

book reviews



Cristina A. Bejan, *Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania: The Criterion Association*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2019, 323 pp., €74.89 (hardback), ISBN 978-3-030-20164-7.

Book review by **Maria Bucur**
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Cristina A. Bejan's *Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania: The Criterion Association* provides a detailed depiction of the activities that linked together the core members of the Criterion group in interwar Romania. Focused primarily on the rocky 1930s and centered on Bucharest, the study follows closely how a number of men (and a few women) came together as young college or generational friends in the late 1920s and became engaged in an experiment of constructing a community of friendship, intellectual interest, performance, and political debate, and how they eventually destroyed their own experiment. The author takes as a model for the history of this tight-knit group Marci Shore's *Caviar and Ashes*, which similarly followed the complicated and sometimes paradoxical friendships, love affairs, and political actions of a Warsaw circle from around the same period.¹

Many historians and literary critics have obsessed over the complex network that Mircea Eliade, Nae Ionescu, Emil Cioran, and Constantin Noica wove in their years together. The last three decades, in particular, brought a flourishing of such studies, many of them touching on or providing an in-depth analysis of how their careers and friendships were shaped through the Criterion episode. This book adds important elements about several other fascinating characters, especially Petru Comarnescu. Bejan's goal is to pull together many of the disparate strands of these previous works and add her own self-avowed objective yet compassionate reading of the Criterion group's evolution. She succeeds on several counts.

In the first part of the book (introduction through chapter 5), the author presents a very detailed description of how the group came about, what seemed to anchor their close relationships, what their activities were, and, to some extent, what their ideas were. This close narrative also offers excellent content for further analysis and presents a rich compendium of the many persons who became affiliated with the life of the Criterion group beyond the main players. Though she spends no more than a few sentences touching on most women participants, gathering their names in the pages of the book in connection to a variety of public and more intimate events provides a good starting point for considering how other communities these women were involved with overlapped with Criterion's and with what consequences. It would be interesting to know, for instance, what role the general lack of interest in women artists, as evinced by the words and other choices of the main male authors in Criterion, played



for female artists like Lucia Demetrius Bălăceanu or Milița Pătrașcu, both affiliated with the group. These women also collaborated with feminist groups like the Little Entente of Women to make their work more fully visible to an international audience.

In the second part of the book, Bejan turns to the dissolution of the Criterion group after the *Credința* slanderous scandal regarding the purported homoeroticism of some members; the resolute turn to the radical right of some of the same (and other) members; and the legacies of Criterion after World War II. The chapter on the dissolution of Criterion provides ample detail of the nasty campaign in the pages of *Credința*, where Comarnescu and a few others were accused of homosexuality in grotesque language. It is the one chapter where the possibility of gender analysis is ample, yet unfortunately not taken up. Why such a campaign would gain so much traction in Romania at that time is never explained. Yet there is evidence in other primary sources and scholarship that intense debates about heteronormativity were present in the medical community and various eugenicist circles. Human trafficking and prostitution were themes of interest to both the Romanian secret police as well as a variety of organizations dealing with women's rights, in addition to eugenicists. We also never learn whether anyone in the Criterion circle took up some kind of public defense of Comarnescu. That other newspapers started to attack *Credința* in the name of public decency, but neither Eliade nor other prominent Criterionists seem to have risen in public defense of Comarnescu strikes me as quite important for understanding whether it was the slander campaign that broke Criterion up, or whether the group was in fact breaking up already and this was simply the last straw.

The author's discussion about Comarnescu's sexual preferences, following the description of the grotesque articles that attacked his purported homosexuality, seems defensive and unnecessary, unless those preferences themselves (and not the accusations in the press about them) had consequences for the Criterion group. The author does not address that issue. It may have been that Comarnescu's erotic attraction to Noica drove him to become interested in specific issues or thinkers, like Freud, for instance. But no such connection is made. The question of how love affairs (and not just this one sublimated one) may have been part of the glue that held Criterion together is one that I hope will find a good gender analysis at some point.

The penultimate chapter of the book explores how some of the more prominent Criterion members flirted with or fully embraced the Iron Guard. Eliade, Cioran, Noica, and Marietta Sadova are the main foci of this analysis. These are all well-trodden subjects, and the author summarizes those findings. Sadova is the one person about whom less has been written among historians. Those who have written about the female leadership of the Iron Guard generally do not include her among them. The main figure of interest remains Nicoleta Nicolescu, but no connection between her and Sadova seems to have been established. So what are we to make of the detailed story about Sadova's frustrated enthrallment with fascism? Most likely, that she was unwilling to give up the elitism closely cultivated by the Criterion circle and her close friends for the kind of discipline and hierarchy that the Iron Guard demanded.

In the last chapter, Bejan turns to the legacies of Criterion. The discussion takes us into the postwar decades and the activities of people who had long given up on Criterion for other options, to leave fascist Romania (Ionescu and Cioran), commu-

nist Romania (Eliade), or to stay there (most of them, including Noica, Capsali, and Sadova). It is difficult to speak of these paths as legacies of Criterion, for many other radical changes in their personal and the larger sociopolitical context predated the evolution of these people's careers after the war. Because of that, the links suggested by the author left me largely unpersuaded. There are also exaggerations or erroneous claims. For instance, the statement that Noica's Păltiniș school provided access to philosophers that were not being taught at the university is false (266). Kant and Plato were required readings at the University of Bucharest throughout the 1970s.

Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania provides a rich foundation for further research into the complex and often self-contradictory work of a generation of men who sought to construct themselves into the authentic elite of their country through a performative engagement with masculinity. I eagerly await a follow-up to this book with a thorough gender analysis of the core elements of Criterion, as the subject deserves it.

◆ Note

1. Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918–1968* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).



Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Women and Industry in the Balkans: The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Textile Sector*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2020, 232 pp., £85 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-78533-598-3.

Book review by **Alexandra Ghit**
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Chiara Bonfiglioli's book deals with gendered experiences and memories of industrialization and, especially, deindustrialization in Yugoslavia and its successor states. Bonfiglioli traces specific "industrial structures of feeling" (5) emerging from women's employment in several textile and garment factories now located in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. The book relies on sixty oral history interviews, archival and published sources, and several films. Bonfiglioli argues that because during state socialism factories functioned as "microcosms of socialist values" (19), instilling certain structures of feeling, during postsocialism women textile workers narrate deindustrialization as a loss of employment and welfare rights and as an undoing of spaces of working-class sociability and solidarity. Bonfiglioli argues that their reflective nostalgic attachments (154) can fuel contemporary demands for social justice.

In the introduction, the author broadens Raymond Williams's original "structures of feeling" concept by arguing that structures of feeling consist of ideologies,

economic developments, and daily experiences that together generate what Williams stated were “a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities” (quoted on 5). Chapters 1 and 2 detail the elements making up the socialist structures of feeling specific to Yugoslavia. Thus, in Bonfiglioli’s account, socialist industrial structures of feeling were made up of, among others: the ambivalences of the workers’ self-management doctrine and system (29); “the socialist politics of women’s emancipation promoted by the Antifascist Women’s Front” (32); “socialist gendered pedagogies enacted within garment factories” (37); representations of women as endlessly resilient workers in factory newspapers (39); improvements in welfare standards and a sense of material progress, but also open borders, making the domestic dearth of consumption goods visible (46); or disillusionment about self-management and the benefits of joining the Communist Party (69).

The first two chapters discuss Yugoslav women’s wage work and the complications intensive industrial labor brought for these workers’ performance of unpaid housework and care work. These tensions are placed in the context of the evolution of the textile and garment industries in Yugoslavia in the twentieth century, beginning with the 1920s. Bonfiglioli reviews the history of labor struggles in the interwar textile industry and discusses the mostly beneficial impact state socialist reorganization of the textile industry had on working and living conditions for women workers employed in various large textile and garment factories. She argues that the Yugoslav modernization project (and its attendant structures of feeling) challenged patriarchal arrangements, especially in rural areas where young women embraced postwar factory work the most. Also, Bonfiglioli points out that by the mid-1960s the “working mother gender contract” (57) of Yugoslav socialist self-management enabled relatively easy balancing of productive and reproductive labor (40), with various firms displaying a degree of flexibility and human understanding (49) of women workers’ significant care and domestic work obligations (60). In fact, the humane (“humanist”) orientation of state socialist paternalist factory managers was brought up repeatedly by the author’s interlocutors (49, 155), especially as contrast for the perceived inhumanity of postsocialist employers. At the same time, Bonfiglioli shows how Yugoslav cultural production both “valorized and naturalized” (55) women’s double-burden work (portrayed in newspapers and films as unending and deriving from gendered self-sacrificial dispositions) (55–74). This key ambivalence of the self-management system (30) strongly shaped how women interviewed by the author in the 2010s remembered the period. For instance, piece-rate labor (which proliferated in Yugoslav textile firms) was remembered by former workers as strenuous but somewhat offset by available welfare facilities (41, 134), while experiences of struggling to care for dependents during the period were naturalized and privatized (60) as individual hardships.

Chapter 3 tackles the deterioration of working conditions in postsocialist textile factories, developments shown to occur against the background of ex-Yugoslavia’s geopolitical re-peripheralization (89) and the global race to the (social standard) bottom characterizing the textile and garments sectors. The chapter details the privatization and layoffs that occurred in three major textile factories located in Macedonia and Croatia. It spotlights former workers’ and trade unionists’ narrative invocation of state socialist factories’ less exploitative labor conditions and better welfare provisions as

benchmarks for a bygone normality. According to Bonfiglioli, the heritage of socialist paternalism and postsocialist economic and military violence have left the women she interviewed (mostly former workers in now defunct or privatized factories) both ill-equipped to combat criminal privatizations (115) and distrustful of trade unionists (30, 122). By contrast, socialist structures of feeling that interviewed women still harbor, and their corresponding memories, function as “a cultural and political repertoire to demand social justice and social rights in the present context” (115).

Chapter 4 places women workers’ durable attachments to Yugoslav industrial work in the context of gentrification and the tourist industry’s rebranding of three deindustrialized towns (located in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia). It also sets them against the broader backdrop of the global demise of Fordism and its promise of a “job for life” (133). Here the author shows that besides welfare provision and labor standards, former textile workers are nostalgically attached to forms of socialist sociability (contrasted with a postsocialist “crisis of sociability”), collective solidarity (including multiethnic coexistence), and an overall sense of existential stability. Although the interviewed women were not uncritical of the organization of production and social reproduction during socialist Yugoslavia (with blue-collar textile workers less nostalgic than former white-collar workers in textile factories), Bonfiglioli argues that former textile sector employees still display an understanding of Yugoslav socialist modernity as enabling not only a more “normal life” for industrial workers but also a more “ethical form of life” (132). Because of this, what the author terms “critical Yugo-nostalgia” can function as a “form of counter-discourse to present injustices and a way to articulate utopian feelings of resistance and hope” (153).

The fifth and final chapter deals with labor resistance and everyday resilience among former textile factory workers through tactics that, although rooted in socialist structures of feeling, go beyond (narrative) nostalgia. Notably, it highlights instances of postsocialist labor protest by women discouraged from organizing by trade unionists but supported by resurgent new Left movements (the case of the 2010 hunger strike organized by factory workers from the Kamensko factory in Zagreb, demanding wage arrears) or backed-up by still active (116-121), and sometimes efficient, trade unions (solidarity strikes in support of Arena factory workers in 2014) (171, 178). Labor’s inconsistent support of women textile workers’ organizing could have benefited here from further analysis. For instance, were the solidarity strikes organized four years after Kamensko, in support of Arena factory workers, a sign of changes in views among veteran trade unionists in Croatia, or of a different approach chosen by a handful of modernizing unions, or were women better represented in some of these organizations?

Bonfiglioli’s conceptual rooting of her volume in the work of sociologist of urban (de)industrialization David Byrne and especially, of Williams, a Marxist theorist who emphasized the material underpinnings of changes in cultural forms, makes an original break with the constructivism embraced by most feminist literature relying on oral histories to deal with the broad theme of gender and (post)socialism in Eastern Europe. These other authors emphasize the narrative construction of gendered identities, and consider these changes especially in relation to national state policy, rather than in relation to local material circumstances created by evolutions in global economic

orders. Bonfiglioli's standpoint and her detailing of experiences of both empowerment and disempowerment for women workers during both state socialism and post-socialism also enables the author to largely avoid the by now repetitive discussion on whether women living under socialism in Eastern Europe had or did not have agency.

From here, exciting scholarly debate can proceed. Bonfiglioli mentions that the Yugoslav state was implementing an industrial modernization plan, complete with a gender contract aligned to the period's globally dominant Fordist imaginaries (138) and increasingly dependent on exports to a West whose markets were almost as fickle in the 1980s as they are now (59–60). Considering this, can attachment to once-dominant cultural forms grounded in state socialist versions of Fordism be conceptualized as a fully emancipatory resource for resistance in the current historical context? Bonfiglioli argues it can, but the interpretations and evidence she presents throughout the book can similarly be read as highlighting that these experiences and memories disable as much as they enable organizing to challenge current exploitation and dispossession. Historical sociologist Philip Abrams pointed out that "the past is the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed" and the "present [is] a struggle to create a future *out of the past*."¹ What to do with a past that does not offer ready-made futures? Chiara Bonfiglioli's book provides a valuable discussion of gendered work during socialist and especially, postsocialist deindustrialization and exploitative reindustrialization in Yugoslavia and its successor states. It raises the right and timely questions for feminist research in labor history and memory politics in Eastern Europe and should serve as a starting point for ventures seeking to offer original answers to this uneasy question.

◆ Notes

1. Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 8.



Aslı Davaz, *Eşitsiz kız kardeşlik, uluslararası ve Ortadoğu kadın hareketleri, 1935 Kongresi ve Türk Kadın Birliği* (Unequal sisterhood, international and Middle Eastern women's movements, 1935 Congress and the Turkish Women's Union), İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2014, 892 pp., with an introduction by Yıldız Ecevit, pp. xxi–xxviii; preface by the author, pp. xxix–xlix, TL 42 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-605-332-296-2.

Book review by **Ayşe Durakbaşa**
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Aslı Davaz's book—*Eşitsiz kız kardeşlik, uluslararası ve Ortadoğu kadın hareketleri, 1935 Kongresi ve Türk Kadın Birliği* (Unequal sisterhood, international and Middle Eastern

women's movements, 1935 congress and the Turkish Women's Union)—is based on her prolonged research on international connections of Turkish feminism, her interest initially ignited by the 1935 congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA, est. 1904; in 1926 the organization changed its name to the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship [IAWSEC] and once again after World War II to the International Alliance of Women [IAW]) hosted by Türk Kadınlar Birliği (TKB, the Turkish Women's Union), the major women's association of early republican Turkey. TKB was founded on 7 February 1924, as the successor of Kadınlar Halk Fırkası (Women's People's Party, created in June 1923), whose establishment as a political party was not approved by the (male) leaders of Turkey. TKB took moderate steps for gender equality and only in 1927 added a decree to the constitution of the association that included women's political rights among their goals.

