Nachrichten aus der Forschung

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»Gender Relationships between Occupiers and Occupied during the Allied Occupation of Germany after 1945«

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This international workshop explored different aspects of gender relations between occupiers and occupied during the Allied Occupation of defeated Germany after 1945. The focal points of the workshop were the various modalities of non-voluntary cohabitation and the broad spectrum those gender relationships could take as well as the struggles underlying those explicit and implicit renegotiations of power. Those non-voluntary forms of cohabitation and gender relations caused by the occupation covered a wide range of interactions – ranging from enmity to intimacy and from protection to violence – and were shaped by legal, economic, and moral hierarchies between the (mostly male) occupiers and the occupied of both sexes. In line with current historiographical trends, the workshop integrated a »history from below« approach by focusing on the perspectives of historical actors such as ordinary soldiers, civilians, men and women as well as »occupation children« or improvised mediators. Besides that, the workshop aimed to observe the history of bodies and emotions, the history of everyday life as well as the social and cultural history of war phenomena and transition periods such as the end of the war. The four chronological panels covered a broad range of themes, with a slight focus on the Western Zones of Occupation in Southwestern Germany. Nonetheless, the speakers – both established scholars as well as early career historians – provided multifaceted perspectives on the occupational period by integrating the perspectives of the occupied as well as the one of the occupiers.

The first panel, »Strategic, National, and Societal Dimensions of Sexual Violence in War Times«, addressed the end of the war and the beginning of the occupation as a transition period shaped by (sexual) violence. In her talk, »Before

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the Occupation. Gender Relationships between Soldiers and Women during the Invasion of Southern Germany by the French Army (April–July 1945)«, *Claire Miot* (Paris) focused on gendered war crimes such as rapes committed by the French army during the first days and weeks of the French occupation of Southern Germany. She drew on a rich corpus of sources from American archives, papers and documents from the French military justice, and German documents such as reports written by Priests after the capitulation of the »Third Reich«. Miot traced the post-war assumption that colonial soldiers committed most rapes back to racist stereotypes against North African troops, stirred by Nazi propaganda and ideology. She further ascribed the origin of these stereotypes to the civilians' collective memory of the occupation of the Rhineland after the Great War, which was also accompanied by sexual attacks and similar racist stereotypes. Second, Miot demonstrated the extent to which these gendered war crimes can be seen as an expression to dominate and conquer the female body, and a restatement of the virility of the French men, especially after their defeat in 1940 and the proceeding occupation.

The second paper, »Reasserting Gender Roles. The Reports of the Catholic Priests on Sexual Violence and Intimate Encounters in the French Zone of Occupation,« by the organizer of the conference, *Anne-Laure Briatte* (Freiburg i.Br./Paris), was based on specific sources: hundreds of »war reports« written by Catholic priests between May 1945 and the end of 1947. Despite the fact that these reports can only provide insight into the perspective of German, white, male, Catholic priests, their perspective should not be underestimated since – due to a vacuum of authorities – the clergymen played a highly influential role in the immediate post-war period. By analyzing the way they reported on acts of sexual violence and intimate encounters under the Allied, mostly French, occupation, Briatte illustrated how Catholic clergy presented themselves as protector and mediator while, at the same time, did not reflect on the war crimes committed by Germans during the war. The priests thus contributed to the victimization of Germans in general and the Catholic Church in particular. Furthermore, Briatte showed that Catholic priests were blaming the female victims of sexual violence by condemning their behavior and particularly condemning consensual sexual encounters and fraternization. In their reports, they portrayed the dignity of the German nation – as embodied by the German women – at risk and ultimately contributed to the restoration of the anti-liberal patriarchal gender order.

The second panel, »Responses to Fraternizations between Allied Occupiers and German Women«, covered the topic of fraternization and how the German civilian population and the Allied military organizations responded to relationships between Allied soldiers and local women. *Ann-Kristin Glöckner's* paper »[D]iese Art der ›Verbrüderung‹ geht einem denn doch etwas gegen den Strich! –

