

Gender and Sexuality in (Post)Socialist Europe and the Validity of “East/West Divides”

Diverging Perceptions from Difference to Entanglement

This interdisciplinary lecture series brings together historical and contemporary research perspectives and engages with the question how gender and sexuality are negotiated in the (former) state socialist countries of Europe. It is striking that gender and sexuality are repeatedly used to draw a line between a supposed "West" or "East," with reference often being made to state socialism. Historians, sociologists, cultural scholars and activists will therefore address the question of what the specific contributions to gender equality or gender and sexual emancipation were in the communist countries of Europe (Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Ukrainian SSR, Polish People's Republic and SFR Yugoslavia) and Central Asia, and what has lingering effects today. After all, communism had taken up the banner of equal rights for women. Today, by contrast, so-called “Eastern Europe” tends to be associated with conservative, anti-LGBTQ* or anti-gender equality policies in light of legislative changes such as the restriction of abortion rights in Poland or the curtailment of freedoms and rights of non-heterosexual people in Russia; or it is claimed that there never was a sexual revolution or genuine grassroots feminism under state socialism in the first place and that gender equality is a “Western import”. And more recently shifts and reframing’s of East-West differences could be also observed in the context of the Russian invasion into Ukraine.

In the lecture series we will complicate homogenizing regional framings and explore how European East-West differences are created and justified. We also attempt to discuss whether it is at all valid to speak of “Eastern” or “Western European” ideas, problems and developments, or whether for example a translocal, transregional European, global perspective is necessary with regards to the many of the aforementioned topics.

The lecture series is hosted by the **Chair of European Studies** in cooperation with the **Viadrina Institute for European Studies (IFES)** and **WIDE+**

*With the kind support of the **Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences** and the **equality office** at the European University Viadrina*

PROGRAMME OF THE LECTURE SERIES 2022/2023 The programme is still subject to changes. Please always check the IFES event website for actual versions and prior events. All events are in Central European Time Zone (CET).

	DATE	Lectures + Commentary
1	24.10.22 6.15-7.45 p.m. CET LH 101/102	<i>From Theory to Activism and Back: The Feminist Challenge to the State in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s</i> Zsófia Lóránd (Phd, University of Cambridge, UK)
2	14.11.2022 6.15-7.45 p.m. CET LH 101/102	<i>Global perspective on state socialist work for women's rights: the Women's International Democratic Federation and the rights of women in (post)colonial countries</i> Yulia Gradskova (Center for Baltic and East European Studies, Associate Professor, Södertörn University, Sweden) Commentary (online): Edmé Domínguez Reyes (Associate Professor, School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University, Sweden)
3	28.11.2022 6.15-7.45 p.m. CET online only	<i>Framing Homosexualities in Hungary since State-Socialism</i> Judit Takács (Professor of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Science, Hungary) Commentary (online): Emil Edenberg (Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Stockholm University)
5	09.01.2023 6.15-7.45 p.m. CET LH 101/102 In cooperation with WIDE plus	<i>Polish Communist Women in the Long Sixties: What Is Left of Their Experience for Leftist Feminism in Today's Poland?</i> Agnieszka Mrozik (Phd, Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland) Commentary (online): Natali Stegmann (apl. prof. of History, Universität Regensburg) The lectures and discussions will be translated from English into Spanish Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82915084713?pwd=NitnU3RENVBvNm1wTnFJYmZVTzBWUT09
	16.01.2023 4.15- 5.45 p.m. CET LH 101/102	<i>The debate on abortion in the non-governmental women's movement in the GDR</i> Jessica Bock (PhD, Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv) Introduction: Prof. Dr. Timm Beichelt (Dean and Prof. of European-Studies)
6	23.01.2023 6.15-8.00 p.m. CET	<i>Queer Encounters with Communist Power: Non-Heterosexual Lives and the State in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989</i> Věra Sokolová (Assoc. Professor of History and Head of the Graduate Program in