The book provides an invaluable source for the general reading public in Turkey, with its extensive coverage of different epochs of the suffrage movement in the West before World War I and its impact on other parts of the world between the two world wars. Undertaking the difficult task of tracing international connections between women's movements and associations in the West, in the Balkans, and in the Middle East, Davaz produces an admirably informative book about the lives of the leading women in these associations, using archival sources, women's papers, special archives of women's associations, women's libraries, digital encyclopedias, women's periodicals,¹ newspapers and journals, as well as secondary sources provided by feminist histories in these regions. In the case of Turkey, she traces mainly the story of the establishment of the TKB in 1924 and its dissolution just after the 1935 Congress, as well as its re-establishment and continued international connections after World War II. The book covers a long history and a number of regions, and Davaz has engaged herself like a detective seeking any kind of evidence to write the most complete story of the women who gathered for the twelfth Congress of the IAWSEC in İstanbul in 1935. For her biographical research about TKB members, the author tried to find the living relations of these leading women figures from the early years of the republic and interviewed them, in addition to the information she found in the secondary sources, the women's journals and daily newspapers of the period, and the personal papers of a few women activists. One of them was Necile Tevfik (1911–1964), a member of the executive committee of the TKB, whose private archive became part of the special collection of the Women's Library in İstanbul, through the efforts of Aslı Davaz and Serpil Çakır. Aslı Davaz herself prepared an annotated catalog as well.²

Aslı Davaz is a dedicated feminist researcher, one of the founding members of the Women's Library in İstanbul³ with continuing interest in searching for women's documents, bringing women's personal archives to the attention of researchers, and finding and keeping historical records by women to write them into history. Davaz has acted as the chairperson and a member of the executive board of the Women's Library and has built ongoing and strong relationships with women's libraries, librarians, and archivists around the world. One can see the fruits of these feminist connections, friendships, and mutual support of the network Davaz used to find the precious resources that lie behind the tremendous effort that brought this voluminous book into being. It is fascinating to read the author's story of researching the history of the TKB's found-

ing, its closing in response to a directive from President Kemal Atatürk, just after the successful 1935 women's congress, and its re-establishment in 1949. One reads it as yet another account of a feminist endeavor, informed and inspired by the present-day women's agenda, alongside the history of feminist endeavors to bring out the hidden treasures of women as individuals and as organizers of worldwide movements, campaigns, and meetings to seek universal suffrage for women, the pacifist cry for disarmament and peace, and women's rights in marriage and divorce, in citizenship, in family and public participation, and in employment.

The book, in fact, comprises more than one book, and therefore, sometimes the reader finds it difficult to follow the historical record of the connections between pioneers of "the woman question" in the world seen mainly through the moves and actions of the IWSA/IWSEC/IAW and TKB.

In the first part, Davaz presents an overview of the history of international feminist organizations, namely, the International Council of Women (ICW, 1888), the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF, 1915). In the same chapter Davaz gives a detailed account of the relationships of Turkish women with the international feminist movement by tracing the representatives from Turkey in the international women's meetings held by various organizations, most specifically, the congresses convened by the ICW and IWSA in Washington (1902) and later in the major cities of Europe, such as Berlin (1904), Copenhagen (1906), Amsterdam (1908), and London (1909). In fact, Ottoman women's organizations were not totally ignorant about the international cry for women's rights. *Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti* (Association for the Defense of Women's Rights, 1913), for example, published various commentaries and news about international feminism and feminists in a specific column in its journal, *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's world) (1913–1921).

Turkey did not set up its national council and branch of the ICW until 1959. On the other hand, the TKB became a member of the IWASEC—the most influential body representing international feminist solidarity for the cause of women's suffrage—in 1926. The IAWSEC was much more outspoken in comparison to the ICW, especially in matters concerning world peace. However, the interwar years brought a cessation of women's feminist demands. Women usually were torn between nationalist feelings for their countries and the solidarity ideals of international sisterhood. Davaz is critical of the neutral position of the IWASEC toward authoritarian governments and their suppression of women's movements, be it in fascist Italy or Germany or single-party rule in Turkey. Hence, the theme of international sisterhood and its shaky nature in the face of the problems of democratic and undemocratic governments, the cultural and political conflicts between the West and the East, and the question of colonialism and imperialism are usually passed by untouched, despite all the efforts at building bridges between women of the West and the East, as formulated as one of the goals of the IWASEC.

The first part of the book also includes a section on women's movements in the Middle East (179–312) and how they developed as a form of "nationalist feminism" (179) against the imperial powers, the Ottoman Empire among them. The subsection about the foundation of the Egyptian Feminist Union by Huda Sharawi and its period-

ical publication, *L'Égyptienne* (The Egyptian woman) (1925–1939), is especially enlightening as it critically reviews the viewpoints shaped through “imperial feminisms,” as Davaz calls it (184). *L'Égyptienne* is one of the most striking primary sources that Davaz uses in her study of the accounts of transnationalist interactions and efforts for peace among women’s organizations, including information about earlier peace conferences in Damascus (1930), Baghdad (1932), Tehran (1932), and also a special issue about Turkey (1936), with rich coverage of the news and proceedings of the 1935 Istanbul Congress.

The subsection on women’s movements for peace in the Balkan countries (317–358) also illustrates the similar dilemma that women of the Balkan nations experienced in between nationalist interests and the feminist goals of women’s solidarity beyond national boundaries. This section is also highly informative about the women’s organizations in the Balkans and communication networks among them through the Balkan conferences in the 1930s and meetings of the Little Entente of Women (1923), established by women activists from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Poland, and Czechoslovakia for the purpose of a long-lasting peace in the Balkans after World War I. It also contains information about the critical attitude of Eastern European and Balkan feminists toward the “feminist orientalism” (351) of Western feminists.

In the second part, the feminist pioneers of the early republic are introduced as delegates of the 1935 Congress nominated by the TKB; their biographies are sketched from various sources. The pioneers of the international feminist movement who actively engaged themselves in the various commissions of the IWASEC are also portrayed with their deeds and work for gender equality in employment, payment, citizenship, moral issues, political rights, and maintaining peace, disarmament, and providing global welfare in accordance with the principles of the League of Nations. Throughout the book, we read the parallel efforts of women’s organizations for world peace, though it would have been an unfulfilled goal by the mid-1930s, which led the IWASEC to cease their activities for peace after the outbreak of the war in 1939.

The third part of the book deals with the 1935 Congress of the IWASEC. The whole story of its organization, both from the perspective of the alliance as well as that of the TKB as the host organization, is presented in detail and is the core of this work. Readers learn how the Turkish government successfully monitored the congress by giving full support and guidance to the women’s association and used the event to promote itself as a modern, democratic country to the world, also having its recently elected eighteen women members of the Parliament on the scene. For the history of the women’s movement in Turkey, the 1935 Congress is paradoxical, because it signifies a climax of first-wave feminism in Turkey. Turkish women won their political rights in 1934 and elected the first women members to the Turkish Parliament under Atatürk’s single-party regime, which gave full support to women’s reforms. The 1935 Congress also signifies a break in the women’s movement in Turkey, because the TKB was instructed by the single-party regime to dissolve itself just after the congress, which it did in its final assembly on 10 May 1935, only ten days after the congress. The members of the association were encouraged to continue their efforts in philanthropic organizations and in the so-called People’s Houses, cultural clubs under the auspices of the Republican People’s Party. The dissolution of the TKB also reveals the conflicting

standpoints of some women leaders of the time, especially in their response to Western feminism and the transnational peace movement.

Davaz, in fact, rewrites the forgotten story of this important women's organization and its leading members into the history of Turkish feminism, which had been neglected for so long. Her work is therefore an invaluable contribution to women's history in Turkey. She also follows the story further to post-World War II and the declining significance of the IWASEC (after 1949, the IAW) and the re-establishment of the TKB in 1949, though with a much more moderate profile in terms of women's rights.

The fourth part of the book discusses the interrelations between the IAW and the second phase of the TKB⁴ in the postwar years. Davaz concludes the volume with a fifth part, giving a thorough evaluation of the weakening international feminist "sisterhood" and ideals of world peace in the wake of a new world order in which women's organizations found themselves in a new sociopolitical context divided along economic and political interests between the Anglo-Saxon liberal world on one side and the socialist bloc on the other.

Apart from providing a thorough comprehensive story of what happened to the TKB, the inner conflicts, the relationship of the organization to the government, the pioneering women in the organization, and what functions they assumed in the years after the dissolution, the book also provides accounts of various encounters of feminists from the West with leaders of women's organizations in Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, and India. As the author acknowledges in the preface, she found reports, correspondence among the representatives of member organizations, and speeches given by leading women in the archives of the IAW in the Aletta Institute for Women's History in the Netherlands, the Sophia Smith Collection in the United States, the Women's Library in London, and the Bibliotheque Marguerite Durand in Paris. Through these collections, she read the issues of *Jus suffragii* (The right of suffrage), the periodical published by the IAW, as well as the weekly newspaper called *La française* (The French woman), directed by Cécile Brunschvicg (1877–1946), a suffragist who represented France in the twelfth Congress. Hence, the book can be consulted not only as a biographical dictionary, but also a bibliographic reference especially for primary sources on international women's movements and the history of the women's movement in Turkey. The footnotes given by the author guide the reader through new routes of research, discovering and digging into the personal papers and archives of women as well as the institutional archives of organizations, businesses, ministries, parliaments, and other government offices. Davaz's book is also informative and instructive about women-centered archival work and how to use other sources in the absence of first-hand accounts by women themselves. One such exemplary work embedded in the present research is Necile Tevfik's personal archive mentioned above. The footnotes show how useful these papers have been in tracing the women involved in the activities of the TKB and, notably, in the 1935 Congress.

As Yıldız Ecevit, a feminist academic from the Middle East Technical University, says in her introduction, Davaz's book provides younger generations of women in Turkey with a long history of women's struggles and enriches their memory with instances of transnational feminist concerns dating back to the end of the nineteenth

century. It also covers a range of issues related to transnational feminism, among them world peace, equality, and justice among nations still being longed for, although unattainable so far.

◆ Notes

1. *Türk Kadın Yolu* [The Turkish women's path], 1925–1927), the official journal of the Union of Turkish Women, the last women's periodical published in Ottoman script, was the only journal of the first-wave feminist movement in Turkey at that time. It also sheds light on the international relations of early republican feminists. A section of this journal entitled "World Women's Post" published writings and correspondence between Turkish feminists and their Western counterparts. See <http://kadineserleri.org/about-us/> (accessed 5 September 2018).

2. An annotated catalog, with explanatory notes about each item and its relationship to the other items in the archive and significance in her life as a member of many organizations and a founding member of the TKB, was prepared by Aslı Davaz. See Aslı Davaz, *Bir kadın arşivini okuma denemesi: Necile Tevfik Arşivi Açıklamalı kataloğu (1924–1954)* ["An essay" on reading a woman's private papers: Annotated catalogue of the Necile Tevfik Private Papers (1924–1954)] (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2019). See the special collection of women's papers in the Women's Library, Istanbul, <http://kadineserleri.org/ozel-arsivler-katalog-dizisi/> (accessed 5 September 2018).

3. Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı (Women's Library and Information Center Foundation), founded in 1990; see <http://kadineserleri.org> (accessed 5 September 2018).

4. Another women's periodical used by Davaz is *Kadın Gazetesi* (Women's newspaper) (1947), founded by İffet Halim Oruz, who is acknowledged by Davaz "as the most anti-feminist woman activist" (779) of the period. She opposed the equality demands of the suffragists and Western feminists in favor of Turkish women's reform, thus serving "the national goals" as prescribed by the government (740–746). See Aslı Davaz-Mardin, *Hanımlar Alemi'nden Roza'ya, kadın süreli yayımları bibliyografyası: 1928–1996* [From Hanımlar Alemi to Roza, bibliography of women's periodicals: 1928–1996] (İstanbul: Women's Library and History Foundation, 1998).



Biljana Dojčinović and Ana Kolarić, eds., *Feministički časopisi u Srbiji: Teorija, aktivizam i umetničke prakse u 1990-im i 2000-im* (Feminist periodicals in Serbia: Theory, activism, and artistic practice in the 1990s and 2000s), Belgrade: Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, 2018, 370 pp., price not listed (paperback), ISBN: 978-86-6153-515-4.

Book review by **Ivana Pantelić**

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The collection *Feministički časopisi u Srbiji: Teorija, aktivizam i umetničke prakse u 1990-im i 2000-im* (Feminist periodicals in Serbia: Theory, activism, and artistic practice in the 1990s and 2000s) is the outcome of the PhD program "Theory, Activism and Cultural/

Artistic Practices: Feminist Periodicals in Serbia in the 1990s and 2000s" offered by the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. It includes articles written by the female professors teaching in the PhD program, as well as the female participants in the roundtable "Female Editors Speak—ProFemina and Genero." Apart from the female professors and female researchers, the collection also includes independently written, original research papers by the female and male students of the above-mentioned PhD program.

The collection is divided into six thematic chapters. The introductory chapters written by the editors problematize two phenomena that were cornerstones in the development of feminist periodicals in Serbia at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries. Biljana Dojčinović's introductory article provides an insight into the interdisciplinary character of feminist research, presenting the history of the development of feminist-theorist activity. Ana Kolarić presents the editorial policies, challenges, and obstacles female editors of academic journals encountered. According to Kolarić, some of the problems faced by Serbian editors are universal, but many others are specifically tied to the interdisciplinary research field of feminist epistemology.

The second part of the book includes four contributions that are not necessarily coherently connected. The section begins with a historiographical chapter written by Svetlana Stefanović, where she discusses the relationship between gender and nation, feminism and nation, the participation of women in national causes, and the benefits but also limits that such activities impose on them. Katja Mihurko Poniž's chapter presents valuable research on the history of Slovenian feminist publications with her discourse analysis of case studies of maternity in different historical periods. Stanislava Barac's important chapter on the journal *Feminističke sveske* (Feminist notebooks) problematizes the issue of male violence against women during the 1990s that had characteristics relevant to peacetime but also wartime. Barac analyzes the methods by which the female authors of the journal contributed to the theoretical definition, political awareness, and presentation of gender-based violence. The last chapter in this part, written by Nevena Stanisavljević, deals with the bibliography of the newsletter *Novosti sa ženske scene i Ž.* (News from the women's scene and W). This tabulated overview of all the entries is useful for future feminist research and content analysis.

Two contributions in the third section present the journal *Ženske studije* (Women's studies). Jasmina Lukić, one of the editors of the journal, explores the founding of the Center for Women's Studies in Belgrade and the journal *Ženske studije*. She also presents a parallel analysis of its editorial policy with the editorial policy of *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, thus presenting a clear picture of the specific dynamics and power relations in the academic community in Serbia at the end of the twentieth century based on the activity and social positioning of the center and the journal. The chapter written by Nemanja Glintić follows the previous one as he presents a content analysis of *Ženske studije* with the aim of pointing out the specificities and the editorial policy of the journal.

The fourth section contains articles dealing with the journal *Genero: Journal of Feminist Theory and Cultural Studies*). Katarina Lončarović, the editor of *Genero*, discusses the publishing activity of the Center for Women's Studies, whose publications include *Genero*, and analyzes how the center created space for publishing feminist theory. Nataša Vučenović and Zorana Simić present the contents of all thematic issues and reviews

published in the journal *Genero*. The fifth section focuses on the journal *ProFemina*. Dubravka Đurić, one of the first editors of the journal, writes about its beginnings, the challenges and obstacles conditioned by the time, and the general social context. She also compares *ProFemina* with other not necessarily women's journals from the 1990s, thus presenting a broader picture of the literary cultural space and the position of feminist counteractivity in it. Mila Vojnović analyzes the introductory texts published in *ProFemina* that show the clear goal of feminism to make visible to the public the marginalized authorship of women. Jelena Lalatović's article about literary criticism in *ProFemina* poses the question of whether literature and literary criticism can contribute to women's emancipation as places of microresistance to the hegemony of social systems. Jelena Milinković takes us back to the past, analyzing the contents of the column *Portret prethodnice* (Portrait of a precursor) in *ProFemina* that laid the groundwork both for researching the history of literature written by women and women's periodicals in Serbia, thus for the first time introducing the public to very important but completely forgotten female authors from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The final section deals with the contemporary project coming from the field of digital humanities: *Knjiženstvo* (Translation). Zorana Simić, presenting the basic goals of the project, goes on to problematize the challenges, advantages, and disadvantages of digital humanities as a new (trans)disciplinary field, while Nataša Vučenović presents a detailed overview of all the published essays in the online journal *Knjiženstvo* and thus completes this project.