Intimate Relationships between French and Germans in Southwestern Germany under Occupation, 1945–55» focused on intimate relationships between Germans and French in the cities of Koblenz, Tübingen, and Freiburg im Breisgau and thus analyzed diverse forms of encounters and relationships, ranging from amicable to sexual and amorous relations. Drawing from a rich corpus of source material, mostly ego-documents and letters from local archives, Glöckner outlined how those relationships were seen by the German public, but also how occupiers and occupied perceived each other. In her concluding remarks, she pointed towards the limitations of the roles of occupiers and occupied, and highlighted the analytic potential of the categories gender, race, and age and their intersection. The category of race, for example, played a crucial role in the perception of sexual violence committed by French Allied soldiers, since only rapes committed by colonial soldiers were part of the public discourse. This stereotype was also found in the diaries analyzed by Glöckner since text passages on feared sexual violence were predominantly about colonial soldiers. Race, on the other hand, also played a crucial role regarding intimate relationships and friendships since the shared experience of being in a powerless situation brought French colonial soldiers and German civilians closer.

Camilo Erlichman (Maastricht) presented a different perspective on responses towards fraternization in his paper »A Question of Honour? Violence against Women in the British Zone of Germany«. Erlichman demonstrated, how analyzing attacks on German women by German men could contribute to our understanding of the shifting power relations as well as the crisis of German masculinity in post-war Germany. He highlighted how researching those violent attacks can serve to gain knowledge on conflicts over power, authority, and legitimacy between occupiers and occupied as well as among the occupied of both sexes. While German women rather benefitted from the occupation and experienced an increase in power during the occupation, this period constituted yet another defeat and emasculation for German men. Drawing from records of the British Military Government courts, Ehrlichman gave insights into the motives of the attackers, mostly young, homeless, former soldiers returning from war. Besides that, he elaborated on the nature of those attacks such as attacking women and DPs, shaving women's hair or threatening to do so or, in one case, spreading anti-British leaflets in a town in Niedersachsen. Regarding the responses of the occupiers towards those violent attacks, he noted that the sentences became less drastic from 1948 on, with the death penalty no longer imposed for those crimes.

Nadja Klopprogge (Berlin/Basel) presented a transnational as well as intersectional perspective on the occupation period in her paper »Race, Sex and the Liminality of the Aftermath. African-American Occupation Troops in Postwar Germany«. By focusing on the perspective of African American soldiers in the

U.S. Army – who had to de-Nazify and democratize Germans, while serving in a racially segregated and racist Army – and integrating the category of race into her analysis, Klopprogge gave insight into an under-explored aspect of the occupation period. She re-read and re-interpreted themes of historiography of occupation and gender in postwar Germany, such as sexual violence, fraternization, venereal diseases, and gendered protagonists such as the »Black Brute« or the »Fraulein«. When elaborating on the racialization of sexual violence, Klopprogge pointed towards similarities between Nazi-propaganda, the German post-war discourse, and the discourse in the U.S. South since in all three contexts rape was remembered as so-called »racial impurity« and as a threat to the nation. Klopprogge conceptualized the post war period as a liminal phase and concluded that racial as well as racist undercurrents were an integral component of the reactions to intimacy and sexuality in the aftermath of the Nazi racial state.

The paper of *Lena Rudeck* (Berlin), »Controlled Fraternization in Western Allied Soldiers' Clubs? The System of American Social Passes, 1945–1948«, focused on the American Clubs in Berlin and on the procedure of admitting Germans into those clubs, which was administered by so-called »social passes«. Rudeck provided insights into the example of Berlin-Schöneberg, where the social passes were issued between January 1947 and June 1948. In the archive of Berlin Tempelhof-Schöneberg she had access to over 700 application forms and official correspondences. Based on these applications, she elaborated on the question what type of woman the American government wanted to admit to the »Special Service and American Red Cross Clubs« for US soldiers. She showed that – contrary to the German public discourse that applying women were poor, desperate, and in need of the resources and food of the Allies – most female applicants were from a rather bourgeois quarter of Berlin Tempelhof-Schöneberg and lived in houses that had not been completely destroyed by the bombings. Most female applicants were between 18 and 22 years old, single, well-educated, and employed, often by the American government. Drawing on these fascinating sources, Rudeck concluded that the social passes served to deepen already existing contacts between German women and Allied soldiers rather than establishing them.