<p>LH 101/102 In cooperation with WIDE plus</p> 	<p>Gender Studies, Charles University, Czech Repl.) <i>Continuities and Discontinuities of Feminist Thought and the "East/West Divide": the case of Czech Society and Culture</i></p> <p>Libora Oates-Indruchová (Professor of Sociology of Gender, University of Graz Austria)</p> <p>The lectures and discussions will be translated from English into Spanish</p> <p>Registration to the online event: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88400281825?pwd=MXR1b3F4TDJLRkpwWk5yc2hHRIFPdz09</p>
<p>30.01.23 5.15-6.00 p.m. CET 15 min. break 6.15-8.00 p.m. CET LH 101/102 In cooperation with WIDE plus</p> 	<p>5.15-6.00 p.m. <i>"The Wonderful Years": Research and Film Exploration of Heterodoom in Late Soviet Ukraine.</i> Short lecture by Galina Yarmanova (PhD) followed by film screening (English subtitles, Spanish translation) with discussion</p> <p>6.15-8.00 p.m <i>Pride Contested: Geopolitics of Liberation at the Buffer Periphery of Europe</i></p> <p>Maria Mayerchyk (PhD, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine/ currently Fellow at the University of Greifswald) titled Commentary: Vanya Solovey (PhD, EECA Officer at TGEU)</p> <p>The lectures and discussions will be translated from English into Spanish</p> <p><i>Registration link to the online event will follow.</i> <i>With the kind support of the EUV Equality Office</i></p>
	<p>Concept and moderation of the lecture series and events: Jennifer Ramme (European Studies, EUV)</p>

The *hybrid* lectures will take place on Mondays - online and in room LH 101/102, Logenhaus, Logenstraße 11 at European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder) from 6.15 p.m. until 8 p.m. (please note: the session on January 16th will start at 4.00 p.m.). Please check the program website of [IFES](#) for actual information and the online links to the events.

Confirmed dates: 24.10.22/14.11.22/28.11.22 (**online**)/ 09.01.23/16.01.23 (**4-6 pm**)/ 23.01.23/30.01.23 (**6-9 pm**)

The link to the Zoom-events will be announced at the IFES Website a 1-3 days head the event. Please seek information at the IFES website prior to any event. The link to the online-events on the 09.01.23, 23.01.23, 30.01.23 will be send after registration on the WIDE+ website.

Moderation and contact for organizational matters:

Jennifer Ramme, Europa-Studien / Europa-Institut (IFES), Kulturwissenschaftliche Fakultät,
Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

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Abstracts and biographies (alphabetical order)

Jessica Bock (PhD, Digital German Women's Archive)

The debate on abortion in the non-governmental women's movement in the GDR

On 9 March 1972, the regulation of the period was introduced in the GDR. Women now had the option of having an abortion in the first three months free of charge and without compulsory counselling. In retrospective discussions of the GDR's equality policy, this legislation is not infrequently seen as the yardstick of a supposedly realised equality of women. However, more detailed observations and discussions about the practice of abortion in the GDR rarely take place.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, a non-governmental women's movement also organised itself in the GDR. From the second half of the 1980s, a debate on the topic of abortion can be documented within this movement. However, these debates and their actors have hardly been studied so far.

I would like to take up this gap with my lecture and ask: How did the women of the non-governmental women's movement perceive the autonomy and power of action guaranteed to them by the regulation of the period? How did they experience the practical implementation of the regulation of the time limit? What questions and problems regarding abortion were discussed within the informal women's groups? What were the ideas regarding bodily self-determination and contraception?

With my lecture I would like to encourage a differentiated view of abortion in the GDR, introduce the positions of the non-governmental women's movement into the debates and discuss the contradictions and also the limits of female emancipation in a patriarchal as well as authoritarian SED state: How self-determined were women in the GDR?

