Central European History 44 (2011), 1–12.
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doi:10.1017/S0008938910001159

HUMAN RIGHTS, UTOPIAS, AND GENDER IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY EUROPE

Introduction

Carola Sachse and Atina Grossmann

HUMAN rights for women, and, above all, violations, such as forced marriage, genital mutilation, and so-called honor killings, are omnipresent in current European popular debates on immigration, integration, assimilation, and European Union enlargement. Social, cultural, and religious practices such as arranged marriages, rites of passage, and veiling or public statements of faith are taken notice of only in their most extreme manifestations. Such practices, furthermore, are not discussed as phenomena that take place in similar or comparable forms in different times and parts of the world, but rather are ascribed exclusively to non-Western cultures. This tunnel vision is matched on the opposite side of the debate by playing down the infringements of rights and obvious crimes, and non-Western customs are sometimes legitimized in the context of so-called "foreign" psychostructures.[1] Such constrictions of the terms of debate obstruct the judgment and prosecution of human-rights violations and violent crimes against not only women of "other" societies, but also those of one's "own" society. In addition, they divert our attention from the fundamental contradictions that have beset the concept of human rights since its earliest formulations in the age of western-European Enlightenment.

We are grateful to Mary Nolan for assistance in editing the introduction and for general support throughout the process of organizing the issue. Katja Geiger provided valuable help with bibiliographic research, and the German-language draft was translated by Bryn Harris. The articles published here were first presented at a workshop on "Utopia, Human Rights, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Europe," at the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna in December 2007, organized by Carola Sachse and Atina Grossmann. We are grateful to The Center for European and Mediterranean Studies at New York University, the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies at the University of Vienna, the Sigmund Freud *Privatstiftung* in Vienna, and the Freud Foundation U.S. for their support of this conference; to *Central European History*, especially Kenneth Ledford for his support of the theme, and the anonymous readers for their critical and constructive comments on the articles; and to the authors for their contributions (and patience!).

[1] See Christina von Braun and Bettina Matthes, *Verschleierte Wirklichkeit. Die Frau, der Islam und der Westen* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2007).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938910001159 Published online by Cambridge University Press

At the 2007 Vienna conference on "Utopias, Human Rights, and Gender," from which the articles included in this volume originate, philosopher Cornelia Klinger pointed out the utopian factor that lies, necessarily, at the foundation of the idea of universally valid human rights, namely the "idea of mankind as something able to act as a single entity, mankind as a subject, which could step into the role of God as an imposer of order." The "flaw in Enlightenment reasoning" lies in making claim to this position of power: "For men are not powerful, but fallible and vulnerable; they are not endless, but mortal; they are, above all, never at one with either themselves, or with one another, but are multiply fragmented and pursue utterly varied ideas and interests." The bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries revealed that, "In the shortest time the ideal universal subject was reduced to the male taxpayers of a nation."[2] Nevertheless, the idea of universally valid rights for all human beings, once it had first been formulated in the American *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* in 1789, enjoyed periods of recurring popularity and faced repeated skepticism. For some, the idea of mankind as a single agent, made up of the equal and the free, remains to this day the utopia of the modern age.

Since the late eighteenth century, the contradictions between the claim of the universality of human rights and the actual, always merely partial scope of constitutionally guaranteed rights have become sharper. The historian Lynn Hunt has pointed out the paradox that lies behind this: in the eighteenth century the differing rights and opportunities for women and men; Catholics, Protestants, and Jews; blacks and whites; rich and poor could still be justified by social customs and habits, their different spheres of responsibility, and levels of education or "civilization." After the revolutions of the Enlightenment, different justifications were put forth for unequal rights within and among nations. The life sciences, on the rise since the first third of the nineteenth century, provided convenient biological explanations for "natural" differences. "In effect, the sweeping claims about the natural equality of all mankind called forth equally global assertions about natural difference." As a result, Hunt has argued, "the very notion of human rights inadvertently opened the door to more virulent forms of sexism, racism, and anti-Semitism."[3]

It was in the nation-states established across Europe after the middle of the nineteenth century and, above all, by the Paris Peace Treaties that followed

[2]Cornelia Klinger, Gabriele Kämper, and Carola Sachse, "Im Gespräch mit … Cornelia Klinger," *Feministische Studien* 27, no. 2 (2009): 258–267. See the issue for papers from the Vienna conference focused on visions of "utopia."

