

impositions. Nevertheless, without presuming, wrongly, that harem women had no agency, it is hard to imagine twenty-first-century rural women's self-directed strategizing, that the author spotlights, without the colonizers' previous introduction of some "modernizing" changes.

The study offers a useful historical dimension that traces transformations over more than a century. Large political and social forces imposed by the Russians, such as the collectivization of agriculture around a cotton monoculture for export, changed lives again and again. Some Uzbeks, men and women, found advantageous niches for themselves in these developments, but many, especially women, faced shifting hardships. Tursunova's central argument, however, is that, after independence, rural women were again able, drawing on traditional local practices, to engage effectively as agents in shaping their own lives and those of their families. Some women were among those better placed or more skilled at taking advantage of new conditions.

Tursunova pays special attention to ways that customary local practices have worked to mediate the recurrent hardships or to help women exploit emergent opportunities. Valuable for both men and women is the *gap*, an arrangement in which usually one-sex groups gather regularly for sociability and pony up small sums of money into a collective pot; each member then, in turn, gets a chance to use the accumulated sum to advance her economic strategy. In a more cultural vein, the author foregrounds religion and the support rural women continue to draw from traditional female religious leaders (*otin*). The Soviets discouraged Islam more and less strongly at different times, but, when Uzbekistan became an inde-

pendent Muslim state, religion in many forms revived. According to Tursunova, reanimating the moral guidelines and story-telling traditions of a syncretic, old-fashioned version of Islam, women leaders in rural areas teach Qur'an, perform healing rituals, mediate conflicts, and help solve a variety of problems. These services and the female religious assemblies in which they take place provide crucial support.

Tursunova's tone of sincerity and serious professionalism gives force to her book. Choppy organization inside and among chapters, however, impedes the clear delivery of complex arguments about unfamiliar data. This book is probably not the easiest entrée into the gendered experiences of rural Uzbekistan, but it offers a rich account of the texture of village women's lives within a thoughtful framework of broad sociological and political explanation.

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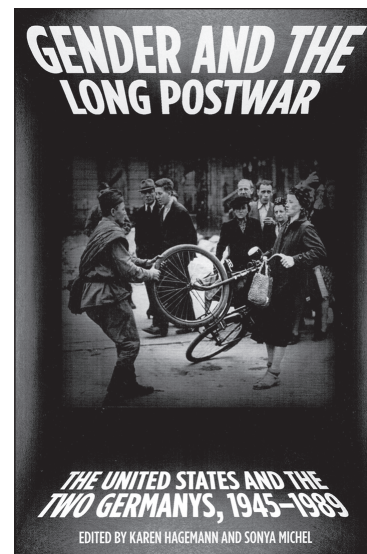
## **GENDER AND THE LONG POSTWAR: THE UNITED STATES AND THE TWO GERMANYS, 1945-1989**

Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel, Eds.

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014

### **REVIEWED BY DEBORAH HERMAN**

The authors provide a well-organized overview of postwar politics by using a transnational, comparative approach that includes not only the



"two Germanys" but the influence of the U.S. and Russia as well.

This perspective lays bare the concerted Cold War effort on both sides to put the brakes on progress by returning to prewar sexual and social norms. Such binaries as the male breadwinner/female homemaker, East/West, black/white and the heteronormative/homosexual subject become complicated upon closer inspection. Hagemann and Michel's choice of essays do well to "decouple" and challenge peacetime anxieties, to use their term.

They do this by organizing the book into sections that "gender" the aftermath of war, unpack the changing role of postwar masculinity, examine the new nuclear family under the watchful eye of the state, and finally explore new sexual identities.

"The defeated Germany that the victors encountered in spring 1945 wore a predominantly female face," begins Atina Grossmann, explaining how the GDR (German Democratic Republic) had the Red Army as a rapacious occupying force in the East, while the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) of the West softened their seduction into the slightly more acceptable American G.I. "fraternization" with the local