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.

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| 1 24.10.22 | From Theory to Activism and Back: The Feminist Challenge to the State in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s  
Zsófia Lóránd (Phd, University of Cambridge, UK) |
| 2 14.11.22 | 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  
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 28.11.22 | Framing Homosexualities in Hungary since State-Socialism  
Judit Takács (Professor of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Science, Hungary)  
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| 5 09.01.2023 | Polish Communist Women in the Long Sixties: What Is Left of Their Experience for Leftist Feminism in Today’s Poland?  
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 |
| 6 23.01.2023 | Queer Encounters with Communist Power: Non-Heterosexual Lives and the State in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989  
Věra Sokolová (Ass. Professor of History and Head of the Graduate Program in Gender Studies, Charles University, Czech Repl.)  
Continuities and Discontinuities of Feminist Thought and the “East/West Divide”: the
case of Czech Society and Culture

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

The lectures and discussions will be translated from English into Spanish

30.01.23
6-8 p.m.
(s.t)
LH 101/102
In cooperation with WIDE plus

“The Wonderful Years” – short documentary film by Svitlana Shymko and Galina Yarmanova followed by a lecture and discussion with Galina Yarmanova (PhD) and a lecture titled Pride Contested: Geopolitics of Liberation at the Buffer Periphery of Europe by Maria Mayerchyk (PhD, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine/ currently Fellow at the University of Greifswald)

Commentary: Vanya Solovey (PhD, EECA Officer at TGEU)

The lectures and discussions will be translated from English into Spanish

With the kind support of WIDE Plus and the EUV Equality Office

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)/05.12.22 (tbc)/09.01.23/23.01.23/30.01.23

The link to the Zoom-events will be announced at the IFES Website a 1-3 days head the event. In cases of recurring cyber rides of the online events, we might change the mode of participation to registered users only. Please seek information at the IFES website prior to any event.

Moderation and contact for organizational matters:

Jennifer Ramme, Europa-Studien / Europa-Institut (IFES), Kulturwissenschaftliche Fakultät, Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany
E-Mail: ramme@europa-uni.de

Abstracts and biographies (alphabetical order)

Bock, Jessica received her doctorate from the Institute of Historical Studies at the TU Dresden, Germany. She is currently a research assistant at the Digital German Women's Archive (Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv), focusing on the second women's movement and the women's movement in the GDR. She is editorially responsible for the texts of the DDF portal. Another focus of her work is the preservation of holdings on the GDR women's movement. In 2020, her dissertation "Frauenbewegung in Ostdeutschland. Aufbruch - Revolte - Transformation in Leipzig 1980-2000" (Women's Movement in East Germany.

**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’Études 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). Gradskova is the author of *Soviet Politics of Emancipation of Ethnic Minority Women. Natsionalka* (Springer, 2018) and co-editor of several books, including
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.

Mayerchyk, 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. Mayerchyk 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. Mayerchyk 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.

*Title and abstract will follow*

**Agnieszka Mrozik** (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, Mrozik, 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:

Mrozik, 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) and is member of the Viadrina Institute for European Studies (IFES). Her research focus is on critical, spatial and aesthetic theoretical perspectives on the conflict of “European” and “Polish” gender and sexual regimes. publications include amongst other 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].

Angelika Richter (PhD, Rector of weißensee academy of art berlin, Germany)

Disturbing Factor. Women artists between emancipation and patriarchy in the GDR

There were significant national differences between the individual Eastern and South-Eastern European countries in terms of their political realities, cultural identities, religious practices and potential openness to Western Europe, but crucial similarities in their women's policies, as Nanette Funk and Magda Müller point out in their studies on Gender, Politics and Post-Communism in 1993. Gender equality efforts under socialism were set by the state, with state
measures affecting numerous public and institutional spheres: those of work and education, politics, jurisprudence and culture. In state socialism, the solution to the 'women's question' was seen - in the tradition of the labour movement - in close connection with the changed relations of production and power, i.e. with the abolition of capitalist exploitation, of private property and the establishment of social equality. In particular, the integration of women into gainful employment was not only supposed to bring about the abolition of their oppression, but was even understood as the fundamental prerequisite for their emancipation. The downside was that efforts to achieve equality for women were not directed at a fundamental critique of the supposedly 'natural' gender difference and traditional gender hierarchies in all social contexts, but remained reduced to the class question. The consequence of this was that, with the integration into socialist work processes, authoritative (women) politicians in the GDR believed that a fundamentally new position for women in society – the equality of women - had already been achieved. Compared to other Eastern European countries, however, it is also clear that the GDR government did not assume that inequality between men and women would simply disappear. Since women’s policy had a special status in the GDR, the government took direct measures for the equality of women. Significant legal and structural changes were introduced in favour of women, including labour and education rights, marriage and family equality, and reproduction. But the reduction to state social policy shows a significant lack of a paradigm shift in gender policy in the GDR and even a “structural misogyny” of the state as the political scientist Birgit Sauer points out.

The lecture follows the questions of what awareness of their situation - which developed from the ambivalent position of women as beneficiaries of state measures and addressees of discrimination - had women artists of the second public sphere in the German Democratic Republic and how did they articulate a gender critique in their work. It also looks at the present and asks what position do East German women artists have today?

Richter, Angelika is an art and cultural scholar and curator. Her focus is on contemporary art, gender studies, art and culture of Eastern Europe, and the history of performance and media art. She has been president of weiβensee kunsthochschule berlin since 2021. Previous posts include International Exhibition Coordinator for the Liverpool Biennial in the UK (2001–2003), director of the Werkleitz Gesellschaft Halle (2003–2006), director of the 6th Werkleitz Biennial Common Property/Allgemeingut, co-curator of the 7th Werkleitz Biennial Happy Believers, executive director of the Deutscher Künstlerbund (2018–2021). As a freelance curator, she conducted the research for art in the GRD for Gender Check. Femininity and Masculinity in the Eastern Europe at mumok–Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (curated by Bojana Pejic). Her (co-)realized shows comprise And Now. Women artists from the GDR at Künstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin (2009), the Marion Ermer Prize show in 2010 and 2013 at Neues Museum Weimar, Left Performance Histories. Recollecting Artistic Practices in Eastern Europe at nGbK Berlin (2018), and Die wir nie gewesen sind at the Deutscher Künstlerbund (2019). She was a member of the DFG’s international research network Action Art Beyond the Iron Curtain and a visiting scholar at the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe in Leipzig. With a transnational and interdisciplinary focus, she has lectured at art academies in Germany, the UK, or in the U.S. Angelika Richter lives and works in Berlin.

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** studied linguistics at the Russian State University of the Humanities in Moscow and was active in several feminist and lesbian initiatives before he began doing research on activism. Vanya Solovey completed his doctoral thesis on the contemporary feminist movement in Russia at the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin. Vanya works with TGEU as EECA Officer. He has experience in grassroots leftist, feminist, queer, and trans activism.

**Věra Sokolová** (Ass. 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*

Abstract will follow

**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 decririminalised 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 decririminalising 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** 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).

*Title and abstract will follow*

Please check out the websites of the **Chair for European Studies** and the **Viadrina Institute for European Studies** (IFES) for updates