[3]Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 187. See also Hunt's *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); and Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

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World War I that racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, and nationalistic movements found a space for political action. There, the inclusion and exclusion of sections of the population could be negotiated within nation-states, which determined which rights should de facto be valid for whom. The more or less marked ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heterogeneity of these nation-states produced a field of intense conflict. Inhabitants of nation-states in no way thought of themselves as equal citizens, but above all, as belonging to their particular national majority, or to one or the other national minority—and even if they did not identify themselves as belonging to a national or cultural group, they were still addressed as such.[4]

Thus we can map the poles of the areas of tension in which debates about human rights have moved since the beginning of the twentieth century. Is it only individuals who can claim human rights for themselves, or can social, cultural, and national groups do so, too? Can human rights involve only universally valid statements, or should they take into account social, cultural, and national differences? Who has the authority to decide who or what is to be categorized as equal or different? Should human rights be sanctioned by national or supranational authorities? Do nations, groups of people, and/or individuals have a right of appeal? What relationship should supranational sanctioning authorities and universally valid human rights have to national sovereignty and the rights of national self-determination?

Regarding the rights of women, the problems become still more complex. As early as 1791 Olympe de Gouges had demanded—in vain—the "*droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*" ("rights of woman and the female citizen"), but it would still take almost another two hundred years until women's human rights were pushed forward onto the agenda of international human rights—not least through the activities of the new, frequently militant, women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the Economic and Social Council of the young United Nations had established a UN Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, it was only in 1975, the "International Women's Year," almost three decades after its 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and on the occasion of its first World Conference on Women held in Mexico City, that the UN proclaimed the "UN Decade for Women." The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), drawn up during the conference, was finally approved in modified form by the UN General Assembly in 1979. Nevertheless, at the UN Conferences on Women that followed, in Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and especially in Beijing in 1995, there

[4]See Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), for an excellent discussion of nationalism and "national indifference" in central Europe.

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were still heated debates about what should be understood by "women's human rights" in the first place.[5]

The formulation of universal women's human rights has repeatedly confronted one particular challenge: On the one hand, women must demand recognition of gender-specific difference, so that the forms of violence that specifically threaten women, such as mass rape in wartime, forced abortion as a tool of demographic policy, international trafficking in women, and forced prostitution, can be codified and punished as human-rights violations. They must define themselves as a group united with respect to these risks. On the other hand, they must insist on the universal validity of the human rights of individuals, so as to assert for themselves—as individuals—freedom, equality, dignity, physical and psychological integrity, the protection of privacy, and freedom of movement, to list but some of the items of the UN catalog of human rights. Moreover, women are themselves members of cultural and national groups and of religious communities. It is above all as members of families that women are the holders of possibly conflicting rights. For indeed families are, as Dieter Grimm, former judge of the German Federal Constitutional Court, put it in 1987, "an enclave of unequal rights" for men and women.[6] They constitute, it must be added, the sphere in which women are still most frequently exposed to violence and least protected from it. In often similar but rarely identical ways, this is true of western culture no less than of any other culture in the world.[7] As long as families, in spite of the particular historical, culturally specific, and socially influenced shaping of gender relations within each family, are defined as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society" and are as such—as in Article 16 (3) of the UN Declaration of Human Rights—considered to be "entitled to protection by society and the State," then the family's right to protection remains in a fraught and unresolved relationship to the "equal rights of men and women" that had already been proclaimed by the 1945 UN Charter and confirmed by the preamble to the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights.[8]

[5]See Raluca Maria Popa, "Translating Equality between Women and Men across Cold War Divides: Women Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of International Women's Year," in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist East and Central Europe*, ed. Jill Massino and Shana Penn (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 59–74; and Judith P. Zinsser, "From Mexico to Copenhagen to Nairobi: The United Nations Decade for Women 1975–1985," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 139–168.

[6]Dieter Grimm, *Recht und Staat der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987).

[7]Ute Gerhard, *Menschenrechte und Frauenrechte. Überlegungen zu Gleichheit und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit im Islam*, vol. III, Schriften des Essener Kollegs für Geschlechterforschung 4 (2004), 20–22; Mechthild Rumpf, Ute Gerhard, and Mechthild M. Jansen, eds., *Facetten islamischer Welten. Geschlechterordnungen, Frauen- und Menschenrechte in der Diskussion* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2003).

[8]On the origins of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, see among many sources Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001).