This collection presents detailed and useful material for all interested female and male readers. As a source for study, periodicals are challenging because they allow for an analysis of specific contents but also give contemporary social contexts. Since it deals with feminist periodicals, a topic that is multiply marginalized, the importance of this collection is obvious and beyond doubt. Its greatest significance is the fact that it is intended for humanities students of all disciplines. Rich in contents, the collection problematizes the different aspects of humanities and contributes to the interdisciplinarity of women's literary history.



Melanie Ilic, ed., *The Palgrave Handbook of Women and Gender in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 572 pp., \$239 (e-book) ISBN: 978-1-137-54904-4; ISBN: 978-1-137-54905-1.

Book review by **Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild**
Davis Center, Harvard University



This book is like a smorgasbord of well-written treatises by scholars in the field of women's and gender studies. It is notable for including a number of essays by Russian

and former Soviet bloc scholars. Editor Melanie Ilic's efforts for inclusion definitely deserve praise. It is notable also for including an essay about Russian peasant women, until quite recently the majority of the female population in Russia and the Soviet Union, but often neglected in anthologies about Russian and Soviet women. Many of the essays address the experiences of ordinary people through the upheavals of collectivization, war, and postwar privation. The collection is not perfect. It does not, for example, include coverage of postwar dissidents, or the feminist movement in Russia either before, during, or after the Soviet period. While one essay discusses Soviet homophobia, LGBTQ voices are absent. And as with any smorgasbord, some offerings are more tasty—and filling—than others.

The book comprises thirty essays, plus an introduction by editor Melanie Ilic. Ilic has a distinguished career in the field and is eminently qualified to edit such a volume. She is currently Professor of Soviet History at the University of Gloucestershire, UK, and Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies (CREES), at the University of Birmingham. Most of the contributing scholars are from the British Isles and the European continent, including the former Soviet Union, refreshingly different from many such collections. Each essay includes a conclusion, a helpful summary of its major arguments.

I cannot possibly do justice to all the important essays included in this volume, but here's an overview of the contents. The first, Alison Rowley's "Russian Revolutionary as American Celebrity: A Case Study of Yekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaya," surveys the rise and fall of a prominent prerevolutionary figure, adopted by radicals and feminists in the US, including Alice Stone Blackwell, the only child of Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell. Rowley traces how Breshko-Breshkovskaya became a celebrity in the West and how this saved her from even more brutal treatment by the tsarist regime. But this celebrity had its limits. After the Bolshevik Revolution, as Breshko-Breshkovskaya escalated her criticism, her support fell precipitously. By mid-1919 until her death in 1934, "as a political force, she was spent" (20). In this, the Russian revolutionary's trajectory resembles that of Emma Goldman, the celebrated US anarchist, whose prescient criticism of the Bolsheviks' authoritarianism was also ignored.

Vera Zasulich is probably the most well-known Russian female terrorist. As a 28-year-old, she shot and wounded F. F. Trepov, the St. Petersburg chief of police, protesting his brutal policies toward political prisoners. Captured and tried, Zasulich achieved great fame as her trial ended in her acquittal. Hungarian scholar Szilvia Nagy explores Zasulich's life and politics. This is the least satisfying of the essays in this collection. Nagy attributes the prominence of women among Russian radical terrorists to their noble origins, contact with "radical viewpoints" when they studied abroad (the outside agitator argument), and a commitment to gender equality in the underground movements. This does not explain the prominence of Jewish women, who were decidedly not of noble origins. Nor does it explain why Russian women, both Jewish and non-Jewish, were the majority of those who studied in Western European universities. Most questionable is Nagy's discussion of the argument that those who turned to terrorism were mentally ill, without really contextualizing this gender stereotype. Nagy does not endorse this hypothesis, but in simply presenting it, she legitimizes it. Such an argument comes close to reviving sexist arguments about wom-

en's "hysteria." Were male terrorists similarly psychologically disturbed? Further, such speculation diverts the focus away from the sheer brutality of the tsarist regime. There were real reasons why women and men, desperate for change, chose a variety of tactics to reform or bring down the autocracy. And there are cultural and historical reasons why Russian women in particular far outnumbered Western women in the level of their political engagement. Scholars such as Barbara Engel and Richard Stites, neither of whom is cited in this article, have explored these issues in more complex ways.

Erin Katherine Krafft's "Sophia on the Street: Boulevard Literature Denies the Divine" compares the concept of the new woman, articulated by Alexandra Kollontai, as opposed to Vladimir Solov'ev's image of the divine Sophia. She focuses more specifically on boulevard literature, romance novels portraying the conflicts connected with changing images of women. In particular she discusses Anastasia Verbitskaya's writings, most notably *Keys to Happiness* and the character of Manya. Krafft criticizes Verbitskaya, arguing that she conflates independence with masculinity. Instead she prefers the character of Tanya in Yevdokiya Nagrodskaya's less well-known *Wrath of Dionysus*, who, she argues, as a role model for women's autonomy, is much more representative of the "new woman": Krafft's juxtaposition of Sophia and the new woman is thought-provoking: "Sophia, the new woman of the literary avant-garde, stood on fresh ground alongside the new woman of the political avant-garde, and though neither figure proved to be the perfect role model for the new women who emerged on the boulevard, both offered productive templates against which new understandings of femininity and a woman's status in society could be tested" (52).

Barbara Alpern Engel's "On the Eve: Gender, Historiography and the Prelude to Revolution" celebrates "the rebirth of a discipline" (55), specifically women's and gender studies of Russia and the USSR. Engel's essay, part memoir and part survey of the field, is notable for connecting her participation in the women's movement with her scholarship. Engel provides a wide-ranging exploration of the field from the early 1970s to today. She is very positive about the growth in women's and gender studies both in the West and in the former Soviet Union, and her discussion of the scholarship is wide-ranging. Her extensive footnotes provide further information for those interested in research in the field. I am not as sanguine as Engel about further development of the field in the former Soviet bloc, given the attacks on women's studies programs and "gender ideology" and the "traditional values" agenda of Putin, Orban, and Poland's Law and Justice Party leaders.

Katy Turton's "Gender and Family in the Russian Revolutionary Movement" discusses a rarely researched but significant topic, arguing that "domestic family life and the highest levels of revolutionary conspiracy were closely intertwined" (70). She shows how the home was often the site of revolutionary meetings and strategy sessions and that all members of the family, including children, often participated. Her essay provides an important counterpoint to the traditional notions discounting women's contributions to the revolutionary movement. Her final argument is that "for women the domestic setting was a space in which they were supremely confident and capable, where they could 'play' the housewife and mother, but subvert the expectations associated with those identities" (77). When the revolution moved out of the home and into control of the state, women lost the space in which they were included

and were often excluded in the public sphere. Turton's argument is persuasive and an important corrective to the standard arguments about women's lack of visibility and agency in the revolutionary movement.

Alissa Klots's "The Kitchen Maid as Revolutionary Symbol: Paid Domestic Labour and the Emancipation of Soviet Women, 1917–1941" explores shifting concepts and policies about domestic servants—from Lenin's proclaiming that "the cooks shall rule" to acceptance of some forms of paid household service by the 1930s into the postwar period. Klots did an impressive amount of archival research to trace the shifts in Soviet policy, from a focus on the emancipation of the domestic worker to concern about the new Soviet mother and her needs, all in a gendered context.

Melanie Ilic's "'Equal Pay for Equal Work': Women's Wages in Soviet Russia" focuses on her subject in the interwar period. Critiquing the lack of attention to this issue by both prewar feminists and postrevolution socialists, she shows that women, both in industrial and white-collar settings, faced a Soviet-era "glass ceiling" that was never breached.

Yulia Gradskova's "Emancipation at the Crossroads Between the 'Woman Question' and the 'National Question'" explores the intersection of the politics of women's emancipation and the emancipation of non-Russian and non-Christian nations within the USSR. Such nations were often considered backward and in need of enlightenment. To assess Soviet policies, primarily in the early period, Gradskova did a deep dive into the archival materials for the *Kommissia po uluchsheniyu truda i byta zhenshchin*, or KUTBZh (Commission for the Improvement of the Work and the Everyday Life of Women), which functioned from 1926 to 1932. The commission worked closely with the *Zhenotdel*, the subject of much more scholarly attention. Gradskova has mined the archive well. She notes the mixed results of the commission's work. It reinforced the notion of the imperial center ministering to backward nations on the periphery, but individual programs, such as kindergartens and divorce protection for women, were quite successful.

Jonathan Waterlow's "Babushka, Harlot, Helper, Joker: Women and Gender in 1930s Political Humour" surveys male and female joke telling. Waterlow argues that male humor often demonstrated men's anxiety about Soviet emancipation propaganda and was often sexualized, denigrating women. In contrast, female humor, while less sexualized, was more varied and transgressive than usually portrayed. In Waterlow's discourse, women have a sense of humor, and discovering it involves seeing through gendered assumptions.

Liubov Denisova's "The Daily Life of Russian Peasant Women" pays attention to the often-overlooked scholarship about female peasants, until recently the majority of the Russian female population. Using a rich collection of largely archival sources, Denisova paints a complex portrait of the lives of peasant women from collectivization to the 1960s. She details many examples of peasant women's resistance to collectivization; often it was the women who openly protested while the men stayed silent. While Soviet authorities encouraged young peasant women to join in the project of modernization, highlighting the accomplishments of tractor driver Pasha Angelina and other high achievers, the lot of the average peasant woman remained difficult, ranging from repression and starvation in the 1930s through the war years to the continued misogyn-

yny and corruption of the postwar period. Peasant women were able to win the right to raise food in private plots, which sustained them through many difficult times. In her overall comprehensive survey of continuity and change for female peasants, Denisova does not mention the work of Esther Kingston-Mann in highlighting private plots as a successful example of peasant women's resistance. Overall, Denisova's assessment is gloomy. Although some women benefited from emancipatory policies, for the most part the Soviet state treated the peasantry, and women in the countryside, with benign neglect.

Junbae Jo's "Memory and History: Korean Women's Experiences of Repression During the Stalin Era" makes visible the history of the treatment of the Soviet Korean minority and their deportation to Central Asia in the late 1930s. Jo delves into the histories of three women, Viviana Pak, Yevgeniya Tsoi, and Svetlana Li, and through them shines a light on the Soviet Korean experience from idealism and belief in the revolution to KGB murder, uprooting, gulag confinement, exile, and finally rehabilitation and the unearthing of repressed and contested memory. There is much more that needs to be known about Koreans in the USSR, and this is an important contribution to this history.

Leena Kurvet-Käosaar's "Travelling Memory and Memory of Travel in Estonian Women's Deportation Stories" recounts deportation stories from this Baltic nation, then part of the USSR, after World War II. Along with Jo's description of Korean women's experiences, Kurvet-Käosaar's fleshes out the still too invisible history of Stalinist repression against national groups considered traitorous in the Soviet leader's paranoid mind.

Elizabeth Waters's "Heroism in the Frame: Gender, Nationality and Propaganda in Tashkent and Moscow, 1924–1945" adds to our understanding about women and gender in Central Asia. Waters compares Soviet propaganda posters in the capital of Uzbekistan with those shown in the Russian capital. She notes that during the war the Uzbek posters moved from predominantly Russian figures to representations of Uzbek heroism, both female and male. The authorities were very sensitive to both gendered and national representations. Soviet-era symbols were so successful that they are still being used in the now independent secular state of Uzbekistan.

Roger D. Markwick's "'The Motherland Calls': Soviet Women in the Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945" surveys the many ways in which the Soviet state mobilized women in its fight for survival against the Nazi invaders. From farm laborers to industrial workers to medical personnel to soldiers and pilots, women for the most part responded positively to the call. Markwick notes the success of women pilots, who made up the majority of wartime female Heroes of the Soviet Union. But he interprets "night witches," the name given the women, as "a contemptuous sobriquet German soldiers gave them" (225). Witches were often the objects of fear and respect. Given the rampant misogyny of Nazi ideology, this calls for a more nuanced interpretation rather than a brief throwaway line. Markwick notes that the postvictory cult of the war was overwhelmingly male, rendering women's participation largely invisible. He perceptively concludes that "the ultimate victor in the Great Patriotic War was the Soviet state, which consolidated the Stalinist troika of patriotism, motherhood and family, thereby thwarting women's emancipation" (229).

Carmen Scheide's "Unstintingly Master Warfare': Women in the Red Army" surveys women's experience in the Soviet military, the gender stereotypes that affected their participation, and the invisibility of this story in the postwar myth of the Great Patriotic War. Despite Soviet rhetoric touting female emancipation, stereotypes abounded. Women were quickly demobilized; only female fighter pilots, the "night witches," have received substantial recognition for their wartime exploits. Scheide has done her research, citing important archival sources.

Susan Grant's "Nurses in the Soviet Union: Explorations of Gender in State and Society" provides added evidence for the great disparity between Soviet theory and reality. Although in the 1930s the state encouraged images of nurses as scientific workers, during the war and after nurses were largely portrayed in maternal roles. Other aspects of their caregiving and overall medical training were minimized; this continued through the rest of the Soviet period.

Ekaterina Kalemeneva and Julia Lajus's "Soviet Female Experts in the Polar Regions" again brings light to a little studied subject. Addressing the topic of Soviet female scientists working in the harsh outdoors, the authors use the examples of two women, Maria Vasil'evna Klenova (1898–1976), "a leading marine geologist who participated annually in expeditions in the Arctic Ocean between 1925 and 1935 and in 1959 became the first Soviet female scientist to work in Antarctica, and Tat'yana Vladimirovna Rimskaya-Korsakova (1915–2006) who devoted most of her professional life to the problems of urban planning in Arctic regions" (268). Klenova came from humble origins; Rimskaya-Korsakova from the famous composer's family. Both had productive careers but both encountered gender barriers that limited their rise in the Soviet system and gave the lie to the state's emancipation propaganda.

Robert Hornsby's "Women and Girls in the Post-Stalin Komsomol" offers a survey of the Komsomol experience, which included about half of all Soviets between fourteen and twenty-eight years old in this period. Hornsby discusses the general impact of Komsomol membership on young women—"often among its most dedicated activists" (285–286)—as well as the ways in which gender considerations affected the operation of the organization across the USSR. Although Hornsby argues that the Komsomol "tended not to think about specific gender matters any more by the post-Stalin years" (286), his own evidence belies this assertion. While Komsomol chapters varied widely in treatment of women and there were some egregious examples of abuse, gender representation was clearly a concern for the Central Committee. Hornsby provides examples of Komsomol leaders chiding local chapters for low numbers of women as members or leaders. In comparison with the Communist Party and Western political organizations, Hornsby argues that female delegates were elected to Komsomol congresses in much greater numbers.

