book reviews

Athena Athanasiou, *Agonistic Mourning: Political Dissidence and the Women in Black*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, xii + 348 pp., £19.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-4744-2015-0.

Book review by **Adriana Zaharijević**
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Athena Athanasiou's *Agonistic Mourning* is the most recent and the most original book on the Serbian feminist and anti-militarist activist group *Žene u Crnom* (Women in Black). What makes it so original and important can be expressed with a paradoxical claim: this is and is not a book about Women in Black. *Agonistic Mourning* is a rich ethnographic account presented as a series of problems, paradoxes, and quandaries of activism in which the group from Serbia, with all the specificities of the context of its emergence, becomes a paradigm for a different kind of re-memembering the community. Offering a chain of reflections on the potentials of and for feminist peace activism, Athanasiou traces a lived history of a particular activist undertaking. The way she does that, in the spirit of an ethnography of friendship, makes this book truly unique.

The main characters of the book are activists, a large and heterogeneous community gathered around the elusive name of *Žene u Crnom*, but the dilemmas propelling the research surpass the local context. Athena Athanasiou seeks to find answers to the questions that critically cross over disciplinary boundaries: Can loss and mourning have political significance? If so, what and how potent? What kinds of affective relationships and forms of intimacy emerge within the context of political violence, the loss of loved ones, home, and familiar affective moorings? How can a political subject with critical agency evolve, if it is developed out of resistance to the logic of violation, abjection, exclusion, or if it is built on a different economy of affectivity? Are we speaking of a sovereign subject, or must we not then think a nonsovereign subjectivity? What is the role of political processes of memorization in the production of dominant narratives, but also of those narratives that subvert dominant, uniform, and (un)desirable matrices of sovereign knowledge? How do forms of memory introduce agonism into what we think we know, into what we think belongs to the corpus of common knowledge, to the "one and only truth"? What kind of alternative forms of belonging or dispossessed forms of belonging are possible in the wake of tragedy? Finally, what do bodies do in public, gathered in such a way that their sheer exposure disturbs the public narrative and unweaves the fabric of the publicly acceptable? Perhaps this public exposure has the force to become a counterpublic—something that not only questions the sovereignty of "the truth" (of the nation, of the past, of the war, of patriarchy), but has the power to deregulate and upset the norms that define what

is allowed to be seen or heard, felt or known. If these “counterpublic” silent bodies (for these bodies do not speak) mourn the losses erased from the public, what kind of agonistic politics—which is a key concept to Athanasiou—do they make (im)possible?

The book is divided into four parts. The first part, “Mourning Otherwise,” a mise-en-scène for a comprehensive description of the transnational Women in Black movement and its local Serbian variant, addresses motifs of mourning, loss, and grief. The second part, “Gendered Intimacies of the Nationalist Archive,” elaborates the Serbian context in which the Belgrade-based group developed, with special emphasis on the politics of the archive and the epistemic violence of its uniform formation and preservation. The third chapter, “Spectral Spaces of Counter-Memory,” focuses on the public dimension of Women in Black’s action, that is, on the creation of the critical memory that has the power to restructure the public space and its hegemonic truth. While this chapter explores the “where” (spaces where activism performs itself), the last chapter, “Political Languages of Responsiveness and the Disquiet of Silence,” experiments with the “how.” Athanasiou wants to understand how standing still and in silence—two distinguishing marks of Women in Black’s *acting*—can be rethought in an agonistic vein, or possibly as the model agonistic politics.

At the beginning of the Yugoslav wars in 1991, a Belgrade-based group of feminists, leftists, war objectors and deserters, refugees, and people politically excluded from civic belonging by virtue of ethnicity or sexuality formed *Žene u Crnom protiv Rata* (Women in Black against the War). Their distinctive mode of action, which has changed only slightly during its twenty-seven years of existence, is to stand motionless and silent, dressed in black, in a bustling public place, most often the Square of the Republic in the center of Belgrade. The absence of movement (which, nevertheless, moves) and the absence of verbal expressions recalls the solemnity of a funeral procession, the dignified mourning of the dear ones we have lost. The only thing that “speaks” are the banners that address the subject of mourning—those already killed, tortured, and raped in war or those who live under such a threat. However, the mourned ones are not only “our own,” not only those we *should* mourn for, but those who were murdered or whose lives were made unliveable “in our name.” Thus the most famous Women in Black statements are: “Not in our name!” and “Disloyal (to war, patriarchy, state, nation, army).”

This description exemplifies moments of great importance to Athanasiou’s narrative on agonistic political activism. *Agonistic Mourning* questions the possibilities, challenges, and dangers of acting by mourning in public, and especially of “mourning otherwise,” which is why Antigone’s shadow looms large over this contemporary polis (73). Cleverly using Judith Butler’s conception of grievability, Athanasiou asks which lives are grievable, and thus alive and livable in certain cultural and political contexts. These two questions, while central for her book, are further expanded and enhanced by the series of problems that Athanasiou articulates. For example, Athanasiou discusses how to create a politics of solidarity after the war and its indescribable violence, without recourse to universal moralism or a humanitarian reification of victimhood; how to build communities that are not reducible to the principles of fraternity, ethnic affinities, and brutal nationalism: in short, how to assemble “communities without community” (85)? How can repetitive acts of performance (supposedly

passive “nonacts,” like standing motionless in the public, are, in fact, performative) constantly bring the past back into “our” time, thereby unsettling its smooth archiving into an unambiguous, single, and hegemonic narrative? Athena Athanasiou shows how mourning/remembering otherwise contains a spectral element of an unceasing past, the past that does not cease to haunt both our presence and our futurity. Openness toward the effects of the haunting enables a peculiar nonprescriptive accountable ethics (171). Such embodied ethical activism can be dangerous, open to various risks, often quite physical, and yet, public bodily exposure produces fissures on the surface of a city and sends cracks into the thick tissues of the public in order to condition a possibly different *res publica*.

While it might seem that Athanasiou uses her ethnographic material only to bolster her political beliefs and to apply theoretical concepts to “her subjects,” such a reading would be a gross oversimplification of her work. Theory (Butler and Derrida) and practice (the voices of the activists from Serbia) permeate each other’s already porous and unstable boundaries, rehearsing mutual respect and acknowledgment, and Athanasiou makes us aware that agonism, materially present on Belgrade’s streets, symbolically conditions and informs the words of Hannah Arendt, Bonnie Honig, and Chantal Mouffe. In *Agonistic Mourning* practice and theory meet for a dance, a grievable one, but a dance nonetheless.

Agonistic Mourning is a necessary reading for scholars engaged with the post-Yugoslav history, especially in its alternative ramifications; for gender studies scholars, especially those working with the concepts of grievability and vulnerability; and for historians of the present who deploy memory studies in their work.

Maria Bucur and Mihaela Miroiu, *Birth of Democratic Citizenship: Women and Power in Modern Romania*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2018, 189 pp., \$35.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-25302-564-7.

Book review by **Kristen Ghodsee**
University of Pennsylvania

In this slim volume, *Birth of Democratic Citizenship: Women and Power in Modern Romania*, historian Maria Bucur and philosopher Mihaela Miroiu beautifully capture the anxieties, ambiguities, and opportunities faced by women in contemporary Romania. The book is an excellent primer on the unique ways that the transition from state socialism to free market democracy has impacted the lives of ordinary women. It is a qualitative gem filled with wonderful quotes and anecdotes from the lives of Romanian women from Hunedoara County in Transylvania. After conducting some exploratory focus groups, Bucur and Miroiu interviewed a snowball sample of 101

women between 2009 and 2010. They divided their interview subjects into three generations: the “communist generation,” which included twenty-three urban and four rural women between the ages of sixty and eighty-three; the “transition generation,” consisting of fifty urban and six rural women between the ages of forty and fifty-nine; and the “democracy generation,” which included sixteen urban and two rural members of women under forty.

The book begins with a valuable historical overview of women’s history in Romania, which provides necessary context for the interviews that follow. The subsequent chapters are clustered around the major themes in women’s lives: men, children, work, community, and their personal experiences of both communism and democracy. One persistent theme throughout the book is the tenacity of Romanian patriarchal culture, and women’s own embrace of traditional gender roles, particularly with regard to their children. Motherhood looms large in the personal histories, with most women considering their children “the most beautiful accomplishment” of their lives. But it is clear from the interviews that women also consider work an important part of their identities.

The Hunedoara women believed that formal employment was part of what it meant to be a complete person and rejected the idea of solely being caregivers in the private sphere. When considering the lives of previous generations of Romanian women who did not work, some interviewees complained “that their mothers had grown dull and remained dependent on their husbands” (80). Interestingly, while the authors note that the pre-1989 state “did create unprecedented work opportunities and support programs for women—including paid maternity leaves; conveniently located, low-cost child care; and access to services and products that facilitated household chores, such as washing machines and affordable dry cleaning,” the women they interviewed “never directly linked them to the communist regime” (80). Bucur and Miroiu suggest that the Hunedoara women viewed these opportunities and services as “hard-earned benefits that rendered their double burden more manageable” rather than as special entitlements from the state. Bucur and Miroiu then argue that by providing these services for mothers (and not fathers), the state reinforced traditional gender roles, and the politics of employment before 1989 “forced Romanian women to identify with state paternalism in order to take advantage of equal rights in the workplace” (81). But they also acknowledge that the dismantling of these services after 1989 has made it much more difficult for members of the democracy generation to combine work and family than it was for the women of the communist and transition generations.

Indeed, the interviews across the three generations provide a fascinating window onto the ways that contemporary Romanian women assess the communist past compared to their lives after 1989. One of the most refreshing aspects of this book is that Bucur and Miroiu present the voices of the interviewees directly to the reader as the women grapple with both the positives and the negatives of Romanian communism. For example, one result of the interviews was that all the women interviewed “unanimously” felt that pre-1989 education was far superior to the education system that replaced it (75). One 49-year-old member of the transition generation reported, “The truth is that those who went to school during the [communist period] are people better prepared [for life]—both professionally and in their general education. From the point

of view of individual freedom, it was zero. But what was good, I repeat, was education, culture in the arts, as much as one had access. From my point of view, education and culture play a major role in shaping a person" (75).

The focus on education makes sense when one considers that about 80 percent of women in Transylvania could not read or write in 1945 when the communists took power, and that figure was 92 percent for the Romanian kingdom as a whole. The new state created unprecedented opportunities for women, expanding mandatory education and promoting professional opportunities even in male-dominated fields, despite the dogged persistence of Romanian patriarchy in both the private and public spheres. Bucur and Miroiu note that "women had full access to an advanced education in technical and scientific fields, and they increasingly enrolled in such programs. Romania outpaced Western European and North American countries in terms of female enrollment in engineering programs and employment of female engineers. This difference holds for other communist regime countries, such as the Soviet Union and China, where engineering reached gender parity by the end of the 1980s" (31).

In addition to education, women spoke nostalgically about the perceived job security and housing benefits they once enjoyed. Another interesting theme is the change in the quality of human relationships before and after the coming of democracy. In their chapter on "Communities," Bucur and Miroiu report a pervasive sense that social relations had deteriorated since 1989. "Our interviewees attributed this to the development of a free market—pursuing wealth or survival in a capitalist system of competition" (98). One woman commented that "in a relatively status- and income-homogenous society, people had greater consideration for one another and cheated less" (98–99). Later in the book the authors return to this theme and suggest that the experience of an economy of shortage forged a stronger feeling of solidarity among people struggling against a common enemy: the communist state. "Our respondents contrasted the value placed on and the quality of human relationships during periods of shortage to 'the selfishness and loneliness of nowadays'" (130). Another interviewee reported, "Nobody does anything anymore without a reward. People are no longer as good or kind. Everybody seems stressed out, nervous. They do not have the strength to work with one another, as they barely solve their own issues. The richer one gets, the worse, more selfish, and greedier one becomes" (144).

The interviewees had plenty of criticism about the past as well, remarking on "political control, lack of individual rights, food shortages, and their inability to access birth control and information" (124). By far the worst aspect of Romanian communism for women, so well documented in this book and others, was the ban on abortion and the fiercely intrusive pro-natalist policies imposed on the population after 1966. "They force you to have four children," one woman proclaimed (125). Another interviewee confirmed: "It was horrible. It was impossible to have a normal sexual life because of fear of getting pregnant" (125). A third woman repeated the same sentiment: "It was a horrible time. Women refused to have sexual lives, and from this, family fights and abandonment resulted, as women were scared, scared of pregnancy. For a woman any sexual contact meant only panic and pain, not pleasure" (127). The interviews leave little doubt that although Romanian women valued motherhood, none wished to be compelled to have children they did not want. Unlike other Eastern European coun-

tries that protected women's rights to abortion and birth control as well as promoting sex education, the Romanian state essentially nationalized women's bodies, violating their autonomy and limiting their ability to make the most intimate decisions about their own lives.

The focus on individual autonomy is critical to the theoretical framework that underpins the authors' analysis of the interview data. In their chapter on "Communism as State Patriarchy," Bucur and Miroiu assert that "democratic citizenship assumes individuals are rational actors who understand their own interests and freely make political choices. Without respect for individual autonomy and political pluralism, democratic citizenship and feminism, in the most generic sense, are meaningless" (112). Because the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) ruled over a one-party, hierarchical, and centralized state, Romanians were not treated as rational actors and important decisions about life choices were made on their behalf, such as when to start a family and how many children to have. The goal of the later chapters in this book is to understand how people negotiated with the communist state given the limitations imposed on their autonomy. One key issue implicit in the book is that women-friendly policies in Romania could not be considered "feminist" policies because they did not promote individual autonomy. "Though we agree these policies promote greater gender equality," the authors write, "we do not see them as part of an intentional, explicit feminist agenda" (133n3).

This question of whether communist policies can be considered "feminist" has been extensively debated in the pages of *Aspasia*. This book contributes to this ongoing conversation by focusing on the role of "autonomy" in Kantian terms, which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as "the freedom of will which enables a person to adopt the rational principles of moral law (rather than personal desire or feeling) as the prerequisite for his or her actions; the capacity of reason for moral self-determination." Bucur and Miroiu argue that the persistence of state patriarchy in Romania undermined women's ability to make rational decisions or to behave as rational actors. Because the RCP made decisions for women, they lacked an essential opportunity to self-determine the path of their own lives.

Reading through the interview material, however, it seems that women of both the communist and transition generations did make rational, self-determining decisions about their lives despite the many constraints imposed upon them. For example, women had illegal abortions or avoided sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy. Some women discussed their decisions to join the RCP to further their education or their careers, claiming that they did so because they were "forced to" rather than out of any form of conviction. Other women chose *not* to join the party, even when they were exposed to the same incentives "forcing them" to do so. Still other women risked listening to Radio Free Europe broadcasts or attended church services, both dangerous choices opposed to regime policies.

Bucur and Miroiu argue that state patriarchy infantilized women and prevented them from realizing their full potential as citizens, which is undoubtedly true from the perspective of political rights. But one persistent question I had throughout the book is whether political pluralism and multiparty elections are enough to guarantee women autonomy in a capitalist economy, where their lives are constrained by the in-

visible hand of the market rather than the very visible fist of the state. In other words, is democracy enough to guarantee women's autonomy? Furthermore, is individual autonomy the normative universal goal for all feminists, or can there be other feminisms that emphasize community and social solidarity over personal opportunities for self-actualization? These are complicated questions that feminists and women's activists have been debating for over a century, but *Birth of Democratic Citizenship: Women and Power in Modern Romania* will infuse these conversations with rich empirical data and incisive analysis. Bucur and Miroiu have written an important and timely study that should be required reading for all scholars of gender and socialism and is most highly recommended.

◆ Note

1. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Socialism," www.OED.com (accessed 16 January 2019).

Katherina Dalakoura and Sidiroula Ziogou-Karastergiou, *Hē ekpaideusē tōn gynaiκōn, gynaiκes stēn ekpaideusē: Koinōnikoi, ideologikoi, ekpaideutikoi metaschēmatismoi kai gynaikeia paremvasē (18os–20os ai.)* (Women's education, women in education: Social, ideological, educational transformations, and women's interventions [18th–20th centuries]), Athens: Greek Academic Electronic Manuals/Kallipos Repository, 2015, 346 pp., e-book: <http://hdl.handle.net/11419/2585>, ISBN: 978-960-603-290-5. Provided free of charge by the Association of Greek Academic Libraries.

