Editorial

The years 1917 and 1918 witnessed the end of the Russian, German, Habsburg, and Ottoman empires, with huge consequences for European and global history. Yet despite the obvious importance of empires to the history of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, gendered imperialism—especially within Eastern Europe—has received little attention from scholars. The theme section included here, “Rethinking Empire from Eastern Europe,” for which Susan Zimmermann served as guest editor, aims to begin addressing this omission.

The call for papers for “Rethinking Empire from Eastern Europe” highlighted four research lacunae. First, although scholars have investigated the entanglement of gender and nationalism in Eastern Europe, this has primarily been done within the context of emerging national movements that challenged the imperial order. There is hardly any research on gender within that imperial order. How, for example, might we think about the relationship between gender and identity within the community of the *Kaisertreu* (those loyal to the Habsburg Monarchy)? Second, there has been little integrative research that considers gender in relation to competing and parallel imperialisms within the region. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the East European empires had a secondary global status compared to Germany, Britain, or France. How would a consideration of gender allow us to conceptualize the dynamics of these power relations? Third, despite an interest in counter-hegemonic intellectual traditions in East European history, this research has not focused on the gendered dimensions of these intellectual traditions nor on the politics related to these intellectual traditions. One important exception is socialist or communist thought and politics, but even here there has been little research on the connections between the socialist drive for gender equality and socialism’s anti-imperialist agenda. Fourth, the history of the post-imperial condition has usually been written in terms of the national histories of successor states, as if the residue of the imperial past did not exist. How might we think about gender and the after-effects of empire?

The theme section consists of three articles. Fabio Giomi focuses on the public writings of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Habsburg period. His research shows that Muslim women contested late Ottoman gender norms and explored, albeit timidly, new forms of sisterhood. Thus, Giomi argues, these women made an original contribution to the construction of a Bosnian, post-Ottoman public sphere. In the second article in this section, Marina Matešić examines nineteenth-century travelogues about the Balkans written by European women travelers. She links these texts both to a broader historical discourse called Balkanism and to the socio-historical con-

texts of the authors themselves. Written in the time of anti-Ottoman uprisings and nation-building movements, the travelogues expressed diverse humanitarian, Christian, feminist, anti-imperial/anti-Turkish, and other agendas and discussed the crucial role of (Balkan) women in them. The third article, by Oana Sînziana Păltineanu, explores the suffrage politics of the Romanian women's movement in Hungary before World War I. Păltineanu examines the politics of the *Uniunea femeilor române din Ungaria* (Union of the Romanian Women in Hungary) in the context of the internationalization strategies of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) and the suffrage politics of the Romanian National Party in Hungary. Păltineanu concludes that the Union's actions resembled those of similar organizations in Austria-Hungary that sought to join the IWSA. This indicates, she argues, that the Union may have been preparing to adopt a pro-suffrage position. We hope that the research desiderata listed above and the articles included here will inspire more such research.

The General Article section has two articles that both deal with the state-socialist period. Natalia Jarska analyzes gender relations and industrialization in the Stalinist and post-Stalinist period in Poland. Taking the example of a newly built metal factory in Kraśnik, her article shows the importance of local conditions for the process of the "productivization" of women. The study argues that in rural areas women's access to factory jobs generated less conflict than in the urban milieu. Finally, Anna Borgos's article deals with Hungarian lesbian "herstory" from the 1950s until the 2000s, based on oral history interviews with Hungarian women born between 1929 and the early 1960s. Borgos carefully analyzes their narratives in the changing social and political context of their time. The topic is a first for *Aspasia* that we hope will be followed by more contributions about LGBT histories in the region.

Socialism and feminism have complex, entangled, and contested histories. Earlier volumes of *Aspasia* have addressed some aspects of that complex field, for example in the forum titled "Is 'Communist Feminism' a *Contradictio in Terminis*?" (*Aspasia* 1). In this volume, we present two cases of the rubric The Source, which in different ways deal with that same topic: the relation between feminism and socialism. The first source presents translations of three articles from early twentieth-century Bulgaria about the different strategies used by socialist and liberal feminists to reach their shared goal of women's rights. Two of these translated articles have telling titles: "Class Consciousness and Feminism" (Vela Blagoeva in 1904) and "Do We Divide the [Bulgarian Women's] Union?" (Ana Karima in 1908). The headnote and documents will allow the readers to form their own judgment. The second source that we publish in translation is from Hungary, in particular, a report about the second congress of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), held in Budapest in early December 1948. An extensive introduction contextualizes this source and uses it to ask questions about the dominant narrative in Hungary (and Central and Eastern Europe more broadly) about women's movements and women's emancipation during state socialism. Interestingly, this source is also related to the theme of this volume, "Rethinking Empire from Eastern Europe," because the congress had a strong focus on the anti-colonial struggle of women in Asia and included a preparatory session for the WIDF-convened Congress of the Women of Asia held in Beijing in December 1949. Thus this source allows a glimpse into the "anti-imperial" dimension of the state-

socialist gender project, one of the desiderata quoted above from the call for papers for this volume.

We continue with thirteen book review essays and book reviews. Several of them take up the same issue of how to evaluate the “‘women-friendly’ actions” of state socialism (Krassimira Daskalova’s term coined in *Aspasia* 1). Interestingly, and probably characteristic for the currently unfolding broader debate about this question, the views expressed here are sometimes diametrically opposed: some authors support a “totalitarian” paradigm, whereas others argue that some state-socialist policies did have “liberatory effects” on the women involved, and that “our current knowledge of women’s experiences of state socialism, and of state socialism’s ability to emancipate women and support individual autonomy (albeit in unintentional ways), is totally insufficient” (Kristen Ghodsee in her review of Ana Hofman’s book about Serbia). We conclude with a short conference report.

We would like to thank all those colleagues who have done blind peer reviews for us, and express our thanks for the support of the members of the Editorial Board. Special thanks go to Raili Põldsaar Marling and Melissa Feinberg for their significant contributions as editors, to Rochelle Ruthchild for her editing assistance with the book reviews, and to Selin Cagatay for being an excellent editorial assistant. This is Marianna Muravyeva’s last issue as *Aspasia* editor and assistant book review editor. Many thanks to Marianna for five years of valuable and dedicated work for *Aspasia*.

The editors welcome contributions to *Aspasia* in any area of women’s and gender history in CESEE on an ongoing basis. Notes for contributors can be found on the inside back cover of this volume. For more and updated information about *Aspasia*, please visit <http://journals.berghahnbooks.com/asp>.

Francisca de Haan, on behalf of the *Aspasia* editors