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The example of Germany shows that this tension is hardly specific to religiously fundamentalist countries or countries of the so-called Third World. Only in 1997 did rape within marriage become a punishable offense. Until then, the state's "special protection," which "marriage and the family shall enjoy" as set down in Article 6 of the Federal Republic's constitution of 1949, was brought into play, for instance, to prevent a standardized tax regime for everyone receiving an income, independent of marital status. In recent legislative periods, federal ministers from various parties responsible for women's affairs have attempted in vain to fund improved child care through the abolition of tax privileges for married couples. Their aim was to improve women's job opportunities and with that, to further "the abolition of existing disadvantages," a commitment to which they have been bound since 1994 by the additional clause to Article 3, the equality provisions of the constitution.

At present women are not in agreement with one another, either on the national or international levels, on the ways in which women's rights, the protection of families, and the human-rights-based demands of other groups—cultural, social, or national—should be balanced against and related to one another, on which practices should be tolerated as cultural expression or religious self-definition, and which should be condemned as human-rights violations. Activists in the international campaign for women's human rights, in which countless women's organizations took part both in the run-up to the UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993 and in its aftermath, finally did succeed in putting women's rights on the agenda. They even succeeded in having violence against women and girls recognized as a human-rights violation in the Declaration and, in 1994, securing the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women to the UN Human Rights Commission. Disputes about universalism and cultural difference, or about feminism and multiculturalism, or, as their mutual recriminations went, about "cultural imperialism" and "cultural relativism" continued, however. These arguments were stoked by the 1999 publication of an article by Susan Moller Okin, which posed the provocative question, "Is multiculturalism bad for women?" She answered "yes," referring to the particular vulnerability of women in immigrant communities where apparent acts of violence against women are glossed over as "cultural traditions" by both the majority and minority communities.[9]

Feminists, human-rights activists, and cultural and social scientists have time and time again debated the underlying concepts of culture and violence. Some have emphasized that neither majority nor minority cultures, neither dominant

[9]See Susan Moller Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?," in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*, ed. Joshua Cohen, Matthew Howard, and Martha Nussbaum (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 7–24; and Susan Moller Okin, "Multiculturalism and Feminism: No Simple Question, No Simple Answers," in *Minorities within Minorities: Equality, Rights, and Diversity*, ed. Avigail Eisenberg and Jeff Spinner-Haley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 67–89.

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nor marginalized cultures, are static, but rather develop dynamically or construct themselves entirely anew, either in exchange with each other or by differentiating themselves from one another. Some have stressed that violent practices can only be understood within these intercultural dynamics. They are the "intersectional" product of the interplay of structures and discourses of violence on the one hand, and of the interplay of the combined cultural and social, local and global structures of inequality on the other hand.[10] Accordingly, in 2005, Iris Marion Young called for the "politics of cultural difference" to be replaced by the "politics of positional difference." It is not, she insisted, cultures but "axes of structural social privilege and disadvantage" such as "the social division of labor, hierarchies of decision-making power, practices of sexuality and body aesthetics, and the arrangement of persons in physical and social space" that increase or lessen the vulnerability of women.[11]

For more than thirty years, women's studies and the closely linked fields of political science and the law have discussed the substantive content of women's human rights; their scope; their status in relation to competing human rights; and, above all, those of cultural, ethnic, and national groups; and strategies for prosecuting human-rights violations. This has not been the smoothest or most comfortable political journey, and it is not clear where the theory of intersectionality will lead. It is clear that there is a growing theoretical awareness of the problem among activists and social scientists. Historians' scrutiny of the women's human-rights movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, is still at a very early stage.[12] The gender-specific implications of the change in modernity's discourse of progress, which began in the final years of World War II and in the aftermath of the Holocaust, have been even less explored. The more or less utopian designs for society of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries gave way to the paradigm of universally valid human rights. With this shift, the focus of the debate moved away from

[10]In her theoretical discussion of an "intersectional concept of violence," Birgit Sauer refers above all to acts of violence against migrant women occurring in the overlapping spaces of migrant and majority societies. See Birgit Sauer, "Gewalt, Geschlecht, Kultur. Fallstricke aktueller Debatten um Traditionsbedingte Gewalt," in *Zwangsfreiheiten. Multikulturalität und Feminismus*, ed. Birgit Sauer and Sabine Strasser (Vienna: Promedia Verlag & Südwind, 2008), 52–59.