Stefanie Siess (Heidelberg/Paris) opened the third panel on »Shifting Gender Roles in New Power Relationships« with her paper on »Social Representations in Ego-Documents from the French Zone of Occupation (1945–1955)«. By referring to several sources, mostly from »Deutsches Tagebucharchiv Emmedingen«, Siess analyzed how male and female diarists in the French Zone of Occupation (FZO) in South-West Germany described and reacted to the shifting gender roles and power dynamics of the post-war period. By referring to the concept of »flawed masculinities«, she showed how men coming back from war or captivity coped

with the change of roles from soldier to husband and father as well as the change of roles from occupier to occupied. Siess also raised important theoretical questions about the genre of ego-documents, asking whether ego-documents, especially diaries, can be considered a »female source«. She pointed to a gendered asymmetry in her source material and noted that most diaries written during the war and stored in the archives were by men, while most diaries written during peacetime and the post-war period were by women. Concluding, Siess noted that diaries cannot be considered a per se »female source«. She stressed the potential and importance of (unpublished) diaries of women to make women visible as historical actors, especially since ego-documents of men written in the 1940's and 1950's were more frequently published than those of women.

In his paper, »Young Men Returning Home to an Alien Country. German-Speaking Emigrants as American and British Soldiers of Occupation in Germany and Austria«, *Avid Schors* (Freiburg i.Br.) focused on an understudied group of soldiers: Austrian and German men, who had to flee from Austria and Germany due to the persecution of the Nazis and, after the war, came back as Allied occupation soldiers. These young men went through a remarkable transition within a few years: from victims and emigrants to soldiers wearing the winner's uniforms. Despite their young age – but due to their language skills – they often rose to positions of high rank and functioned as mediators between occupier and occupied. In his close reading of published memoirs, Schors illustrated how these soldiers' memoirs shed new light on the relationship between occupiers and the occupied of both sexes. Furthermore, he showed that coming back to their countries of origin was often an ambivalent, uprooting experience for those young men that challenged their sense of belonging as well as their identity and masculinity. Interestingly enough, Schors noted that gender aspects were hardly mentioned in his sample and if the memoirists wrote about gender aspects or intimacy, they mostly did so in a low-key manner or an impersonal tone.

Bettina Blum (Paderborn) examined the requisitioning of houses in Westfalen and addressed the question, what impact the requisitioning had on German and British women. In her paper, »»Mothers fight for their home«. Gendered Approaches to the Requisitioning of Houses in Westphalia«, she described the requisitioning of houses as a technical, political and emotional issue. She illustrated that women were primarily affected by requisitioning, not only because they were traditionally considered responsible for family life, but also because oftentimes they had to cope with the situation alone due to their absent husbands. Blum described German women as a special pressure group who, by taking action as women and mothers, often took on active, publicly visible roles in their fight for reclaiming their homes. Moving to Germany as an occupier, on the other hand, was also a difficult experience for British families and women,

especially since a family's situation in Germany was dependent on the rank of the family member registered as the head of the family, who were mostly men. While some families advanced their social standing considerably in Germany, women were nonetheless dependent on their husbands for such development. Drawing on a rich corpus of interviews, private documents, and material from British and German archives, Blum elaborated on the coping strategies of British women, which ranged from staying in British circles to helping local families and establishing contacts with locals.

In the last panel, titled »Cross-Border Family Constellations and National Issues around the »Children of the Occupation««, the topics of the so-called »occupation children« and cross-border family constellations were approached from a legal, sociopolitical, ethical, and – with the help of oral history interviews and ego-documents – personal perspective. *Christopher Knowles* (London) explored marriages between German women and Allied Soldiers in his paper »Marriage with »ex-enemy Aliens«. Why did British Servicemen marry German women after the End of the Second World War?«. While pointing towards the difficulty of obtaining reliable statistics of the number of British-German marriages in the post-war period, Knowles stated that marriages between former enemies were surprisingly common in occupied Germany. He estimated that about 15 000 British servicemen married German women between 1947 and 1951 and explained that even after the marriage ban was lifted, couples had to overcome several bureaucratic obstacles to get married. Knowles brought up the most interesting question of the motives of getting married. Referring to memoirs and personal stories, he concluded that men were mostly marrying out of personal and romantic motives, pointing towards the fact that the British government actively discouraged marriages. Regarding women's motives, he concluded that – against the backdrop of the gender imbalance in post-war Germany amongst people in their 20s – motives of women were both rational and romantic. Knowles concluded that studying these marriages can tell us a lot about the process of reconciliation. Comparing the numbers of marriages in the different zones of occupation can be especially fruitful for future research since it could provide further insight into the social structure as well as the nature of occupation.

