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**Gender and the First World War**  
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**T**HIS VOLUME presents some of the papers, extended and revised, of the conference “The First World War in a Gender Context—Topics and Perspective” which was held in Vienna between 29 September and 1 October 2011.

The studies included in this volume present a variety of gender-related topics, from violence, pacifism, women’s rights, citizenship during the First World War, to homosexual behavior among the soldiers of the German Army. All of the papers are dedicated to the European space, within a somewhat Eurocentric approach. Only in “Towards a New Internationalism: Pacifist Journals Edited by Women, 1914–1919” and “‘A foolish dream of sisterhood’: Anti-Pacifist Debates in the German Women’s Movement, 1914–1919” there are some mentions of the American women’s organizations which were actively present in Europe. Also, the Balkans are only mentioned in the article by Tina Bahovec, “Love for the Nation in Times of War: Strategies and Discourses of the National and Political Mobilization of Slovene Women in Carinthia from 1917 to 1920,” when the Carinthians had to choose between Austria and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. But this fact is also mentioned by the editors, who consider that the discussion should include more “Eastern and Southern European case studies” (p. 6).

The book has 14 chapters. In the first chapter “Introduction: Women’s and Gender History of the First World War—Top-

ics, Concepts, Perspectives” the editors talk about the aim of the book, namely, to raise the gender issue in the context of the upcoming centenary of the First World War, considering that the mainstream history of the First World War still ignores this perspective. So the chapters featured in the book outline a comparative perspective on gender concepts, on the role and visibility of the women in First World War, on concepts like “violence, pacifism, contemporary peace movements, and the issue of citizenship” (p. 2).

In the second chapter, “Women Behind the Lines: The Friuli Region as a Case Study of Total Mobilization, 1915–1917,” the author, Matteo Ermacora, talks about the role of women in the northern region of Italy, Friuli, which became a rear area of the Italian front. Using different sources, such as military and administrative records, letters, and newspapers, he seeks to examine the relationship between women and society during the war, the mobilization of women and their changing role from the household to the male professions. Even though the war changed gender relations, this was only temporary, especially in rural communities. Gender stereotypes were reinstated after the war and the women were still seen as second-class persons after the war. But the war effort made women aware of their rights in society, which had an effect in the long run (p. 31).

The next chapter, “Imagining and Communicating Violence: The Correspondence of a Berlin Family, 1914–1918,” written by Dorothee Wierling, examines the correspondence of four intellectuals in Germany. Lily Braun, a feminist and activist, was in favor of the war and considered motherhood as way of fighting the war. Her son, Otto, volunteered for the front, while her husband Heinrich

Braun was seen as the “least masculine” of them because he never got into “the mood of war” (p. 48). The fourth person was Julie Vogelstein, a friend of the family, an art historian who saw the war as a modern Greek drama (p. 36).

In the fourth chapter, “Love in the Trenches: German Soldiers’ Conceptions of Sexual Deviance and Hegemonic Masculinity in the First World War,” Jason Crouthamel argues that soldiers created their own conception of “good comrade” (p. 53) and that homosexuality and homosexual activities were seen as necessary for surviving the horrors of the war. Although they were still seen as social outcasts, homosexuals “were made into real men” (p. 68) by the war experience and they had another perspective on the masculine ideal.

The next chapter, “Visualizing ‘War Hysterics’: Strategies of Feminization and Re-Masculinization in Scientific Cinematography, 1916–1918” by Julia Barbara Köhne, deals with the way in which cinematography was used in the field of military psychiatry. Cinematography was supposed to help the medical community deal with the increasing number of soldiers suffering from “war hysteria” (p. 75), with symptoms like dizziness, amnesia, problems with speaking, sitting, walking, and it was seen like a disease, just like female hysteria. The people affected by this disease were considered the very opposite of the strong soldier and of the symbol of masculinity. In all countries, medical films were trying to present the complete recovery of the “hysterics” as a certainty.

In “Mentally broken, physically a wreck...: Violence in War Accounts of Nurses in Austro-Hungarian Service,” Christa Hämmerle, drawing on the memoirs of wartime nurses, discusses the history of these women who were on the front-

line and witnessed the violence and suffering of the war. If during the war they were seen as “white angels, sisters or mothers” (p. 99), after 1918 the nurses were hardly remembered and appreciated, especially in the countries that had lost the war. Their experience of the war, which was similar to that of soldiers, was only much later taken into consideration.

The next study, “Remembering French and British First World War Heroines,” signed by Alison S. Fell, refers to the British and French heroines who became legends in their countries. After 1914 the journalists, writers, and artists constructed a heroic type of woman, a role model, meant to boost morale and the war effort. Usually these heroines acted on the frontline, and some of them became martyrs. While the heroine-martyrs had their prestige assured, for those who survived the war it was very difficult to maintain that status. In a postwar climate that encouraged women to return to domestic activities, a status usually reserved for the males was no longer welcome in their case (p. 123).

In the following study, “The Baby in the Gas Mask: Motherhood, Wartime Technology, and the Gendered Division Between the Fronts During and After the First World War,” Susan R. Grayzel focuses on how the new war technology had a direct impact on the women and children, categories located well behind the frontlines. With the aerial bombardment of civilian areas, the First World War erased the boundaries between “home front” and “frontline” (p. 140). The threat to mothers and children changed their status, they could now become the direct victims of the modern war. In the postwar period, the mother and her child became the image of the victims of the future war (p. 133).