[11]Iris Marion Young, "Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference," in *Multiculturalism and Political Theory*, ed. Anthon Simon Laden and David Owen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 60–88, cited in Sauer, "Gewalt, Geschlecht, Kultur," 58.

[12]Remarkably, the first studies in this context deal with communist women or with women in "state socialist" societies. See, for example, Francisca de Haan, "Hoffnungen auf eine bessere Welt. Die frühen Jahre der Internationalen Demokratischen Frauenföderation (IDFF/WIDF) (1945–1950)," *Feministische Studien* 27, no. 2 (2009): 241–257; and Popa, "Translating Equality," or Zinsser, "From Mexico to Copenhagen to Nairobi." For the nineteenth century, see, for example, Ute Gerhard, *Verhältnisse und Verhinderungen. Frauenarbeit, Familie und Rechte der Frauen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978); and Ute Gerhard et al., eds., *Differenz und Gleichheit. Menschenrechte haben (k)ein Geschlecht* (Frankfurt am Main: Helmer, 1990); as well as Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*, and Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*.

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the construction of society according to any liberal or totalitarian concepts of governance as an ideal. In its place was put the individual, who must be granted universal rights by means of a global human-rights regime.

The establishment of a human-rights regime, starting with Franklin D. Roosevelt's formulation of the "four freedoms" in his speech to Congress in January 1941 and continuing through the British-American "Atlantic Charter" of August of the same year; the Declaration by the United Nations at the beginning of 1942 and the subsequent Allied conferences in Moscow (1943), Dumbarton Oaks (October 1944), Teheran (December 1944), and finally Yalta (February 1945); and culminating in the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in spring 1945, has been more intensively examined by contemporary historical research in recent years. Particular attention has been paid to the human-rights commission headed by Eleanor Roosevelt, which drew up the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights between 1946 and 1948."[13] Subsequent developments have also received attention from contemporary historians. In his review of literature on the subject, Jan Eckel suggested a plausible periodization of the debates on human rights in the second half of the twentieth century.[14] The phase of the institutional establishment within the UN, the Council of Europe, and the Organization of American States, was followed by a period extending to the end of the 1960s in which human rights were discussed predominantly within the context of decolonization. The 1970s were perceived even by contemporaries as a "human rights revolution," represented not least by the American president Jimmy Carter.[15] A genuine "human-rights industry" emerged from countless activist groups and new NGOs all over the world.[16] In eastern Europe dissident groups likewise appealed to human rights and were supported in their endeavors by the states of the European Community through the "Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (CSCE). In the 1980s and 1990s, human-rights discourse was dominated above all by the clash between western industrialized countries and African countries that demanded in vain a "right to development" as well as the "Asian

[13]On Eleanor Roosevelt, see Glendon, *A World Made New*, and Alida Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[14]Jan Eckel, "Utopie der Moral, Kalkül der Macht. Menschenrechte in der globalen Politik seit 1945," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 49 (2009): 437–484. For an important earlier review essay by the late and much missed Ken Cmiel, see his "The Recent History of Human Rights: Review Essay," *American Historical Review* 109, no. 1 (February 2004): 117–135.

[15]This argument is developed by Samuel Moyn in his critical study of human-rights ideology and historiography, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[16]Marguerite Garling, *The Human Rights Handbook: A Guide to British and American International Human Rights Organizations* (London and Worcester: Writers and Scholars Educational Trust, 1979), 6, cited in Eckel, "Utopie der Moral," 458.

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Tigers" of southeast Asia that viewed the global human-rights regime as an instrument for safeguarding western supremacy.[17]

This periodization is structured around larger global conflicts; historians have been interested predominantly in the strategic calculations of the powerful actors in international politics. They try to decode how political adversaries have used human rights in the overlapping eras of decolonization, the Cold War, and the "New World Order" after 1989/90. Historians have focused on the discrepancy between the expansive rhetorical airs with which human rights were proclaimed, defended, and demanded and the modest political efforts of the major powers actually to implement them, generally or even in their own immediate sphere of influence. At the same time, they stressed the contradiction between the assertion of universal validity and the no-less sacrosanct assertion of national sovereignty. This fault line has frustrated both those within a state who want to defend themselves against human-rights violations at the hands of state organs by appealing to a supranational authority as well as those who want to work from outside a nation-state to pressure it to recognize human rights.