Lukas Schretter (Graz) introduced another aspect of British occupation, namely children from occupation soldiers and Austrian women and their life stories, in his paper »From Taboo to Recognition. Children Fathered by British Soldiers in Austria after World War II«. Schretter focused on the British Occupation Zone, and concluded that 80 per cent of all so-called »occupation children« were born in the first years of the occupation (1946–1948). In the post-war period, these children were perceived a financial burden by Austrian society and had to endure multi-dimensional processes of discrimination and stigmatization. Until

recently, the »occupation children« were marginalized in Austria's collective memory. Referring to his interviewees, Schretter gave insights into the life stories of three »occupation children«. Despite their diverse biographical backgrounds, all three women had in common that being labelled as an »occupation child« has had a profound influence on their childhood and on their lives in general. Besides that, they described their childhood as shaped by economic hardship since their single mothers did not receive financial support from neither the biological fathers of their children, nor the British or Austrian state. The British charity »The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child« identified the desperate situation of the single mothers of »occupation children« and aimed at establishing a financial support system for them. However, Schretter's research showed that hardly any »occupation children« fathered by British soldiers indeed received any financial aid by their biological British fathers.

In his paper, »The Attitude of the French State towards Children born to French Soldiers and Local Women in Germany and Indochina (1945–1954). A comparative Approach«, *Yves Denéchère* (Angers) also talked about the children of occupation soldiers and local women. While there are no reliable figures, Denéchère estimated that approximately 15 000 children were born in the French Zone of Occupation (FZO) in Germany and approximately 5000 children were born in Indochina. Based on hitherto unpublished sources and oral history interviews, Denéchère showed how differently the French government treated children from the FZO and children from Indochina. In his comparative study, he found that while both children from the FZO and from Indochina were brought to France, children from the FZO were given up for adoption and children from Indochina were raised in institutions. Denéchère emphasized to what extent these processes were influenced by biopolitical and eugenic considerations of the French state and the declining population number as well as racist and ableist ideas of the post-war era in general. He pointed out, for example, that it was a lot harder to find an adoptive family for children from the FZO with Arab or Black fathers and that handicapped or mentally impaired children were not given up for adoption at all but sent back to German authorities.

Fabrice Virgili (Paris) closed the last panel with his paper »Recover Allied Children in Germany (1945–1949)«, that focused on children fathered by French men living in the Soviet zone of Occupation. In 1947, Marie-Pierre Koenig, the chief commander of the French army in the FZO of Germany, estimated that approximately 10 000 children fathered by French men, mostly prisoners of war, were living in the Soviet occupation zone. Virgili elaborated on the debates evolving around the »repatriation« of these children to France, which centered on the declining birth rate as well the demographical balance between France and Germany. He further pointed to the long tradition of populationist ideas in France

and traced the debates on the demographical balance between France and Germany back to the First World War. Virgili also gave insights into the organization of the »repatriations«, which were a collaboration of the French and the Soviet Military Administration. Children living in the Soviet Zone were first brought to the Soviet sector of Berlin, then to the French sector and, ultimately, to France. He further pointed to conflicts in that process which had mostly to do with conflicting views on the children's nationality: children of French men and Soviet women living in Germany as forced laborers, for example, were viewed as French citizens by the French state and viewed as Soviet citizens by the Soviet State.

In the final discussion, the organizer of the workshop, Anne-Laure Briatte, commented the diversity of the workshop and the relevance and potential of researching gender relations in the post-war period. As it turned out in the discussion, quantification or concrete numbers were one of the most common challenges when researching gender relations in the post-war period. Several speakers pointed towards the difficulty of obtaining reliable statistics, even when it comes to official processes and public acts such as applying for a civil wedding or emigrating to an Allied country before or after getting married. Throughout the workshop, several topics emerged as important themes for future research. When it comes to non-voluntary cohabitation, the perspective of family members (wives, children) of the families of Allied soldiers living in Germany as well as the perspective of German servants working for – and sometimes living with – Allied families would provide further insight into the history of the everyday life of occupation. The discussion illuminated the high potential of an intersectional perspective when researching gender relationships between occupiers and occupied. Participants agreed that topics such as discrimination can only be studied thoroughly if several categories of discrimination – such as age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity class, social origin or military rank – and their intersection are taken into account. An intersectional perspective would be very useful when researching the highly unresearched perspective of soldiers of color serving in the French army, especially since the military rank of a soldier often intersected with the class or the race of a soldier.