Dr. Jessica Bock, studied Medieval and Modern History at the University of Leipzig. With a scholarship from the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, she wrote her doctoral thesis on "Women's Movement in East Germany. Awakening-Revolt-Transformation in Leipzig 1980-2000". Her dissertation was awarded the Dissertation Prize of the GenderConceptGroup of the TU Dresden in 2019 and was published by Mitteldeutscher Verlag in 2020. She has been a research assistant at the Digital German Women's Archive since 2016. She is currently working on a brochure on abortion in Saxony from 1945 to 1989/90 on behalf of the association Weiterdenken - Heinrich Böll Foundation Saxony.

Recent publications:

- 1968–1989. Narrative in den Eigen-Geschichten der ost- und westdeutschen Frauenbewegung, in: Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft, H. 2, 2021, S. 163-174.

- Emanzipierter, selbstbewusster, freizügiger oder: Die ewig Andere? Betrachtungen zur Ostfrau und ihrer Sexualisierung, in: Gerbergasse 18. Thüringer Vierteljahreszeit-schrift für Zeitgeschichte und Politik, H. 95, Jena 2020, S.27-32.
- Kein einzig Schwesternland. Über die bestehende Un-Einigheit zwischen ost- und west-deutscher Frauenbewegung, in: Femina Politica. Zeitschrift für feministische Politikwissenschaft, Tübingen 2019, S. 121-130.

Domínguez Reyes, Edmé is Associate Professor in Peace and Development Studies at the School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University, Sweden. Her field is International Relations with a Ph.D. in Political Science with a specialisation on the Soviet Union-Eastern Europe, from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques of Paris. Her first area of research and publications was on Soviet foreign policy towards Latin America. Since the beginning of the 1990s her works and publications have focused on Regionalism in the case of NAFTA and Mexico, and on gender issues related to citizenship, labour organising, transnational activism, gender consequences of free trade agreements, and international political economy. Her research on these issues has concentrated on the cases of Mexico, El Salvador and Bolivia.

Edenborg, Emil has a Ph.D. in political science from Lund University, Sweden, and is currently an associate professor of gender studies at Stockholm University, Sweden. His research focuses on intersections of gender, sexuality, nationalism and security, as manifested in discourses of “traditional values”, anti-gender politics, far-right nationalism and contemporary security policy. Currently, he is conducting research on aid and development policy as an instrument to promote LGBT+ rights. Among his publications are the monograph *Politics of visibility and belonging: From Russia's “homosexual propaganda” laws to the Ukraine war* (Routledge, 2017) and peer-reviewed articles in journals such as *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *Problems of Post Communism*, and *Sexualities*.

Yulia Gradskova (Center for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden)
Global perspective on state socialist work for women's rights: the Women's International Democratic Federation and the rights of women in (post)colonial countries

The presentation is dedicated to the history of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), transnational women's organization created in Paris in 1945, but from 1951 having its headquarter in East Berlin. The WIDF was an influential organization on the global level, in particular, in the 1970s-1980s. At the same time, it was an organization that presented the state socialist achievements with respect to the rights of women as the “most progressive”.

The presentation is focused around the WIDF work for and with women from non-European countries and analyzes contradiction and internal hierarchies connected to this work. Special attention is paid to the role that women from the Soviet Central Asia were playing in the WIDF work with women from the (post)colonial and “developing” countries. The presentation is based on author's archival research as well as analysis of the WIDF's official publications.

Gradskova, Yulia is Associate Professor in History and currently works as a research coordinator at the Center for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University (Sweden). Her research interests include Soviet and post-Soviet social and gender history,

decolonial perspective on Soviet politics on emancipation of “woman of the East” and gender equality. Her last book is *The Women’s International Democratic Federation, the Global South and the Cold War. Defending the Rights of Women of the ‘Whole World’?* (Routledge 2021). Gradszkova is the author of *Soviet Politics of Emancipation of Ethnic Minority Women. Natsionalka* (Springer, 2018) and co-editor of several books, including *Gendering Postsocialism. Old Legacies and New Hierarchies* (Routledge 2018, with Ildiko Asztalos Morell); *Gender Equality on a Grand Tour. Politics and Institutions – the Nordic Council, Sweden, Lithuania and Russia* (Brill, 2017 – with E. Blomberg, Y. Waldemarson and A. Zvinkliene).

