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As I was collecting material for my new book about the relationship between women and World War II, I interviewed women who experienced the siege of Budapest in the winter of 1944-45.[1] I discovered that what women were most often reading in the light of candles at the air-raid shelters was the then-latest edition of *Gone with the Wind.* In that novel we find the famous line: "war is men's business, not women's." The Hungarian women readers would have loved to nod approvingly, had they not been sitting in the cross-fire of Soviet, German, and Hungarian cannons.[2]

Historically, the military is an organization of masculine strength and power, in which men are the fighters, while women are the "angels at home," the representatives of peace and caring.

Our twentieth century is, indeed, no success story, witnessing as it has groups of uniformed men slaughtering one another in an increasingly professional manner. Thus, the feminist reading of international relations is correct: if the history of wars is nothing but the history of the fights of groups of men in uniform, then wars, which cause so much suffering, must be avoided and the biologically determined violent and aggressive tendencies of men have to be controlled. To achieve this aim requires more than laws, norms, treaties, and military conventions; it also requires employing as many women as possible as leaders, soldiers, and politicians. The masculine world order founded on violence can be transformed through women's active participation in world politics. The true revolution of the twentieth century is the revolution in the role of women, and this conference provides us with a good opportunity to rethink what this revolution implies for the relationship between women

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and war. The long-term trend, women's struggle for a better life, has lasted for more than a hundred years; it began with winning the suffrage and still has many years to go.

Twentieth-century wars in Europe have fundamentally questioned the separation between the fighting man and the woman staying at home. Because of wars' demand for manpower and the perishing of soldiers in heretofore unseen numbers owing to improvements in military technology, women began at least temporarily to replace the men missing from the labor force in factories, and even in the military itself. We must not forget, however, that the places women were taking in the military or at work had belonged to men. We must be aware of the psychological consequences. Today armies no longer consist of unyielding and bloodthirsty male soldiers—women are also members of the military.

But why did women want to take up a military career, which is, above all, so dangerous? Primarily in the hope of receiving professional training of a quality unobtainable elsewhere. A military career also guarantees a steady job, no small thing in our world. A third reason is the wish for a career, or, in other words, self-realization. As Amelia Earhart, the American pilot, wrote in her autobiographical novel *The Last Flight*:

> And besides these there was my conviction, too, that here and now women have to do for themselves what men already have, or what men in some cases haven't, ...to become somebody, thus encouraging other women to become more independent in thoughts as well as in deeds.

Fukuyama, who has always had a talent for raising questions that attract the world's attention, asked in his latest book, which has caused such a stir, what would happen if women governed the world?[3] What will a military be like in which women, having transcended the antimilitarism of feminism, attempt to deconstruct men's reign within the military? Is the notion of professionalism indeed suitable for changing both gender disparities and dissimilar attitudes to deploying force? What moral arguments can we have against war, as a means of solving conflicts, within and outside the military? We may find answers to these questions at the conference.

In the following I shall analyze the two interpretive frameworks that govern how we think about women and military. According to the early feminists of the 1960s, the biological differences between men and women are decisive, the essential differences are crucial. According to the feminists of the 1980s, the psychology of men and women would be identical if there weren't socially determined norms, systems of socialization maintained by cultural systems.[4]

The framework of care

The interpretation of women and the military within the so-called framework of care relies on otherness determined by biological difference. In accordance with this concept, it allocates four roles to women:

The mothers

Women as mothers ensure that enough would-be soldiers endowed with patriotic enthusiasm are ready to defend their country. Given this role, the female body becomes only an instrument, the means of reproduction. In this logic women are expected to send their sons into the military without hesitation or resistance, while they receive moral recognition from the state in return. A good example is the rightward shift of the Hungarian women's movement shortly before World War Two, accompanied by the militarization of various women's organisations.[5] The members of Hungarian women's organizations were supposed to encourage their sons to defend their country and to pour their enthusiasm into knitting scarves for the boys fighting on the fronts. When the mothers protested against this unequal treatment imposed by state power—as did the Russian mothers who later organized themselves in support of their sons fighting in the Afghan war—the military establishment and politicians using nationalistic rhetoric responded with accusations of treason.

The wives

The role of wife is also restricted by the logic of caring. In this framework, a woman defends the family's unity in the hinterland, attempting to preserve the family unchanged while the master of the house protects the country by serving in the military. Knowing that the family left at home is safe and protected by its women arouses enthusiasm in those fighting on the front. Several studies have already analyzed the extent to which the radicalization of the soldiers of Tsarist Russia during the First World War resulted from letters from their loved ones at home revealing that the Tsarist state was incapable of guaranteeing their welfare—forcing soldiers to take matters into their own hands.[6]

The mourners

Women and mothers mourn. When analyzing war monuments, the depiction of women's bereavement, the Descent from the Cross fits well into the framework of care, yet it raises the question whether it is just to consider mothers' suffering superior to that of fathers.[7]

The nurses

In the framework of care, one other role remains. Women in the military are set tasks fitting the framework of care, serving in medical or other auxiliary capacities. From Mrs. Zsindely, née Klára Tüdős, to Margit Slachta, all of the leaders of the Hungarian women's movement in the interwar period volunteered to work as nurses, and while the roles they assumed were compatible with the patriarchal order, they became the means for accumulated unique personal experiences that proved decisive for the roles these women later undertook in public life.

