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HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

GENDER, SEXUALITY AND IDENTITY: IN HISTORICAL REVIEW



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GENDER, SEXUALITY AND IDENTITY: IN HISTORICAL REVIEW

Letter from the Editor

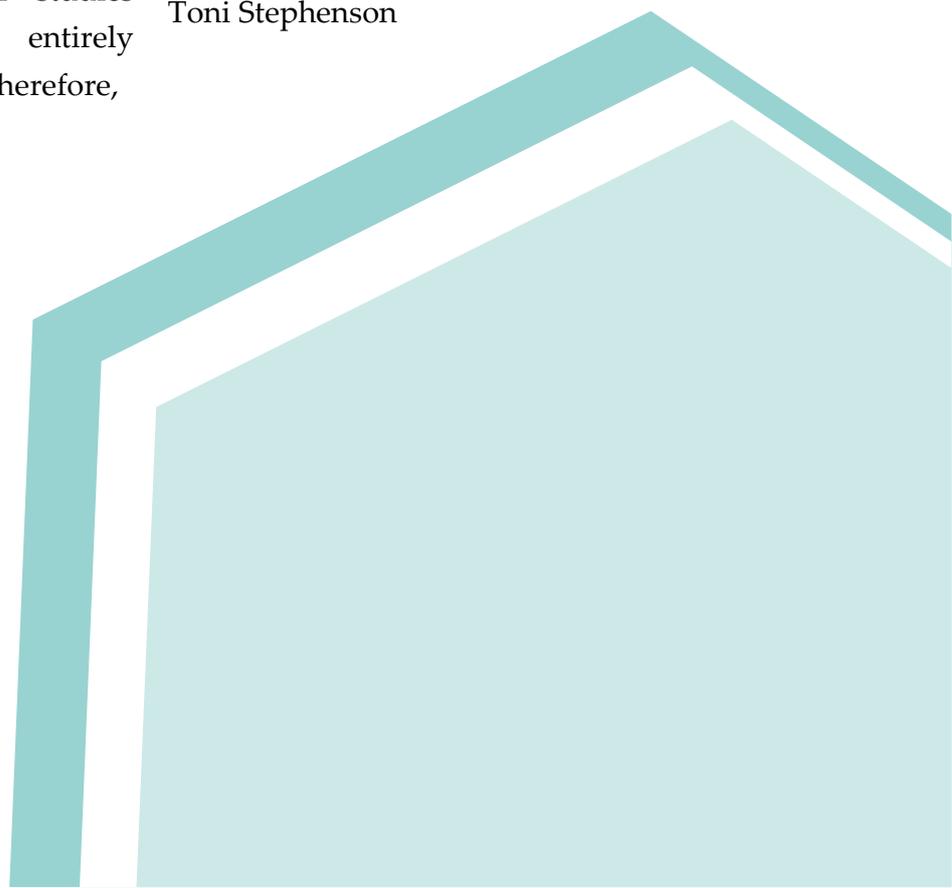
As we approach June, LGBTQ+ Pride Month, it seemed a fitting time to explore ideas of gender, sexuality and identity and how they have navigated their way through history. Spanning from the exploration of gender roles in indigenous societies, to the effects of ingrained masculinity, to the importance of LGBTQ+ spaces in the reunification of countries divided by dichotomous regimes, this final issue of the 2019/2020 academic year wonderfully highlights the rich areas of research these disciplines offer.

Many of us have experienced upheaval in our everyday lives during this last term, as campus closed its doors in line with government measures to tackle the Coronavirus outbreak and many students returned home to complete their studies online. This edition, created entirely throughout the lockdown period, is therefore,

a tribute to the passion and dedication of our student writers and editors who continued to produce compelling contributions and engage with history in and around their studies during this uncertain and difficult period.

I would like to thank every student who has been involved in this year's issues of the History Student Times. Together our work has produced 58 articles in three editions since September, all which display the diverse range of topics both offered by the School of History and inspired by study within it. It has been a pleasure to orchestrate them and I hope you enjoy reading Gender, Sexuality and Identity: In Historical Review.

Toni Stephenson



WONDER WOMAN & THE AMAZONS: Greek Myth or

Historical Fact?

Jenny Speakman

“Wonder Woman is psychological propaganda for the new type of woman who should, I believe, rule the world.”

– William Marston, the creator of Wonder Woman, speaking to
The American Scholar in 1943.

An iconic champion of feminism and female empowerment spanning the 20th and 21st centuries, Wonder Woman has, and continues, to inspire young women around the world. Yet another example of a woman in a ‘man’s world’ – this superhero led to the emergence of female representation in comic books and the wider world of feminist fictional characters – but who is she based on?

William Marston created Wonder Woman in 1941, inspired to introduce a superhero driven by justice and love in comparison to the strength and brawn of Superman and Green Lantern, other popular superheroes at this time. In fact, Wonder Woman was dually based on his wife, Elizabeth, and his mistress, Olive; who lived with the married couple as part of a polyamorous relationship. When pitching the idea, it was his wife who suggested that he make his hero a woman.

Nevertheless, Marston was a feminist and a fanatic of Greek mythology and Ancient History, especially the idea of the matriarchal society. Perhaps the most famous example of this concept is the Amazons – warrior women who fought and died like men, powerful in their own right and enemies of the Grecian Empire. This became a primary source for Marston’s creativity.

He drew upon these stories as well as the myths of Pandora, and Odysseus, naming Wonder Woman as Princess Diana of Themyscira, of royal Amazonian blood. Diana was moulded from clay by her mother, the Amazonian Queen Hippolyta, and brought to life by Zeus, making her a demi-god.