Zsófia Lóránd (Research Fellow, University of Cambridge, England)

From Theory to Activism and Back: The Feminist Challenge to the State in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s

One of the rare cases of organized feminist dissent started in Yugoslavia in the 1970s. A network of feminist groups in Belgrade, Ljubljana, and Zagreb started a quest for productive criticism of the socialist claim for women’s equality. While socialist regimes all over East Central Europe made substantial steps towards gender equality, women’s status in these countries was hardly equal. Criticizing the state for its shortcomings in this regard meant questioning one of socialism’s presumed main achievements. A feminist critique, moreover, involved a radical critique of the idea that subsuming the women’s question to the class question would bring forth gender equality. Feminist intellectuals (academics, artists, writers) in Yugoslavia were producing a diverse body of texts (including artworks and literature), suggesting a variety of feminist takes on women’s lives in socialist Yugoslavia. In her talk, Zsófia Lóránd offers an analytical overview of how feminist theory was created locally by Yugoslav intellectuals and artists, which then inspired an exceptionally vivid activist scene, and the talk will show how the varied activist efforts provided the basis for a different type of knowledge production.

Lóránd, Zsófia is an intellectual historian of feminism in post-WWII state-socialist Eastern Europe. Currently she is a Marie Curie Fellow at the Faculty of History and a Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College at the University of Cambridge. Her new project focuses on the heritage of interwar feminism in post-WWII Hungary, Yugoslavia and the GDR. Her book, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* was published in 2018 and got translated into Croatian in 2020. She earned her PhD at the Central European University in Budapest, where her dissertation got the Best Dissertation Award in 2015. Afterwards, she held positions at the European University Institute in Florence and the Lichtenberg-Kolleg of the University of Göttingen. Her further publications include articles about the history of feminist political thought in Croatia and Serbia after 1991, the problems of a missing women’s perspective in the nationalist commemorations of Hungarian history, the concept of the sexual revolution in Yugoslavia, women’s rights and political thought in post-WWII Hungary, among others. For 8 years, she worked as an SOS helpline volunteer and trainer in the field of domestic violence.

Maria Mayerchyk (PhD, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine/ currently Fellow at the University of Greifswald)

Pride Contested: Geopolitics of Liberation at the Buffer Periphery of Europe

This presentation explores Pride politics in post-Maidan Ukraine from queer feminist and decolonial perspectives. It aims to understand how the location of Ukraine on the fringes of two imperial formations, namely the global West and Russian imperialism, shapes Pride and its consequences for LGBT communities and broader society. Drawing on the concept of *buffer periphery* as an analytic lens that focuses critically on both imperial formations simultaneously, the presentation will closely examine the case of Queer Anarcho-Feminist Block at the 2017 Kyiv Pride, considering it as an attempt of decolonial resistance to neoliberalization and militarization of Pride and LGBT politics in Ukraine.

Mayerchuk, Maria (PhD) is a Philipp Schwartz Fellow at the University of Greifswald (Germany) and a Senior Research Associate at the Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Dr. Mayerchuk teaches courses on queer, gender, and feminist studies, as well as folklore and Ukrainian culture in Germany, Canada, and Ukraine. She holds a Candidate of Sciences degree in History specializing in Ethnology. She is a recipient of fellowships at Harvard University (USA), Lund University (Sweden), and the University of Alberta (Canada). Dr. Mayerchuk is editor-in-chief of the refereed journal *Feminist Critique: East European Journal of Feminist and Queer Studies* (<http://feminist.krytyka.com/en>).

Her research interests include decolonial option, queer and feminist epistemologies, East European studies, diaspora studies, and critical folklore studies.