Book review by **Efi Kanner**
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This book is a part of the "Kallipos" project that was implemented from 2013 to 2015. It produced a series of digital textbooks primarily designed for undergraduate students. The authors of the book under review here—Sidiroula Ziogou-Karastergiou, a pioneer in the history of women's education in Greece, and Katherina Dalakoura, one of the first Greek historians in the field—accomplished much more than that. They produced the first comprehensive history of Greek women's education. It is an extensive synthesis that covers a long period—from the eighteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century—and comprises various topics, such as discourses on the "woman question" among Greek literati, the development of educational institutions, and biographies of women teachers. Thus they successfully filled an important gap concerning the history of Greek women's education and offered readers a kaleidoscopic view of the issue.

The book examines the history of women's education both in Greece and the Greek Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire and sets this story in the wider context of the socioideological transformations of Greek society during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. The book's first four chapters cover the emergence and development women's education in a *longue durée* perspective. The following three chapters focus on women teachers' educational, social, and cultural activity and the "paradoxes" — as the authors put it — their professional activity presents.

The first chapter is entitled "The Revival of the Woman Question (18th–19th Centuries)" (16). The chapter examines European discourses about women from the Enlightenment to the mid-nineteenth century: from the reformulation of traditional patriarchal values by Jean-Jacques Rousseau to the advocacy of women's rights by the Marquis de Condorcet and Mary Wollstonecraft to the later writing of John Stuart Mill. Greek Enlightenment thinkers integrated women into their project of "reviving of the nation," seeing women's education as a necessary component of this revival (23). The authors emphasize that some representatives of the Greek Enlightenment took positions similar to the most radical views of their Western counterparts about women—for example, Rēgas Feraios stood for equal and compulsory education for both sexes and considered women essential for the national defense (24). The rest of the chapter examines later debates on the "woman question" during the nineteenth century, going from discourses based on "women's feebleness" or "equality in difference" to the emergence of the feminist movement.

The above-mentioned debates constituted the context of the development of Greek women's education (both in Greece and in Greek Orthodox communities in the Ottoman territories), which is described in the second chapter. The authors examine the structure of education that was shaped upon class- and gender-based concerns in the framework of nineteenth-century Greek national aspirations (i.e., Greek cultural and/or political hegemony in the Balkans and Asia Minor), which required the spread of Greek culture in the Orthodox populations of these regions. Women's education was such a novelty for Greek society in this period that it encountered substantial resistance. Filekpaideftikē Etaireia (The Society of Friends of Education) played a major role in developing women's secondary education, a task the Greek state neglected (67–71). Generally speaking, girls' schools were mainly expected to form future wives and mothers. Thus, courses such as Latin, mathematics, or chemistry were absent from their curricula and female pupils had no access to vocational education (a practice that only changed with the education reform act of 1929 and much later with the one of 1976–1977). The chapter highlights the role of the first Greek feminists—particularly Kalliorhoē Parren and those around *Efēmeris tôn kyriôn* (Ladies' journal), the journal she edited—in the struggle for women's rights in education and work.

The third chapter deals with how female education in Greece was transformed during the twentieth century, a highly eventful period. These changes were tied to the events that transformed Greek society socioeconomically and ideologically during these decades: the defeat in the 1919–1922 war that struck a fatal blow to Greek nationalist aspirations, the refugee problem, World War II, the civil war, and the rule of the military junta (1967–1974) and its political aftermath. The authors show how the first decades of the century were marked by the demotic language movement (*dēmo-*

tikismos) and its collaboration with the feminist movement. The first radical educational experiment was the *Anôtero Parthenagôgeio Volou* (Girls' Higher School in Volos), which emphasized the making of "moral and independent personalities" (125). It was a short-lived undertaking (1908–1911) due to strong social reactions against it. Similar experiments in Athens during the 1920s were also rejected by conservative educational communities and society in general. What is particularly important in this chapter is female educators' contribution to this progressive education movement (Roza Imvrioti, Myrsini Kléanthous, Katina Pappa). As a result of these endeavors, the education acts of 1913 and 1929 institutionalized women's secondary education and vocational education for women (135, 138). The Greek educational system nevertheless remained differentiated by gender until 1979, when mixed-gender secondary education was finally institutionalized.

The next chapter examines women's access to universities. It describes the debates over women's academic abilities and considers the opportunities university education offered women to renegotiate their position in the family and society. It covers a period from 1890—the year the first female student was accepted in the Faculty of Letters at the University of Athens—to the last decades of the twentieth century, when women's studies was gradually integrated into university curricula. Of particular interest in this chapter are the life stories of the first female university students. We learn about their motivation to pursue academic study, their painful experiences as students, and the hard time they had establishing themselves as academics.

In the fifth chapter, the authors discuss women teachers' professional training in Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Teaching was often characterized as an extension of motherhood; a teacher's mission was to socialize her pupils within the ideal of domesticity, even though she herself had transgressed this ideal by choosing to have a profession. At the same time, even this limited access to the public sphere—which provoked public reactions ranging from mockery to sanctification—permitted women to support their families and gain public visibility and sometimes an important public role.

Women's public presence is analyzed in the following chapter, which focuses on these women's writing, publishing, and philanthropic activity, as well as their feminist and syndicalist action. Its first part presents a whole range of journals edited by and addressing women—from the conservative journal *Vosporis* (The Bosphorus woman) to the first feminist Greek journal *Efēmeris tôn kyriôn*—as well as essays and literary translations. The growing number of subscribers to these journals indicates female readers' interest in these publications (262–278). This activity underwent a qualitative transformation after the end of World War I; during the interwar period, women began to write more academic essays and political and feminist journals proliferated (278–279). The following sections deal with philanthropic activity. They describe diverse undertakings, including workshops that provided work for destitute women or campaigns for the education of women of the popular strata (279–286), cultural interventions, and feminist action. Especially noteworthy is the section about women teachers' syndicalist action, since it depicts women's struggle for equal pay and very active participation in unions, showing that many women conceived of their jobs in professional terms, contrary to the dominant patriarchal discourse.

This self-image of women is depicted even more convincingly in the last chapter, which describes women teachers' contribution to the codification and development of educational theory and praxis, with emphasis on the work of educators such as Polytimē Kouskourē, Sappho Leontias, and Aikaterinē Laskaridou.

This is an ambitious book that covers an extensive time period and combines a wide variety of historiographical subfields, including the history of ideas, the history of institutions and pedagogical thinking, and biography. This may account for its occasionally excessive length, which reveals the authors' concern to not omit anything related to women's public activity (extending well beyond the actions of teachers themselves). The authors are well versed in the Greek and international literature on women's education and have integrated the relevant problematics into their own narrative. What is missing, however, is an introduction that explicitly discusses this existing historiography and makes the authors' own methodological choices clear. While each chapter does include a synopsis and conclusions, this does not fully compensate for the absence of such an introduction and a general epilogue. Such omissions, however, do not detract from the book's value as the first comprehensive study of Greek women's education. The book contains many valuable features for university teaching, including extensive documentation following each chapter, a rich bibliography containing primary and secondary sources, quantitative data, and the complete text of many key primary sources (legislative acts, school curricula, extracts from newspapers, memoirs, fiction, etc.).

Melissa Feinberg, *Curtain of Lies: The Battle over Truth in Stalinist Eastern Europe*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, 232 pp., \$74.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-19-064461-1.

Book review by **Árpád von Klimó**
The Catholic University of America

Historians have been criticizing the paradigm of totalitarianism as an inadequate description of communist dictatorships for a long time. Until now, however, nobody has explained how the discourse of the "totalitarian state" was created in the context of a triangular communication that included communist propaganda in Eastern Europe in confrontation with its opposite, anti-communist propaganda in the West, and, as a major third party, Eastern Europeans who had escaped to the West where they told their own stories of how it felt to live in a "totalitarian state."

In her study on Cold War propaganda between 1948 and 1956, Melissa Feinberg demonstrates how the struggle to convince public opinion by both superpowers and the narratives of Eastern European refugees interviewed by Western agencies like Radio Free Europe (RFE) or researchers created a specific Cold War culture that was, to some degree, shared in both camps. This discourse focused on mutually exclusive

concepts like “truth” and descriptions of shared emotional sensations like “fear” or notions like “peace” and “war” and tended to exaggerate the strength of the other camp. Refugees from the main battlefield of this cultural Cold War were the countries between Germany and the Soviet Union, then called “Eastern Europe” (although Prague lies west of Vienna), which had been occupied by Soviet troops and ruled by communist parties. Both the United States and the Soviet Union simplified the complex reality of Eastern Europe, while Bulgarians, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, or Romanians had to provide “truths” about the situation in their lands, depending on which side of the conflict they addressed. This gave them more leeway and opportunities than both superpowers and a large part of public opinion wanted to believe. However, the contradictions the author reveals in their testimonies add much gray to the otherwise black-and-white picture.

Feinberg investigates the hundreds of interviews given by Eastern Europeans to Western radio and research institutions during the Stalinist years. On the one hand, most interviewees seemed to affirm the standard narrative of Western propaganda, according to which Eastern Europeans had become members of “captivated nations,” “enslaved” by the Soviets and their local allies. They claimed that they had lived in “constant fear” of the surveillance apparatus, at times exaggerating its influence so that an RFE report believed that no less than 20 percent of the entire Bulgarian population worked for the state security (92). Their lives had become unbearable not only because of the lack of food and consumer goods (elegant cloths, cosmetics, etc.) and the destruction of families, neighborhoods, and friendships in a climate of fear, terror, and mistrust, but also through the undermining of gender relations by new socialist policies that integrated women into the workforce. But stories like the one of the young Polish fisherman who left his wife and child and declared that his “harmonious family life” had been “destroyed” by communism demonstrate not only how male perspectives dominated the Cold War discourse (most refugees were young men) but also contradicts the idea that all Eastern Europeans were “helpless victims” (162).

Melissa Feinberg’s close reading of these documents reveals many contradictions and brings back the complexities of the Stalinist period that started with the establishing of one-party dictatorships and the massive propaganda accompanying the show trials of the 1948 split between Stalin and Tito. Then, many rumors about all kinds of torture circulated. The war hysteria infused by both sides in the context of the Korean War also influenced how Eastern Europeans narrated their lives. Many expressed that they had hoped to be “liberated” by the US Army, often unaware of the devastating effects of nuclear warfare or believing in fantastic weapons (that would somehow tranquilize the communists), thus paradoxically giving full credibility to the communist “peace camp” propaganda that portrayed the United States and her allies as “warmongers” (123–126). This led to deep disappointments when the United States did not intervene in the Hungarian crisis of 1956, but it also undermined communist propaganda warning of Western “aggression” (140–141). The reality interviewees saw was filtered through their own anti-communist lenses, then filtered again by the Western radio stations that used what they found usable for their broadcast, transmitting the filtered “truths” back into Eastern Europe (89ff.). *Curtain of Lies* opens many

new perspectives on the Cold War and provides insights into our own “postfactual” time.

Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger, and Birgitta Bader Zaar, eds.,
Gender and the First World War, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan,
2014, 276 pp., £69.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-349-45379-5.

Book review by **Matthew Stibbe**
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This rich collection of fourteen essays, based on a conference in Vienna in autumn 2011, critiques recent historiography of World War I not for ignoring gender as a category of analysis, but for applying it in an uneven way. The imbalance is partly a geographical one: previous research has centered overwhelmingly on the western front, making comparisons with other fronts difficult. But there is also a thematic lopsidedness, with women still being associated with the home front, mourning, and suffrage, and men with combat, violence, and death. Even if men and women communicated with each other through letters, postcards, and periods of leave, the resulting narrative is still very much based on a strict separation of the genders. Women, as Ute Daniel wrote in 1989 in relation to Germany, experienced an “emancipation on loan” during the war, with their newfound status in the family and workplace merely temporary and tied to the absence of men. Ultimately, it was the ideal of “soldierly masculinity,” transformed after 1918 into the sexually repressive and politically authoritarian “cult of the fallen soldier,” that had a lasting impact across Europe—as another eminent scholar in this area, George L. Mosse, argued in 1990. The editors of the volume discussed here recognize these findings, and in their introduction even quote the French historian Françoise Thébaud on the “deeply conservative” consequences of the war for gender order (3–4). Female suffrage, in countries where it was granted in full or in part in 1918–1920, did not have a significant impact on power relations between the sexes. Women at the front were not integrated into war narratives except as the innocent targets of enemy brutality. Male fighters who developed shell shock could be belittled as “war hysterics,” but the nurses who served immediately behind the lines were not even acknowledged as fellow warriors who could suffer from combat stress, death, or permanent injury, as Julia Barbara Köhne and Christa Hämmerle show in their respective chapters. Even in the spheres of international governance and cross-border activism—the arenas in which women had had most success in getting their voices heard before the war—progress toward equality was stunted after 1918. The peacemakers at Paris in 1919–1920 were all men.

Pacifism was another great loser in the years after 1914, with only a tiny number of women (and men) in each of the warring states refusing to champion the cause

of national defense. Yet in other respects, the different contributions to the volume challenge the notion that the war had “deeply conservative” outcomes for gender relations. Indeed, the devastation caused by the fighting, to civilians as well as soldiers, and to the peoples of Southern and Eastern as well as Western Europe, was such that it is difficult to see how it could not have had a serious and lasting impact on constructions of masculinity and femininity. Matteo Ermacora, for instance, in his essay on poorer women in the rural parts of the northeastern Italian region of Friuli, close to the front line with Austria, notes that public recognition of their sacrifices for the war effort did not translate into material improvements in everyday life. But equally he finds that elements of “diffidence and submissiveness” were matched by “anger and the determination to fight for their rights” (21). Likewise, Claudia Siebrecht acknowledges that German women’s and soldiers’ reactions to the grief associated with the loss of close male friends or relatives were “by no means uniform” and that alongside “stoic endurance” there were also instances of resistance to the dominant tropes about “sacrifice” and “redemption” (146, 152).

Susan R. Grayzel, in a fascinating essay on gendered responses to technological advances in chemical and aerial warfare, notes how the bombing of civilians in 1914–1918, and the even greater destruction many anticipated would occur in the next war, completely overturned arguments that women and children were kept safe on the home front by men’s self-sacrificing courage in battle. Instead, in the 1920s and 1930s the debate was reframed around the imagined “baby in the gas mask,” a nightmare concept that either reinforced arguments that war was now impossible without completely destroying civilization or inspired new ventures in civil defense preparations, including the manufacture of child-friendly anti-gas helmets. Meanwhile, Jason Crouthamel examines how various homosexual rights discourses in Germany, some social democratic, others right-wing, challenged the notion that “soldierly masculinity” could only be exhibited by heterosexual or abstinent men. The war was a state of exception that either demonstrated the folly of Paragraph 175—the part of the Reich penal code outlawing “unnatural” sexual acts between men—or justified its suspension in view of the equal or even superior fighting qualities of the hypermasculine gay soldier.

One of the frustrations of the volume is that its emphasis on the complexity and sheer diversity of gendered war experiences makes it difficult to draw larger conclusions from the individual case studies. Some contributors, including Manon Pignot, argue that the war had a more or less instantly transformative impact on gender relations, at least as witnessed through the eyes of French girls and boys living under German occupation. Others, such as Alison S. Fell (on “Remembering French and British First World War Heroines”) and Tina Bahovec (on the “National and Political Mobilization of Slovene Women in Carinthia”), seem to assert the opposite: that the immediate effects of the war were conservative, but change came nonetheless in the longer term—especially if World War I is linked to World War II. These disparities of time and place are perhaps best interpreted via Ingrid Sharp’s shrewd observation that the 1914–1918 conflict was “a global phenomenon with national and local consequences” (198). But they also underline just how much more research needs to be done on specific regions and localities before all-inclusive comparative or transnational treatments

can be developed. In the meantime, this volume can be read with great profit by all scholars of gender and war in the modern era.

◆ Notes

1. Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War*, trans. by Margaret Ries (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997), 276–283.
2. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 70–106.

Oksana Kis, *Ukrayinky v Hulahu: Vyzhyty znachyt' peremohty* (Ukrainian women in the Gulag: Survival means victory), Lviv: Institute of Ethnology, 2017, 288 pp., price not listed (paperback), ISBN: 978-966-02-8268-1.

Book review by **Tatiana Zhurzhenko**
University of Vienna, Austria

Oksana Kis was one of the first scholars to start doing women's and gender history in Ukraine back in the 1990s. Her publications on the crossroads of history and social anthropology are well known in Ukraine and appreciated far beyond feminist circles. Her very first book, *Zhinka v tradytsiyniy ukrayins'kiy kul'turi (druha polovyna XIX–pochatok XX stolittya)*,¹ established her as a promising historian and academic writer. The collected volume *Ukrayins'ki zhinky u hornyli modernizatsiyi*,² edited by Kis, received the Best History Book Award at the 2017 Lviv Book Fair.