Zamira Yusufionova-Abman's "State Feminism in Soviet Central Asia: Anti-Religious Campaigns and Muslim Women in Tajikistan, 1953–1982" sheds light on another aspect of the status of women in Central Asia. The author discusses the policies initiated under Khrushchev and continued by Brezhnev to combat religious influence in Central Asia, especially in the rural areas. Focusing on Tajikistan, she argues that the campaigns failed in part because Soviet authorities lacked an understanding of women's agency in maintaining these traditions.

Laima Žilinskienė's "Women's Social Adaptation Models in Soviet Lithuania" discusses the life histories of a group of women who lived through different parts of the transformative stages in the country's history—"Stalin," "Thaw," "Stagnation," and "Perestroika." Based on rigorously structured interviews with 180 women, the data shows that these stages occurred within the borders of the same state but required major changes from those who lived through them.

Claire McCallum's "Man About the House: Male Domesticity and Fatherhood in Soviet Visual Satire Under Khrushchev" shows how post-Stalin policies reflected a desire to restructure the family and encourage men to take on more domestic responsibilities. Satirical literature played a significant part in this effort. As McCallum writes: "The family tableaux which began to appear in the mid-1950s were part of a much broader visual re-conceptualization of the place of men within the home which occurred after the death of Stalin" (333). Providing a wide range of examples, McCallum documents "how central paternity had become to the Soviet masculine ideal by the mid-1960s" (340). McCallum adds to the growing literature about changing gender policies after the death of Stalin, the ultimate father figure.

Rustam Alexander's "Sex Education and the Depiction of Homosexuality Under Khrushchev" is the only essay in this collection that addresses the subject of Soviet sexual minorities. Alexander surveys the evolution of sex manuals from the postwar Stalin period to Brezhnev's ascension. The manuals are notable for their increasingly homophobic tone. The descriptions of homosexuality focus exclusively on men, especially on pedophiles, and equate such behavior with Western decadence that threatens exclusively heterosexual socialist morality. More historical context would have been helpful. Alexander does not mention the postrevolutionary decriminalization of homosexuality as part of early Soviet efforts at sexual liberation. These policies were decisively repudiated by Stalin, who outlawed male homosexuality in the 1934 criminal code.

Maija Runcis and Lilita Zalkans's "Women's Role in the Alternative Culture Movements in Soviet Latvia, 1960–1990" uses the life stories of two participants in alternative groups to highlight the shifting nature and definitions of resistance and the gendered nature of their actions as interpreted in the current highly nationalist conditions of modern-day Latvia. The two women are Māra Zirņīte of the alternative cultural scene of the 1960s and 1970s, and Gunta Rožkalne of the alternative religious scene of the 1980s. Although Runcis and Zalkans are circumspect in discussing their interview experiences, it is evident that the interviewees' level of cooperation, their willingness to share their stories and address their gender implications, reflect contemporary divisions in interpreting Latvia's Soviet legacy.

Elena Katz and Judith Pallot's "'As the Thread Follows the Needle': The Social Construction of the Prisoner's Wife in Russia from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century" surveys the endurance of the symbolism of the *dekabristas* (female Decembrists), who followed their husbands into Siberian exile after the failed 1825 Decembrist revolt. Despite the radically different circumstances of the gulag and post-Soviet prisons, the notion that wives have, as posted on the website of the Federal Prison Service, "a moral, and often material, responsibility to support the prisoner" persists.

Larisa Kosygina's "'Forced Re-Settlers' in Post-Soviet Russia: Gender and Age Dimensions of Social Inequality in State Assistance with Permanent Housing" surveys the history of migration back to Russia from the former Soviet republics and argues for a more nuanced understanding of the impact of state aid, including an awareness of intersectionality, gender, and age discrimination.

Holly Porteous's "'A Woman Isn't a Woman When She's Not Concerned About the Way She Looks': Beauty Labour and Femininity in Post-Soviet Russia" discusses changes in normative concepts of women's beauty after the collapse of the USSR. In many ways this represents the triumph of Western capitalist norms and the backlash against Soviet notions of emancipation. Russian women have a different past; some of those interviewed reflect awareness of more natural Soviet notions of feminine beauty. They link "'choice' to the Soviet past, which contradicts prominent discourses of choice more often linked to the neoliberal, capitalist global order." (422)

Olga Tabachnikova and Natalia Vinokurova's "New Russian 'Macho' Between Literature and Life" argues, primarily using the work of popular Russian writer Zakhar Prilepin, for a distinctive and Russian machismo, brutal on the surface but tender, particularly in relation to women, and harking back to older traditions of masculinity.

Lynne Attwood and Olga Isupova's "'To Give Birth or Not to Give Birth?' Having Children in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia" addresses choice within the framework of Russia's demographic crisis. They note the support given to the Russian "traditional values" agenda by groups such as the right-wing US-based World Congress of Families, promoting a homophobic agenda and designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Using a "netnographic" approach, the authors conclude that the material incentives offered by Putin, which reflect the heteronormativity of the Russian state at this point, have not produced the desired result. They have not persuaded many women to have more than one child, or any children at all.

Mary Buckley's "Recent Russian Press Coverage of Unfree Labour" addresses the various types of human trafficking. She provides a short overview of the issue in Russia, cites key antitrafficking efforts, and discusses Russian press coverage of specific forced labor cases. Buckley's is a very helpful survey of a problem that exploded with the Soviet collapse. In her narrative, she weaves in questions of expanding notions of citizenship along with rising xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment.

The final essay in this collection is Ulrike Ziemer's "Opportunities for Self-Realisation? Young Women's Experiences of Higher Education in Russia." Despite Soviet strides in extending education to the masses, and higher education enrollment percentages second only to the US, Russian higher education institutions face a series of problems. Some, such as gender equity in pay and gendered choices of courses and career paths, are common in the West as well. "Retraditionalization" and high levels of corruption are particularly egregious in Russia. The women interviewed for this study operate within societal constraints, and do not challenge them. The focus on the Krasnodar' region provides more comparative data for research on areas outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

In sum, this is an important collection of essays, which can in its diversity and historical range be productively used in many educational venues, for Zoom or in

classroom settings, when they return, as well as for general readers interested in Russia and the former Soviet bloc.



Luciana M. Jinga, ed., *The Other Half of Communism: Women's Outlook*, in *History of Communism in Europe*, vol. 8, Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2018, 348 pp., USD 40 (paperback), ISBN: 978-606-697-070-9.

Book review by **Elizabeth A. Wood**
Professor of History, MIT



The authors in this volume have, each in their own way, tried to crack a rather tough nut. To what extent, they ask, did communism or socialism (as it was variously called) in different Eastern European countries succeed in “emancipating” women, leveling the playing field and allowing them to reach their full potential? This conundrum itself has many aspects. How do you define what “emancipation” meant in the first place? How do you find out what really happened in these societies that were dominated by propaganda trumpeting success? How do you measure what was a success or at least progress? In the end, the question of agency dominates all others: how well were women and some men able to create changes in gendered social structures in societies with strong, some would say totalitarian, controls in the party structures, both local and national?

The volume consists of fourteen articles covering women’s history, literature, and memoirs in the interwar and postwar periods in Poland (4), Romania (3), Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Italy, and the Soviet Union. The authors take a variety of approaches, including studying legislation and practices, developing collective biographies and analyzing memoirs of women communists, and examining literary images of women and women’s publications.

The article most critical of state rhetoric and claims of emancipating women is undoubtedly Luciana Jinga’s “Comrade First, Baba Second: State Violence against Women in Communist Romania,” which analyzes official decrees, articles in the communist women’s magazine, and in-depth, personal interviews to look at both personal and structural violence against women in the family and through the state’s pronatalist discourse and practice. The Romanian authorities, she shows, systematically denied the existence of domestic violence against women, assumed a heterosexual family structure, discriminated against women’s access to traditional male occupations, and limited women’s access to the courts in cases of violence by their male spouses. If a woman did want to use the courts, she had to haul her battering husband before a “reconciliation committee,” which might require them to get back together!

Three strong articles address women communists’ roles in interwar and postwar Poland: Agnieszka Mrozik, “Communism as a Generational Herstory: Reading

Post-Stalinist Memoirs of Polish Communist Women"; Natalia Jarska, "Women Communists and Polish Communist Party: From 'Fanatic' Revolutionaries to Invisible Bureaucrats (1918–1965)"; and Jan A. Burek, "From Party Leaders to Social Outcasts. Women's Political Activism during the Establishing of Communist Power in a Polish Industrial Town (Żyrardów, 1945–1948)." Jarska and Mrozik show how women gained the status of "comrades" through their time in prison during the interwar period, developing a reputation as strong, passionate fighters willing to sacrifice themselves unconditionally for the party, the revolution, and the nation. Yet in the postwar period when the (mostly male) communists came to power, they tended to marginalize women in women's departments ignored by male party elites, where they became the guardians of party history ("aunts of the revolution," as both authors show), but also bureaucrats and members of Control Commissions that sought to police the morality of party and union members. They also tended to be disproportionately involved in the care sector, as Burek shows in the textile town of Żyrardów. But Burek also shows how they were pushed out of power and used instrumentally to attack other men. One wife was personally attacked in October 1945, he argues, as a veiled way of toppling her husband. In other moments, the discourse of "care" was used by the town committee of the Polish Workers' Party (PWP) to "chip away at the power of the textile factory's director." Women gained some influence in this town of textile workers (majority female since the 1880s) in 1946 when Agnieszka Tomaszewska, an influential prewar labor organizer, took charge of the Polish Socialist Party (PSP), but that was not to be long-lived. Following a major strike in 1947 and during the reunification of the PWP and the PSP, women were disproportionately punished and pushed out of the party, as well as being accused of sexual improprieties.

In the postwar period (1960s–1970s), Julia Mead and Kristen Ghodsee ("Debating Gender in State Socialist Women's Magazines: The Cases of Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia") examine women's periodicals (*Vlast* [Homeland] in Czechoslovakia and *Zhenata dnes* [The woman today] in Bulgaria) to determine how they addressed what was often called women's "double burden," working long hours in the workplace and also juggling families and childcare issues. They do an admirable job of considering the variety of possible meanings of "emancipation," ranging from the idea of liberating women from the constraints of the patriarchal family, to definitions of "femininity" and "masculinity," to questions of what to do about unmarried women without children, to the issue of men's involvement in housework and childcare. In Mead's story of Czech and Slovak efforts, the most emancipatory ideas seem to have come at the time of the radical ideas of "socialism with a human face" (1968) but were firmly stamped out in the ensuing period. In Ghodsee's findings on Bulgaria, the discussions of fatherhood seem to have lasted longer (from 1968 into the 1980s), but without having a definitive effect. Mead and Ghodsee assume that the lead culprit in the failure to transform gender relations is "the lingering influence of patriarchy" (25) and, in the Czech case, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Prague in 1968. It would have been good, however, to hear about the sources of enlightened ideas on gender in the first place, beyond "socialist ideals." What about the role of pan-European ideas of the "New Woman" in the interwar period? What about the material influence of women's increasing involvement in industrial labor? What about male communists' "mansplaining Bolshe-

vism" (as Alexander Fokin elsewhere in the volume calls emancipation from above): how did women's discussions in the women's journals arise in part as a reaction to the Czech and Bulgarian communist parties' own masculinist rhetoric, a topic Mead and Ghodsee don't address?

Graziano Mamone also provides an interesting, if poorly translated, discussion of what he calls "The Big Contradiction: Feminism and Communism in the Magazine *Lotta Continua*, 1968–1978." Here he shows the fragmentation of both the feminist and communist movements and the ways in which the introduction of feminism contributed to what he calls "the decline of communist militancy" (59). *Lotta continua* (The continuous struggle), the publication of the leading left-wing organization of the same name, tried, he argues, to publish readers' letters about popular issues of the family and home that ultimately acted as "a boomerang that hit the militancy's foundations" (60), highlighting sexism within the movement. Yet in the end the reader is left to wonder about Mamone's apparent conclusion that the net harm of the feminist issues was greater than the net gain of airing the problems. If women's issues had instead been silenced, would they not have continued to perpetuate and perhaps exacerbate patriarchal ideas?

In one last important article (unfortunately, I cannot discuss them all), Iva Jelušić ("The Mother in the Yugoslav Partisan Myth: Creative Revisions and Subversive Messages in Women-Centred Narratives") explores the range of images of women in four literary works about the Yugoslav partisan uprisings, showing how the figure of the woman and mother is often subordinated to dominant male imagery, the fraternity of male partisans, and men's partisan romances.

In the end, these essays make me wonder about the antifeminist directions of many Eastern European countries in the post-Soviet period. To what extent did these conflicts and the patriarchal attitudes of the movement's own male (and sometimes female) leaders contribute to the rejection of feminism and gender equality once the official "communist" or "socialist" period was over? Feminist revisionists today have pioneered excellent discussions of the degree to which "women's issues" in the Eastern bloc were and were not captured by state control, were and were not emancipatory, did and did not have agency. How often, one wonders, did these often negative images of women communists as ardent but dogmatic, unsexed or oversexed, affect the postcommunist period with its meteoric rise of blatant sexism and complete rejection of state projects of gender transformation? It is important too to remember that the "Cold War" narrative that the revisionists want to critique (which is good to critique) emerged not only from liberal feminists but also from post-Soviet bloc citizens themselves who sometimes hated the gender projects, perhaps precisely because they embodied hypocrisy but also because of the embedded misogyny of the later communist propaganda itself.

Ultimately, the editor is to be commended for a thought-provoking collection of essays that does not pretend to provide monolithic answers to the question of "women's outlook." The book would have benefited, however, from greater editorial control to make sure the English translations were more readable (too often one has to guess at the meanings of words and phrases) and to provide more background on particularly obscure concepts. More discussion of different issues of sexuality would also have been a key topic to take up, though, of course, it is impossible to do everything.



Teresa Kulawik and Zhanna Kravchenko, eds., *Borderlands in European Gender Studies: Beyond the East-West Frontier*, New York: Routledge, 2020, 264 pp., \$140.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-0-367-25896-2.

Book review by **Maria Bucur**
Indiana University, USA



This collection of ten essays offers a new iteration of discussions ongoing in the world of feminist debates among scholars interested in gender relations in postcommunist Europe in the past thirty years. The editors represent the project as a critical intervention in an epistemic void that seems to have bypassed the Second World, and we are to understand each individual contribution as a model for such a productive intervention.

I start my reading with what I understand to be the shared parameters of this collection. Feminism seems to be a core positioning, though no author goes to the trouble to define their own feminism. So what “feminist theory” comes to mean here is more of an implicit issue, linked to the methods, scholarship, and specific analytical moves made by each author. And they are quite different from each other, as one would expect, even as they hold some important commonalities. Theory and praxis (or activism) are necessarily related in the definition used by most authors. They all examine to some extent the inability of Western feminist theories to capture the realities of life under state socialism and postsocialism. Yet in articulating inadequacies of this sort, the bibliography of each contribution is filled with theoretical writings by a variety of Western scholars who have had no interest in Eastern Europe thirty years ago or today, and to a lesser extent to people from the region. Those who made it their professional mission to link these two academic spaces through edited work, coauthorship, or shared research get almost no mention. So much for the value of semiperipheries. Kimberle Crenshaw is someone to quote approvingly, as is Audre Lorde, even as the authors in this book critique Western feminists in toto. So, what are these two authors, not Western feminists?

The authors use “Eastern” as a category that has meaning without needing too much definition. With that, we begin to see slippages from case studies, which are limited in their scope to Poland, the Russian Federation, Serbia, and Estonia, to speak for a region that most feminist scholars have come to agree is riddled with major cultural, discursive, behavioral, and institutional differences. “Eastern Europe” today continues to be a highly contested term, and when one calls for making context more meaningful for theorizing, the reader expects a bit more self-awareness of speaking with one voice for contexts that are quite different from each other.