Agnieszka Mroziak (PhD, Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences)
Polish Communist Women in the Long Sixties: What Is Left of Their Experience for Leftist Feminism in Today's Poland?

Stalinism, despite its authoritarian or even totalitarian practices, brought radical social, economic and cultural changes to postwar Poland. Many postulates of the pre-World War II leftist movement were finally realized, such as land reform, the development of education, science and culture – free and accessible to children of all social classes, and in terms of women's rights – equal access to education and work, as well as securing women's rights in the family (e.g., Lebow 2016; Chmielewska, Mroziak, Wolowiec 2021). “Thaw” – while it undoubtedly initiated processes of political democratization – caused a backlash in many areas where a real revolution had previously taken place. For example, the division into male and female professions, which had been abolished under Stalinism, returned to the labor market (e.g. Fidelis 2010), and in the field of education, the enrollment of working-class and rural youth suddenly slowed down (e.g. Zysiak 2016).

In my lecture – contrary to the popular thesis of a post-Stalinist backlash – I will show that Polish communist women politicians, intellectuals and activists, who after the war pursued a program of socialist modernization, one of the main pillars of which was the emancipation of women, did not give up the struggle to realize their ideals. They continued it under changed conditions and with new tools at their disposal. Their activities were not limited to what Anthony Giddens (1991) called “the politics of life”, i.e. the formation of a reflexive project of the self under conditions of state socialism (e.g., in the popular press, self-help books, radio

and television programs). “The politics of emancipation” continued to be their focus. In the long 1960s, i.e. between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, they persisted in advocating the implementation of the political demands of the “old left” – both domestically and internationally: they fought for secular education, equal access to medical care for all citizens, equal sharing of domestic duties between men and women, and against discrimination against women in all spheres of life (e.g. de Haan 2018). However, it is impossible not to notice that over time they moved further and further away from the demand for a systemic fight against inequality, especially class inequality. The year 1968, which in Western countries became the symbolic beginning of the “new left,” in Poland brought not only the defeat of the fight against antisemitism, but also the strengthening of the state's pro-family policies with the role of women as mothers at the forefront.

Do contemporary leftist feminists want to remember the activism of political radicals of the not so distant past – their achievements and failures? What lessons do they draw from the experiences of their predecessors? Does the promise of equality for all people not fully realized by state socialism have a chance to continue in the new, post-socialist reality? I would like to use the case of Poland as an introduction to a broader discussion not only about the past of the left and leftist feminism, but especially about their present condition and future.

References:

- Chmielewska Katarzyna, Mroziak Agnieszka, Wołowicz Grzegorz (eds.), *Reassessing Communism: Concepts, Culture, and Society in Poland, 1944-1989*, CEU Press, 2021.
- De Haan Francisca, “The Global Left-Feminist 1960s: From Copenhagen to Moscow and New York,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties. Between Protest and Nation-Building*, ed. Chen Jian et al, Routledge, 2018, 230-242.
- Fidelis Małgorzata, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Giddens Anthony, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Lebow Katherine, *Unfinished Utopia: Nowa Huta, Stalinism and Polish Society, 1949-56*, Cornell University Press, 2016.
- Zysiak Agata, *Punkty za pochodzenie. Powojenna modernizacja i uniwersytet w robotniczym mieście* [Affirmative Action. Postwar Modernization and University in the Working-Class City], Nomos, 2016.

Mroziak, Agnieszka is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She is affiliated with two research teams: The Centre for Cultural and Literary Studies of Communism, and the Archives of Women. She holds a PhD in Literary Studies and an MA in American Studies. She was a fellow of the Imre Kertész Kolleg in Jena (2017), the Institute for Advanced Study CEU (2018-19) and the DAAD programme at the University of Hamburg (2019). She is the author of *Architektki PRL-u. Komunistki, literatura i emancypacja kobiet w powojennej Polsce* (Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2022), and *Akuszerki transformacji. Kobiety, literatura i władza w Polsce po 1989 roku* (Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2012). She has co-authored and co-edited several collective volumes, including, *Reassessing Communism: Concepts, Culture, and Society in Poland, 1944–1989* (CEU Press, 2021), *Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond* (Routledge, 2020), and *Historical Memory of Central and East European Communism* (Routledge, 2018).