Kis's new book on Ukrainian women as prisoners of the Gulag draws on more than a decade of research and active engagement with the issue. It is based on first-hand archival research, oral history, and biographical methods and offers a deep view into one of the least studied aspects of Soviet history and the history of Stalinist repression in particular. This book makes several original contributions to the existing historiography of the Gulag, not only in Ukraine but internationally.

One of the book's most significant contributions is to systematically address the Ukrainian experience of the Gulag. Previous work on the history of the Gulag, including the important books by Anne Applebaum, Steven Barnes, Golfo Alexopoulos, Nanci Adler, and Leona Toker, has been based on the memoirs of Russians and Russian speakers. To be sure, the everyday experience of Ukrainian women in the Gulag was in many ways similar to that of other ethnic groups. But due to the sheer scale of anti-Soviet resistance in wartime and postwar Ukraine as well as the organizational capacities of the Ukrainian nationalist underground, Ukrainians formed a special (and the second-largest) group in the Stalinist labor camps, characterized by a high level of solidarity and developed national consciousness. Kis's work addresses the particular

aspects of Ukrainian women's experience in the Gulag, including national identity, religious practices, and ethnic traditions. To the best of my knowledge, there is only one English-language book—by Katherine Jolluck—that similarly focuses on ethnicity and gender in Soviet camps (Jolluck addresses the fate of Polish women in Soviet labor camps and Siberian exile during World War II). Another of the book's important innovations is to combine historical and anthropological approaches. Kis's book is an interdisciplinary study that not only examines the everyday life of Ukrainian women in Stalinist prisons and camps but also applies gender concepts and feminist methodology. It portrays women's vulnerability to state violence and terror and at the same time addresses women's specific strategies of survival, adaptation, and resistance under the inhuman conditions of the Stalinist repressive system, emphasizing the role of gendered skills, knowledge, communication, and networking as a personal resource. The author draws on concepts and approaches developed in the academic literature on the gender aspects of the Holocaust and cross-cultural famine studies. Applying the feminist notion of women's agency, Kis goes beyond discourses that victimize women and instead sees them as the subjects of history.

Kis's book is an important contribution to the growing field of research on women's experience in the Gulag (see, for example, the works by Veronica Shapovalov, Paul L. Gregory, Simeon Vilensky, Emma Mason, and Melanie Ilić). What makes her work especially valuable is that it is not limited to the topics of sexual violence and maternity behind bars, but draws the reader's attention also to other aspects of everyday life, from work and leisure to networking, communication between prisoners, and forms of solidarity, as well as (female) ways of resisting the dehumanizing policies of the Gulag system (such as creativity, arts, and traditional crafts). It should be also noted that Kis extensively cites not only published but also unpublished memoirs and interviews with Ukrainian women.

The author should be credited for her effort to gender the Ukrainian historiography of the Soviet era. She has enriched our understanding of Stalinism by shedding additional light on the national and ethnic dimensions of its political repression. Kis's book also makes an important contribution to the highly politicized and ideologically polarized field of memory studies by bringing marginalized female narratives to the fore and focusing on women's personal memories, which are less prone to political instrumentalization. At the same time, the book can be read as a warning against the current tendency of post-Soviet nostalgia and the rehabilitation of Stalinism in the post-Soviet space.

◆ Notes

1. Oksana Kis, *Zhinka v tradytsiyniy ukrayins'kiy kul'turi (druha polovyna XIX–pochatok XX stolittya* [Women in Ukrainian traditional culture: From the second half of the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries] (Lviv: Institute of Ethnology, 2008).

2. Oksana Kis, ed., *Ukrayins'ki zhinky u hornyli modernizatsiyi* [Women in the crucible of modernization] (Kharkiv: KSD, 2017).

3. Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003); Steven A. Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Uni-

versity Press, 2011); Golfo Alexopoulos, *Illness and Inhumanity in Stalin's Gulag* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017); Nanci Adler, *The Gulag Survivor: Beyond the Soviet System* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Leona Toker, *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

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

5. Veronica Shapovalov, ed., *Remembering the Darkness: Women in Soviet Prisons* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Paul R. Gregory, *Women of the Gulag, Portraits of Five Remarkable Lives* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2013); Simeon Vilensky, ed., *Till My Tale Is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Emma Mason, "Women in the Gulag in the 1930s," in *Women in the Stalin Era: Studies in Russian and East European History and Society*, ed. Melanie Ilić (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Melanie Ilić, "The Forgotten Five Per Cent: Women, Political Repression and the Purges," in *Stalin's Terror Revisited*, ed. Melanie Ilić (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Ana Kolarić, *Rod, modernost i emancipacija: Uredničke politike u časopisima "Žena" (1911–1914) i "The Freewoman" (1911–1912)* (Gender, modernity, and emancipation: Editorial politics in the journals "Žena" [The woman] [1911–1914] and "The Freewoman" [1911–1912]), Belgrade: Fabrika knjiga, 2017, 253 pp., €14 (paperback), ISBN 978-86-7718-168-0.

Book review by **Žarka Svirčev**
Institute for Literature and Arts, Belgrade

Ana Kolarić's book *Rod, modernost i emancipacija* (Gender, modernity, and emancipation) illustrates the conceptual and methodological innovation, reliability, and thoroughness of her research in the field of feminist theory and criticism. The author's work is a remarkable contribution to the feminist study of periodicals, an area of research that she, among others, spearheaded in Serbia over the last ten years. In this book, Kolarić simultaneously enters into a creative dialogue with recent trends in the study of periodicals in the West, introducing some of them in her academic community, and establishes her research in the local interpretive community, where she provides an international framework. Hence her research, which is aimed at knowledge production, is not only an important contribution to Serbian scholarship, but allows us to situate the Serbian case within the context of broader European perspectives, practices, and phenomena.

The title of the book highlights both the key categories that the author analyzes and the body of texts that she considers. Also, the title suggests interdisciplinary methodological frameworks. The author has organized this extensive and complex material into seven substantive chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Each chapter

takes up a particular theme within the context of either the Serbian journal *Žena* (The woman) or the British journal *The Freewoman*. Specific topics include: Dora Marsden, *The Freewoman*, and the free woman; Milica Tomic, *Žena*, and the emancipated Serbian woman; gender identity, sexuality, and morality in *The Freewoman*; gender identities and sexual pedagogy in *Žena*; the foundations of feminist literary criticism; the early works of Rebecca West; and nurses and faithful wives in literary pieces in *Žena*.

In her analysis, the author covers a wide range of topics, problems, and theoretical concepts. Kolarić focuses on the relations among gender, literature, and modernity in two magazines—one Serbian and one English—that began publication in the same year in two different regions of Europe. One of her aims is to explore and demonstrate the importance of female authorship and gender policies at the beginning of the twentieth century for the formation of modernity. To investigate this complex relationship, she asks the following questions:

Can one speak of modernity and modernism in the singular? What defines modern subjectivity/identity? What is the relationship between the individual and collective identity? How did the women's movement effect and change historical understandings of gender relations and roles? What is the relationship between women's emancipation and the division between the public and private spheres? What was the attitude toward sexuality and what role did sexuality play? What is the dynamics of the relationship between the modern/traditional binary opposition? (10)

This broad research platform required an interdisciplinary approach and Kolarić found methodological support in feminist theory, feminist literary criticism, feminist studies of periodicals, gender studies, cultural studies, and critical discourse analysis. While she deals with an extensive body of material that contains complex ideological and discursive formations, Kolarić does not succumb to the temptation to generalize. Her research is characterized by an extreme meticulousness, theoretical precision, thoroughness, and metacriticism. It is a study that skillfully combines propaedeutic discourse and theoretical-interpretative discourse challenging even for experienced researchers.

Kolarić interprets articles from both magazines in their specific social and political contexts, showing her profound knowledge and, most importantly, understanding of the historical moment in which these texts were written. Her analysis of *The Freewoman* and *Žena* shows how authors for each magazine used the concepts of modernity and modernism in ways that were specific to the cultural traditions of their different societies (Serbian and British). In other words, her analysis shows that in order to properly understand the meaning of concepts like modernity and modernism, and consequently gender identities and politics, one should always bear in mind the historical, geopolitical, and social conditions of the culture in which they emerged. By bringing the magazine *Žena* onto the European scene and comparing it with the British magazine, Kolarić shows that the feminist revision of modernism must first answer the question how our understanding of modernity is changed if we look at the female experience as paradigmatic instead of the male. It must, however, also consider the diversity of women's

experiences of modernity and examine the ways in which women's emancipatory politics was shaped by their distinct experience of the modern. She simultaneously sheds light on the specific socioideological physiognomy of the British and Serbian national contexts, reminding us that neither environment was homogeneous.

In her discussion of each journal, Kolarić details the biographies of the editors, describes the history and concept of the magazine, and examines its editorial strategy. By analyzing a wide range of discourses in relation to the "woman question" (education, paid work, marriage and its alternatives, sexuality, motherhood, different micro-institutions of activity of the female public sphere, etc.), Kolarić identifies one of the key issues that concerned both journals: (female) freedom. Each journal, she argues, had its own distinct understanding of women's freedom. In the magazine *The Freewoman*, freedom was individualistic, psychological, personal, related to the introspective turn in feminism. In the magazine *Žena*, freedom was collective, national, and public (external). Kolarić concludes that attitudes toward individualism and collectivism affect the perception and formulations of gender/female identity. Her analysis of the concepts of (female) freedom is a constructive heuristic framework for future research.

Ana Kolarić's book is an important contribution to the research of the general history of modernism, (feminist) history and literary criticism, the theory and history of women's magazines, and of periodicals in general. It is important to emphasize that in addition to the synchronic level, the author constantly has in mind a diachronic perspective as well. Kolarić's research shows that historical knowledge can help provide useful models for contemporary and future (feminist) practice. With her self-reflexive and feminist discourse, Kolarić has created a provocative and stimulating narrative about social responsibility and research ethics.

Agnieszka Kościańska, *Zobaczyć łosia: Historia polskiej edukacji seksualnej od pierwszej lekcji do internetu* (To see a moose: The history of Polish sex education from the first lesson to the internet), Wołowiec: Czarne, 2017, 424 pp., PLN 44.90 (hardback), ISBN 978-83-8049-545-6.

Book review by **Agata Ignaciuk**
University of Warsaw, Poland

Agnieszka Kościańska, based at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Warsaw, Poland, is one of the key contributors to the dynamically growing field of the history of sexuality in Central and Eastern Europe. Her previous book, *Płeć, przyjemność i przemoc: Kształtowanie wiedzy eksperckiej o seksualności w Polsce* (Gender, pleasure, and violence: The construction of expert knowledge of sexuality in Poland), traced the development of sexology as a scientific discipline in Poland from 1970 to the present. *Płeć, przyjemność i przemoc* was an important contribution to the

study of how sexologists and sexology have shaped the understanding of female sexuality and gender violence in contemporary Poland.

In her recent book *Zobaczyć łosia: Historia polskiej edukacji seksualnej od pierwszej lekcji do internetu* (To see a moose: The history of Polish sex education from the first lesson to the internet), Kościańska achieves an almost impossible goal. She offers new, fascinating pieces of research that advance and complement her previous book, while also bringing most of her recent work closer to the public at a particularly complex political moment in Polish history.

In *Zobaczyć łosia*, Kościańska produces a solid—and at the same time extremely readable—history of sex education in contemporary Poland. She navigates through the early twentieth century, the interwar period, the years of state socialism, and three decades of democracy in search of sites of the production and reception of sexual knowledge. This knowledge is always treated as a continuous exchange between experts and the public, and the outcome is a book that is rich in detail, thoroughly documented, and beautifully narrated.

The book consists of three parts. The first part examines a range of key themes raised in sex education manuals aimed at Polish youth throughout the twentieth century. The author traces continuity and change in what sexologists and Catholic sex educators wrote about masturbation, sexual initiation, birth control, the prevention of venereal disease (including HIV/AIDS), pornography, nonheteronormative sexuality, and sexual violence. Throughout this section of the book, Kościańska's analysis of expert discourse is intertwined with extracts from readers' letters to professionals. Apart from correspondence printed from the 1960s onward in advice columns from a number of Polish magazines for teens, the author primarily uses an unpublished collection of letters received by the sexologist Wiesław Sokoluk, coauthor of the progressive sex education manual *Przysposobienie do życia w rodzinie* (Preparation for family life). This textbook was released for high school use in 1987, almost on the verge of the democratic transition that would explode in 1989. It caused so much controversy that it was almost immediately withdrawn (from circulation in bookstores and libraries) and any unsold copies were destroyed. Moving through Kościańska's book, the reader comes to appreciate how sex as agony, sex as agency, and all fifty shades of gray in between shine through the invaluable personal testimonies. Skillfully selected and interpreted, these narratives bring the book to life, making it an interesting read for historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and the nonspecialized public alike.

The second part of the book offers unique insights into the diversity and complexity of the Polish Catholic Church's attitudes toward sex education over the past half century. The author tells the little-known (especially in Poland) story of the "unfinished revolution" within the Catholic Church in the 1960s, when theological debates about sex and contraception blossomed and many hoped the Vatican would adopt a new stance on birth control. Yet, in his encyclical *Humanae vitae* (August 1968), Pope Paul VI chose to maintain the status quo, and the church would continue to condemn "artificial" birth control methods except those based on periodic abstinence. The author shows how these debates were received and picked up in Poland as she discusses *Przed nami małżeństwo* (Marriage upon us)—a popular sex education manual for Catholic couples, written by the progressive Catholic intellectual Andrzej Wielowieyski in

the 1970s. She also explains how Polish Catholic sex education of the period considered premarital intercourse and contraception as “not only sinful, but also unhealthy.”

The third part—my favorite—explores the history of “sex education” in the Polish countryside and argues against the widespread and persistent idea about sex being an ongoing taboo in rural communities. Here, Kościańska draws on historical and anthropological scholarship on twentieth-century rural Poland, which she complements with an inventive analysis of folk songs and rituals themed around sex and reproduction. As entertaining as it is, this section—like the whole book—is a great piece of cultural history, bringing out nuance and complexity and dismantling binary oppositions and fixed ideas. In sum, *Zobaczyć łosia* is an important scholarly book, and a great read for both academic and nonacademics. I hope to see it translated into English soon.

◆ Note

1. Agnieszka Kościańska, *Płeć, przyjemność i przemoc: Kształtowanie wiedzy eksperckiej o seksualności w Polsce* [Gender, pleasure, and violence: The construction of expert knowledge of sexuality in Poland] (Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2015).

Irina Livezeanu and Árpád von Klimó, eds., *The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700*, New York: Routledge, 2017, 522 pp., GBP 175 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-415-58433-3.

Book review by **Sophia Kuhnle**
University of Mainz, Germany

The anthology *The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700*, edited by Irina Livezeanu and Árpád von Klimó, was published in 2017 by Routledge. It contains an introduction and ten articles that deal with the region of East Central Europe from different historical perspectives. Although a lot of research on women’s history in East Central Europe has been published by academics specialized in the topic in recent years, many mainstream history researchers lack a gender-sensitive perspective. By not talking about the particular situation of women and the different experiences they made, scholars contribute to a distorted picture of history, one that leaves out half of the population. This review addresses whether and how the authors of this anthology managed to integrate women’s and gender history in their articles and how women and gender relations are depicted in the volume.

In their chapter, “Women’s and Gender History,” Krassimira Daskalova and Susan Zimmermann give an introduction to the field of research. They chose six different key themes: education; work and social politics; law and citizenship; empire, nation, and ethnicity; gendered scripts of sexualities and intimate relationships; and women’s activism and movement. The authors elaborate how gender can be used as a cate-

gory of analysis to explain asymmetrical power relations between women and men in different cultures and societies. Women's access to material goods or resources like education has always been restricted. Daskalova and Zimmermann, for example, analyze how labor was highly gendered. Women entered the industrial workforce later and their work was undervalued and therefore paid less, but they were still considered responsible for domestic labor. Constitutions did not treat women in equal terms with men either, so discrimination against women can be traced in the law as well. Examples given in the article concern inequality in marriage, divorce and family laws, criminal codes that banned abortions, and the exclusion of women from political citizenship. In the realm of social politics, many labor protection laws were enacted due to traditional gender roles; women were prohibited from working at night to keep them at home. In response to these issues, newly formed women's movements in the nineteenth century raised "the woman question."