As with most edited volumes, the quality of the individual contributions varies. The book is divided into three sections. The first section, “Bringing in the Second Other,” offers four different takes on what this “second Other” can mean. The very fact that what is “second Other” gets defined differently by the various authors al-

ready suggests that intersectionality is in fact a necessary analytic here. We have a presentation of how Western academic feminism “travelled East,” though unfortunately Agnieszka Graff does not stop to offer some basic information that seems absolutely essential. Academic feminism without a clear institutional commitment to it is a very different beast than academic feminism that has been able to construct some sort of gender studies core curriculum. And what the reader does not appreciate at the end of reading this otherwise very interesting piece is that in 2020 there are fewer institutionalized feminist theory and gender studies programs in postcommunist countries in Europe than there were ten years ago. That is unmitigated gender analysis regress in academia. And that is where I think our discussion needs to go with regard to what feminism in postcommunist countries can mean in the future. The fact that there is no well-established feminist network among academics in Eastern Europe, a space and resource that would support research and dissemination, together with other public policy programs related to gender justice, should be something to discuss, though it does not really come into play here. The fact that in 2020 gender scholars from postcommunist countries need to meet in Strasbourg to discuss gender violence policies in Eastern Europe is something we need to talk about as not just an East-West issue, but as an East-East one.

Marina Hughson’s analysis of Serbian masculinities is a brief incursion into the theorization of semiperiphery and features some of the findings she has already published in other forms through important research projects she has undertaken in the past twenty years. It is outstanding work that needs to be replicated in the field, as gender analysis in the postcommunist spaces has lagged in interest in masculinities. Two studies on postcoloniality round out this section, both examining the usefulness of the occidental theorizing of colonialism in the realm of Eastern Europe and Russia.

The second part has a more awkward relationship to the concept of boundary. Two cases focus on feminist positionings in relation to reproductive technologies. I had a hard time taking seriously an essay that starts with “reproductive technologies have been a matter of feminist concern for over thirty years,” when a rich historiography on this issue puts the concern of feminists with reproductive technologies back over one hundred years. The first essay is very selective in its framing and misses important work done on feminism and reproductive technologies focusing on many parts of the world. And to write any scholarship on these issues without discussing the enormous economic burden posed by these technologies, a burden that has race, class, and gender elements to it, seems to me somewhat pointless. I found the chapter on disidentification to be bolder and more provocative in its reading of particular representations of gender identity and articulation of queerness in postcommunist spaces.

The last section focuses on citizenship and engages with the concept through the lens of intersectionality. We have an essay on whiteness and movement East-West in which whiteness is defined against some abstract concept of race; but not once is any reference to the Roma included, for countries where the only “other” concrete racial category of citizens in relation to whites are the Roma. A second offering focuses on the masculinist assumptions that undergird access to higher education in Russia through the state exam that in many countries is known as the “baccalaureate.” The author pro-

vides a close reading of the implicit gendered components the standards undergirding the exam contain, to demonstrate that the model Russian citizen entering higher education is understood as male, without regard for gender differences. The final essay in the third part makes a claim that an intersectional framework in researching women's participation in politics is necessary for better understanding how women understand the concept of quotas in relation to representation in politics. Based on thirty interviews (seems like ten for each of three countries), the research represents a small comparative study and a hypothesis worth testing further.

For scholars interested in specific topics having to do with the case studies presented here, some essays in this collection will likely provide useful provocations and findings. Yet the book doesn't quite hit its intended mark if the larger aim of this collection was to fill an epistemic void that focusing on Eastern Europe, with its unique historical context, might bring. In the end, the deconstructive impulse is much stronger in these analyses than any theorization that places the specific empirical reality of Eastern European gender regimes at the heart of its epistemology.



Jill Massino, *Ambiguous Transitions: Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2019, 466 pp., USD 122 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-785-33598-3.

Book review by **Anna Müller**
University of Michigan, USA



The cover of the book under review shows a group of people sitting around a table on a summer day—it is either a casual gathering or a moment of celebration. There are three laughing women, a child standing close to one of the women, and a man. The women are elegantly dressed, while the man dressed in a white tank top looks rather informal, suggesting a stereotypical Eastern European man. Covered with a tablecloth, the table is full of various goodies, which as we can easily imagine were prepared by the women. There is an obvious story that the author of the photo conveys—that of joyous celebrations prepared and organized most likely by women. But as with any photograph, the message is fragmented. It portrays a life frozen in a given moment that invites us to view a given reality from a certain angle. There are two predominant ways of viewing reality in former socialist countries, Romania being one of them: either a nostalgic view of the past, where daily difficulties are colored or overshadowed by daily victories and hard-won pleasures, or a view that portrays life as saturated with stories of shortages, state surveillance, and coercive practices. But already the first pages of Jill Massino's excellent *Ambiguous Transitions: Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania* remind readers that reality is always much more complicated than the most immediate images and one-sided

visions of that reality. It entices the reader to look beyond the image on the cover and reflect on the ambiguous connections and negotiations that various actors—individuals as well as state institutions—engaged in. The book's thematic matter at hand is a socialist Romania, but the conceptual reflection and the critical investigation of reality is something that extends far beyond Romania, or, for that matter, any socialist or authoritarian country. The book explores the connections and the interplay that took place daily between various aspects of life in Romania—oppressive and emancipatory, monotonous and joyous, ordinary and extraordinary (3); these connections and negotiations can serve to historicize the lives of historical actors, in this case, the women of socialist Romania.

While looking at policies, media representations, and stories from postwar socialist Romania, from the early Cold War years to the present, the book offers a dynamic and complex image of the centrality of gender in the process of fashioning a new socialist state. Complex concepts about the roles women were expected to play influenced policy making and social organization in the process of socialist modernization. As Massino argues, the reception of these policies—some of which were ambiguous—shows women as objects of state policy but also active agents of their own lives. While the women remain at the center of this book, the book also portrays various actors—ordinary members of society, men and women, as well as intellectuals and experts—in a never-ending dance of defining what it means to occupy a certain social role. Hence, the nexus of gender, daily life, nation, and state that the book discusses serves to complicate our understanding of the concepts of citizenship. While using daily life and gender as tools to analyze life in socialist Romania, Massino relies on the concept of "*experience*" as a meaningful category of analysis, not only as something that is constructed and mediated by language but also as something that helps us make sense of the daily lives of historical subjects—their subjectivities as well as the ways social hierarchies are established and challenged in daily lives. She hence creates space for reflection on what is agency and how we can define and analyze the agency of people involved in often difficult relations with an authoritarian state. In addition to showing a complex image of socialist Romania, Massino's work offers an interesting lens through which to investigate other countries of the Eastern bloc, as well as non-communist regimes and societies in transition.

The book is organized into seven chapters. The first, "The Times, They Are A-Changin': Gender, Citizenship, and the Transition to Socialism," provides readers with an overview of the position of women in Romanian society through the establishment of socialism. The second chapter, "Children of the Revolution: Gender and the (Ab)Normality of Growing Up Socialist," discusses the place children and youth, considered most receptive to the new values, played in the process. It examines emancipatory state policies that widened female youths' opportunities for growth, but it also notices the presence of social groups that were regarded either as politically suspicious (here Massino introduces and discusses social parasitism) or as unwilling to conform to socialist dictates and hence excluded from many opportunities. In the following chapter, "Career Opportunities: Gender, Work, and Identity," the author looks at work as the basic element of socialist citizenship and labor relations, noticing women's advancement but also underlining that these changes nevertheless maintained rigid

gender hierarchies that were, for example, visible in women's underrepresentation in leadership positions. Chapter 4, "Love and Marriage: Gender and the Transformation of Marital Roles and Relations," invites the reader to a discussion on marriage and sexuality while analyzing the changes and continuities in the roles that women played in their families. It shows that the domestic sphere was a site for transforming not only gender norms but also intimate relations. This chapter also demonstrates the Romanian intricacies of the larger story that is most likely known to all scholars of Eastern Europe, meaning the existence of women's double and triple burden reinforced by the reconfigured ideas of motherhood and women's roles despite the insistence on the equal participation of male partners in various chores. In the book this is also the moment when Massino introduces a discussion of the strict pro-natalist policies embraced by Nicolae Ceausescu, a phenomenon that for most of us serves as a lens through which to view socialist Romania.

Chapter 5, "It's a Family Affair: Parenthood, Reproductive Politics, and State 'Welfare,'" is the big elephant in the room, as it concerns inhumane Romanian reproductive policies that are perhaps one of the most well-known and discussed elements of socialist Romanian lives. Overall, after an interesting discussion and fascinating snippets from collected oral interviews, it confirms our knowledge that the women were engaging in prolonged acts of resistance in order to deal with the cruelty of Romanian pro-natalist policies. The sixth chapter, "Good Times, Bad Times: Gender, Consumption, and Lifestyle," looks at the dynamics between consumption and identity, which for the women meant exposure to problems of the Western world that encourage more attention to the self. Finally, the last chapter, "Revolution Blues: Gender and the Transformation from Socialism to Pluralism," discusses the transition from socialism to pluralism. The organization of the chapters is thematic, while each chapter progresses chronologically, giving readers a chance to see how particular roles were changing. Each one underlines the general tendency of Romanian women to overlook the grimness of their lives and to emphasize their perseverance.

Many interesting themes emerge throughout the book: the problem of agency, the construction of a socialist citizen, the ways people tend to remember a difficult past, and finally the fluid transition of states under socialism. Another interesting aspect of the book is the universality of certain issues, for example, their similarity with other socialist countries. The similarities, for example, concern a larger story of turning peasants into workers. For many women this meant more freedom and agency, but it also meant an almost universal story of women performing multiple roles across socialist national borders. In these as well as in many other cases, the author shows her knowledge of the most recent historiography of the region as well as works that come from the outside.

Massino's book is based on a rich array of sources, including periodicals, state documents, media, and social science research. But perhaps the most fascinating aspect are over one hundred interviews that she conducted in Romania. In addition to analyzing them in depth, she also provides longer quotes, which, along with images and quotes from other documents, significantly enrich the book by giving readers a sense of the experiences under investigation. Also, each chapter starts with an excerpt from an interview that usually provides a specific perspective on the issues discussed

in a given chapter. The chapters then efficiently weave these seemingly contradictory voices into a story that show the ambiguities of life and daily life choices.

Ambiguous Transitions: Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania is a wonderful book for both undergraduate and graduate students, as it provides interesting analysis but also lengthy snippets of sources that would make a basis for fascinating class discussions. It should also reach certain sectors of the wider public interested in the complexities of life under socialism.



Gergana Mircheva, *(A)normalnost i dostap do publichnostta: Socialno-institucionalni prostranstva na biomedicinskite discursi v Bulgaria (1878–1939)* ([Ab]normality and access to publicity: Social-institutional spaces of biomedicine discourses in Bulgaria [1878–1939]), Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2018, 487 pp., BGN 16 (paperback), ISBN: 978-954-07-4474-2.

Book review by **Galina Goncharova**
 Department of Cultural Studies,
 St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Bulgaria



Since the mid-1990s, the question “Is there fascism/racism in Bulgaria?”—in terms of political practices and state policy—has echoed in a variety of public and academic discussions and scholarly works in Bulgaria. However, no definite answers emerged, despite the revision of the socialist historiographical censorship on the topic. Moreover, the broad cultural premises and manifestations of the phenomenon in local perspective remained out of the prime focus of study during the last decades. One of the positive exceptions is the recent exploration of the adoption and evolution of eugenics discourses and policies in Bulgaria, to which Mircheva’s book is perhaps the most substantial contribution.

As the title suggests, the volume opens a vast scope of understandings of the public modes, complexities, and power dimensions of biomedical knowledge, covering important political and cultural processes both in national and transnational contexts. Chronologically, the text’s purview extends from the development of legislation and institutional structures and practices of the modern Bulgarian state, established with the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, to the twentieth-century interwar economic, social, and value crisis, including the public debates on the (de)stabilization of national life and consciousness. Conceptually, the five chapters offer multiple insights into the aspirations of modern science to control the access of marginalized and vulnerable populations to the public sphere. The analysis emphasizes hybrid characters and the expert discourses tied to them. Mircheva focuses particularly on the “criminal with diminished responsibility,” students who are considered “hard to educate,” clerks who are

“hard to heal,” and men “half-fit” for military service. These subjects are constructed in the following social-institutional spaces: the court-psychiatric (in between the clinic and the prison), the medico-pedagogical (of school health service), the administrative-medical (of public services, the factory and the army, including the so-called labor army), and the space of marriage hygiene (of the family).

Gergana Mircheva is not unknown in contemporary historical scholarship on eugenics, conducted in postsocialist Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries in collaboration and dialogue with Western scholars. She has been a member of the International Workgroup on the History of Racial Sciences and Biomedicine in Central and Southeast Europe: nineteenth and twentieth centuries, based at Oxford Brookes University. In her overview of the publications and international networks dealing with the development of eugenic thinking in CEE countries, Victoria Schmidt places Mircheva among scholars providing consistent historical narratives on the topic.¹ Schmidt discusses Mircheva’s approach to eugenics as biopower (in Foucauldian terms) producing theoretical surplus and failing to shed light on national specifics. Mircheva’s book questions such criticism. Combining constructivist models of research and thick historical description, Mircheva traces a considerable range of epistemological and cultural transformations of the notion of (ab)normality, especially in the Bulgarian pre- and interwar context. Furthermore, she focuses on points of intersection and hybridization between eugenics and many other forms of biosocial engineering, such as social hygiene and preventive medicine, urban policies, and physical, criminal, and racial anthropology, thus building a solid conceptual basis for presenting Bulgarian biomedical thought in its original development, discursive abundance, and complex agency.

Hence, Mircheva opens a new space for elaboration about particular national approaches and forms of application of medical and legal selection criteria in relation to the biological and social reproduction of individuals and groups from the beginning of the twentieth century. This is especially valid for the gender issues tied to biomedical knowledge and social control. Although most chapters of the book do not address explicitly the problem of gender construction of biosocial difference and forms of exclusion, they implicitly reveal the reflection and production of cultural meanings of gender in public healthcare and national identity discourses. Thus, Mircheva outlines different stages and forms of “masculinization of the ideal psycho-physical type of the national” (243) in public debates and state initiatives, which mobilized a mixture of paternalistic norms, utopian educationalist projects, and modern medical arguments. As indicated in certain state programs and sports organizations’ guidelines from the first decade of that century, physical and moral values cultivated in school physical training were inseparable from each other. Traditional virtues, such as (mental) strength, health, and courage, were prescribed by (medical) experts to both boys and girls, regarded, respectively, as future soldiers and mothers. Later, in the 1921 Law on Civil Conscription, which adhered to the official 1911 instructions to the military recruitment commissions, these virtues and vocations found new recognition and validation, though in an ambivalent fashion. Along with those certified incapable for any physical or mental work, married women and men enlisted in the army were also exempt from civil conscription (364). In both cases, women became visible and comparable to men

only in the moralized, militarized, and medicalized universe of the family, the state, and the nation. The author draws special attention to the language of construction of this universe. In her intriguing story the promoters of sports organizations promised to prepare girls for service on “the home front” (243), and legislators guided them in the system of “labour militarism” (363).