These contradictions were neither natural nor logically necessary. They rather arose from the concrete, world-historical situation at the end of World War II and, as Mark Mazower has compellingly demonstrated, were carefully built into the structure of the human-rights regime by the major powers. The U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, which attempted to create a supranational institution for global peacekeeping, believed the League of Nations had failed because it protected the rights of national minorities rather than the rights of individuals. Indeed, the strong German minorities in the states of eastern and southeastern Europe served as a legitimation, if not actually as the "fifth column," for the aggressive expansionist policy of the Third Reich—a perception that as early as 1942 prompted the former Czechoslovakian president Edvard Beneš, in his London exile, to plead *against* rights for national minorities and *for* individual human rights in any postwar settlement. So, too, Jews living in Allied countries, mindful of the disaster faced by the Jewish minorities in the Nazi-controlled countries, no longer backed minority rights, but rather voiced support for individual rights. As the founding of the UN became imminent, leaders of nations from New Zealand to India and South America also demanded the human rights that had been promised time and again during the war. Even in the United States, popular opinion shifted away from the isolationists toward those who sought a leading role for their country in the new postwar order under the banner of human rights.[18]

[17] Eckel, "Utopie der Moral," 479–82.

[18] Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 2 (2004): 389–392. See also his essay collection, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

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The major powers viewed this support for individual human rights with concern rather than enthusiasm, and they responded by strengthening the principle of noninterference in domestic affairs. Great Britain would rather have done entirely without setting down human rights in the UN Charter, fearing the consequences for its colonial empire. The Soviet Union had just as little desire to see its dominance within its European sphere of influence (which it expected to expand) limited by an international human-rights regime. The United States also had substantial grounds for skepticism because of its policy of racial segregation, particularly since China, which had very early on been involved in the founding of the UN, insisted on a ban on racial discrimination. Nevertheless, the U.S. believed that the future organization for world peace required a unifying mission statement. In view of the catastrophic experiences associated with the League of Nations' minority-rights regime, this could only be a regime of individual human rights. As Mazower argued, however, "The higher human rights moved up the agenda, the greater the pressure for a *further* limitation on the new organization's ability to intervene in the domestic affairs of member states."[19] The UN Charter accommodated this contradiction, on which the major powers agreed. Article 1 (3) called for "promoting and encouraging respect" for unrestricted human rights, but Article 2 (1) failed to provide any sanctioning authority to balance the "principle of the sovereign equality of all its members." The American jurist Hans Kelsen, a refugee from Austria and one of the most respected figures in his field, characterized the UN Charter's commitment to human rights as nothing more than "empty phrases."[20] Even Eleanor Roosevelt and the commission appointed to work out the details concerning human rights could not do much about this, for it very quickly became clear that, at the most, what would be issued was a well-meaning declaration, but no binding convention.

Despite this inauspicious beginning, human-rights discourse developed its own dynamics during the Cold War. The major powers deployed human rights as a rhetorical weapon against one another; smaller or less powerful nations tried to expand their scope for action with reference to human rights. All exploited the forum of the UN General Assembly to bring human-rights violations—preferably those of others—to public attention, at least in the international sphere. Up to this day, however, the European Convention on Human Rights, which was issued by the Council of Europe in 1950 in reaction to the "empty phrases" of the UN Declaration, remains the only agreement on human rights between states in which observance of the agreement can be legally tested

[19]Mazower, "Strange Triumph," 393.

[20]Hans Kelsen, "The Preamble of the Charter—A Critical Analysis," *Journal of Politics* 8 (1946): 134–159, cited in Mazower, "Strange Triumph," 393.

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before the European Court of Human Rights, not only by the signatory states, but also by individuals, groups of people, and NGOs.[21]

The growing historical literature and contemporary debates on human rights suffer, it seems to us, from two particularly obvious shortcomings in regard to gender. On the one hand, the category of gender has not featured prominently among these studies of the history of human rights. On the other hand, the past decades' legal, socio-theoretical, and feminist debates about human rights, whether considered as a single corpus or as a set of contradictory legal rulings and competing interpretations, have not been historicized. Historians are faced with a paradox: women have been central, as Jean Quataert has recently argued, to human-rights mobilizations such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina since the 1970s, but they are virtually invisible in the new and ever growing (and ever more critical) historiography about the (now much questioned) postwar "human-rights revolution."[22] The countless incongruities between the conflicting categories of the rights of individual freedom; the social, economic, and political rights that have been included in the ever expanding list of human rights; and the rights of groups need to be further interrogated from the perspective of gender history. The incongruity between the rights of individuals and the rights that apply to families is one of the most important of these tensions.