Following the first big modern European war, new discourses were needed when coming to terms with the experiences gained during the war. Thus, following World War One, literature acquired a new genre. Universal conscription democratized the military, decreasing its previously professional and elite character. The soldiers who experienced and survived trench warfare published recollections of their war experiences in the form of poems, short stories, and diaries. In many cases the authenticity of their personal experiences made up for lack of literary value. Personal experiences and the recognition of their value leads us, then, to the next framework of interpretation. For women who as nurses had also lived adventurously and under just as dangerous circumstances were astonished to find that no one was interested in their memories—especially not in written form, as that would have undermined the myth of masculine militancy that had already been seriously eroded. (T. S. Eliott's "Hollow Men" provides one famous example.) It was then that those structures began to be examined that had made women, and especially nurses, invisible in the military (nurses were called "invisible soldiers"). Similarly, the question emerged whether women's lives made sense only as a contribution supporting men's heroic military deeds.

Our second framework is that of equal rights, within which women, having won civic rights, especially the suffrage, set themselves the task of becoming equal to men in all walks of life and being able to interpret their equality themselves. If we read history as the "history of wars," then we see only men, as leaders and fighters, in history textbooks. By contrast, Elisabeth Minnich has pointed out that without the participation of women there is also no military history:

> Women fought and tried to stop the massacre, women were there on the forefront, as suppliers, nurses and spies, and they worked behind the front lines as cooks, secretaries, dressmakers, drivers and translators so that life could go on in the country.[8]

They were merely left out of historiography.

A special case of equal role allocation involving women and the military is the Red Military. Setting up units consisting exclusively of women, for example of aristocrats' daughters, was already a tradition in Russia; the last defenders of the Winter Palace were Czarist units consisting of women fighting on the side of the Provisional Government. We will lack, however, a history of women in uniform fighting the Great Patriotic War. The history of Soviet women pilots, or more precisely the history of how they were quite consciously and officially forgotten after the war, has been studied, and it does not differ much from the history of contemporary American women pilots.[9] Independently from American and Western European women's fight for emancipation, yet in the spirit of leveling communist politics, the women soldiers (*afghanki*) who had fought on the Soviet side in the Afghan-Soviet war were astonished to find, following their return home, that they were not entitled to the same social benefits as male soldiers who served on the same front. What they learned from the bloody war was that they could only rely on themselves.

Framework of Rights

The birth of the framework of equal rights is closely linked to the history of feminism. Before World War One, strong pacifist and feminist women's movements were operating almost everywhere in Europe, primarily in order to win universal suffrage. World War One marks a dividing line in many respects. Feminist movements had two alternatives: they either adopted "national" enthusiasm for the war in an atmosphere of widespread nationalism and militarism, demanding that women fulfil roles in the military equal to those of men, or, warning both men and women not to participate in the war, they became completely isolated by their antimilitarist rhetoric. This process occurred, for instance, in both England and Hungary. Then, after the war, governments rewarded women for the sacrifices they made during the war by granting them the right to vote. Hence, the period between the two wars was the ebb tide of feminism. The second great wave of feminism followed only after another war claiming tens of millions of lives. The second wave of feminism, which was born at the time of the fight against the Vietnam war, wanted to move beyond the framework of care in which women sacrifice themselves for men while the extent and conditions of the sacrifice are determined by men. At the same time, by pointing to the achievements of extraordinary women, it aimed to give freedom of choice to a wider stratum of women.

The new approach of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s stresses respect for otherness and the importance of human experiences instead of

the games of world politics. It emphasizes that men and women both have the right to experience the effects of change in dissimilar ways. Like individual freedom, individual experience can be fitted into a military based on the discipline and hierarchy of collective obedience only through complex processes. The novelty of the approach is that we examine women together with men and within structures defined by men. Thus we avoid the most dangerous trap of the writing of women's history, i.e. the one-sided perspective, when women are studied isolated, separately, in a ghettoized position. Through the category of experience we can examine the relationship of women and war in new, so far utterly neglected areas of historical research.