Libora Oates-Indruchová (Professor of Sociology of Gender, University of Graz, Austria)

Continuities and Discontinuities of Feminist Thought and the “East/West Divide”: the case of Czech Society and Culture

A widespread myth that first appeared in the Czecho(Slovak) media in the 1990s and has been upheld since by academics, including feminist ones, is that of the import of Western feminism to Czecho(Slovakia) after the demise of state socialism in 1989. The record of the publishing output by Czech and Slovak feminist scholars in the 1990s, however, rather speaks against this myth. Moreover, empirical research in the last decade has shown that these scholars did not represent an isolated, elitist group of intellectuals, but that they drew on a long tradition of gender thinking that was present in a variety of discourses even during late state socialism. Drawing on published academic work and current discussions among Czech gender studies researchers working on state socialism, I will outline the development of feminist and gender thinking from the times of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the post state-socialist transformation. I will propose, first, that the feminist impulse begun in the 19th century continued in some form throughout the 20th century; and second, that despite the specific political and historical development of Czecho(Slovakia), the trajectory of feminist/gender thinking in its territory shows more parallels with the Western, and especially Anglo-American, feminist and gender discussions than has been thought so far. The focus of the presentation will be on the second half of the 20th century.

Oates-Indruchová, Libora obtained her PhD from Lancaster University, UK and a „habilitation“ in Literary and Cultural Studies from Szeged University, Hungary. She is Professor of Sociology of Gender at the University of Graz (A). Her research interests include cultural representations of gender, gender and social change, censorship, everyday creativity and narrative research, with a focus on state-socialist and post state-socialist Czech Republic. Her publications include *Censorship in Czech and Hungarian Academic Publishing, 1969-89: Snakes and Ladders* (Bloomsbury 2020); “Blind Spots in Post-1989 Czech Historiography of State Socialism: Gender as a Category of Analysis” (*EEPS*, online first 2021) and “Self-Censorship and Aesopian Language of Scholarly Texts of Late State Socialism” (*The Slavonic and East European Review* 96 [2018], 4: 614-641). She co-edited *The Politics of Gender Culture under State Socialism: an Expropriated Voice* (with Hana Havelková; Routledge 2014, paperback 2015; expanded Czech edition 2015) that won the 2016 BASEES Women’s Forum Book Prize. Her other articles appeared, among others, in *Slavic Review*, *Signs*, *Men and Masculinities*, and *Aspasia*.

Homepage: <https://soziologie.uni-graz.at/en/sociology-of-gender/team/libora-oates-indruchova/>

Ramme, Jennifer works at the chair of European Studies at the Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences of the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany and is member of the Viadrina Institute for European Studies (IFES). She studied at the Art Academy in Poznan, Poland. Her research focuses on critical, spatial, and aesthetic theoretical perspectives on the conflict between "European" and "Polish" gender and sexual regimes. Among her publications are articles on conflictual scalar politics ([Exclusion through Inclusion. Struggles Over the Scalar Regimes of Belonging..](#), FS 2019), bodily performances of belonging during protests ([Women's Uprising in Poland. Embodied Claims between the Nation and Europe](#), AJEC 2019), or right sexual politics in Poland ([De/Constructing a Polish Nation](#), AG 2022). She has been coediting a book on women's mass political mobilisations in Poland, ([Bunt Kobiet. Czarne Protesty i Strajki Kobiet](#), ECS 2019), and an anthology on right-wing sexual politics in Europe [[Paradoxical Right-Wing Sexual Politics in Europe](#), Palgrave Macmillan 2021].