Daskalova and Zimmermann illustrate that women were active in nationalist movements as well and nationalists used demands for gender equality to establish their visions of the nation. While nationalist groups often adopted feminist claims when fighting for the establishment of their nation-state, after its achievement they often tried to reinforce traditional gender roles and strengthen the hierarchy between men and women.

When discussing power relations between genders, sexuality is an important factor that cannot be omitted. The authors analyze how femininity and masculinity as concepts were always highly sexualized and gendered imagery played an important role in political debates. They also point out that gendered ideas and double standards behind sexual relationships can be seen in the fact that families tried to "protect" their daughters from losing their virginity because sexual activity before marriage would destroy their status, or in heterosexual relationships, where violence against and subordination of women played a huge role.

Several other chapters successfully embed women's and gender history into their analysis. In their chapter on "Political Ideologies and Political Movements," Ulf Brunnbauer and Paul Hanebrink trace different political ideas while putting them in their temporal and regional context; a whole section is dedicated to feminism. The authors give a brief overview of the development of women's movements and their goals. They mention different organizations, international networks, and newspapers in which women articulated their positions and goals they achieved. When talking about feminism, one important factor is that it was always linked to other political ideas and ideologies. Therefore, Brunnbauer and Hanebrink focus on explaining how women engaged with other political movements such as socialist parties or national movements where they advanced feminist views. The authors also bring clarity to why the term "women's movements" is used in its plural form: feminist groups not only differed by country or region, but also in their goals and approaches. The chapter concludes with the rise of conservatism and fascism and the political right in East Central Europe in the late 1920s, when women's organizations were put under pressure and feminism was condemned. Nevertheless, the authors argue that rightist female activists managed to keep their interests on the agenda.

In their contribution, "Communism and Its Legacy," Malgorzata Fidelis and Irina Gigova analyze the procedures created during the Cold War period to shape the historiography of communism in East Central Europe. They also suggest another successful way to include topics regarding women's and gender history. Under the question "A new society?" the authors discuss how communist governments tried to change social structures to achieve a classless society. The authors point out that communist leaders promoted gender equality, especially in the workforce and in the field of education, leading to new opportunities for women. On the other hand, patriarchal local officials tried to resist these changes and preserved old gender roles and traditions, which many still considered natural. Fidelis and Gigova point out that after the short Stalinist period, when women were encouraged to enter male-dominated jobs, women were pushed back into their roles as mothers and jobs became highly gendered. Other achievements for women's rights, like the legalization of abortion, were attacked or even abolished. After 1989, feminist scholars saw the transformation from communism to liberal-democratic states as the main reason for anti-feminist backlashes in the region (382). But referring to recent scholarship, for example, the work of Kristen Ghodsee, the authors question this assumption and argue that the policies regarding women's rights after 1989 did not differ so much from the late socialist era.

The chapter by Reinhard Heinisch, "'Returning to 'Europe' and the Rise of Europragmatism: Party Politics and the European Union since 1989," also successfully integrates gender into its analysis. The article focuses on the relationship between the old member states of the European Union and East Central European countries—EU members and membership candidates. It examines political debates regarding the EU and analyzes the political culture in these societies in transition, including a section on the gender dimension of the accession process. Heinisch argues that the comparison between the accession of East Central Europe and Southern European member states might be right from an economic point of view but is inconsistent from a gender perspective. Under socialism, women's rate of employment was almost equal to that of men, leading to their economic independence. But the EU accession process caused a rise in unemployment, particularly among civil servants, which disproportionately affected women. Even though women tried to address these problems, national governments mostly failed to solve this issue.

The other chapters do not include much material about either women or gender. The article "Space: Empires, Nations, Borders," by James Kornyi and Bernhard Struck, gives an overview of how the territory of Eastern Europe has been reconceptualized and reconfigured over time. It examines how empires (like the Ottoman and/or the Habsburg Empires) influenced the region, and considers the impact of war on shifting borders and territorial claims. The authors do not mention women at all. Even though the article does not deal with social history or *Alltagsgeschichte*, the chapter could have at least mentioned the fact that powerful female leaders such as Catherine the Great or Maria Theresia were an exception to male-dominated political order.

In "Uses and Abuses of the Past," Patrice M. Dabrowski and Stefan Troebst take up the topic of national cultures of remembrance. They consider how nations and national leaders have used or abused history and how national cults of remembrance

were created. The gender dimension is only touched on marginally when the authors explain the gendered distinction between “female” and “male” rituals. In “Rural and Urban Worlds: Between Economic Modernization and Persistent Backwardness,” Jacek Kochanowicz and Bogdan Murgescu discuss the economic development of the region, the influence of industrialization on society, and the origin of the stereotype of Eastern “backwardness.” Regarding women’s and gender history, they mention only women’s entry into the workforce under socialism. The authors problematically omit any discussion of two major phenomena in the industrialization of the region, neglecting the existing scholarship by women’s and gender historians on these topics. First, they do not discuss how the nuclear family (father, mother, and children) arose as a civic ideal that compelled middle-class women to stay at home as housewives and take care of the children. Second, they neglect to mention the specific experiences of working-class women, either before or during socialism.

“Demography and Population Movements,” by Theodora Dragostinova and David Gerlach, deals with demographic development, particularly migration. Until World War I, ethnic mixing played an important role in the area and the rulers even forced it strategically; after 1918 the idea of “ethnically pure states” compelled the people to unmix again. The authors show that migration due to economic reasons happened at all times throughout the history of Eastern Europe, but they depict women only as passive actors: in the chapter, women migrate as part of a family or marry immigrant men. The authors do not discuss how women may have decided independently to migrate. As Iwona Dadej has noted, many historians of migration are under the misapprehension that migration was only a male experience and that women’s migration was dependent on men’s choices. Dadej’s work examines the many young Eastern European women and girls who moved to the West to study because the universities in their own countries would not admit them. Between 1885 and 1914 a number of Russian, Polish, and Bulgarian women, for example, emigrated to Switzerland, especially Zurich, in order to obtain higher education. Even though most of them returned to their home countries after their studies were completed, some stayed to build an academic career. The chapter would have benefited from paying more attention to issues of gender, such as how gender affected migration before and after both world wars.

In “Religion and Ethnicity: Conflicting and Covering Identifications,” Joel Brady and Edin Hajdarpasic discuss the situation of different religious groups in East Central Europe. Women are mentioned only once in the whole article: in relation to conversion to Islam. The authors argue that non-Muslim women who married Muslim men were more likely to convert than anyone else. They could have done more, however, to address the special situation of women within the Ottoman context and how Sharia law treated such religiously mixed marriages.

The chapter “The Cultures of East Central Europe: Imperial, National, Revolutionary,” by Irina Livezeanu, Thomas Ort, and Alex Drace-Francis, covers the cultural development and characteristics in East Central Europe over a period of almost three hundred years, but fails to incorporate much from women’s and gender history. While the authors explain how high culture emerged in the eighteenth century, they neglect to mention the male gender of that culture. The article is primarily concerned with

newly formed national movements in the nineteenth century and their impact on culture. Authors started to use their mother tongue—for example, Polish or Lithuanian instead of Russian, which was the language of intellectuals—to write plays, poems, and novels. Even though the section includes female authors and their opposition to male colleagues, it does not manage to describe the whole impact of literature written by women. The chapter notes women's achievements in various genres, including fairy tales and children's books (236), but does not mention novels and/or plays that were written by women about their lives and experiences. There are hundreds of women writers they might have included, such as Eliza Orzeszkowa, Julija Žemaitė, and Gabriela Zapolskas. The only feminist author included in the chapter is a man: Bolesław Prus, who wrote the novel *Emancypantki* (The new women). The authors also omitted a discussion of how the rise of the periodical press affected women specifically. Women used this genre to openly express opinions about politics and to mobilize other women for various causes, and thus helped to change the entire patriarchal culture in their respective societies. In conclusion, this book gives a very good overview of different mainstream fields of historical research, but women's and gender history is underrepresented in most of the contributions. Fortunately, the editors decided to include an entire article dedicated to this topic, where interested readers could get a good overview. Three other articles included the gender perspective as well. The rest of the book leaves women invisible or depicts them as passive actors, thus creating a false impression about women's lives, actions, wishes, and desires. As the editors consider this volume to be a textbook, teaching with just a few articles out of the anthology could lead to an incomplete image of women's and gender history. However, if used in its entirety, at least some articles contribute to a more gender-sensitive approach to history.

◆ Notes

1. For further information on how socialist governments tackled women's reproductive rights, see Ulf Brunnbauer and Karin Taylor, "Creating a 'Socialist Way of Life': Family and Reproduction Policies in Bulgaria, 1944–1989," *Continuity and Change* 19 (2004): 283–312, doi:10.1017/S0268416004005004; and Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communist Rule* (Iași: Center for Romanian Studies, 1999), 144–146.

2. See Kristen Ghodsee, *The Red Riviera: Gender, Tourism, and Postsocialism on the Black Sea* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

3. A better overview on gender aspects in commemoration practices is given by Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

4. Iwona Dadej, "Nicht nur Madame Curie—Zum Phänomen der polnischen Bildungsmigrantinnen an westeuropäischen Universitäten im 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts" [Not only Madame Curie—the phenomenon of female Polish educational migrants at Western European universities in the 19th and early 20th centuries], in *Femina Migrans: Frauen in Migrationsprozessen (18.–20. Jahrhundert)* [Femina Migrans: Women in migration processes (18th–20th century)], ed. Edeltraud Aubele and Gabriele Pieri (Sulzbach: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2011), 69–97, here 72.

5. *Ibid.*, 78–79.

6. Julija Žemaitė, *Schwiegertochter* [Daughter-in-law] (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1973); and Teresa Murjas, "'To You It Is Light—To Me Darkness': Małka Szwarcenkopf (1897)," in *Zapolska's Women: Three Plays*, ed. Teresa Murjas (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 25–48. For the biographies of more women writers from the region, see Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi, eds., *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006).

7. See, for example, the various articles presenting the historical Eastern European feminisms and women journalists and writers in Edith Saurer, Margareth Lanzinger, and Elisabeth Frysak, eds., *Women's Movements: Networks and Debates in Post-communist Countries in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006).

Zsófia Lóránd, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia*, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan 2018, 270 pp., €88.39 (hard-back), €71.39 (e-book), ISBN 978-3-319-78222-5.

Book review by **Ana Miškovska Kajevska**
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Reading about the intellectual history of Yugoslav feminism in the 1970s and 1980s can be an emotional endeavor; it makes us long for a time when the idea of a war in Yugoslavia was inconceivable. One of the great strengths of this book is the author's ability to write about prewar Yugoslavia without extensively referring to the country's violent demise and its aftermath. This approach helps the reader to go back to the last two decades of Yugoslavia's existence and (re)discover parts of its amazing non-war-related legacy. This legacy can easily be overlooked: the atrocities, human tragedy, and interethnic hatred of the 1990s form a lens that is not easily cast aside. Yet, Zsófia Lóránd succeeds in doing exactly that.

The book's main goal is to examine the various components and nuances of the complex interaction between the Yugoslav feminists and the state: "Through rereading concepts and meanings, integrating ideologies and theories from 'Western' feminisms and through transfer creating their own version, new Yugoslav feminism was cooperating with the state and criticising it at the same time" (2). While the author is correct to distinguish between the state and its feminist challengers, she is equally right to occasionally blur this binary. The intertwinement of these two actors is also why she speaks of feminists as engaging in dissent rather than dissidence: "Yugoslav feminists attempted to engage the state in a dialogue rather than refusing it per se, as most dissidence does" (9). As such, this book will be of interest to a broad public, including those who explore the intellectual history and the development of feminism,

those immersed in the subjects of dissent and dissidence, and those who study the history of the quite peculiar socialist state of Yugoslavia.

Lóránd has gathered data from published sources, archival materials, and semi-structured interviews with twenty Yugoslav feminists. This rich empirical material about the substantial, albeit pioneering, steps in the formation of feminist thought and action is organized in four chapters: “‘Neither Class, nor Nature’ —(Re)Turning to Feminism in the Social Sciences and Humanities,” “Feminist Dissent in Literature and Art: Sisterhood, Motherhood and the Body,” “Feminism in the Popular Mass Media,” and “Reorganising Theory: From Kitchen Tables to the Streets, from Theory to Activism.” By choosing to look not only at the scholarly contributions of Yugoslav feminists(-in-becoming), but to also consider an array of localities where feminist dissent was coming into being, interacting with the state, and developing further, the author gives justice to the impressive and diverse production of feminist ideas that took place in less than two decades. Besides leaving a trace in Yugoslavia’s three cultural and political centers (Belgrade, Ljubljana, and Zagreb), the knowledge and experience feminists gained during this period greatly influenced and facilitated feminist engagement across the post-Yugoslav region in the 1990s—notably related to war rapes—and also shaped more recent feminist activity during the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

Another important accomplishment of this book is its skillful elaboration of how Yugoslav feminists criticized Marxism, arguing that to focus solely on abolishing class difference insufficiently helped women’s emancipation. Instead of advocating the end of socialism, these feminists attempted to improve it by exposing and redressing the state’s failure—including that of the mass women’s organizations—to achieve the equality of women and men in practice. These efforts led to “the creation of a feminist form of dissent and a new feminist language, an intervention into the existing discourse on women and women’s rights, thus providing not only a vocabulary, but also new ways of organising, new forms of collectivities and even parallel institutions” (223–224), such as emergency hotlines and shelters for female victims of male violence.

Ideally, Lóránd would have made greater use of Slovenian sources. This neglect is especially noticeable in her analyses of art, literature, and the mass media. Given Yugoslavia’s many languages, some such lacunae were perhaps inevitable, but the author should have noted them and reflected upon their significance. It would also have been fitting to give slightly more attention in the last empirical chapter to the feminists’ prewar engagement with ethnicity and nationalism. Moreover, including only passing references to the situation in Kosovo and post-1991 feminist discourses on (war) rape brings that chapter to a very abrupt end. These omissions notwithstanding, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* is an exceptional book that will be hopefully savored by (feminist) scholars and activists alike, including those born after the state ceased to exist.

Marina Matešić and Svetlana Slapšak, *Rod i Balkan* (Gender and the Balkans), Zagreb: Durieux, 2017, 333 pp., KN 168 (hardback), ISBN 978-953-188-425-9.

Book review by **Chiara Bonfiglioli**
University College Cork, Ireland

The volume *Rod i Balkan* (Gender and the Balkans) stems from the collaboration between authors Marina Matešić and Svetlana Slapšak. The first, more historical part of the book is based on Matešić's doctoral research, conducted under Slapšak's supervision at the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis (ISH) in Ljubljana. It analyzes the biographies and narratives of a number of Western and non-Western female travelers who visited the Balkans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in detail. The second part of the book contains critical reflections on the anthropology of gender and Balkanist discourse in the region.

The book aims to "engender" Balkanism. Previous research on Balkanist discourse, such as the work by Milica Bakić-Hayden, Božidar Jezernik, Maria Todorova, and Larry Wolf, or the 2000 volume edited by John B. Allcock and Antonia Young on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western women's travel writing in the Balkans, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travelling in the Balkans*, did not emphasize the role of gender as a cultural and political signifier. Matešić and Slapšak want to remedy this by connecting the earlier work on Balkanism with the scholarly literature on gender, imperialism, and Orientalism, exploring the links between the "Second" and "Third" worlds through a gendered lens. As the authors make clear, gendered representations were instrumental to the essentialist construction of the Balkans as a space of in-betweenness and unachieved modernity, and cosmopolitan female travelers saw themselves as emancipated subjects in their encounters with allegedly passive, victimized Balkan women.

These encounters, however, were not one dimensional, and the authors of the book succeed in providing a complex cross-border cartography of gendered representations and transnational exchanges by focusing on the travel writings of Mary Wortley Montagu, Emily Strangford, Dora d'Istria, Maria F. Karlova, Paulina Irby, and Georgina Mackenzie. Women's travel writing, the authors note, differed from male travelogues. Female travelers often managed to access the intimate spaces allocated to women in Ottoman times—including the harem—thanks to the shared cultural value of hospitality, as well as through their common belonging to the "second sex," which took preeminence over ethnic and class differences. This enabled them to observe women's everyday life in ways men could not. Lady Montagu, for example, saw the local Ottoman practice of smallpox inoculation and then took it with her back to London. Because these women travelers understood and compared women's patriarchal oppression across borders, the authors define them as "pioneers of feminist anthropology in the Balkans" (20).