Going further, Mircheva shows how the shaping of femininity and masculinity in terms of reproduction and defense of the social and national body functioned in regimes of surveillance and sanctioning. Thus, in the last chapter of the book, which is dedicated to the analysis of (proto)eugenic programs and initiatives, the author demonstrates the transformation of medical and legal expertise on marriage impediments and “morbid reasons for termination of the family community” to a “scientific therapy of the impairments of society” (393–394). In the public debates from the 1920s and 1930s, declining birth rates were conceptualized within the framework of degeneration theories and popular eugenics constructs. These discourses claimed women’s emancipation and extramarital sexual practices as factors for the decline of traditional family ethos and the “venerization” of the population.

Overall, the study creates an extremely broad interdisciplinary field for research of the historical and cultural (including gender) meanings of abnormality in general and to the medicalization of modern Bulgarian society in particular. There is no doubt that this book will be widely read, discussed, and quoted in the future to come.

◆ Note

1. Viktoria Shmidt, *The Legacy of Eugenics in CEE Countries: The Limits and Options of Historical Consciousness*, CAS Working Paper Series 10, Advanced Academia Programme 2017–2018 (Sofia, 2018).



Milutin A. Popović, *Zatvorenice, album ženskog odeljenja Požarevačkog kaznenog zavoda sa statistikom (1898)* (Prisoners, the album of the women’s section of Požarevac penitentiary with statistics, 1898), edited by Svetlana Tomić, Belgrade: Laguna, 2017, 333 pp., RSD 894 (paperback), ISBN: 978-86-521-2798-6.

Book review by **Zorana Antonijević**
University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia



It would be hard to believe that nothing has changed in terms of crime, treatment, and rehabilitation of female prisoners in Serbia in the last 150 years, and yet the book *Zatvorenice, album ženskog odeljenja Požarevačkog kaznenog zavoda sa statistikom (1898)* (Prisoners, the album of the women’s section of Požarevac penitentiary with statis-

tics, 1898) shows us exactly that. This authentic combination of fictional and factual writing represents a unique testimony about the position of women in Serbia's sole female detention center (even today). Saved from oblivion by the feminist literary historian Svetlana Tomić, it contains a foreword by Milutin A. Popović (9–10), thirty-five prisoner's stories with illustrations and authentic photographs (13–271), and relevant criminal statistics from 1861 to 1897 about the crimes committed by women in Serbia (273–277). Svetlana Tomić's comprehensive afterword, "*Zločin, žene i kazna (zatvorenice iz druge polovine 19. veka i kažnjenički sistem u Srbiji)*" (Crime, women, and punishment [Prisoners from the second half of the nineteenth century and the penal system in Serbia]) (279–317) blends perfectly with the album. Nonetheless, it could be read as a standalone sociopolitical, cultural, and literary account about women, crimes, and punishment in nineteenth-century Serbia.

In the foreword, Milutin A. Popović gives a brief overview of the short history of the Požarevac penitentiary since its establishment in 1866. He also emphasizes the everyday life of female prisoners, their surroundings, and occupations, such as the knitting and weaving of the beautiful and well-known Pirot carpets (*Pirotski ćilimi*). Each of the thirty-five stories carries the name of the prisoner in the heading, her place of origin, and her age when she entered prison. The information collected about female prisoners has been skilfully incorporated into a literary text representing a particular genre of crime fiction or police literature, which became popular in the late nineteenth century in Serbia (280). The crimes described in the album are various: from murders (mostly violent husbands and fathers), to infanticide, crimes against the state or private property, forgery, robbery, and hiding politically persecuted dissidents. Unlike the predominantly moralizing portrayal of women's crimes in the mainstream Serbian literature at the time, court and police records fail to provide details of the violence and hardships that usually preceded such crimes. Popović takes a nonjudgmental approach and provides a vivid picture. The story of Persa Tadić shows how sensitive the author of the album was to her destiny. She killed her father when she was only eighteen years old, after being forcibly prostituted by him to a man. For Tadić, as it is still now for many women and girls around the world, the only way to save herself was self-defense. Popović describes how she sang in prison and how she looked "in peace" with what she had done. Similarly, Popović adds his own observations about what the other prisoners looked like, about their physical appearance, how they behaved, what they did during their imprisonment. He claims that some of them were happier in prison than in their life before the prison.

Several "mysteries" make this book exceptional. The first concerns Popović himself: there is no reliable information about him, who he was (a police officer, a prison guard, or just an educated researcher?), and what his motive was in writing down stories of these women who were outcasts of his, and even our, time. The second "mystery" concerns the album itself. When published in 1898, there were no reviews of the book. Indeed, its reception went unnoticed by specialized nineteenth-century journals such as *Policijski glasnik* (Police journal). The album had to wait for almost 120 years to be discovered and published. It represents a unique undertaking in terms of editing and an invaluable contribution to a better understanding of the position of women in nineteenth-century Serbia. It could also be used as a source for a comparative analysis

of the actual position of the women prisoners in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The album is an important source for future researchers interested in history, society, literature, and law from a women's everyday life perspective. At the same time, it is an authentic and realistic depiction of women's lives in nineteenth-century Serbia and a great read for anyone interested in Serbian history during the transition from traditional to modern society.



Irena Protassewicz, *A Polish Woman's Experience in World War II: Conflict, Deportation and Exile*, edited by Hubert Zawadzki, with Meg Knott, translated by Hubert Zawadzki, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, xxv pp. + 257 pp., £73.38 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-3500-7992-2.

Book review by **Katarzyna Sierakowska**

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History Polish Academy of Sciences,
Warsaw, Poland



These memoirs were written in 1968. Irena Protassewicz-Zawadzka came from a rich landowning family from the Borderlands (Kresy). Her father's estate—Borki near Nowogródek—where she lived until 1940, was about one thousand hectares. This land included arable fields, forests, breeding ponds (the father bred carp), as well as an apiary, managed by Irena herself. Our protagonist attended a secondary school run by nuns, which had a considerable impact on her religiosity. The passages of her memoirs dealing with this sphere are very interesting, making the reader aware of the depth of the influence that religious upbringing exerted on the author's life choices and decisions. Writing her memoirs as a mature woman (in 1968 she was fifty-eight years old), she repeatedly demonstrates, on the one hand, a critical attitude toward religious upbringing, and yet, on the other hand, her devotion to religion is unquestionable.

The first part of the memoir deals with the interwar period and is preceded by an introduction by the author's son, the historian Hubert Zawadzki, who not only persuaded his mother to write them, but also prepared them for publication. This preparation includes not only the translation, the addition of an extensive introduction outlining the history of Poland, but also organizing the reminiscences in such a way, as Zawadzki himself explains, as to make their perusal easier for the reader, and supplementing them with the years spent as an émigré in Great Britain. The second part—dealing with deportation to Siberia and wartime exile—is also preceded with an introduction penned by the son. Hubert Zawadzki first read his

mother's memoirs in 2003, seven years after her death, so he was unable to confer with her about various ambiguities. Translation into English undoubtedly gave a greater number of people the opportunity to read them; however, the natural pace of each language, the use of unique terms and verbal clusters, often makes it easier to decode certain relationships, social contexts, and so on. For instance, the use of "Mamusia" and "Tatus" (diminutive forms of mother and father) in the social context of the time might—but does not have to—signify good, close, and affectionate relations with the parents, which for a non-Polish reader would, in my opinion, remain largely incomprehensible.

Thus, Protassewicz's memoirs are a joint creation of the mother and son. Therefore, the question arises of the extent to which the image of the author that emerges from them constitutes her own autobiography (understood here as her own attempt to present a fragment of her life), and to what extent rather a portrait constructed by her son? These questions become even more pertinent because changes to the source text—such as places where passages were moved—are not marked in the translation, even though Zawadzki explains the rules that he followed in making these transfers. We do not know, either, whether changing the placement of a given passage also involved its editing. I would also like to draw attention to the title: *A Polish Woman's Experience*, which emphasizes that the experience of Irena Protassewicz is hers alone—unique and unrepeatable. It constitutes interesting material for biographical study and perfectly demonstrates how the author attempts to give meaning to the events of her life, how she constructs her identity as a woman, an inhabitant of the Borderlands, an exile, nurse, and wife. The latter part of the title, suggesting that the memoirs cover the period of World War II, is also to some extent misleading. Half of the book is devoted to Irena's life in the eastern part of the Second Polish Republic.

There are also a few typical myths and narrative tactics to be found in the memoirs. Most of all, Irena's reminiscences come under the so-called Borderland myth. The author is homesick for the country of her childhood years, which she presents idealistically, emphasizing the beauty of surrounding nature, the people's nobility, and the harmonious coexistence between persons of different religious denominations and nationalities, belonging to different social milieus. It should be emphasized that despite this idealism she does not present this past world uncritically. The criticism, however, stems rather from the author's later experiences and gives a distinct impression of being "tacked on" to the narration. In fact, a closer analysis of the text in its entirety points to the conclusion that there are many events, behaviors, and experiences that Irena could not or would not deconstruct, and not because she was not intelligent enough. What stood in the way were deeply ingrained convictions as well as her upbringing, which even then would have been considered deeply traditional. Evidence for this is to be found, for instance, in those passages where Irena reminisces that in her home children were treated like children and had no voice in any matters; their voice did not count even when they were already grown young women, and the decisions being made concerned their own lives. We can conclude from the memoirs that such treatment was due to the fact of their being girls. Irena was clearly bothered by this. She wrote: "It always hurt me that in life women were discriminated against,

that wherever they went they were not allowed to do this or that. I sometimes cried at night because I had not been born a boy. Perhaps that is why, in my obstinacy, I loved to roam the forests alone with my revolver, and why, pretending to be a tom-boy, I sought male diversions" (67). With regard to some issues, however, her parents proved to be quite progressive—although there had been match-making attempts, the decision regarding marriage was left to her. It appears from her notes that the parents were not particularly concerned that although nearing thirty she was still unmarried. They welcomed her aspirations toward financial independence, and her father suggested that she should manage the apiary on the estate, at the same time advising against enrolling at a university. He claimed that university education was not necessary to earn money, giving examples of people who—having studied law for a long time—now earned no more than Irena did by selling honey. In this part of the memoirs, the passages dealing with the life and attitude of the father, as well as his relationship with his daughter, are very interesting from the perspective of research on gender relations. It seems that he was an authority figure for her; in contrast to him, her mother is only rarely mentioned. Together with claims that her romantic political vision was shaped by the influence of the patriotic tradition, this adds up to a story fairly typical for that generation of Polish women, for whom it was the men who were the role models. An exception quite often mentioned in the reminiscences of women from the privileged classes is the figure of Emilia Plater, but probably rather as an example of a woman who was able to fight for Poland's liberty by taking up arms (that is, like a man).

Interesting parts of Protassewicz's narration are the passages dealing with the role and position of women. It is difficult to define her attitude unambiguously. In male-female relations, she applied very restrictive rules, yet she corresponded with a German man, whom she had met in Vilnius and who then visited her in Borki. Later on, she was supposed to visit him in Berlin, but for various reasons the trip was never made. She also defined the term "suffragette" in her own unique way: "I was rather a suffragette type. I was seeking love, rather than the position of wife of a district governor" (20). These passages suggest that she had hardly any idea about emancipation as a social movement. She noticed, however, the tribulations of peasant women: exhaustion, hard work, multiple pregnancies, and finally the ruthlessness of stronger men in insisting on the performance of conjugal duties. In fact, when it comes to politics she seems to exhibit ignorance. Descriptions of her actions and contacts in the interwar period reflect great naïvete, maybe even parochialism.

The second part of the book, describing her deportation to the Soviet Union, her life there, and the evacuation of the Polish army to Iran and later Palestine, ends with the journey to Scotland, the meeting with her future husband, and marriage. The further course of Irena's life, until her death in 1994, is described by her son. His description, on the one hand, provides an intriguing contrast to Irena's own reminiscences, and on the other hand makes for an interesting complement. Hubert Zawadzki definitively attempts to present his mother in a positive light. He still sees her with the eyes of a child, perceives her sacrifices, independence, psychological strength. Many passages in Irena's memoirs concern faith, the church, and piety. As already mentioned,

the author was undoubtedly a deeply religious person. Although her attitude toward the church changed considerably, as the son describes in the last part of the memoirs, Irena herself, while reminiscing about past events from her life, did not shrink from presenting her erstwhile religious devotion. It seems interesting that in the first part she supplemented the account of her education at the school of the Ursuline nuns with later reflections. With the benefit of hindsight she noticed discrepancies between the principles inculcated by the church and the behavior of many, even the priests themselves; she criticized the thinking on the body and sex that had been instilled in her at school, claiming that this conventual education destroyed her spontaneity and impaired her contacts with boys. She finally concluded: "Burdened with such an outlook, I consider it a miracle that eventually at the age of thirty-four I decided to get married" (33).

In the second part of the memoirs, devoted to her wartime exile, her attitude toward religion is somewhat different. Irena wrote many times that it was her deep faith and prayer that had allowed her to survive. She often judged the people she met along the way by the principles instilled in her by the church. For instance, she judged their behavior toward persons of the opposite gender. The most interesting passages of the second part for me are those that describe the living conditions of Poles in the Polish army that was then being formed, both in the eastern republics of the Soviet Union, as well as later in Iran and Palestine. They show the real problems faced by Irena in her work as a nurse, but also as a deportee. The author takes note of malnutrition, the monotony of army food, the insufficient numbers of staff for the care of the sick. In a few places she concludes that better care and more varied, nutritionally richer food could have saved the lives of many people who were being decimated by typhoid, pneumonia, dysentery, and more. On her arrival in Iran she shows appreciation first and foremost for the opportunity for a more varied diet. She wrote: "I remember the taste of the first flatbread, the first egg and the first onion; I remember the juicy softness of the fruit. Army food was awful, for it consisted mostly of thick boiled rice with fat mutton, impossible to swallow in the heat" (147). The author's narration is much more emotional than the passages written by her son. The events being described must have aroused many emotions during the writing, for both of them.

The memoirs of Irena Protassewicz undoubtedly present an interesting example of the fate of a Polish woman belonging to the landowning class from the eastern part of the Second Polish Republic, and invite a deeper analysis, especially regarding the question of gender relations and their changes in such extraordinary conditions (something that both war and exile undoubtedly were), as well as the impact of these events on the individual, and her attitude toward her own past. The book is an interesting read for all who investigate history of the Soviet Union and Central Europe in the twentieth century, mainly the interwar period and World War II, for social scientists interested in gender relations and personal accounts, and for anyone who simply likes reading memoirs.



Zilka Spahić Šiljak, ed., *Bosanski labirint: Kultura, rod i liderstvo* (Bosnian labyrinth: Culture, gender, and leadership), Sarajevo and Zagreb: TPO Fondacija and Buybook, 2019, xii + 213 pp., no price listed (paperback), ISBN: 978-9926-422-16-5.

Book review by **Andrea Feldman**

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education



The book under review shows the results of research conducted by Zilka Spahić Šiljak, a versatile human rights activist and gender and religious studies scholar, and several of her colleagues, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with the intention of investigating cultural perceptions and the construction of gender roles and gender relationships in a particular Bosnian context. This context is defined in the work as “post-socialist, post-war” (or postconflict), in a country that is characterized by “an unfinished transition and with strong ethno-national divisions” (7). The researchers, the majority of whom are connected to the Faculty of Economics of the University of Sarajevo, attempt to explain the ways in which a specific culture and the understanding of predominant (i.e., traditional) gender roles influence the position of women as leaders in the two fields under investigation: politics and business.