Stegmann, Natali (Prof. Dr.), studied Eastern European History in Frankfurt am Main and Poznan; 1999 doctorate in Tübingen; 2007 habilitation there; since March 2009 research associate and since 2009 associate professor at the University of Regensburg. Her research focus is the history of East Central Europe, especially Poland and the Bohemian Lands, respectively Czechoslovakia in the 19th and 20th centuries, gender and cultural history, social and post-war politics in the 20th century, late socialism. Her publications are amongst other on war interpretations; state foundations - social policy; feminism and the women's movement in Poland, 1863-1919; samizdat and alternative ways of communication, communication processes in late socialist Czechoslovakia and Poland; the work of the ILO and East Central Europe in the early Polish and Czechoslovak interwar years.

Solovey, Vanya Mark is a feminist researcher, activist, and translator. He did his doctoral research on the feminist movement in Russia at the Humboldt University of Berlin. Throughout his various fields of work, he is interested in intersectional practice and post- and decolonial approaches to post-Soviet societies. Vanya has translated and edited Russian translations of Audre Lorde, Virginie Despentes, and Paul Preciado. He is currently Associated Member at the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin, and does practice-oriented work to support trans movements in Eastern Europe and Central Asia as EECA Advocacy & Programme Officer at TGEU.

Věra Sokolová (Assoc. Professor of History and Head of the Graduate Program in Gender Studies, Charles University, Czech Repl.)

Queer Encounters with Communist Power: Non-Heterosexual Lives and the State in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989

Based on a recently published book of the same title, the presentation focuses on different ways, in which state authorities in socialist Czechoslovakia during the Normalization period tried to control homosexual lives, and discusses the shortcomings and contradictions of those efforts, which led to unexpected encounters between state power and queer individuals. History of homosexuality and queer people is most often written as a history of oppression. It is relatively commonplace to find historical accounts that treat queer people as victims of a regime that targeted them as sick and aberrant. But narratives that divide historical agency

into perpetration and victimhood often simplify how the exercise of power worked in practice and, above all, underestimate the agency of queer people to find their own ways to lead enriching lives. Interweaving queer oral history with archival research into the discourses on homosexuality and transsexuality in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1989, my presentation will thus travel in a different direction. Despite its brutality in many areas of life, the Czechoslovak Communist regime never enacted hateful or seditious campaign against homosexuality and queer people. Nonetheless, the “Communist regime” consisted of a number of institutional actors, who strived to regulate and police non-normative sexualities. While Czech sexology often played an enabling role, actively attempting to help queer people to enact their choices and live out their desires, not surprisingly, the constant presence of the watchful state and society represented a threat restricting the degree of queer agency. Importantly, however, the absence of legitimate, legally defined lesbian and gay identities during the socialist era posed discursive and practical challenges to formal attempts of the Communist state to constrain homosexuality and queer lives. This opacity opened space for articulations of defiance and creative solutions, which was thought-provokingly manifested in the selected examples of failed queer policing of same-sex ads in state-owned media and queer family constellations.

Sokolová, Věra is Associate Professor of History and Head of the Graduate Program in Gender Studies at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic. She also serves as Vice-Chair of the of the Equality & Diversity Working Group at Coimbra Group and Chair of the Board for Equal Opportunities at Charles University. She is a member of the Gender 4EU+ platform of the 4EU+ European University Alliance; a former member of the Committee for Sexual Minorities of the Government Council of the Czech Republic; and a member of several editorial and research boards of academic institutions in the Czech Republic. She specializes in comparative history of gender and sexuality; collective memory and public space; and reproductive justice. She is the author of four books and numerous chapters and research articles, mostly in English.

