

abzuschwächen. Die Autorin erfuhr von diesen unautorisierten Änderungen erst nach dem Druck.

Im Ausblick bietet S. sogar noch eine philosophische Grundsatzdiskussion über das Zusammenwirken von Gedächtnis und Vergessen und beruft sich dabei auf zwei grundsätzlich unterschiedliche Konzepte. Während das Modell von Friedrich Nietzsches Gedächtnis als „Geschichte für die Herkunft von Verantwortlichkeit“ (S. 240) versteht, argumentiert Sigmund Freud, dass Erinnerung erst dann geschehen könne, wenn man die Bindungen zur Vergangenheit aufgehoben habe (S. 241). Diese „Paradoxie des Erinnerns“ (S. 242), auf die sämtliche Analysen des Hauptteils abzielen, ermöglicht eine Übertragung der Erkenntnisse der Arbeit auf andere historische Kontexte.

Gießen – Marburg

Elisa-Maria Hiemer

Kateřina Liřková: Sexual Liberation, Socialist Style. Communist Czechoslovakia and the Science of Desire, 1945-1989. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge 2018. 281 S. ISBN 978-1-108-44084-4. (£ 23,99.)

Kateřina Liřková, an associate professor of sociology and gender studies at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, has written an outstanding book on sexual liberation in communist Czechoslovakia. It sheds light on the under-researched scholarship on sexuality in post-war Europe, the social history of the Eastern Bloc, and Czechoslovakia in particular. This book thus contributes to the wider understanding of four decades of communist rule, while making a strong argument about the development of sexual liberation within the politics and society of Czechoslovakia, claiming that it advanced in the opposite direction from the trends in the post-war West.

The author introduces fascinating primary sources that shape her main focus around contemporary scholarly and political discussions. L.'s sources include medical studies and essays, popular magazine articles, citizens' letters and petitions, survey findings, legal codifications, government committee minutes, proceedings from sexologist congresses, marriage-advice guidebooks, demographic data, and divorce-court records.

The book has five chapters. The first chapter places the Czechoslovak case in the broader context of East-Central Europe, and thus gives an overview of gender and sexual politics in Czechoslovakia before and during the communist regime. The main argument in this chapter is that the control of sexuality was central to the socialist project. In the second chapter the author discusses gender equality and sexual liberation in the long 1950s, and how such ideas were encouraged by academic professionals, and sexologists in particular. This chapter discusses contemporary debates on reproductive rights, plans for premarital consulting, the legalization of children born out of wedlock, and suggestions to encourage reproduction. In the third chapter L. presents changes in sexological research on the female orgasm, which was conducted in Czechoslovakia already in the 1950s, prior to the research of William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson. The chapter also clarifies differences in academic and political approaches towards ideas of sexual satisfaction in marriage during the long 1950s, and the years after 1968. The fourth chapter discusses the backlash in sexual liberation and equality politics as well as the "normalization" of traditional ideas about the family during the normalization era. Any ideas on spousal equality that had developed during the long 1950s were, according to L., replaced in the 1970s by experts' insistence that women should subordinate themselves to their husbands. Indeed, L.'s analysis shows that family policies and sexuality in Czechoslovakia during the 1970s echoed those of many West European societies in the 1950s. In the final chapter the author moves from the nuclear heterosexual family to the topic of (exclusively) male "sexual deviance." The chapter also provides an analysis of the material used to encourage sexologists to decriminalize homosexuality.

L.'s outstanding book challenges many common assumptions about communist policies towards gender equality and sexual liberation. Unlike in most West European countries in

which sexual conservatism and a re-consolidation of pre-war gender roles took place during the long 1950s, the situation in Czechoslovakia took a different direction. Yet, when most of the West European countries were confronted with challenges to conservative ideas, such as sexual liberalization, gender equality, and the fight for gay rights at the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, Czechoslovakia again went in the opposite direction, experiencing a sharp backlash against ideas of gender equality, followed by attempts to restore hierarchy between men and women.

Obviously, the combination of a rather under-studied topic, diligent archival research, and the unique approach of the author makes the reader even more curious. As the book's predominant focus is on a white, classless (which would be important even in, and especially in, a communist society), assumedly Christian or non-religious Czech (only partially Slovak) women and men, it does not manage to illustrate all nuances of Czechoslovak society and its approach toward sexuality during the communist regime. Thus, the book leaves out a number of key actors within Czechoslovak sexual liberation, such as lesbian women, and questions of class and ethnicity, or the influence of churches. Additionally, it would be interesting to learn about people's reactions, contra-narratives, or protests against the experts' proposals and official policies. This would provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the topic. However, it would also change the 281-page book into an opus of thousands of pages.

L.'s book offers a remarkable contribution to the study of gender and sexuality, which belongs to a larger body of scholarship on sexuality in the former Eastern Bloc. The author presents stimulating material that can be discussed and further developed by scholars focusing on East-Central Europe, and across the West, where her book could serve a point of comparison. Indeed, where Dagmar Herzog ends in her study *Sexuality in Europe*¹, suggesting the further development of studying sexuality especially in Eastern Europe, L. continues with her findings. And where L. finishes her outstanding book, she leaves space for further scholarly research.

Marburg

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¹ DAGMAR HERZOG: *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History*, Cambridge 2011.

Jasmin Nithammer: Grenzen des Sozialismus zu Land und zu Wasser. Die tschechoslowakische Landgrenze und die polnische Seegrenze im Vergleich (1948–1968). (Studien zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, Bd. 44.) Verlag Herder-Institut. Marburg 2019. VI, 235 S., 4 Ill. ISBN 978-3-87969-444-0. (€ 45,-.)

Jasmin Nithammers Monografie ist eine punktuell überarbeitete Version ihrer 2016 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen verteidigten Dissertation. Gegenstand der Studie ist der Vergleich der polnischen Seegrenze mit der tschechoslowakischen Landgrenze in ihren Abschnitten zu Deutschland und Österreich während des Kalten Krieges. Die Vf. untersucht diese unter dem Phänomen der „Systemaußengrenzen“ mittels direkter Gegenüberstellung der Grenzkonzeptionen. Grundlegende Aspekte zur Bestimmung der „Systemaußengrenzen“ sieht die Vf. in der Konsolidierung aus physischer Grenzanlage und der sie umgebenden, diskursiven „ideologischen Mechanismen“ (S. 3). Diese arbeitet sie mithilfe einer Analyse des Wirkens der Grenzsoldaten sowie der in den Gebieten lebenden Bevölkerung heraus. Damit leistet die Vf. einen Beitrag zum Forschungsfeld der interdisziplinären Grenzstudien.

Die Arbeit ist übersichtlich in fünf Kapitel unterteilt. Neben der Einleitung und einer knappen historischen Darstellung über die Etablierung der Staatsgrenzen nach 1945 als Garant des sozialistischen Staatensystems folgen drei inhaltliche Fallstudien. Diese analysiert N. anhand dreier theoretischer Zugänge: Die internationale rechtliche Etablierung untersucht sie mit dem Konzept „Grenzen und Territorium“, den Ausbau der „System-