Nonetheless, the book aptly reminds us that these pioneering accounts were firmly rooted in imperial geopolitics, notably in Western powers' interests in the Balkans. As a territory containing a large number of Christian inhabitants living under the "Turkish yoke," the Balkans could provide Western women with a space for their own moral self-realization. Some British women came to the Balkans in the company of their diplomat husbands, as in the case of Mary Wortley Montagu and Emily Strangford. Others came independently, with their own political or humanitarian agendas, as in the case of Paulina Irby and Georgina Mackenzie. They all, however, represented Balkan women's clothing, behaviors, and customs in the context of their own perception of civilizational hierarchies. In Lady Montagu's letters (written between 1716 and 1718), Balkan women were seen as part of a backward mix of ethnicities, opposed not only to Westerners but also to the aristocratic women of the Ottoman court in Istanbul. In nineteenth-century accounts, such as Lady Strangford's, Balkan Christian women were represented as "half-oriental," but closer to Western civilization than Muslim women in the harem. Similarly, Irby and Mackenzie took up the cause of Serbian independence and established a strong hierarchy between the modest femininity of Christian women and the enslaved position of Muslim women in the Ottoman provinces. Balkan women's status was also taken as a civilizational marker by two travelers outside of the British empire, the Romanian-born duchess Elena Ghica, who took the pen name of Dora d'Istria, and the Russian writer Maria F. Karlova. In *Les femmes en Orient* (Women in the Orient), defined by the authors as the "first feminist treaty on the Balkans," Dora D'Istria challenged "Asian" despotism and customs as a long-standing form of oppression of local women, while Karlova, despite being Russian, experienced herself as a "European" when traveling in the Balkans, where she perceived local women as naïve and primitive, particularly in Muslim villages. Overall, the case studies reaffirm the salience of gender as a signifier of geopolitical power hierarchies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The second part of the volume revisits a number of theoretical issues mentioned in the first part, while introducing new questions related to more recent dynamics of feminist knowledge production between the Balkans and Western Europe. It also brings in additional examples, such as the work of Serbian writer Jelena Dimitrijević and Greek writer Elizavet Moutzan-Martinengou, whose writings deconstructed Western colonial fantasies about the harem in the Balkan context.

The final essay in the book is the most controversial (as already noted by Asja Bakić in an earlier review). It suggests abandoning the term for "gender" in the Balkan Slavic languages (*rod*), since it has too much of a "nationalist and even eugenic" connotation, and is excessively "masculinized." The authors propose replacing *rod* with a term of Turkish origin, *soj* (which can be translated as type, sort, breed, or lineage, among other meanings). The authors also suggest that feminist scholars should distance themselves from the term "intersectionality" (*intersekcionalnost*) due to its "excessive contamination with political correctness," even though the first part of the book represents a sophisticated intersectional analysis (albeit never defined as such). The authors support their contentions by examining the writing of two Serbian feminists educated in Vienna during the interwar period, Julka Hlapec Đorđević and Anica

Savić Rebac (who inspired parts of Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*³, appearing as Milica in the book), but their argument is not sufficiently developed to justify their conclusions. Given that the term *rod* has a long feminist tradition in the region, and that both "gender" and "intersectionality" have been the object of extensive transnational and regional debates, any such radical shift in usage as the authors propose would require further exploration.

Rod i Balkan provides an innovative contribution to the gendered history of Balkanism and Orientalism. The book deserves to be translated and made available to a wider readership interested in transnational gender history, women's travel writing, and Balkan history.

◆ Notes

1. John B. Allcock and Antonia Young (eds.), *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Traveling in the Balkans* (New York: Berghahn, 2000); Milica Bakić-Hayden, 'Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, 54 (4) (Winter, 1995), 917-931; Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travelers* (London: Saqi, 2004); Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

2. Asja Bakić, "Balkanske žene su buldozi divovskih grudi" [Balkan women are bulldogs with giant breasts], *Express*, 12 February 2018, <https://www.express.hr/life/balkanske-zene-su-buldozi-divovskih-grudi-14516> (accessed 11 November 2018). See also the subsequent exchange: Svetlana Slapšak, "Prostakluk umjesto stila" [Vulgarity instead of style], *Novosti* [News], 11 April 2018; Asja Bakić, "Stil akademskog soja" [The style of the academic breed], *Novosti*, 18 April 2018.

3. Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (New York: The Viking Press, 1941).

Ana Miškovska Kajevska, *Feminist Activism at War: Belgrade and Zagreb Feminists in the 1990s*, London: Routledge, 2017, 186 pp., £105.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-138-69768-3.

Book review by **Marina Hughson**

Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade

Feminist Activism at War, by Ana Miškovska Kajevska, presents the author's PhD research on feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb during the 1990s. It is the first book in a new Routledge series, Gender and Comparative Politics, which aims at encouraging innovative theory building and research design. This book, by its subject and focus, as well as approach and many different subtle insights, opens up—intentionally and unintentionally—new avenues for research and theorization on feminist

movements, within and beyond the region of Southeastern Europe. It also provides a useful mapping of the field of feminist activism in Zagreb and Belgrade during the 1990s, based on major protagonists (NGOs and activists) within those scenes.

The book consists of six chapters, with a rich bibliography. The first chapter—"Feminism at War: An Introduction"—sets out the theoretical and methodological framework of the research. The second chapter—"Portrayals of Feminist NGOs"—offers a historical overview of NGOs in Zagreb and Belgrade during the 1990s. The third chapter—"A Time to Examine the Common Scholarly Narrative"—is devoted to silent spaces, conflicts, and what the author calls a "homogenizing bias," by which she means misrepresentation of the real divisions and tensions present in both movements. The fourth chapter—"Positioning as a Process: Nine Episodes of Interaction"—offers historical episodes of feminist encounters during the wars. In the fifth chapter, "Revisiting the 1990s: A View from a Distance," based on in-depth interviews, the author explores war-related intrafeminist dynamics in the Belgrade and Zagreb scenes in the 1990s. In the concluding sixth chapter—"A Critical Novel Look at the Old Dynamics and Knowledge"—the author compiles her findings and makes some critical observations on knowledge production about the issues of women's movements in the region. A "slow science trend" in academic research is also briefly addressed in this chapter.

The main objective of the research is to present a "comparison of the positionings, i.e. discourses and activities" (3) of Belgrade and Zagreb feminists related to the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia (the NATO bombing of Serbia and the war in Kosovo). Why the "positionings" do not include the interests and structural and institutional aspects of individual and group positionings is not clear, but this omission bears serious consequences for further analysis in this book. The author is cautious in setting up theoretical goals for herself, and she says: "I did not set out to verify a theory, I aimed instead at collecting a lot of diverse empirical material . . . My final goal was to re-examine and supplement the common narrative on the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists" (9). One could say that she succeeds in her initial intentions. Miškovska Kajevska deconstructs the dominant narrative on this topic by putting considerable effort into showing how feminists were divided among themselves and how their divisions grew even stronger toward the end of the 1990s.

However, the author prioritizes one specific type of division, that between nationalists and nonnationalists. She believes this particular separation has been under-researched and misrepresented in scholarly literature, especially in the case of Belgrade. By invoking this division, she finds a niche for her own research. The author's theoretical approach is inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on the "struggle over legitimacy," which is used to further justify the methodological approach she uses to define four clusters of feminists. The four clusters, two in Belgrade and two in Zagreb, consist of "anti-nationalists" and "nationalists" in each of the cities. The stated intention of the author was to be as exhaustive in her sample as possible. Toward this end, she interviewed thirteen Croatian feminist anti-nationalists; eight Croatian feminist nationalists; eleven Serbian feminist anti-nationalists; and four Serbian feminist nationalists. The sample changed in the course of the fieldwork, and the author

faced many different challenges in conducting her interviews, including resistance to interview, withdrawal from interview, and the nonaccessibility of the intended interviewees.

These clusters play a very important role in the research. The author's claim for parallelism between Zagreb and Belgrade, an essential component of the project, depends on the existence of the cluster of four feminist "nationalists" from Belgrade (13). The author identified the four Belgrade "national feminists" with the aid of Belgrade "anti-nationalist feminists," who labeled them as "nationalists" in conversations with the author. Yet these categorizations are problematic. As the author herself says: "Even the anti-nationalist feminists did not blame other so-called nationalist feminists for being nationalist . . . No consensus existed about who was a nationalist and some refrained from pronouncing on a particular feminist because of not knowing her at all or well enough" (158). The author obviously discussed the names of her interviewees with other feminists in deciding who would be part of her sample: "Quite unlike Zagreb, some respondents were puzzled to hear that a particular feminist was perceived as a 'nationalist'" (159). So, the research process actually served to "raise awareness" of who the "nationalists" were within feminist circles. This type of approach is ethically problematic because it appears to intentionally damage the reputation of so-called nationalists. As such, it is highly disrespectful toward the implicated interviewees. By their very positioning within the research, Belgrade "nationalists" are effectively accused and besmirched before any "guilt" has been proven.

The author states that she successfully interviewed "all four prominent Belgrade feminists who were seen by some as nationalists" (12). So "seen by some" was a criterion for tracking down Belgrade "nationalist feminists" because in Belgrade a nationalist feminist NGO never existed. The author admits this herself: "No feminist NGO there was considered nationalist: only individual feminists" (11). But it is also worth noting that those "nationalists" who were interviewed did not know that they were being considered part of the "nationalist" cluster. On the contrary, they believed they were being interviewed because of their engagement in the anti-war movement. The author claims that her Macedonian ethnicity was helpful in being perceived as neutral ("The fact that the people of Macedonian ethnicity are usually seen as neutral party . . . probably assured the respondents that I would transmit the message correctly" [14]). She also comments that some respondents perceived her as their "personal biographer or research assistant, who would write their story or pursue their research interest" (14). These examples clearly show how deception (not to mention a dose of cynicism and feelings of antagonism and superiority over research subjects) was built into the very structure and process of the research.

Another example of ethical transgression is in the decision to use the interviews without the final confirmation of the respondents ("they all received emails and mobile text messages in which I informed them that if I do not hear from them by given date, I would treat their transcripts as authorized. Consequently, this is how I used them in the analysis" [16]). The author was eager to distribute her PhD dissertation throughout the region as soon as she defended it, although in that version of

the research she did not (want to) make the proper effort to protect the identity of respondents, and instead gave a key for easy identification (by including personal details that would make it easy to identify what were small numbers of actors operating in small communities). In the book she openly says, "I wish I could have kept the full names" (17). But what she does instead is use labels such as, for example, "Zagreb7AN" (AN meaning anti-nationalist) and "Belgrade2N" (N meaning nationalist), which suggests how the quotes should be read. The author must be aware that labeling someone as "nationalist" has severe consequences, nevertheless, again in the book, the author provides enough information for the reader to identify the Belgrade "nationalists," citing their academic works as sources in some parts of the book and disclosing their personal details (127, 128, 162). This cannot be seen as an omission or a mistake, but more as an open call to further delegitimize these individuals, their work, and their legacies.

Since these Belgrade feminist "nationalists" never in their activist engagements, nor in the media, preached or advocated nationalism, the author refers to their academic work (three out of four were academics) to add an additional argument in support of her allegations. The work she cites was produced during a period when those feminists did not act as activists, but in their own name, as academics, which then actually poses a serious question as to how their academic work should be approached. The author reads and interprets their academic work in a biased way, not through adequate academic analysis, but through an activist lens of "advocacy" for what she believes is a "legitimate" thesis and "just cause." It is beyond the scope of this review to make an extended explanation of what is wrong with this type of approach, which at the end risks looking like personal "witch-hunting." It serves to politically instrumentalize the research subjects, and the research itself, in support of a framework designed to echo well in Western academia and within Western influential feminist circles. Therefore, it is not surprising that the research did not resonate with the respondents in the region ("Despite the already mentioned virtual absence of respondents' feedbacks on my dissertations" [18]), and that many feminist activists in Belgrade, as the author comments herself, were inclined to withdraw or react negatively to the findings as presented in the PhD dissertation version of the research.

One example of the oversimplified and unfair interpretation of the academic works by the three academic "nationalist" feminists can be seen in the following paragraph:

The Belgrade "nationalist" feminists did not underline the foremost perpetrator's role of the Serb militaries nor insist on assuming collective Serb responsibility. Instead they generally criticized the nationalism of all ethnic groups and the (sexual) war crimes committed by all sides against people of all ethnicities. The Belgrade "nationalist" feminists, thus, kept using the positionings of equal responsibility and victimhood, which had been, too, the initial positioning of the other Belgrade feminists—but usually focused on the suffering of Serbs. (123)

Regardless of the fact that those feminists did not necessarily deal with such topics at all in their work, this quotation reveals two basic intentional misreadings: that these feminists were actually talking about *equal responsibility and victimhood*, and that they did not accept the *collective responsibility* of Serbs. "Collective responsibility" is a very contentious concept, the usage of which has greatly evolved since the beginning of the 1990s. It is a highly politicized notion that basically disregards the huge differences in power between different social and political groups and individual actors within one constituency. That could be seen, especially from the feminist perspective, as well as from a general humanistic perspective, as a serious objection to the ethical and political validity of the concept, not to mention the related "collective punishments" in the shape of "international sanctions" and all the damage they produced for a large part of the population. As such, "collective responsibility" can be contested as a concept that heavily supports totalitarianism, while opposing and limiting the idea of individual freedom and responsibility commensurate to power. But, at the end, the issue of "collective guilt" is also about a worldview, disciplinary knowledge about the causes and the consequences of different historical events, and finally the very practicality of how the "collective guilt" should be approached in legal terms. Perhaps it was difficult for well-educated academics to simply embrace this concept, especially if they were very much aware of the complex internal and external social and political dynamics that led to the wars. On the other hand, talking about Serbian victimhood does not imply in any way that all sides had *equal numbers of victims and perpetrators*, and the previously cited claim in the book (123) is a "straw man fallacy," since academics would be very "nonacademic" if they would ever claim such nonsense, especially without proper evidence (the author does not provide any concrete citations for those claims, just her own "understanding" of their academic works). Rather, the author construed any mention of Serbian victims as "Serbian nationalism" as such, to fit the previously provided framework. Biased reading and judgments are made from one assumed and self-appropriated higher moral ground that allows for an improper other (especially one coming from Serbia) to be "rightfully" "blamed and shamed," and thus satisfy the chosen "innovative" analytical and comparative framework of this research.

Throughout the book there are many allegations related especially to the Belgrade "nationalist" feminists, including the following: "Their war related positionings resembled those of the Serbian state, i.e. were indirectly given some legitimacy by it" (181). Miškovska Kajevska also claims that the "nationalist" feminists "only spoke of the NATO-induced suffering of Serbs and destruction of Serbia, while being silent about the Serbian ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians" (126). Readers are led to believe that the "nationalist feminists," as a "cluster," supported the "ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians" without any evidence. The author in another place implies that the "nationalist" feminists "typically addressed only the dynamics in the early 1990s, probably because their positionings on the Kosovar Albanians and the bombing resembled those of Serbian authorities" (170), which means Milošević. At moments the serious accusations even take a comical turn, as in the following example, where the "nationalist feminists" are blamed because they "did not pub-

licly position themselves against cooperation with the Zagreb feminists, but did not put much effort into such cooperation either" (173). This is a highly suggestive interpretation. Furthermore, there are many tactics employed in the text that mislead the reader. One is the tactic of "accumulating the guilt" by ascribing the guilt of one "nationalist" to the whole "cluster." All this misinterpretation is done under the umbrella of "academic" research, while it looks more like a deliberate strategy to delegitimize some of the key figures of the women's movement in Belgrade and Serbia in the 1990s.

Many aspects of this research and writing are highly ethically problematic, and could be qualified as—in the terms of Miranda Fricker—an "epistemic injustice." The author puts her own ideological labels on her subjects and develops a research and writing process to support a "straw man fallacy" by attacking positions she falsely ascribes to her interviewees. The case of the Belgrade "nationalist" feminists is the real weak point of the research. Instead of conducting interviews in a manner that would have allowed the voices of those "nationalists" to be properly heard, by explaining her major hypothesis, not as a given, but as a question, the author interprets the data in a way that "proves" her point regardless of the evidence. She does not explain her research aims properly, manipulates respondents to get access to them, and effectively discloses their identities, thus betraying their trust.