Judit Takács (Research Professor, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary)

Framing Homosexualities in Hungary since State-Socialism

Comparing the control of homosexuality under different political regimes within and between countries can reveal previously unwrapped complexities: contrasts and often continuities too. If we look at the de/re/criminalization history of homosexuality in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), we can notice that the early scholarly arguments were less about the right to privacy than whether criminalization was inappropriate because homosexuality was seen as a form of pathology. This led to several waves of decriminalization in the region: 1922 in the USSR, then 1960s and 1970s in several CEE countries, and 1990s for the holdouts. There have also been reverse waves, such as the re-criminalization in the USSR as part of Stalinism and Russia’s 2013 law prohibiting “propaganda for non-traditional sexual relations.” Sometimes we can encounter a perception that in all state-socialist countries, homosexuality was a crime. As surprising as it may be, the state-socialist authorities in Czechoslovakia and Hungary decriminalised consensual homosexual acts as early as 1961, while for example, in Poland, the legislation was abolished in 1932, before the state-socialist takeover, and was not reintroduced under state socialism.

The diversity of the timing and forms of legalizing queerness complicates the conceptualization of (homo)sexual politics of state socialism across CEE. There are several factors contributing to this heterogeneity, including the examined countries' varying cultural and religious traditions as well as democratic and economic conditions, which might be overlooked when approaching them in a homogenizing way as a bloc, either the post-socialist or the "Eastern bloc". For instance, the importance of democratic conditions can be illustrated by the collapse of the Soviet Union leading to a decriminalization wave in its successor countries. At the same time, it can be argued that liberation from a semi-colonial status might also contribute to the (re)emergence of nationalist agendas, re-traditionalizing gender regimes, and demographically focused neoliberal governance.

In this talk I will discuss the historical background of decriminalising homosexual acts in Hungary. I will also give a brief overview of recent Hungarian genderphobic developments, including the ban of any media content promoting or portraying "*deviation from [gender] identity aligning with birth at sex, gender reassignment, or homosexuality*" to be made available for people under the age 18.

Takács, Judit is a Research Professor and member of the Momentum Reproductive Sociology Research Group at the Institute of Sociology of the Centre for Social Sciences (CSS) – Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence. Her main research interests cover family practices, childlessness, the social history of homosexuality, homophobia and genderphobia. She completed an M.A. in Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam, holds a Ph.D. in sociology (2002), a Diploma Habilitationis (2011), and the Doctor of Science title (2019) provided by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her most recent publications include a co-edited volume on the [Paradoxical Right-Wing Sexual Politics in Europe](#) (with C. Möser & J. Ramme), a book chapter on [How to Conserve Kertbeny's Grave? A Case of Post-Communist Queer Necrophilia](#), and articles on [Liberating Pathologization? The Historical Background of the 1961 Decriminalization of Homosexuality in Hungary](#) (with T. PTóth) and [Democracy deficit and homophobic divergence in 21st century Europe](#) (with I. Szalma).

Yarmanova, Galina (PhD)

"The Wonderful Years": Research and Film Exploration of Heterodoom in Late Soviet Ukraine.

Lecture followed by film screening (English subtitles) with discussion: In our short research film, "The Wonderful Years" (9', 2018, dir. by Shymko and Yarmanova), Svitlana Shymko and I set to explore how the generation of our mothers navigated heterodoom, reproductive pressure, and pressure to get married in late Soviet Ukraine. Our film tells stories of several women dealing with heterosexuality in the 1980s. We used official Soviet reels and home videos from the Media Archive at Lviv Center for Urban History and drew on three research projects on sexuality from the early 2000s-2010s. I invite you to think together about local histories of resistance that complicate the narrative of coming out and visibility as the primary political strategies.

Yarmanova, Galina is an independent researcher, and graduate of an international MA program in Gender Studies at the Central European University (Budapest, Hungary). She has taught courses on gender, sexuality, and feminism at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Galina's research interests include topics such as reproduction and sexual rights, moral panics of sexuality, and the influence of nationalism and imperialism on current sexual politics in

Ukraine. Together with **Svitlana Shymko** she is director of [The Wonderful Years](#) (2018).

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