Derived in part from Spahić Šiljak’s postdoctoral research at Stanford University, the book consists of four parts, as well as an introduction, an afterthought, a bibliography, and two appendices. The first chapter, written by Spahić Šiljak, presents the theoretical frame of reference regarding the research of culture and gender in connection with leadership. This is a useful, textbook-like overview of different aspects of leadership studies, some of which are economic, some psychological, and others—feminist. There is a short discussion of the term “leadership,” and the reasons why the authors thought that it was not possible to translate it into the Bosnian language. The second chapter deals with the results of the research. While the research method (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) leaves something to be desired, particularly regarding the number of participants in the research, the selection of leaders for this study represents a larger, conceptual problem. The fields of investigation are politics and business, but the majority of business leaders who participated in the study were employed in public enterprises, that is, state companies, which in turn means that they were politically connected, and/or owed their careers to some extent to political influence. Therefore, one could consider the business leaders under investigation as somewhat tainted by the political influence of cronyism.

Although to some degree ahistorical, the question at the heart of this research regards the present situation of leadership in BiH and the reasons why women have not been more successful as leaders. This question is accentuated with the untested premise of the research, that women in communist Yugoslavia (and therefore, by ex-

tension, in BiH as well) “earned the same salary for the same work.” This assertion is followed by another, usual misconception about communist Yugoslavia, which is that “in Yugoslavia women achieved an envious level of equality” (16). This claim is wrong and unfounded. Several studies were conducted during the late phase of the Yugoslav state that exposed the false universalism of socialist theory, as well as the system’s assertion that the “woman question” was allegedly “solved.” The authentic feminist critique articulated by several prominent sociologists and social theorists during the 1980s in Yugoslavia presented a different, more realistic picture of women’s unfortunate experience with socialism. Some of them, like Sarajevo-born Nada Ler Sofronić in her book *Neofeminism and the Socialist Alternative* (1985), used Marxism to criticize Yugoslav state policies to solve “the women’s question.” Issues of the “feminization of professions,” in particular the medical, legal, and education professions, were some of the issues discussed in the last decades of Yugoslavia, which clearly showed the deterioration of several of the most feminized professions, like journalism, medicine, and law. Under the conditions of an “envious level of equality,” women managed to reach only 24 percent of the top leadership and executive positions (15) in the last days of Yugoslavia.

Therefore, it is wrong to assume, as the authors do at the beginning of the research, that in the Bosnian context, following the “economic and social security of socialism, democracy, with its neo-liberal policies, was not based on civic foundations, but on the three dominant ethnic structures . . . which has not opened the way to the affirmation of meritocracy” (13). The evolution of the democratic system, however slow and ineffective, proves to be the only way toward the affirmation of meritocracy and to increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, as cantonal-level elections seem to testify (15).

There are some unexpected points when it comes to the discussion of differences in the style of leadership between men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority of the respondents in the survey conducted for the third chapter saw women entrepreneurs as readier to take risks, and quick to act in new and changed circumstances. The authors perceive these “reversible gender roles conditioned to the changed political climate, in which the social and economic security of socialism was exchanged for ethno-nationalist-based democracies, in which women, in taking care of the family, became better prepared to take greater risks” (128). One could regard such an assertion in itself as quite conservative, since it refuses to attribute the change of gender roles to the authentic and autonomous agencies of a (much desired) new kind of women leaders, which, however small in number, do exist and exercise a positive influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For all its shortcomings, the book should still be read, by students as well as other members of the academia, because it provides a useful overview of current literature on the topic, but also a spectrum of ideas on what constitutes leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina today.



Gonda Van Steen, *Adoption, Memory and Cold War Greece: Kid pro quo?*, University of Michigan Press, 2019, 350 pp., \$85.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-0-472-13158-7.

Book review by **Maria Kokkinou**

French Research Center in Humanities and Social Sciences,
Prague, Czech Republic



Gonda Van Steen's book¹ constitutes an incisive as well as richly documented study, the first ever to delve into the issue of foster parents from the US adopting children from Greece over the period 1950–1962. The structure of the book follows a circular trajectory, while simultaneously reversing chronological order, as we are led from the present toward the past to finally find ourselves at the point where the narrative not only comes full circle, but also escapes into the future.

The book begins with the story of Mike, the grandson of the executed Elias Argiriadis, who seeks to comprehend his family history (Part 1). By unraveling the events of Argiriadis's execution, Van Steen transports us from the present-day US to Greece in the first years after the civil war. She highlights for the astute reader how the subaltern social position of women of rural origin who were communist, leftist, or merely perceived as such, in combination with prevailing anticommunist feelings, allowed the removal of children from their mothers, who posed a political and social danger to the regime. Children's removal was promoted through transatlantic adoptions, their relocation as "war orphans" accomplished within a politically safe environment represented by white and preferably Christian Greek American foster parents in Cold War America under the Truman Doctrine (of the 3,116 Greek children in total adopted in the US between 1948 and 1962, the first 1,246 had been adopted by 1952) (77, 170).

Children at the babies' center Metera and at PIKPA (Patriotic Institution for Social Welfare and Awareness), which functioned under the supervision of Queen Frederica, were initially chosen for adoption according to political criteria, while by 1955–1956, according to the author, the main criteria for selection had shifted mostly toward socioeconomic factors (Part 2). For this latter period, Van Steen applies a Foucauldian approach to connect the dots that link all the implicated actors: from the church and the institutions that functioned as intermediaries (AHEPA, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, being the primary one), to the orphanages that supplied the institutions with children for adoption, to the proxies, and finally, to the insufficient legal frameworks that were imposed a posteriori in both countries. Thus, Van Steen spotlights the intricate web of mechanisms and socioeconomic conditions both in Greece and the US that systematized transatlantic adoptions, whether legal or illegal, by proxy or for a charge (although this last type of adoption remains a minority).

This periodization of the phenomenon of transatlantic adoptions brings into stark relief the semantic shift from the child-subject to the child-object. As the author ex-

plains, these children—who might have lost one parent but not necessarily both, might have been abandoned or born out of wedlock—are promptly presented as “civil war orphans”; nay, as “communist foundlings.” This shift legitimizes their adoption both morally and politically, and removes from these women, for the second time and for life, the chance to raise their children, while also conversely precluding the adopted children from forming any family relationship with their biological parents and their blood relatives, their mother tongue, and their country of origin.

The last part of the book (Part 3) is dedicated to the children’s accounts, as Van Steen transitions from archival sources, from “the event itself,” to “the meaning of the event.” Whether the subjects are the adopted children themselves or their descendants, their narratives, despite being written in the first person, showcase the plurality of the experience, convey the memories and the lived experiences of their childhood in America, and outline their relationship with their biological and adoptive families. Through these narratives, the subjects bring to the fore the multitudinous relationship between identity and the stories of History, while their accounts provide fertile ground for a reflection on belonging: how does belonging cohere when its fundamental components—language, space, and (biological) relation—are fractured, and how does this fracture, this fragmentation, constitute new belongings?

Last but not least, Van Steen’s book sheds light on an unknown aspect of the post-civil war history of Greece while simultaneously transcending narrow geographical borders, insofar as these transatlantic adoptions can be viewed as part of a wider phenomenon, the “Cold War adoptions.”

◆ Note

1. Gonda Van Steen is Koraes Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature and Director of the Centre for Hellenic Studies at King’s College London.



Dimitra Vassiliadou, *Ston tropiko tis grafis: Oikogeneiakoi desmoi kai synaisthimata stin astiki Ellada (1850–1930)* (The topic of writing: Family ties and emotions in modern Greece [1850–1930]), Athens: Gutenberg, 2018, 291 pp., 16.00 € (paperback), ISBN: 978-960-01-1940-4.

Book review by **Alexandra Zavos**
Department of Sociology, University of Crete, Greece



This pioneering book by Dimitra Vassiliadou makes an important and timely contribution to Greek and international historiography in three areas of scholarship—the history of emotions, the history of the family, and gender history—while also making a methodologically innovative advance into the historical study of private letter writing.

The topic of the book—the family—is a difficult subject for cultural analysis precisely because it is such a naturalized and normalized phenomenon. As feminist theory has shown since the 1970s, family and marriage are not only ideologically charged fields, but ideologies in and of themselves. Focusing on a formative period of the Greek nation-state, from the mid-nineteenth century to the interwar years (1920s and 1930s), the author illuminates in an exemplary way how these cultural patterns are constructed and how they come to be considered self-evident. A key perspective of the study is the treatment of the family as an emotional community in which appropriate dispositions and codes of conduct are inculcated and reproduced. The author examines the genealogy and transformation of these emotions through a systematic and closely woven analysis of a range of private and public discourses.

The research for this book was mainly carried out as part of the author's PhD dissertation (at the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Crete). In order to situate the study, both in terms of its sociohistorical context as well as in relation to cultural constructions of the family and of gender, the author reviews a significant corpus of both Greek and international historical and anthropological literature. She is thus able to frame the Greek case in relation to wider debates about the history of emotions and the family, while also using it as a prism through which to interrogate hegemonic historiographic assumptions in regard to the genealogy and significations of love in the modern era.

The primary historical sources are located in the private, unpublished correspondence of five well-known Greek bourgeois families—Valaoritis, Digenis-Doukas, Levidis-Vassiliadis, Makkas, and Meletopoulos—a material hitherto unexplored in Greek historiography. This material, held at the Greek Literary and Historical Archive at the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece (ELIA/MIET), required transcribing and indexing, and comprised letters exchanged between betrothed, spouses, as well as parents and children over the course of seven decades, starting in the mid-nineteenth century and leading into the post-World War I period. The primary material was read against a range of religious, scientific, pedagogical, and literary works—including feminist writings of the period—in order to explore in depth the discursive milieu and elaborate a conceptual and normative canvas of values, emotions, and relations within which to locate and interpret such private exchanges and their transformation over time.

The period under study represents a time of fast urbanization for the newly formed Greek state and was accompanied by the establishment of a new affluent middle class in the metropolitan areas of Athens and Piraeus. This ascending urban bourgeoisie, often educated in the cultural centers of Western Europe, aspired to become trendsetters, straddling tradition and modernity, Greekness and a more cosmopolitan outlook. As an agent of sociocultural innovation, the bourgeois family came to represent a cornerstone of the ideological foundation of the young nation. The main conclusion, in the author's own words, is that from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century the sources document

a distinct emotional economy of family bonds. This transformative process, the first indelible traces of which can be tracked back to the turn of the twentieth century, relates both to the relationships between erotic partners and those

linking parents and children. It appears the family is being transformed from a moral cell to a place where emotions can be expressed more freely. This immediacy, in the emotions and family relationships they define, allows the powerful idiom of love to appear richer than ever before. If the "close relations" of the 19th century carried a heavy moral burden with strong religious influences, family ties in the early 20th century seem more direct, multidimensional, and less normalized. Is this a transition from a moral signification of emotions to the recognition of their intrinsic value; a passage to emotions as such? (209–210)

The book comprises an introduction, which outlines the purpose of the study and its sources, five chapters, and an addendum, where theoretical and methodological issues concerning letter writing as a social practice and as a historical record are discussed. Chapter 1 explores the cultural context and ideological underpinnings that make the bourgeois family's values universal. As the author demonstrates, this familial economy of emotions is rendered through the idiom of love founded in ecclesiastical philology, with which people of the time were deeply acquainted. As aspects of love are transposed from the emotional community of believers to the emotional community of the family, the bond of love is imbued with spiritual and psychic meaning and becomes a principle of kinship with regulatory power. Particularly in relationships between parents and children, love is directly linked to the respect and gratitude children owe, as well as their acceptance and compliance with parental wishes. Similarly, parents are in charge of child care, which is, in the language of love, a sacrifice.¹ Parental sacrifice in exchange for children's obedience is a relationship of asymmetric reciprocity, which in the context of kinship is expressed as selfless love. This highlights a basic contradiction, namely, that love in the nineteenth century does not necessarily represent a modern Western emotion, as often discussed in the literature, but rather a secularized version of fluid religious ideas adapted to the social realities of the time. The family's emotional culture seems to derive more from theology than secularism and rationality, or at least it is a field structured through the oppositions between emotion/logic, spirituality/materiality, self-love/self-interest.

Balancing these contrasting forces is the subject of the second chapter, which looks at the family and marriage as institutions, the success and stability of which depend on emotional as well as material factors. The author here examines the traditional practice of arranged marriage vis-à-vis the modern expectation of a partnership founded on erotic love, only to discover that one does not preclude the other.² In fact, the rhetoric of "measureless love" often appears in tandem with hard financial negotiations concerning the dowry. In the next chapter, the author focuses on the forces that can, nevertheless, disrupt the ideal harmony of the bourgeois family, such as unbridled passion and sexuality. The distinction between "false" love borne of emotional passion and "true" love involving spiritual and mental compatibility and companionship is reproduced even in the feminist press of the period, reflecting widely accepted norms regarding proper emotional and sexual comportment.

The normative construction of bourgeois femininity and masculinity and gendered social roles and practices are addressed in chapter 4. The structure of the urban household

of the nineteenth century is based on the companionship model of marriage, whereby distinct, complementary, yet equally essential domains are distributed between spouses, even as men hold the position of head of the family. Hard work and industriousness represent successful masculinity, whereas household management and dedication to the family are seen as women's "way of being." Such normative ideals are destabilized at the turn of the twentieth century, as women become more active in the public sphere. Shifts in mentality are also documented in changing intergenerational relations, which is the subject of the final chapter of the book. Even though love in the family is formulated as a relationship of sacrifice and debt and parental authority is unquestioned, from the early twentieth century onward, the relationship between parents and children acquires new content, allowing for greater tolerance of autonomy and individuality, especially for boys, and for closer, more personal relationships between family members.

Summing up, through an exploration of Greek bourgeois family culture, the author illuminates how gender functions as an ideology, an institution, and a process of subjectification, focusing in particular on the less studied aspect of male subjectivity. By addressing the complexity of familial relations and their emotional structuration in relation to the social distinctions of class, sexuality, and age, her work speaks to contemporary intersectional approaches to the gendered past.

◆ Notes

1. Dimitra Vassiliadou, "The Idiom of Love and Sacrifice: Emotional Vocabularies of Motherhood in Nineteenth-Century Greece," *Cultural and Social History* 14, no. 3 (2017): 283–300.
2. Dimitra Vassiliadou, "Love, Actually . . . Pricing Conjugal Emotions in Nineteenth-Century Greece," in *Emotions: The Engines of History*, eds. Rafał Boryśławski and Alicja Bemben (London: Routledge, 2020).



Radina Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties*, English translation by John K. Cox, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018, 334 pp., €58.00 (paperback), ISBN: 978-963-386-200-1.

Book review by **Marija M. Bulatović**
Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia



The book *Coca-Cola Socialism* appeared first in Serbian in 2012 under the title *Koka-kola socijalizam* as an outcome of the doctoral research of Radina Vučetić. However, this monograph in the field of cultural studies can also be read outside the confines of academia, since it is written in clear and simple language.

Meticulously analyzed, the subject of the study is the "Americanization" of Yugoslav popular culture of the 1960s but also of the personal element as an indicator of

the introspective aspect of the author herself offering her own experience of feeling "Americanized." Having entered into the public discourse, *Coca-Cola Socialism*¹ denotes two sides of Yugoslav culture of the 1960s: communist ideology and the liberal society of capitalism. Previous studies of "Americanization" dealt almost always with the *causes* of such a process and not with the methods of achieving it. In Vučetić's book, the key point is elaboration on the methods.