To reiterate, this research is ethically problematic from the perspective of any academic discipline, let alone the standpoint of feminist research. Judging by the absence, or silent spaces in her book (because adequate quotes are missing to support many of her judgments), the author does not actually allow the "nationalists" (but also many "anti-nationalists") to define themselves and tell their stories and the readers do not "hear" their voices. By applying this type of approach, she essentially hides the initial underlying causes of divisions and conflicts, to which labeling of the other side as "nationalist" was highly instrumental for some "nonnationalists" to build their international academic careers and activist recognition. By ignoring tangible interests that were at play even before some historical events took place, she effectively confuses causes and consequences of the conflicts within the Belgrade feminist scene. It is evident that the voices were neither gathered properly nor heard and cited properly (i.e., when the author in her interpretation of one's supposed "nationalism" claims that any "patriotism" is necessarily bad "nationalism" [162]), but nevertheless, some have been integrated into the text in a way that gives an impression that they are the author's own fruitful insights.

This book raises serious questions on a number of issues related to epistemic injustice and hermeneutic injustice; the specific ethics of feminist research, the feminist dimension of any social science research, and the difference between activist research and academic research on activism and feminist activists. It is not the merits of this book but its serious flaws that could inspire new questions on how to make research more engaged but also more sensitive, ethical, and heuristically relevant. Hopefully, through that process of learning, some feminist alliances could be built and rebuilt again and around the places of common understanding of what feminist ethics is about and what really is the feminist cause.

◆ Notes

1. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, "From Sisterhood to Non-recognition: Instrumentalization of Women's Suffering in the War in the Former Yugoslavia," in *The Criminology of War*, ed. Ruth Jamieson (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 345–356.

2. Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Ivana Pantelić, *Uspon i pad "prve drugarice" Jugoslavije: Jovanka Broz i srpska javnost, 1952–2013* (The rise and fall of the "first lady comrade" of Yugoslavia: Jovanka Broz and Serbian public, 1952–2013), Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2018, 336 pp., RSD 880 (paperback), ISBN 978-86-519-2251-3.

Book review by **Sanja Petrović Todosijević**

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Uspon i pad "prve drugarice" Jugoslavije: Jovanka Broz i srpska javnost, 1952–2013 (The rise and fall of the "first lady comrade" of Yugoslavia: Jovanka Broz and Serbian public, 1952–2013) is the first systematic analysis of the construction of the image of Jovanka Broz, the wife of Josip Broz Tito. Based on the author's 2016 PhD dissertation, the book considers the period from 1952, when Jovanka Broz, born Budisavljević, entered the public arena, until her death in 2013.

This book follows from the author's first monograph, *Partizanke kao građanke: Društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji 1945–1953* (Female partisans as citizens: The social emancipation of female partisans in Serbia, 1945–1953), published in 2011. Pantelić continues her interest in the study of gender history and how women were emancipated under socialism in Yugoslavia. With this new book, however, she enters the minefield of post-Yugoslav and postsocialist Serbian society. By analyzing the way in which the Serbian public treated Jovanka Broz in the period after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Pantelić makes a significant contribution to understanding the way in which attitudes toward the socialist legacy and the sacrosanct symbols of the socialist period were formed not only in Serbian society, but in all postsocialist societies. The author points out the dynamics of deconstructing not only the symbols but also "the only wanted" (desired) or "unwanted" past, which was interpreted in different ways in different circumstances: sometimes the interpretation turned into "the sorrow for the youth" (nostalgia for Yugoslavia) and more often into unnecessary relativization, banalization, and vulgarization of the past. As a symbol of the past and a reflection of the current attitude toward it, Jovanka Broz did not avoid any of the dominant interpretations. Pantelić shows to what degree the public image

of Jovanka Broz represented not only a paradigm of Yugoslav politics and society, which went through very different phases during the period of socialist Yugoslavia, but also a paradigm of the breakup and disappearance of socialist Yugoslavia itself.

The fact that there is no biography of Jovanka Broz tells us that the public image of Jovanka Broz has become more relevant than the actual events of her life. The lack of a biography of Jovanka Broz made Pantelić's task unusually challenging, since she could not rely on any existing historiography. Pantelić's extensive research included not only a survey of twenty-one daily newspapers, twenty-five magazines, and thirty-four memoirs, but an examination of archival materials about Jovanka Broz from the Archives of Yugoslavia and the Museum of the History of Yugoslavia (now the Museum of Yugoslavia).

In addition to a preface and a conclusion, the monograph contains six chapters ("Introduction," "The First Lady Comrade," "The Official Role," "Comrade Tito and Jovanka," "Year 1980," and "The Attitude of the Public—the Opposition and Jovanka Broz"). At the end of the book, there is a list of sources and literature used and an index of personal names. In the text, which consists of 336 pages, Ivana Pantelić points out the key social and political mechanisms involved in creating the image of Jovanka Broz, while at the same time trying to deconstruct that image. On the whole, Ivana Pantelić recognizes two key periods in the process of creating Broz's public image. The first covers the period from 1952 to 1980, that is, from the year Jovanka married Tito to Tito's death. The second is from 1980 to Jovanka's death in 2013. Within both of these periods, the public's attitude toward Jovanka Broz went through several phases. The positioning of the image of Jovanka Broz in the period from her marrying Tito to Tito's death, no matter how variable, served to define an affirmative image of Tito. In the period from Tito's death to Jovanka's own demise (which encompassed thirty-three years), Serbian society went through a period of acute crisis, including the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the resulting war, the establishment of several distinctly nationalist states on former Yugoslav territory, the regime of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia, and the formation and the subsequent failure of the so-called Serbia of 5 October. During this tumultuous period, the image of Jovanka Broz inevitably shared the fate of the image of Tito and the image of Yugoslavia.

Pantelić's monograph is a unique and valuable publication. It provides insight into the mechanisms of creating the public image of Jovanka Broz, the wife of the central figure of socialist Yugoslavia. With the fall of socialism and breakup of the Yugoslav state, the image of Jovanka Broz shared the "fate" of all other previously sacrosanct symbols. The monograph of Ivana Pantelić is particularly significant since it points out the problems Yugoslav society faced in the process of emancipation and modernization. Pantelić's analysis of the public attitude toward the "first lady comrade" is as important for understanding the problem of presenting and representing women in the public space of socialist Yugoslavia as it is important for understanding the same issue in the period of repatriarchalization of Serbian society, which started with the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the establishment of Serbia as a national state.

Fatbardha Mulleti Saraçi, *Kalvari i grave në burgjet e komunizmit* (The cavalry of women in communist prisons), Tirana: Instituti i Studimit të Krimeve dhe Pasojave të Komunizmit; Tiranë: Kristalina-KH, 2017, 594 pp., 12000 AL Lek (paperback), ISBN 978-9928-168-71-9.

Book review by **Enriketa Papa-Pandelejmoni**
University of Tirana, Albania

Fatbardha Mulleti Saraçi's *Kalvari i grave në burgjet e komunizmit* (The cavalry of women in communist prisons) is a revised and augmented edition of her previously published three short books *Dhimbe*, volumes 1, 2, and 3 (Pain, vols. 1–3) focusing on the life and suffering of over two hundred women during the period of communist rule in Albania (1945–1991). The author hails from the well-known Mulleti family in Tirana whose members were persecuted, imprisoned, and deported for political reasons. The aim of this volume is to challenge the silence over the treatment of women in communist Albania. Based on the author's direct experience with most of the women covered in the book and her own extensive research, this volume emphasizes women's memories of imprisonment, internment, and life under dictatorship in Albania (1945–1991). The book constitutes an effort to put together the life stories of women who suffered during communism in Albania: "mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of executed or imprisoned men, who journeyed through several of Albania's prisons and labor camps" (9). But it is also the story of those women who rose up against the regime. According to her data, collected from the Institute for the Investigation of the Consequences of Communist Crimes in Tirana, 457 women were executed, 7,367 were imprisoned, and 10,792 women were deported to camps and villages across Albania (10). In this revised edition, Mulleti Saraçi focuses on the lives of "të përndjekurat politike" (politically persecuted women) from the northeastern city of Shkodra, the center of anti-communist rebellion and resistance from 1945 to 1991 and the author's home.

Kalvari i grave në burgjet e komunizmit illuminates the lives of female political prisoners and deportees—activists, feminists, intellectuals, and teachers—who were isolated and forced to live without friends and social networks. Mulleti Saraçi recounts in detail the tragic fates of over two hundred women who were interrogated by the apparatus of the Sigurimi i Shtetit (Secret Police), and examines their ordeals in prison where guards taunted, ridiculed, and maltreated them. Mulleti Saraçi tells us about the specific cases of many women, including Nafije Stërmasi, who was denied the right to breastfeed her six-month-old son by her interrogator because "she carried the enemy's milk in her" (35); Luçie Malaj, who was pregnant with her third son in 1946 when she was arrested by Sigurimi i Shtetit, and gave birth in prison (46); Sadije Kazazi, tortured and imprisoned for fifteen years for belonging to an anti-communist family that fought the regime (47); Syme Muka, who was detained together with her five children for six months at the city prison of Shkodra (69); Marta Gjonmarkaj, im-

prisoned in 1945 for seven years and deported to several labor camps and internment villages across Albania where she was held until 1991; and Bardha Gjon Markagjoni, who was imprisoned twice, first in 1946 for five years, and then together with her husband from 1975 to 1985, when she was fifty years old (109).

This volume of nine chapters navigates layers of political oppression, political imprisonment, and deportation in order to understand the suffering and survival of families and women under conditions of political violence. The first chapter narrates the personal stories of women who were persecuted because of their men (fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons) or their political affiliations and condemned as “armike të popullit” (enemies of the people). The second chapter deals with women’s memories of prisons and labor camps. The author also sheds light on men and members of many well-known Albanian families who were deported to internment camps such as Tepelena, Berat, Savër, and so forth. The third chapter recounts the stories of forty-one women political prisoners, most of whom were intellectuals. Some of them were condemned and executed, such as Sabiha Kasimati, Zyrako Mano, Elisabeta Spiragu, Mergjuze Cafaj, Mime Hamzaj, and Katerina Nikbibaj (190). Further, the author sheds light on the life in prisons of women activists in Shkodra, such as Ida Melgushi, Ida Lezha, Margerita Gjeloši, Pina Kola, Gjystina Sekuj, and numerous other women who were condemned to years of imprisonment (192–258). The fourth chapter describes the “kultura e dhimbjes” (culture of pain) (259–313). It deals with the suffering of women the author met during her life in Shkodra, all of whom had relatives who were executed, imprisoned, or suffered deportation and investigations by Sigurimi i Shtetit. The fifth chapter is the life story of “motrat tona” (our sisters) living in Shkodra, and it recounts the emotional and physical trauma of the sisters of political prisoners (314–330). The sixth chapter recalls the suffering of women whose relatives escaped into exile abroad (331–354). The seventh chapter depicts in an encyclopedia-entry style the story of Rruga “Teuta,” a street in Shkodra where a number of politically persecuted families resided. The author recalls the traumatic experiences of the women who lived there (355–382). The eighth chapter recounts the author’s own story. Her family, the Mulletis from Tirana, was collectively considered an enemy of the state by the new communist regime, and its members were persecuted and deported from the capital. The account covers her life story through 1990. It describes her education and years as a teacher in the town of Lezha and her return to Shkodra after seventeen years of teaching in remote places. She relates how she met her husband, and fell in love with him and his well-known sense of humor. As a dedicated and loving mother she brought up their only son, who was just seven when his father passed away due to a heart attack (383–446). The final, ninth chapter contains the stories of individuals, both women and men, who were deported and detained across Albania because of their social and political background their so-called by the state origins (as “rich merchants,” “traitors,” “state enemies,” “collaborators,” and “anti-communists”) (447–572).

Although *Kalvari i grave në burgjet e komunizmit* is not meant to be an academic book with well-defined research methodologies, as it is based mostly on the author’s personal experience with her subjects, it nonetheless constitutes a valuable resource for historians. The volume provides insights into important sites of memory of the communist past. It is an almanac of the pain and suffering of women, mothers, wives,

sisters, and daughters who were deprived of their basic human rights for most of their lives. It constitutes a call for understanding the traumatic past of the forty-five years of communism in Albania. Among the few studies dealing extensively with the communist past in Albania, this volume is the first to focus on women, as most of the existing studies, memoirs, and monographs shed light chiefly on prisons and the lives of the men imprisoned within them.

Žarka Svirčev, *Avangardistkinje: Ogledi o srpskoj (ženskoj) avangardnoj književnosti* (Women of the avant-garde: Essays on Serbian (female) avant-garde literature), Belgrade, Šabac: Institut za književnost i umetnost, Fondacija "Stanislava Vinaver," 2018, 306 pp., RSD 800 (paperback), ISBN 978-86-7095259-1.

Book review by **Stanislava Barać**
Institute for Literature and Arts, Belgrade

Avangardistkinje: Ogledi o srpskoj (ženskoj) avangardnoj književnosti (Women of the avant-garde: Essays on Serbian (female) avant-garde literature) (2018) is the fourth monograph by Žarka Svirčev, a research associate at the Institute for Literature and Arts in Belgrade. In this innovative and thought-provoking book, Žarka Svirčev's two main research fields—the Yugoslav avant-garde literature and (neglected) nineteenth- and twentieth-century women's literary authorship—intersect in a new, hybrid investigational space. The topic of the Yugoslav avant-garde has undoubtedly been privileged in (post-)Yugoslav literary studies. However, with *Avangardistkinje*, the Serbo-Croatian reading public has received a synthetic and precise description of women's contributions to this artistic movement for the first time.

Previous scholars systematically reduced the role of female artists and intellectuals in the Serbian avant-garde, although women's contributions were obvious from the primary sources such as journals, newspapers, and letters. Although women were active in producing and shaping avant-garde literature, literary historians regarded them primarily as men's silent collaborators, lovers, spouses, good friends, or, in rare cases, as talented colleagues whose own work, however, was not considered worthy of closer examination. Among the few women who were taken seriously were Isidora Sekulić (1877–1958) and Anica Savić Rebac (1892–1953). In the last two decades, the increasing presence of female scholars in academic institutions and their interest in women's intellectual traditions has led to a new trend in literary history based on gynocriticism and the excavation of new sources in order to reveal new elements of the literary past.

In her research, Žarka Svirčev focuses on discovering and exploring forgotten women's literary texts and documents. By taking into consideration both "classical" and recent scholarship about modernism and the avant-garde, as well as the femi-

nist approaches to literature and culture, Svirčev innovatively and precisely interprets male-female contacts, cooperation and coinfluence or—in Svirčev’s terminology—“interference” within the Serbian avant-garde movement of the 1920s. Using a rich trove of new sources (feminist and other periodicals, first editions of books or the first but recent collected/selected works of some neglected author), Svirčev develops an argument about the existence and the importance of avant-garde women in Serbian literature, challenging the dominant image of the Serbian avant-garde in Serbian literary history. Svirčev’s main contributions are twofold. First, she argues that women were central to the construction of certain aspects of the Serbian avant-garde (creative use of “primitive” and applied arts, language experiments, privileging of the free verse, revolutionary representation of corporeality, and eroticism). Second, her research places avant-garde women’s literature, as well as male-female dynamics, in its wider historical context (the patriarchal culture of the Balkans, World War I, political struggles for women’s rights, etc.). Thus, the book sheds new light on gender power relations in the cultural field of the first four decades of the twentieth century, which makes it useful to social and cultural historians as well as to scholars of literature.

In the first chapter, Svirčev establishes the methodology for the case studies she develops in the later chapters. The writers whose work and contributions Svirčev explores include Jelica Belović Bernadžikovska, Leposava Mijušković, Jela Spiridonović Savić, Anica Savić Rebac, Milica Janković, Milica Kostić Selem, Olga Grbić, Nada Jovanović, and Julka Hlapec Đorđević, among others. Besides the concept of “interference” (taken from physics), Svirčev creatively uses concepts initially developed in the pathbreaking studies of Peter Burger and Alexandar Flaker: rebellion, disputes, novelty, and the questioning of bourgeois art and ideology by destructive or utopian visions. Although she sees these concepts as important, however, Svirčev considers this apparatus insufficient to explain women’s contributions to the (Serbian) avant-garde: their gender-conditioned ideas, anticipations, experiments, topics, innovations, and ideological orientations. For example, while most studies regard the experience of World War I as pivotal for avant-garde artists, Svirčev suggests that feminism was the formative experience for avant-garde women.