Claudia Siebrecht, in “The Female Mourner: Gender and the Moral Economy of Grief During the First World War,” deals with “the moral economy of grief” (p. 146) in Germany and argues that it was highly gendered and that women were expected to endure with pride the pain of loss and to bear the sacrifice with strength. This model, adopted by the authorities, the church, the press and other male-dominated sectors, was also expected from the female population, asked to willingly bear the wartime sacrifice with stoicism.

Manon Pignot’s study “French Boys and Girls in the Great War: Gender and the History of Children’s Experiences, 1914–1918” follows the experience of children in the Great War and uses gender as a tool to analyze the differences between boys and girls, taking the example of France. The author draws on sources such as diaries, letters, and drawings, as well as oral testimonies which show that the division male/female was also kept in the case of the young population. The children were also engaged in the wartime economics, besides working hard in school. There was a difference between the occupied territories and the free ones, and children’s experience was not influenced by country or nationality but mainly by the place where the war was experienced (p. 173).

The next two studies discuss the pacifist and anti-pacifist women’s movements. Bruna Bianchi, in “Towards a New Internationalism: Pacifist Journals Edited by Women, 1914–1919,” approaches the new absolute pacifism that emerged during the war, based on the writings published in journals edited by women. She declares that this new form of militarism changed the traditional role of the woman, from “nurturing and caring” into a force capable of counteracting the devastating

effects of the ‘man made world’ (p. 177). Ingrid Sharp, in “‘A foolish dream of sisterhood’: Anti-Pacifist Debates in the German Women’s Movement, 1914–1919,” analyzes women’s organizations in Germany. She argues that in 1914, before the war, the discourse had been that of pacifism and international solidarity, yet after the outbreak of the war the majority of women “supported the war policies of their government and suspended their international contacts for the duration of the war” (p. 195). Only a small minority continued to have international contacts and to oppose the war. Also, the context in which German women operated was unfavorable to the feminist goals. During the war years the women’s society was very divided and intolerant with regard to the opposing views.

The last 2 papers deal with the women’s movements and citizenship rights in Lithuania and Carinthia. Virginija Jurėnienė, in “War Activities and Citizenship Rights in and outside the Occupied Zone: Lithuanian Women During the First World War” follows the Lithuanian women during the First World War. They were active in both charity and women’s rights. This commitment was strongly related to the Lithuanian emancipation from Russian rule (p. 214). Large parts of Lithuania were occupied by the Germans, so initially they could only campaign in Russia, while in the occupied regions they helped citizens to endure the German occupation (founding schools, taking care of children, opening canteens, nursing patients) (p. 226).

In “Love for the Nation in Times of War: Strategies and Discourses of the National and Political Mobilization of Slovene Women in Carinthia from 1917 to 1920,” the author, Tina Bahovec, takes us to the Habsburg Monarchy, in a region

with a mixed population: Slovene and ethnic German. The outbreak of the war and national tensions on the rise created the first massive organization of Slovene women in Carinthia.

With this book the editors wanted to create a starting point for a discussion of gender issues in the First World War. Most of the studies employ a wide range of sources: diaries, letters, newspapers, military or administrative records, church records, while some draw on just one category of sources, like the more than 2,000 letters written by the members of the Braun family. Using a large but not very diverse sample, the study “Imagining and Communicating Violence: The Correspondence of a Berlin Family, 1914–1918” reaches some conclusions also applicable to most educated persons in Germany.

The centenary of the First World War was a good occasion for a historical re-discussion and re-writing of different topics within conferences, books, or projects. The editors introduced a topic which has been less discussed, but was nevertheless embraced and developed by others. As mentioned earlier, in this book there are no studies related to Eastern Europe, but the echoes of this topic have also reached this part of Europe. An example is the recent book by Alin Ciupală, *Bătălia lor: Femeile din România în Primul Război Mondial* (Iași: Polirom, 2017), where he discusses the role of women in the Romanian war effort, during the First World War.



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LOUIS JOSEPH VIONNET

**Retragerea lui Napoleon din Rusia:  
Memoriile maiorului Vionnet, 1812**

Translated from English by GABRIEL STOIAN,  
foreword by FILIP-LUCIAN IORGA, introduction  
and notes by JONATHAN NORTH  
Bucharest: Corint, 2015

**T**HE TWO centuries separating us from the French Revolution have not diminished in any way the power of these events to generate debates involving historians as well as specialists from other fields. Once the interpretations grounded in dogmatic Marxism lost their ideological dominance, Romanian writing became once again connected to the flow of European ideas which, in their turn, accommodate a wide range of interpretations, from the unfettered enthusiasm with the revolution, cultivated by the supporters of the liberal ideology and taken up by its Marxist successors, to the historiographical approaches that tend to reconsider the conservative reactions from the time of the French revolutionary turmoil or from the period immediately following it. The fascination with the events of 1848 and with the manner in which they stimulated the modernization and political development of the Romanian lands has shaped a generally positive approach to the events of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic period, as indicated even by a mere statistical analysis applied to the translations from the specialist literature. The sympathy for the revolution and its protagonists has also been influenced by subjective factors, such as the fascination with personalities and their role in history, the recent tradition that tends to overrate the Jacobin dimension of the revolution, seen at a time as a forerunner of the communist discourse on