World War One brought about an increase in women's employment and universal suffrage in such countries as the Baltic States, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia in addition to the United States and Great Britain. Within the military itself, women as employees were allocated auxiliary roles through which they could support men's heroic efforts on the front. It is during World War One that we also see women enter the field in combat roles formerly restricted to men. Then during World War Two, resistance movements radically overturned gender stereotypes. Although when thinking of the resistance during the Second World War it is still the heroically sneaky, armed male partisan that first comes to mind, since the 1980s many studies have analyzed women's resistance, which was not necessarily linked to semi-military forms of organization, but without which the partisans later glorified could have achieved little.[10]

The short and long term effect of wars is a change in women's situation, yet no fundamental transformation occurs. The questions must be asked: how do we define change? And do wars simply accelerate processes already under way? Can it really be called change if men leave and women take over men's places and fill in for them, or is it only a temporary shift within a structure defined by the same logic? How could the spaces opening up for women during war be preserved in times of peace as well? At the same time the question arises whether it shall be considered a failure that in this new situation women could neither define themselves as a group socially nor develop their consciousness as women? Following World War One they could not exploit the situation brought about by the suffrage; the same happened after World War Two, when the return to respectability and normality seemed to be of supreme importance. Shall we really judge our predecessors on the basis of criteria that we, the feminists of the third wave, employ?[11]

The logic of the military is so far the logic of efficiency as defined by men. Women could not enter the military by accident; if they did at all, it

has historic reasons and history has so far been men's history. If we do not familiarize ourselves with our own, i.e. women's history, with our predecessors' fight for equality, then we stand defenseless against a masculine military and only the role of the victim is left for us.

In the European wars of the twentieth century, women have always taken a step ahead towards social equality, yet men have always been ahead of them. Women themselves, too, often think in categories determined by men in a man's world, and, in the case of the military, both the temptation and the pressure are especially strong. Men give meaning to words, and we women adopt them without giving them new meanings for ourselves. It is not the impact of wars and the military on women that needs to be studied, as this only makes them passive objects, recipients of history, who have no active part in controlling their own fates. What we need to study historically is that system of relations that has always forced women to stay one step behind men.

The twentieth century started with World War One and, according to the experts, it has ended with the war NATO launched against Yugoslavia. The military that once achieved victory only in offensives became defensive during the Cold War. Now that that bipolar world has collapsed, the military has taken on a profensive character, i.e. it intends to protect human values considered to be worthy of being protected through humanitarian relief actions. The character of the military has also changed, since the fighting forces are outnumbered by the auxiliary staff, where with regard to the task it is of no consequence who carries it out, a man or a woman. Again, as so many times before in the course of the twentieth century, new opportunities are opening up for women. It depends on us, on how we avail ourselves of them. We hope that this conference will contribute to this long process based on mutual learning, which will fundamentally change our relationship to the military, which has not been a success story of the twentieth century and has not necessarily strengthened one's faith in human progress.

Notes

1. This research was carried out with the support of the Junior Faculty Research Grant of the Central European University.

2. Pető Andrea, "Magyar nők és orosz katonák" *Magyar Lettre International 32* 1999. Tavasz. pp. 68-71. [Andrea Pető, "Hungarian Women and Russian Soldiers," Magyar Lettre International 32 1999. Spring. pp. 68-71.]

3. Francis Fukuyama, "Women and the Evolution of World Politics," in *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 1998 p. 40.

4. *Behind the Lines. Gender and Two World Wars*. Ed. Margaret Randolph

Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michael, Margaret Collins Weitz. Yale UP. 1987. chapter 1-2.

5. Pető Andrea, "Minden tekintetben derék nők: A nők politikai szerepei és a nőegyesületek a két világháború közötti Magyarországon" in *Szerep és alkotás*, szerk. Nagy Bea, S. Sárdi Margit (Csokonai, Debrecen) 1997. pp. 268-279. [Andrea Pető, "Brave Women in Every Respect: Women's Political Roles and Women's Organisations in Hungary in the Interwar Period" in Role and Creation, ed. Bea Nagy, S. Sárdi Margit (Csokonai, Debrecen) 1997. pp. 268-279.]

6. Alfred G. Meyer, "The impact of WWI on Russian Women's Lives," in *Russia's Women, Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*. Eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, Christine D. Worobec. Oxford UP 1991 p.223.

7. Lawrence Langer, "Gendered Suffering? Women in Holocaust Testimonies," *Women in the Holocaust*. Eds. Dalia Ofer, Leonore J. Weitzman. Yale UP. 1998. pp.351-364.

8. Elisabeth Minnich, *Transforming Knowledge*, Temple UP 1990 p.133.

9. Marion Stegman Hodgson, *Winning my Wings: A Woman Airforce Pilot in World War II*. Airlife Publishing, Shrewsbury, England, 1996. *Women in Air War. The Eastern Front of World War II*. ed. Kazimiera Janina Cottam, Legas, Canada 1997.

10. Paula Schwarz, "Redefining Resistance: Women's Activism in Wartime France," in *Behind the Lines. Gender and Two World Wars*. Eds. Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michael, Margaret Collins Weitz. Yale UP. 1987 pp. 141-151.

11. Irene Bandhauer Schöffmann, Ela Hornung, "War and Gender Identity: The Experience of Austrian Women 1945-1950," in *Austrian Women in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. David F. Good, Margarete Grandner, Mary Jo Maynes. Bergham 1996 pp. 213-235.