Indeed, one of the questions this volume raises is why it has been so difficult, even for scholars trained in and committed to gender history, adequately to gender the history of human rights in the postwar moment. This peculiar absence may reflect in part the fact that the postwar human-rights regime was not articulated in gendered terms—despite the involvement of women such as Eleanor Roosevelt in highly visible representative ways in the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in on-the-ground humanitarian

[21]Mazower, "Strange Triumph," 394–397.

[22]See, for example, Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, or Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*. Jean H. Quataert's new book *Advocating Dignity: Human Rights Mobilizations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) explicitly considers the "gender factor" in the social history of human-rights politics, but focuses on the era starting with the Cold War. See also her *The Gendering of Human Rights in the International Systems of Law in the Twentieth Century*, American Historical Association Series in Global and Comparative History, general ed. Michael Adas (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 2006). For a different approach not directly focused on the origins of the United Nations human-rights regime that does integrate gender, see Tara Zahra, *Lost Children: Displaced Families and the Aftershocks of World War II in Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2011). Uta Ruppert notes that current women human-rights movements are open to all categories of human rights and reject a hierarchization of those rights. Moreover, they particularly reject a splitting of those rights relevant to the public political sphere from those referring to a sphere culturally constituted as private. See Uta Ruppert, "Frauen Menschenrechte. Konzepte und Strategien im Kontext transnationaler Frauenbewegungspolitik," in *Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. Theorie, Methoden, Empirie*, ed. Ruth Becker and Beate Kortendiek, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 912 ff.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938910001159 Published online by Cambridge University Press

work in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust, as noted in Tara Zahra's and Atina Grossmann's contributions to this issue.

The articles published in this issue therefore suggest possible ways to gender the historical discussion of human rights and to historicize contemporary debates about women, gender, and human rights. They cover both the first part of the twentieth century, when utopian projects dominated the discussion of rights, and the second half of the century, when human rights came to be seen by many as an alternative to failed utopian projects. Geographically, the five articles range from the Soviet Union across the Atlantic to the U.S., with three focused on central Europe. Thematically, the articles suggest the diversity of arenas in which human-rights discourse has featured. Lauren Kaminsky's analysis of "Utopian Visions of Family Life in the Stalin-Era Soviet Union" examines Soviet debates about the competing rights of women and families during the 1930s and World War II. She shows the surprising use of a language of differential rights for women in different marital and family situations. In her article, "'The Psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender, and Human Rights after World War II," Tara Zahra demonstrates how the massive separation of parents and children during World War II profoundly shaped understandings of human rights and humanitarianism in postwar Europe and America. Humanitarian workers and child-welfare experts (many of them female) sought to reestablish the sovereignty of families as well as of nations, but disputes about what constituted the "best interests" of the "lost" (and especially Jewish) children of war and genocide also revealed the limits of both national and familial claims. In this contested process, historically specific ideals of family, gender, and child rearing were embedded in emerging conceptions of universal human rights.

Atina Grossmann's article, "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languges of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949," analyzes the competing ways in which both Jewish survivors and defeated Germans deployed human-rights language to claim concrete social entitlements, such as food provision. Stateless Jewish displaced persons moreover saw the fulfillment of their demands for basic necessities such as food as well as political recognition in a national homeland as crucial to a recognition of human rights in a postwar moment when rights, now cast as universal, remained tied to nation-states. Anika Keinz's study of "European Desires and National Bedrooms? Negotiating 'Normalcy' in Postsocialist Poland" analyzes how both conservative and religious opponents of sexual and reproductive rights, and women's- and gay-rights activists invoked a language of human rights. The former, however, spoke a language of genuine democatic majority rights to restore religious and cultural values that had been marginalized by the communist regime, while the latter called on the European Union's defense of individual rights and freedom. Mary Nolan's essay, "Gender and Utopian Visions in a Post-Utopian Era: Americanism, Human Rights, Market Fundamentalism," based on her keynote

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address at the Vienna workshop, offers a critical reflection on the place of human rights among utopian visions in the second half of the twentieth century. She contends that human-rights discourse, like Americanism and market fundamentalism, share an exclusive and limiting focus on the individual at the expense of the social that works against women's interests and welfare. The articles collected here therefore suggest both the possibilities and limits of investigating the gendered character of human rights and are intended as an incitement to further research.

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