Vučetić starts her introduction with a questionable axiomatic statement on the overall influence and reach of American culture in the world, justified by America's cultural supremacy and being considered as *Schlaraffenland* (Cockaigne) in the eyes of Europeans. Entailing offering "something American," its acceptance and, finally, its unique adaptation, Vučetić defines "Americanization" as primarily "cultural" but also a "political" notion, enumerating all other aspects it includes: "economic," resulting in consumerism and supermarkets, and "technological" (the appearance of multinational companies). Vučetić defines "Americanization" by "exploring" and "exploiting the semantic field" of the word, which is, as she mentions herself, a rather subjective method (1). Americanization as a descriptive notion is a cultural and political process that includes also anti-Americanism and its symbols (moral and political points of view are not an obstacle for the opponents of America to enjoy Coca-Cola).

As to the content, the book consists of a foreword, introduction, four chapters, conclusion, and a bibliography and index. Chapter 1 is an analysis of paradoxical Yugoslav cinema: the black wave as a communist ideology critique and opponent to Hollywood glamor. Chapter 2 is an insight into rock and roll and jazz music as a means for political propaganda. Chapter 3 demonstrates that Americanization was not related only to popular but also to high culture in the context of pop art and abstract art. Chapter 4 brings into discussion the golden age of comic books, detective stories, and Western novels, the ideologization of childhood, fashion discourse, the rise of consumerism, self-grocery stores and supermarkets, and broadcasting.

The historical, political, and social contexts of the study are relevant due to the author's precise provision of data and statistics. Vučetić systematically demonstrates the cultural imperialism of America through the means and strategies of American cultural and political diplomacy, such as the intoxication with literature, film, music and philosophy, art, feminism, capitalism, companies, and Coca-Cola.² These zeitgeist tokens reflect the author's deepening of the subject, linking historical milestones and the very cultural process.

Vučetić provides some relevant conclusions that can be systematically deduced. She introduces "the aesthetics of abundance." The glamorous allure of American life shown on film strengthened the aspiration for a more abundant and financially better life under socialism: the American dream was a sort of escapism. Further on, Americanization was a road map for Yugoslav society toward embracing Western values and codes, having to balance between the superpowers of the East and the West; this signaled democratization and the specific dynamics of the country's evolution (254). The "hybridity" of Yugoslavia reflected in dialectical Janus-like *imago* representing the convergence of opposites (children of Marx drinking Coke) provoked a "profound schizophrenia in Yugoslav society" (207). Americanization was an indicator of these contradictions, denoting the specificities of Yugoslav socialism. Finally, the transfer-

ability of Americanization symbols was on the level of form and not substance, but with a long-lasting imprint on the Yugoslav people.

Coca-Cola Socialism provides a meticulous analysis of the findings and praiseworthy spectra of Americanization facets, that is, the strategies of the very process interpreted in their sociohistorical context and with a glimpse of cultural theories, allowing space for additional profound understanding of the cultural phenomena and its reception in a wider philosophical framework. However, in the collision of the initial statement of the omnipresence of American culture and the assumption of the uncertain reach of American culture within small cities and rural areas, that is, fragmentary phenomena in “quantifying” Americanization, there is a specific paradox. Nevertheless, in this paradox lies fruitful possibilities for further research or a different approach.

In spite of the study not being primarily gender oriented, Vučetić inter alia takes the opportunity to mention pioneering Yugoslav women and their decisive influence in the field of theater and modern painting, reflected within the aegis of the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture of the 1960s. This authorial highlighting could be seen as a road map to future gender research dealing with the subject or even widening the research topic.

I would highly recommend Radina Vučetić's *Coca-Cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties* to both scholars who are interested in the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture as well as to readers outside academic circles who, just as the author herself, noticed some elements of the process of Americanization as an integral part of their personal growth and identity.

◆ Notes

1. As a hyper symbol of America: economic, political, and cultural phenomenon as meant by propaganda.

2. Levi jeans, Marlboro cigarettes, McDonald's, Disney, Hollywood, Westerns, Coca-Cola, jazz, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Kerouac, Updike, Miller, *Casablanca*, *Citizen Kane*, *The Great Dictator*, George Gershwin, John Cage, Herbert Marcuse, Andy Warhol (indicative cover of Tito in Warholian style), feminist Betty Friedan, Microsoft, and Apple.



Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xvi + 272 pp., \$80 (hardback), ISBN: 978-0-19880-165-8.

Book review by **Siobhán Hearne**

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Nancy M. Wingfield, an expert in the history of Habsburg Central Europe, introduces her book with the case of Olga Koprivec, a 21-year-old woman who left her family

home in the countryside to join the circus in 1908, and later worked at a brothel in Agram (now Zagreb, Croatia). Koprivec's father called on the local police to help "free" his daughter from the brothel and return her home, but Koprivec flatly refused to leave. Not only do we hear Koprivec's voice, we also see her face, as her refusal letter and photograph have been preserved in the Viennese police archive. This close attention to detail sets the tone for the remainder of Wingfield's excellent study. Drawing on a wide range of multilingual archival material from different corners of the former Austrian monarchy, Wingfield expertly reconstructs the world of regulated prostitution, paying close attention to the experiences of women who sold sex, their madams, pimps, the police, and the wider reading public.

The book is comprised of seven chapters. The first opens with a bang, as the reader is pulled into the highly publicised 1906 trial of Regine Riehl, a madam accused of procuring, abusing, and embezzling women at her brothel in Vienna. The public outcry generated by the Riehl trial forced the Austrian government to attempt to reform the regulation of prostitution. The subsequent discussions between the police, government officials, and physicians are the subject of chapter 2. In the wake of the Riehl trial, the Ministry of Interior also requested proposals for reform from the various provinces of the monarchy, and chapter 3 examines the outpouring of responses from Vorarlberg on the Swiss border to Galicia in the east. Chapters 4 and 5 provide rich social histories of the lives and challenges of women who worked as regulated prostitutes, and those who sold sex without registering with the police, known as clandestine prostitutes. Moral panics related to prostitution, namely, the trafficking of young women and girls for prostitution (known then as "white slavery"), is the subject of chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 and the epilogue examine continuities in the regulation of prostitution throughout World War I and beyond. Despite wholesale social dislocation during the conflict and even the collapse of the monarchy in 1918, the police continued in their attempts to monitor and examine women who sold sex. Habsburg-era legislation was even replicated in various new successor states of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1920s.

The World of Prostitution makes a significant contribution to the historiography of prostitution in Europe, a rapidly developing field of study. From the outset, Wingfield situates the regulation of prostitution in late imperial Austria within wider European trends, drawing comparisons between the police supervision of women who sold sex in France, Germany, Italy, and the Russian Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The detrimental impact of venereal diseases on military prowess, the desire to limit the visibility of prostitution to protect public morality, and anti-Semitic tropes blaming Jews for the international crime of "white slavery" were repeated in expert discourse and the popular press across the continent and beyond. Wingfield's focus on female agency and experience moves beyond "treating prostitutes solely as victims or problems to be solved" (15) and incorporates prostitution into wider social histories of labor at the fin de siècle. She collapses the boundaries between regulated commercial sex performed in adherence with the rules of police supervision and so-called clandestine prostitution, demonstrating the fluidity of the social and occupational identities of working-class women who engaged in paid sex. Case studies of women who worked in brothels, women who worked outside police supervision, and brothel madams pepper the narrative, adding nuance

to, and complicating, contemporary narratives of women's passivity, victimhood, and deviance.

One of the principal strengths of *The World of Prostitution* is the exploration of the messiness of regulated prostitution in practice. There was never a centralized system for regulated prostitution in late imperial Austria, and instead, regional police implemented decrees and instructions for supervising prostitution within their specific territory. Even in Vienna, the regulation of prostitution was introduced through a series of "ad hoc measures" (20). Wingfield skillfully surveys the regulation (or lack thereof) of prostitution, as well as concern about clandestine prostitution and "white slavery," in small towns in industrial regions, provincial capitals, spa towns, military garrisons, and even in the countryside. This is an especially welcome contribution, as much of the scholarship on the history of sexuality in general, and the history of prostitution in particular, has largely remained focused on national/imperial capitals and major cities. Her analysis emphasizes the importance of regional case studies for understanding how regulation actually functioned in practice across a vast multilingual and multiconfessional space.

As a rich social and cultural history of prostitution, *The World of Prostitution* is an essential book for historians of gender and sexuality, as well as those interested in urbanization and modernization in fin-de-siècle Austria. Lucid and highly engaging, the text will also make a valuable addition to undergraduate and postgraduate reading lists.



Anastasia Lakhtikova, Angela Brintlinger, and Irina Glushchenko, eds., *Seasoned Socialism: Gender and Food in Late Soviet Everyday Life*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019, xix + 373 pp., \$68.41(hardback), ISBN: 978-0-253-04095-4.

Book review by **Rayna Gavrilova**
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The authors of the collection *Seasoned Socialism: Gender and Food in Late Soviet Everyday Life* share an interest in "food as a tool to understand culture and society."¹ Noting that while the juncture of food and gender has been fertile ground to research gender relationships "in the West," the editors of the volume arrive at the sad conclusion that this is not the case with gender studies on and in Russia (6). They set out to shed light on this neglected field, stimulated by the conviction that "engagement with food exposes social, economic, cultural and gender differences to their fullest," while revealing and interpreting the general failure of the system. They hope that the analysis of everyday, routine practices opens venues to propose novel interpretations. One should mention immediately that they have succeeded: the volume is a compelling study of the ways

gender identities were constructed and experienced during the last stage of the socialist regime.

The collection is divided into three parts, organized around three connected but separate themes: cooking; procurement of food; and semiotics of food. This is a useful structure even if all the essays read as chapters of a cohesive narrative. Several topics appear multiple times in different contexts: the incongruity between the ideological proclamation of equality between the sexes and the preservation of patriarchal models of division of labor; the uniquely socialist double burden on women, who were expected to excel as “builders of the socialism” and “housewives” simultaneously and to enjoy it in their public behavior; the emasculation of men and the propaganda celebration of women; the lesser but widely observable everyday strategies to navigate the difficult environment, which stealthily subverted the system. The unity of the different essays is visible in other aspects as well. The period under scrutiny is late socialism—the last two decades of the existence of the Soviet Union (1965–1985). Nevertheless, references to past ways of life and foodways, to historical events, precedents, and traditions, abound. This historicity establishes a rich context for the volume as a whole, particularly important for readers not familiar with socialism. On the other hand, the historical canvas activates strong associative chains for readers from the former socialist bloc and reveals unnoticed interpretative angles.

A second particular commonality of all texts in the volume is the demographics of their focus: all chapters discuss urban life, urban cooking, urban families, and urban women. The explanation behind this unanimous choice is, to some extent, yet another shared approach of the authors: most of them look at gender through food and at food through written and visual essays. Some of them are universally recognizable by people who have lived in the former Soviet Union: the films *Station for Two* and *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (the essays of Irina Glushchenko and Adrienne K. Jacobs); the books *House on the Embankment* (Benjamin Sutcliffe’s text) and *Grey Mouse* (in Lidia Levkovitch); the poems of Nonna Slepakova’s (in Amelia Glaser). Some chapters work with private documents (the manuscript cookbooks in Anastasia Lakhtikova’s text and the interviews with *dacha* people in Melissa L. Caldwell’s). All these texts belong or tell the stories of urban people. One may wonder if peasant women have disappeared from popular culture in general, even if they made for a sizable portion of the overall population of the Soviet Union during the discussed period.² Or, as Anastasia Lakhtikova and Angela Brintlinger state in their introduction: “The underrepresentation of ordinary women’s voices in public discourse does not mean they were not engaged,” and “their voice could be heard in private written sources and stories such as memoirs and interviews, personal manuscript cookbooks, scrapbooks, etc.” (7). The above asking is by no means meant as criticism. It substantiates another key proposition, articulated in the introduction and evidenced by the essays: “Thus study of Soviet social classes will not be based on the distinction of taste but on the distinction in proximity to food and services distribution centers. . . . the questions to ask about how the proximity to the center defines and redefines available, officially sanctioned gender roles; how Soviet individuals adapt and circumvent” (8). Proximity to the center seems to produce social stratification not only in the actual food practices but in their discursive visibility.

As mentioned above, the book is structured around subjects (cooking, procuring) or approaches (semiotics). I found it quite interesting to compare the key themes identified by the authors of the preface (Dara Goldstein) and the afterward (Diane P. Koenker). Goldstein names the significant notions that in her understanding inform the reading: scarcity, desire, and creativity. Koenker perceives the insights about food and class (i.e., stratification); balance between work and leisure (and what food was, work or leisure, ordeal or self-expression); and the nature of socialism as common defining themes. This divergence could appear bewildering, but I accepted it as evidence of the complexity of the subject matter, which lends itself to different interpretations, while drawing a relatable picture, both on the methodological and empirical level. Speaking of methodology, one author has undeniably provided a framework to work with the socialist everyday, used and quoted by all: Alexei Yurchak. The observations and theses in his *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*³ seem to have become the interpretational touchstone for cultural Sovietology. All authors in this collection share his nuanced approach to the everyday life of a totalitarian regime, an important quality in today's fragmented and polarized public sphere.

The title of the collection—*Seasoned Socialism*—is an extremely apt trope, which activates at least three associative threads: first—the implication of something mature and wise; second—the undertone of something toughened, weathered; and third—a dish well dressed with condiments. The interplay of the three meanings constantly compels the reader to consider both the system and the actors within it, but I would like to add a note about food. The stereotypical image of “Russian” food includes caviar, cabbage soup, pickles, and vodka. All these “staples” (among several others) are served and carved for the enjoyment and intellectual enrichment of the reader.⁴ Aside from being an interesting contribution to the history and anthropology of food and eating, the articles offer to the non-Russian-speaking reader an opportunity to see information unknown to the external audience (quotes from Russian-language cookbooks, advice books, memoirs, life histories, poetry, stories, and tales).

Consumption is an excellent lens to study any society: it allows for the survey of the disparate fields that have become the provinces of different academic disciplines. Its particularly rich possibilities for gender studies, noted by Victoria de Grazia in the introduction to the now classic text *The Sex of Things*,⁵ are excellently documented and interpreted in this new book on food and gender in the late Soviet Union. We could certainly agree with Anastasia Lakhtikova and Angela Brintlinger that food, its production, acquisition, and sharing, was “at the very center of both male and female everyday existence in the late USSR, the place it truly occupied” (10).

◆ Notes

1. Dara Goldstein, “Foreword,” in *Seasoned Socialism: Gender and Food in Late Soviet Everyday Life*, ed. Anastasia Lakhtikova, Angela Brintlinger, and Irina Glushchenko (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), ix.

2. 47 percent in 1965; 34 percent in 1985. See https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%A1%D0%A1%D0%A1%D0%A0

3. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

4. Olena Stiazhkina, "Sated People: Gendered Modes of Acquiring and Consuming Prestigious Soviet Foods," 133–164; Benjamin Sutcliffe, "Cake, Cabbage, and the Morality of Consumption in Iuri Trifonov's 'House on the Embankment,'" 113–131; Lidia Levkovitch, "Vodka en Plein Air: Authoritative Discourse, Alcohol, and Gendered Spaces in 'Grey Mouse' by Vil Lipatov," 193–219; Angela Brintlinger, "Shchi da Kasha, but Mostly Shchi: Cabbage as Gendered and Genre'd in the Late Soviet Period," 270–296.

5. Victoria de Crazia, "Introduction," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Victoria de Crazia and Ellen Furlough (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 7–10.