Therefore, without neglecting the established—as she calls it—“narrative of the avant-garde,” Svirčev develops an original theoretical framework based on the following three concepts: networks, gynocentric metonymies, and feminist counterpublics. The concept of networks was developed by Bojan Jović, who wrote about the possibilities of using new methods from the digital humanities to enable comparative research, particularly in the case of European avant-garde, which functioned as an international network of collaborators. Jović argued that the digital humanities can allow us to enhance the visibility and understand the importance of “minor” avant-gardes and avant-gardists. Svirčev develops this concept of networks further by adding a gender dimension, showing how the model of networks can be used to unearth the role of the avant-garde women, whose role had been until recently considered “minor” as well. By carefully reconstructing certain literary texts with their first critical receptions, and by discovering personal, professional, and receptionist links between the authors, Svirčev outlined a network that very clearly shows the place of each author—male and female—in the creation of Serbian avant-garde. Establishing a

precise picture of the network of collaborators enables Svirčev to show, as she nicely puts it, the “multiformed avant-garde interferences” of (both male and female) avant-garde writers. Importantly, contemporary researchers of these networks greatly benefit from the existence of databases, such as Knizenstvo (<http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/>)³ in the case of Serbian literature. In other words, by using well-known categories from physics, as well as newly established tools from the digital humanities, Svirčev shows that the work of avant-garde female artists—so remarkably present in the historical record—was diminished over time or even systematically erased from the literary canon and ignored by scholars.

In order to reflect on the systematic suppression of women’s names, Svirčev uses the concept of gynocritic metonymies. More specifically, Svirčev shows how avant-garde male writers suppressed or completely erased the names of their female literary comrades from their manifestos, reviews, and later memoirs and how literary historians from the period after World War II uncritically took information from these sources. However, male writers did leave some traces of women’s contributions to the avant-garde. They referred to women artists, Svirčev shows, through gynocentric metonymies (e.g., embroidery, dance, female dancer) instead of using their actual names. Thus, Serbian male writers’ use of metonymy or metaphor had the effect of further rendering women invisible.

As an example, Svirčev writes about Miloš Crnjanski’s well-known avant-garde manifesto “The Explanation of ‘Sumatra’” (1921) in which Crnjanski—quite intentionally—used the metaphor of dance when he defined new poetry: “Our verse is an enthralled female dancer” (142). Crnjanski used a similar metaphor in the manifesto “For a Free Verse” (1922): “a free verse stepped into our epoch, like an enthralled, odious female dancer, defamed and laughed at, but the one who in her free moves has more ecstasy and beauty than a bunch of bold scholars” (143). By analyzing and contextualizing Jela Spiridonović Savić’s free-verse poetry and her poems on the topic of dance and female dancers, published right before Crnjanski’s manifesto (1919, 1920), Svirčev establishes a precise chronological order of the publishing of Crnjanski’s and Savić’s texts, thus making the process of repressing women’s contribution to the Serbian avant-garde at the very time of its creating even more obvious.

In addition, apart from focusing on the systematic erasure of women’s contributions to avant-garde art, Svirčev shows that avant-garde male writers (such as Rastko Petrović, Stanislav Vinaver, Miloš Crnjanski, and Todor Manojlović) often wrote about the avant-garde by expressing opinions previously stated by female artists in their articles, poetry, or monographs. A good example is Svirčev’s analysis of Jelica Belović Bernadžikovska’s book, in which Svirčev points to Bernadžikovska’s pioneering role in forming the Yugoslav avant-garde. Importantly, Svirčev also shows how Stanislav Vinaver’s 1951 essay on national handiwork/embroidery has been remembered and reproduced in the scholarship on the history of Serbian literature, whereas Bernadžikovska’s monograph—published forty years earlier—was silenced and forgotten.

Finally, the third important concept Svirčev uses is the “feminist counterpublic,” taken from contemporary feminist media history studies. This concept was developed in the book *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere*, and used for the first time in the Serbian/Yugoslav context in the book *Feministička kontrapublic*:

Žanr ženskog portreta u srpskoj periodici 1920–1941 (Feminist counterpublic: The genre of female portraiture in Serbian periodicals 1920–1941). Apart from the concept of interference, the concept of feminist counterpublic allows the author to explore the alternative public spaces created by women, where they could express their subjectivities more freely. This concept was particularly useful to Svirčev in her chapter on modernist periodicals, particularly the journal *Ženski pokret* (Women's movement, 1920–1938). It allowed her to develop a theoretical and historical framework for recognizing and defining the ideological constructs (the new woman, the freewoman, the egoist), and the (sub)genres (the female portrait, the feminist essay, a novel of a young girl) common to the writers and readers of *Ženski pokret*.

Svirčev describes and interprets the interference of the texts and the cooperation between Serbian male and female avant-garde artists. However, Svirčev's contribution is also in pointing to the interference of European avant-garde movements. She does this by reflecting on some of the commonalities among European avant-garde artists, such as an interest in embroidery, the applied arts, or dance, and the use of similar tropes, such as war, the renewal of life, (neo)primitivism, Bergson's creative evolution, new sensibility, new man, and new woman.

Žarka Svirčev's new monograph is the result of theoretically conscious and innovative research on the Serbian avant-garde and female authorship, which aims to rethink established theoretical and literary historical knowledge. This monograph contributes to the rethinking of the history of the Serbian, Yugoslav, and European avant-gardes. At the same time, through the subjective attitude of the author about all the issues she discusses, this monograph implicitly reminds us that the purpose of the humanities—even when the topic is historical—is to engage with issues of concern to us today.

◆ Notes

1. Žarka Svirčev's previous monographs are: *Ah, taj identitet! Dekonstrukcija rodni stereotipa u stvaralaštvu Dubravke Ugrešić* [Ah, the identity! Deconstruction of gender stereotypes in Dubravka Ugrešić's literature] (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2010); *Vinaverova književna republika* [Stanislav Vinaver's republic of letters] (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2017); and *Portret prethodnice: Draga Dejanović* [A portrait of a vanguard: Draga Dejanović] (Bečej: Gradsko pozorište Bečej, 2018).

2. See Bojan Jović, "Comparative (Digital) Literature Studies for an Open Scholarly Society on the Web: The Case of Avant-Garde," *Filološki pregled: Časopis Saveza društva za strane jezike i književnosti* [The philological review: Journal of the Union of the Association for Foreign Languages and Literatures], no. 2 (2011): 41–51.

3. "Knjiženstvo: Theory and History of Women's Writing in Serbian until 1915" is not only a database, but also the research project led by professor Biljana Dojčinović, which includes the scientific journal *Knjiženstvo: Journal for Studies in Literature, Gender and Culture*.

4. Svirčev takes this terminology mostly from Biljana Andonovska's writings on Serbian and French surrealism. See Biljana Andonovska, "Bez nađe: 'Gde prestaje ona, a gde počinje san?' Ili kako su se voleli Breton i Ristić" [Without hope: "Where does she end, and where does the dream begin?" Or how Breton and Ristić were in love], in *Žene, rod, identitet i književnost* [Women, gender, identity, and literature], ed. Dragan Bošković (Kragujevac: Filološko-umetnički fakultet, 2011), 239–282.

5. Maria DiCenzo, Lucy Delap, and Leila Ryan, *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

6. Stanislava Barać, *Feministička kontrajavnost: Žanr ženskog portreta u srpskoj periodici 1920–1941* [The feminist counterpublic: A genre of woman's portrait in the Serbian periodical press from 1920 to 1941] (Belgrade: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2015).

Şirin Tekeli, *Feminizmi düşünmek* (Thinking feminism), İstanbul: Bilgi University, 2017, 503 pp., including bibliography, appendices, and index, TRY 30 (paperback), ISBN: 978-605-399-473-2.

Book review by **Ayşe Durakbaşa**
Marmara University, Istanbul

This collection of articles compiled by Şirin Tekeli (1944–2017), a leading Turkish feminist academic and activist, is an invaluable reference for feminist historians and students of the history of women's movements in the region. The book was published a few months before Tekeli's death on 13 June 2017 and it can be read as an overview of her life, full of struggles for gender equality, women's rights, peace, and social justice. It serves as a farewell to the women of different nationalities, ethnicities, and ages with whom she shared the spirit of women's liberation. Tekeli explains her aim in the preface to this collection: "I wanted to bear witness to a period of nearly forty years. I think these writings might attract the interest of young readers. With this hope, I recommend that all of you adopt a critical viewpoint as you read; I hope you build a friendly relationship with feminism, which is, to my mind, the only power that can change the fate of women" (xv).

The articles collected in the volume are presented in chronological order. A list of where each article was originally published appears at the end of the book. The list is itself a vivid illustration of Tekeli's career and her role as the founder of a number of pioneering institutions for women. To list just a few of them: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı (Women's Library and Information Center Foundation)—the first and only women's library in Turkey and the Balkans; Mor Çatı Vakfı (Purple Roof Foundation)—the pioneering organization against domestic violence and the movement for creating women's shelters in Turkey, in 1990; KA-DER Kadın Adayları Destekleme Derneği (Association to Support Women Political Candidates); Anakültür Kooperatifi (Motherculture Cooperative); and Türk ve Yunan Kadınları Barış Girişimi (Turkish and Greek Initiative for Peace-Winpeace) in 1997. The book includes firsthand accounts of the establishment of most of these organizations, allowing the reader to trace the evolution of Tekeli's thought and how she defined herself as an activist. The collection also enables the study of Şirin Tekeli as a feminist writer and a feminist intellectual, as the book contains valuable information about the details of her education, the intellectual sources of her feminist thinking, and her commentaries on the works of

Simone de Beauvoir (101–116), Betty Friedan (51–58), Germain Tillion (343–351), and Andrée Michel (173–175).

The volume starts with a theoretical article, a summary from Tekeli's habilitation for the position of associate professorship at Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics. She worked there from 1968 to 1981, when she resigned in protest against the law known as YÖK (the law of higher education), which centralized the administration of universities in Turkey and paralyzed academic and scientific autonomy and freedom. Tekeli explains (413) how she had to push hard to write a habilitation on women, at a time when women's studies was not considered an academic subject by the male-dominated faculty. Her habilitation, later (1982) published as *Kadınlar ve siyasal-toplumsal hayat* (Women and political-social life), was one of the pioneering studies on the topic in Turkish.

The articles in this new volume examine women's political underrepresentation and explore the political, ideological, and economic factors that impact the inferior status of women in capitalist societies. Trained as a political scientist in France (1961–1963) and Switzerland (1963–1967), after having attained her BA degree at Istanbul University, Şirin Tekeli developed a keen mind-set for political analysis. She was endowed with a global vision and was well-informed about world politics and social movements, especially in France, the Mediterranean and Balkan countries, and the Middle East. While feminist theory and women's movements were at the core of her concern, her work was informed by a deep knowledge of political theory and by her extensive engagement with political news and commentary in French (she subscribed to *Le nouvel observateur* [The new observer] for nearly forty years), as well as in English and in Turkish. After she resigned from her position at Istanbul University, Tekeli earned her living as a translator; some of the articles collected in this book are prefaces to her translations of significant feminist texts and political works, such as Andrée Michel's *Feminism*, and Germaine Tillion's *Republic of Cousins*. This collection comprehensively spans Tekeli's varied publications, which were always written with full respect for the contributions of other people. Tekeli was always open to cooperation and willing to modify her views. Apart from her translations and her more theoretical articles, she generously published articles in left-wing newspapers such as *Cumhuriyet* (The republic) and *Yeni gündem* (The new agenda), the feminist page in the weekly called *Somut* (The actual), as well as in feminist collections, journals, and e-journals such as *bianet*, an important left-wing news portal, and *Kazete* (Women's journal), an e-journal for women started by a younger generation of feminist women in 2002. Tekeli's articles from *Kazete*, published between 2010 and 2013, form the last part in this collection (417–490). These articles reflect liberal-left politics, evident in her positive opinion of the change to the Constitution of 1982, forwarded by the JDP (Justice and Development Party) in 2010 (425–426), her liberal attitude toward the headscarf (*te-settür*) (231–235), and her optimism regarding the Arab Spring (435–436). All her work shows that she kept her belief in the revolutionary spirit of women and in the possibility of dialogue between different groups and categories of women. She never lost her optimism in women's power to change the world for the better.

Şirin Tekeli organized many feminist academic and nonacademic meetings in her lifetime, in collaboration with other feminists. She was frequently invited to give

keynote addresses or present papers on the women's movement in Turkey, almost as the spokeswoman of second-wave feminism in Turkey. A number of her thoughtful speeches carrying the sensitivities of the historical-political context as well as her subjective feelings and perceptions are included in this collection, which gives the book an autobiographical voice.

The volume also contains interviews Şirin Tekeli gave over her lifetime. She recounts the story of how she became a feminist and explains her self-acknowledged mission of telling the collective story of the feminist movement in Turkey to the younger generations of women. In the interview conducted by Serpil Cakir (359–371), she relates the beginnings of the Turkish feminist movement, starting with the formation of the collective called Kadın Çevresi (Women's Circle) to translate the feminist classics, and continuing with the activities of a number of consciousness-raising groups, campaigns for the realization of CEDAW principles, calls for reform in the Civil Law, the first demonstration against domestic violence in 1987, the Kariye (feminist) Fest, and the Purple Pin Campaign against sexual harassment in the following year. In her own words, "the movement, which had previously been described as the self-contained complaints of a marginal group of women, was transformed into a 'social movement' in the real sense, with the adoption of the criticism against patriarchy by young women, women from the provincial towns, and Kurdish women" (368).

In a number of articles in the collection, Tekeli underlines the paradigmatic change realized by second-wave feminism in the midst of the 1980s, based on a critical evaluation of the authoritarian nature of the Kemalist regime, the instrumentality given to women's reforms in the making of the modern Turkish state and nation, and the state's repressive attitude toward an independent women's movement (367). An even more interesting account of Şirin Tekeli's encounter with Kemalist feminism is displayed in the interview she did with her own mother (a philosophy teacher, one of the few female university graduates of the early Republic, and a fervent supporter of Kemalism and Kemalist reforms). This interview is one of the few instances where Tekeli lets herself speak in print about her intimate self. Aside from this moment, the book reads as an autobiographical account of a public intellectual, saying little about Tekeli's personal life. Her depth as a female persona is perhaps somewhat symbolized by the cover of the book, a beautiful photograph of an empty women's gown at an archaeological site placed next to an upside-down Medusa pillar. The gown, ornamented with ceramic pieces hinting at ruins of different civilizations and fragmentation of memory and historical consciousness, was designed by Handan Börüteçene, a feminist artist, and it originally appeared in a 2007 installation called "Kendime gömülü kaldım" (I remained buried within myself).

◆ Notes

1. Andrée Michel, *Feminizm* [Feminism], trans. Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: Kadın Çevresi, 1983; İstanbul: Cep-İletişim, 1987).
2. Germain Tillion, *Harem ve kuzenler* [Republic of cousins], trans. Nükhet Sirman and Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: Metis, 2006).
3. An important reference book about the feminist movement in Turkey is the edition made

by Şirin Tekeli, *Kadın bakış açısından 1980'ler türkiye'sinde kadınlar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1990; 6th ed., 2015). It was also translated into German (1991) and English as *Women in Turkish Society* (London: Zed Books, 1995).

4. The international pact called the Contract for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was signed by the Turkish government in 1985 and became part of the legislation in 1986.

5. Tekeli's following articles are among the main international references that researchers studying Turkish feminism should consult: "Emergence of the Feminist Movement in Turkey," in *The New Women's Movement*, ed. Drude Dahlerup (London: Sage, 1986), 179–200; "Women in the Changing Political Associations of 1980's," in *Turkish State, Turkish Society*, ed. Andrew Finkel and Nükhet Sirman (London: Routledge, 1990), 259–289; "Le genre mal-aimé de la république" [The gender which is not loved by the republic], in *La Turquie* [Turkey], ed. Semih Vaner (Paris: Fayard, 2005), 251–291, reprinted in *La Turquie, d'une révolution à l'autre* [Turkey, from one revolution to another] (Paris: Pluriel, 2013). The Turkish versions of these articles have been included in the above reviewed book, *Feminizmi düşünmek*.

Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de yeni hayat: Inkılap ve travma 1908–1928* (New life in Turkey: Revolution and trauma 1908–1928), İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2017, 472 pp., TRY 40 (paperback), ISBN 978-605-09-4721-2.

