

ČASOPIS ZA POVIJEST ZAPADNE HRVATSKE

WEST CROATIAN HISTORY JOURNAL

Monografski broj / Special issue:

Revolucije i revolucionari:
iz rodne perspektive

Revolutions and revolutionaries:
from the gender perspective

Uredila / Edited by

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RIJEKA,
XI./11. 2016.

***Gender in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe and the USSR*, ed. Catherine BAKER, London and New York: Palgrave, 2017, 266 str.**

The field of post-socialist gender studies continues to show considerable vitality, as demonstrated by this volume, which presents a series of new contributions on gender issues in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In comparison to previous edited volumes such as *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe* (2006), *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe* (2009), and *Gender and War in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (2006), which focused respectively on contemporary citizenship, state socialism, and WWI and WWII, this collection considers the twentieth century as a whole, from the *fin-de-siècle* and interwar periods to the end of the Cold War. Differently than in previous collections, contributions on the Soviet Union are presented alongside analyses of Eastern Europe (including South-Eastern Europe, namely Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav states), allowing for new comparative perspective on the influence of the Soviet model on other socialist regimes. Another original element in the collection is its attention towards issues of lesbianism, homosexuality and masculinity, a choice that appears particularly productive and that avoids to reduce gender representations and gender relations to women's experiences only. The introduction presents a very useful state of the art of contemporary debates on gender studies in the region, from debates on women's agency to the definition of a specific geographical socialist and post-socialist 'region' within the framework of global gender history.

The first section of the volume, 'Between the *Fin de Siècle* and the Interwar Period' contains a first contribution by Cynthia Paces on visual representations of motherhood in the Czech territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before 1918. Secondly, Olga Dimitrijević presents her research on British-Yugoslav lesbian networks during the Great War. The section also includes a chapter by Jo Laycock and Jeremy Johnson on the contested construction of new Soviet femininities in Armenia. The second section, 'Gender Regimes of Revolution and War', is opened by Jenny Kaminer's chapter on representation and practices of motherhood in the Soviet Union, and continues with a chapter by Katherine R. Jolluck on intersections of gender, ethnicity and class in WWII Poland, which determined probabilities of survival under Nazi and Soviet occupation; the section includes two more essays on Soviet history, Kerstin Bischl's chapter on female Red Army soldiers and their changing testimonies before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and Erica L. Fraser's chapter on Soviet and revolutionary masculinities in a global perspective. The third section of the volume on 'Gender Politics and State Socialist Power' opens with a chapter by Ivan Simić on gender and youth work actions in post-war Yugoslavia, which address the influence of the Soviet

model of emancipation in South East Europe. It continues with a chapter by Judith Takács on the listing of homosexuals in Hungary, from the 1920s until state socialism. The section is closed by a chapter on intimate politics and everyday life in socialist Romania by Maria Bucur. The final section, 'Gender During and After the Collapse of Communism', covers the period of late socialism and of post-socialist transition. The section include Anna Muller's contribution on masculinity and dissidence in Poland, Adriana Zaharijević's chapter on generations of feminist activists in late socialist Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav states, Maria Adamson's and Erika Kispeter's chapter on women's participation to traditionally male professions, particularly medicine and law, in Russia and Hungary, and Catherine Baker's final contribution on LGBT politics in the region after the end of the Cold War.

As it usually happens for edited volumes, the different disciplinary fields and different methodologies used by the authors contribute to highlight the diversity of the on-going research in the field, and also the variety in individual and collective experiences of post-socialism across the region. Some scholarly gaps, of course, are also to be expected for such a volume. The volume largely relies on sources from archives and popular culture, while qualitative sources such as oral history interviews are less present in the book, except for Maria Bucur's contribution that refers to the author's past oral history research, and for Kerstin Bischl's chapter which refers to previously published oral testimonies. This undoubtedly shows the still tenuous status of oral history research in the region, as well as, perhaps, scholars' enduring skepticism towards individual testimonies in a region that has witnessed such profound collective shifts in geopolitics and ideology in the course of the twentieth century. Additionally, the final section would have benefited from an in-depth case study of the impact of post-socialist transition in the region, especially from the perspective of citizenship rights in the field of labour and welfare. Similarly, an overview of the so-called 'East-West' feminist debates of the 1990s could have been useful for readers who are only partially familiar with the existing historiography.

Overall, however, the volume succeeds in covering a lot of ground, both geographically and theoretically. While some contributions are stronger and more innovative than others, it is manifest that the editor strived to balance between theoretical insights and empirical material in each chapter, and that links between the different chapters were built through additional connecting paragraphs, in order to maintain overall coherence. Thanks to the accessible language of the volume, and thanks to the affordable paperback edition, *Gender in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe and the USSR* is particularly suitable for teaching purposes and for all those readers looking for an introduction to women's and gender history in the region.

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