Book review by **Selin Çağatay**
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Zafer Toprak is an established scholar of economic and social history who has published extensively on politics, culture, gender, labor, intellectuals, and institutions in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Turkey. In his new book, *Türkiye'de yeni hayat: Inkılap ve travma 1908–1928* (New life in Turkey: Revolution and trauma 1908–1928), Toprak offers a comprehensive review of public debates on gender during a critical phase of Turkish history. With this book, Toprak builds a bridge between his earlier works on the pre-Republican and the post-1930 single-party periods. In *Türkiye'de yeni hayat*, he takes up the role of gender in the broader sociopolitical context of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), World War I (1914–1918), and the Turkish Independence War (1919–1923). He then analyzes how gender was integrated into postwar policies to restore Turkey's human capital, nurture a growing bourgeois class, and construct a "New Life." Throughout the book, Toprak examines debates over nation building, population and health policies, and cultural politics within the context of Turkey's contested path toward modernization, westernization, and secularization.³

Türkiye'de yeni hayat is composed of eight chapters. The first three chapters are organized chronologically, while the remaining five chapters are thematic. The first three chapters cover the Second Constitutional (1908–1918), the Armistice (1918–1923), and the early Republican (1923–1928) periods, respectively. In these chapters, Toprak discusses the transformation of women's status with regard to a number of developments.

Starting in the Second Constitutional Period, women's status became the backbone of the notion of a "New Life" — the social transformation complementing the 1908 political revolution. As Turkish nationalism gradually replaced Ottomanism as the ruling ideology, the state instituted policies aimed at strengthening the (nuclear) family. As a result, debates over how to best modernize the family, together with women's role in it, moved from the private to the public sphere (40–43). By the Armistice Period, women's search for a new identity by virtue of their wartime participation in politics and paid employment enabled a public debate over feminism, where women and men questioned and challenged conventional gender roles and women's confinement in the domestic sphere (61). Throughout the 1920s, as women began to enter formerly male realms of education, employment, and leisure, Turkish intellectuals heatedly debated the extent to which modernization required including women in public life. Toprak situates the 1917 Enactment of Family Law (*Hukûk-ı Âile Kararnamesi*) and the 1926 Civil Code (*Medeni Kanun*), which granted women status as legal persons and gave the family a basis in civil (as opposed to religious) law, against the background of these debates.

In the later chapters of *Türkiye'de yeni hayat*, Toprak focuses on the themes of modern life and the child (chapter 4), everyday life and fashion (chapter 5), youth and entertainment (chapter 6), prostitution and moral crisis (chapter 7), and acute trauma and suicide (chapter 8). Suggesting that the social trauma of war accounted for the emerging bourgeois class's keen interest in fashion and leisure, Toprak traces the changes in urban women's appearance and lifestyle and examines public debates over the "modern woman" and her role in nation building. During the period from 1908 to 1928, clothing became an indicator of women's freedom. In contrast to earlier models of feminine beauty, the "modern woman" was slim and sexy, with short hair, no veil, and possibly without even a hat to cover her head. This modern woman was a controversial figure. Magazines warned such women that their first duty was to their nation, not to fashion. An interesting topic Toprak discusses here is the influence of white émigrés who moved to Istanbul in the wake of the Russian Revolution and Russian Civil War (1917–1922). Now impoverished and miserable, aristocratic women from Russia helped to define the terms of modern women's fashion and lifestyle as they settled in Armistice Istanbul.

Toprak also examines how debates over changing gender roles were explored in the arts, including theater, cinema, and literature. Especially in the 1920s, topics such as adultery, familial discord, platonic love, and eroticism were frequently explored in literature and in the performing arts. According to Toprak, these media expanded the realm of freedom for women despite their problematic moralistic tone (266–267). The trauma of war, however, did not always lead to positive social developments. In the last two thematic chapters, Toprak examines public debates around prostitution and suicide, showing how the intellectuals of the late 1910s and 1920s understood these two grave issues as the consequences of postwar moral decay and rapid social transformation. In chapter 7, Toprak also provides a comprehensive picture of sex workers in Istanbul in the Armistice and early Republican periods, including their age, ethnoreligious composition, economic status, labor rights, and civil relationships. He also examines how the state regulated brothels.

Taken together, the thematic chapters of *Türkiye’de yeni hayat* show how pronatalist population politics highlighted the need for women to fulfill their biological role as mothers despite the progressive discourse around changing gender roles. These points, according to Toprak, to the main paradox of the new Republic (184): on the one hand, intellectuals who promoted the “New Life” advocated absolute equality between men and women (*Müsâvat-ı Tamme*). On the other hand, changes in women’s attire and leisure were less emancipatory than they initially seemed. The era’s promise of liberation was subverted by new forms of male control over women’s bodies in the realms of reproduction and women’s health.

Türkiye’de yeni hayat is the first book to thoroughly examine how several important groups participated in the debates on changing gender roles in modern Turkey. Toprak concentrates on the contributions of three groups: doctors, Islamists, and Marxist intellectuals. Doctors had a noticeable role in shaping ideas about the “modern woman” in that they saw raising healthy generations as first and foremost a women’s responsibility. Bridging modern medicine and population politics, doctors who took part in Turkey’s social engineering popularized an understanding of femininity framed by familial responsibilities. Their work supported policies that limited women’s rights as individuals (360). The second group of actors Toprak looks at is Islamists, particularly the circle gathered around *Sebilürreşad* (True path, 1908–1925)—a significant journal that survived the Second Constitutional, Armistice, and early Republican periods. He demonstrates how Islamist circles saw women’s participation in public life as a major blow to privacy (*mahremiyet*). They advocated veiling and opposed coeducation for the sake of Islamic values, even as they allowed women intellectuals, such as the poet, novelist, and teacher Halide Nusret (Zorlutuna), into their ranks.

Lastly, Toprak considers the Marxist intellectuals who framed the woman question as part of social revolution, including women such as Fevziye Hanım and Leman Sadreddin. Inspired by the Soviet experience, Marxists gathered around the journal *Aydınlık* (Illumination, 1921–1925), problematized the discrimination women faced in employment due to their care responsibilities, argued that women’s economic independence came prior to equal rights, and criticized early Republican feminism—represented by the Turkish Women’s Union (Türk Kadınlar Birliği) and its publications⁴—for overlooking the problems of working women. Toprak focuses especially on the leftist feminism developed by Sabiha Zekeriya (Sertel), a significant journalist and political figure only recently acknowledged in feminist scholarship. He reviews the many topics Sabiha Zekeriya wrote about in *Büyük mecmua* (Grand magazine, 1919–1920) and *Resimli ay* (Illustrated moon, 1924–1931), including women’s oppression in the family, their right to work and possession, birth control and human capital, prostitution, and the tension between religion and women’s rights. Toprak thereby challenges one-sided historiographies of feminist activism in the Armistice and early Republican periods, pointing to the presence of an alternative—socialist—feminism that was sensitive to poor and working women’s issues.

In *Türkiye’de yeni hayat*, Toprak offers the reader a wealth of new material and a new perspective on the gendered history of Turkish modernization, westernization, and secularization. Although he does not link his work to the present day, Toprak’s findings are also relevant for understanding the contemporary gender regime in Tur-

key, especially with regard to discourses and policies around strengthening the family in times of social and political crisis. Toprak's book is thus a valuable resource for historians and students of gender and culture as well as for those who are interested in late Ottoman, early Republican, and contemporary Turkey.

◆ Notes

1. Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de milli iktisat 1908–1918* [National economics in Turkey 1908–1918] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012); *Türkiye'de popülizm 1908–1923* [Populism in Turkey 1908–1923] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2013).

2. Zafer Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersim'e Cumhuriyet ve antropoloji* [Anthropology and the Republic from Darwin to Dersim] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012).

3. Toprak's previously published research in women's and gender history was recently compiled in his edited volume *Türkiye'de kadın özgürlüğü ve feminizm (1908–1935)* [Feminism and women's freedom in Turkey (1908–1935)] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015).

4. See Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız inkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* [Revolution without women: Nezihe Muhiddin, Women's People's Party, Women's Union] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003).

5. See İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu, "Sabiha Sertel," in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 494–497; Shissler A. Holly, "Womanhood Is Not For Sale: Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel Against Prostitution and For Women's Employment," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no. 3 (2008): 12–30; Kathryn Libal, "Transatlantic Connections in the Making of a Socialist-Feminist Framework for Social Welfare in Turkey: The Legacy of Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel," *Journal of Women & Social Work* 27, no. 3 (2012): 328–337.

Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1964*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016, 380 pp., 31.45 USD (paperback), ISBN 978-0-520-29229-1.

Book review by **Agnieszka Mrozik**

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Sometimes publications from far away, culturally or geographically speaking, demonstrate to us that ideas, concepts, and perspectives travel. As a researcher of female communists' involvement in the making of women's emancipation in post-WWII Poland, I was reminded of this by Wang Zheng's *Finding Women in the State*, a book that explores the measures taken by Chinese female communists to advance women's rights between 1949 and 1964. This work crowns the author's long investigation of the

women's movement in twentieth-century China. Wang Zheng, professor of history and women's studies at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan, dedicated one of her first books in English to the history of the feminist members of the May Fourth Movement. Named for the protests of Beijing students on 4 May 1919, the May Fourth Movement was an anti-imperialist campaign that swept through China between 1915 and 1921. *Finding Women in the State* is, in a way, a continuation of that publication. Wang Zheng examines the fates of some of the same people, organizations, and initiatives to ask what happened to feminist ideas from the early twentieth century after the communists took power in 1949. Many former May Fourth feminists identified with the communists and actively participated in their actions. By revealing the connections between these two groups, Wang Zheng convincingly shows that older feminist traditions had a strong presence in the genealogy of women's state organizations in socialist China.

The author documents this thesis in two ways. First, she follows the activism of state women's organizations in China in the years 1949–1964, especially of the All-China Women's Federation, pointing out that their efforts to further the equality of all people regardless of their social background were intimately coupled with initiatives promoting gender equality. She lists campaigns that aimed to empower women and to actively include them in the socialist modernization of the country, with a particular focus on legal changes (such as the 1950 Marital Law that simplified divorce procedures) and media representations of women (especially on the pages of the popular *Women of China* magazine). Wang Zheng demonstrates that to socialist feminists, as she calls the protagonists of her book, the cause of women's emancipation did not boil down exclusively to equal rights for women of the upper classes; it applied to all women—particularly those from the working class and peasantry, who found themselves under a double burden. In her opinion, socialist feminists went further than the May Fourth Movement activists. Their program of women's emancipation entailed not only eliminating gender inequalities, but also discrimination by class and place of residence (rural areas vs. cities). In this, they identified with the line of the Communist Party of China; they were convinced that only demolishing the old system and building a new one would provide the necessary conditions for redressing all inequalities.

The analysis of the activities of women's organizations and the contents of women's magazines are the focus of the book's first part. In the second part, the author explores the emancipatory potential of films and the film industry. Wang Zheng observes that culture, including film, played a key role in disseminating progressive content, given that Chinese society was largely illiterate in the second half of the twentieth century. She invokes examples of the creators of emancipatory cinema—directors, actors, ministerial officials—and describes how their films portrayed women not only as helpless victims of violence and exploitation, but also as revolutionaries who fought heroically to change their fate. In so doing, the author articulates a pivotal thought: in order for political and legal change to take hold in a society, new laws or practices must be expressed in a way that connects with the people whose lives they will affect. She believes that cultural texts are tools that not only communicate change, but also prepare the population to accept it as a part of their own lives.

This is one of the core ideas of Wang Zheng's book. Another important argument, which goes against many contemporary, postsocialist analyses of emancipation measures undertaken in Mao's China, is that to socialist feminists, slogans of class equality went hand in hand with slogans of gender equality. Feminism converged here with the Marxist belief that only revolution can change relations between people, and thus between women and men as well. Systemic change did occur in communist China, and its accomplishments in the area of women's rights are evidenced by the increase in the numbers of educated women employed outside of the agricultural sector and by women's improved situation within the family. Against the Western, liberal thesis that argues true emancipation can only happen at the grassroots level, Wang Zheng's work illustrates that in certain circumstances emancipation is not possible without top-down actors: state institutions and state-employed officials, activists, and artists.

Wang Zheng defends the history of socialist feminists in China against contemporary tendencies to forget and invalidate this moment in the history of women and women's movements. This has been an issue throughout the former socialist world, as *Aspasia* has addressed a number of times. Nonetheless, Wang Zheng does not glorify the experience of women's activists in communist China. Her analysis brutally and painfully exposes the limitations socialist feminists encountered. Above all, it reveals that their emancipatory message could not be overtly expressed as feminist, as it immediately triggered associations with "bourgeois feminism," which was considered suspicious. Female activists, editors, directors, and officials thus had to avail themselves of a language that was aligned with the party line: one that combined women's rights with the rights of underprivileged classes. The safest strategy was to employ anti-feudal arguments. Feudalism, or the traditional organization of society, including patriarchal relations within the family, as well as imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism, were the "Three Big Mountains" that the Chinese had to overcome on their way to progress. The slogan of the fight against feudalism included the notion of women's rights, but without the unpleasant connotations of feminism. In this sense, it was safe, similar to Mao's speeches, quoted especially in times of political turmoil.

Concealing a feminist message behind the curtain of the official party line was one of the strategies used by women's rights activists. Another one was the politics of self-effacement, which consisted of hiding one's own direct contribution to the achievement of individual goals and instead attributing them to the party. These nameless actions, often in the shadows, were frequently forced by patriarchal relations within the party and various state institutions. Wang Zheng lays bare these power relations that played out on the intersections of professional/official and personal/private spheres. The biographical perspective adopted by the author, next to the detailed analysis of texts, narratives, and discourses, allows readers to get to know the actors of Chinese public life as real people of flesh and bone. While pointing out those cases when women's rights activists could count on male help in furthering their cause of gender equality, the author underscores that much more often they had to face male domination on different rungs of state and party authority. The lines of domination, divisions, but also alliances actually crisscrossed in various directions—sometimes progressive men fell prey to the games led by influential women—which shows that processes of

exercising power were not only gendered but also that their private dimensions were intimately interwoven with the political ones. Animosities, alliances, conflicts, fights over power—everything that took place in the open and behind the scenes translated onto decision-making processes and their results: the successes or failures of emancipation politics.

Wang Zheng reveals these phenomena, all the while asking for reasons behind the erasure of socialist feminists from contemporary memory. Focusing on the Chinese example—and researchers of similar phenomena in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe can consider how the Chinese case might offer insight into their own analyses—Wang Zheng proposes that this erasure was caused in equal measure by the strategy of self-marginalization or concealing the feminist message behind the party line and by contemporary anti-communism. From the anti-communist perspective, these women (if they are noticed at all) were just blind instruments in the hands of Mao and of the party: agents of patriarchy and/or coperpetrators of communist crimes (in the dominant totalitarian paradigm, every involvement in state socialism is considered criminal). Sadly, this approach is also embraced in feminist circles, where the effacement of state socialists from women's movements (denying their agency and real accomplishments) serves to reinforce the idea that the only legitimate type of engagement in the struggle for women's rights is the Western, liberal, free-market one, in line with the dominant contemporary order of the world, also in China.

Finding Women in the State is fascinating and important not only because it presents a forgotten part of the history of China and the Chinese women's movement, but also because it deconstructs contemporary postsocialist (and anti-socialist) narratives of the revolution that took place in China in the mid-twentieth century. At the same time it shows that criticism of women's organizations in Mao's China for their dependence on the party is a moot point today, because it often comes from people and organizations stuck in a similar relationship of dependence on their respective states, and especially on the market. What is striking is that even though today, over twenty years after the 1995 Beijing conference on women's rights, the rhetoric of gender equality is part of the mainstream public debate in China, both the society and the party are decidedly more patriarchal than in the times of Mao, with their overt male domination, imperialist ambitions, and class inequalities. Although Wang Zheng writes about China, her book is an excellent vehicle for rethinking the history of other postsocialist countries. When we unearth the unwanted, erased fragments of our own histories and debate how much space existed in those times for real actions for women's rights, we should also ask ourselves how much of it is left today. And whether postsocialist freedom and its celebrated achievements are not in fact just a fraction of what socialist feminists won for us.

◆ Notes

1. The research for this review was partially sponsored by Central European University Foundation in Budapest. The theses presented in the review are my own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Central European University Foundation in Budapest and its Institute for Advanced Study.

2. Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

3. See, e.g., "Forum: Is 'Communist Feminism' a *Contradictio in Terminus*?" *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 197–246; Francisca de Haan, ed., "Forum: Gendering the Cold War in the Region: An Email Conversation between Małgorzata (Gosia) Fidelis, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Jill Massino, and Libora Oates-Indruchova," *Aspasia* 8 (2014): 162–190; Francisca de Haan, ed., "Forum: Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited," *Aspasia* 10 (2016): 102–162.