The existence of the Amazons has been widely debated in the historiographical field. Some historians claim they are purely fictional, while some suggest that there may be some truth behind the myth. Most prominently, Adrienne Mayor argues that there is ‘overwhelming evidence now shows that the Amazon traditions of the Greeks and other ancient societies derived in part from historical facts.’

This debate originates in the 19th century with Professor Johann Jakob Bachofen. In his 1861 thesis on the Amazons he argued their existence was plausible, as he believed humanity had begun as a matriarchy. Into the 20th century, scholars suggested that the Amazons were created out of anxiety and fear of Barbarian kingdoms, or that they were simply beardless men, mistaken for women.

Modern archaeology proves the existence of women matching the description of the Amazons. Located on the steppes of Eurasia,

northeast of the Mediterranean, skeletons of war-wounded women buried with bows, spears and horses were uncovered. These women belonged to the ancient Scythian civilisation. Nomadic people ranging from the Black Sea to Mongolia, the Scythians were skilled in hunting, fighting, and are evidenced as among the first tribes to domesticate the horse.

Greek scholars established the common falsehoods about the Scythian/Amazonian women. For example, the Greek geographer Strabo suggested that the Amazons cut off or seared their right breasts to aid with using a bow and arrow. He also suggested, along with the scholar Herodotus, that they lived in exclusively female communities, only travelling to neighbouring communities to reproduce.

Contrary to this popular belief, the Scythians lived in mixed-sex tribes where both boys and girls were trained from childhood to ride and fight. These contemporary depictions of the Amazons, therefore, display the Greeks’ fear of this nomadic tribe of women so different from the ‘civilised’ female of the Greek Empire.

However, a layer of fascination and admiration permeates through the disapproval. Greek vases portray the warrior women as beautiful, strong and courageous, barely ever gesturing for mercy. This spirit is emulated by Marston’s Wonder Woman who, in the early comics as her alias ‘Diana Prince’, becomes a military secretary in World War II and, later, a translator for the United Nations. This image continued to be displayed into the late 20th century where she featured on the cover of Ms. magazine in 1972 with the slogan ‘Wonder Woman for President.’

The spirit of the Amazons or, as we have come to discover, the Scythian warrior women, continues to penetrate popular culture with other depictions such as Xena: Warrior Princess, Disney’s Merida from Brave and the outspoken female characters of Game of Thrones.

The strong, unrelenting, and inspiring Scythian/Amazonian women spearheaded feminism before its time and represent the very spirit of ‘girl power.’

Further Reading:

The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women Across the Ancient World by Adrienne Mayor (2014)

The Early Amazons: Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth by J.H. Blok (1995)

THE DEFENCE OF LOUISE BOURGEOIS & Early Modern

Miri Hodnett

Midwifery



Jane Sharp, Front Cover of *The Compleat Midwife's Companion: or, the Art of Midwifry Improv'd*, 1724.

In 1627, the French royal midwife Louise Bourgeois wrote a letter of defence after the death of Princess Marie de Bourbon, the sister-in-law to King Louis XIII, a week after giving birth. Out of this defence sprouted an argument exemplifying the hierarchical structure and competitive nature of the medical field in the early modern period, within which male physicians and surgeons sought to undermine the reputations of not only each other, but of their female counterparts: midwives.

Marie de Bourbon's death was declared to be the result of an infection from a leftover piece of placenta in her uterus, and so the physicians placed the blame with Bourgeois. However, Bourgeois, confident in her own competence and ability, chose to write her own account of the birth in order to denounce this claim. In her statement, she wrote that after the birth, the placenta was 'whole and healthy', but that throughout her pregnancy Marie had been 'extremely ill', with 'a high temperature, hot flushes, nosebleeds and a cough', suggesting another reason for her death for which she could not be blamed for, as her responsibility lay with the birth alone. In this account she displayed strong academic knowledge and evidence to support her claim that the placenta was fully removed from the uterus, and that Marie's death was the cause of non-birth related issues. As well as these exhibitions of knowledge, Bourgeois also expressed a degree of contempt towards the male medical eye, suggesting to the performers of the autopsy that 'you know nothing about a woman's placenta and uterus' as they did not encounter these in the same context as a midwife. She also placed the blame for the death of Marie at the door of the male physicians, stating that they should have paid 'more careful attention' to the illness she had throughout her pregnancy. Ultimately, it is her redirection of the blame and defence

of herself that caused the controversy to explode, and for her reputation to be ruined.

Bourgeois was responded to by a male physician, most likely the royal surgeon, Charles Guillemeau, who chose not to focus on the scientific details of Bourgeois' defence, but rather on its very existence. The main point that he made enforces the gender hierarchy of the medical field, repeatedly emphasising the idea that Bourgeois was less qualified than the male practitioners, despite her being a licensed midwife; a point she makes in her own argument. He told her that she was not 'qualified to judge' the work of male doctors, and that she should 'not speak so arrogantly against men who are more experienced and more successful than you are in your profession'. In fact, Bourgeois is a well-known figure in the history of medicine and midwifery for being one of the few women to publish a textbook on midwifery, demonstrating the depth of her knowledge. It was not her incompetence, but her assertiveness in her vindication that led to her downfall, which ultimately shows the damage done to a woman of position when she not only spoke out in defence of herself but spoke out in an attack against her male counterparts.

Further Reading:

Louise Bourgeois: a midwife defends her reputation (1627)

Fissell, Mary, 'Introduction: Women, Health and Healing in Early Modern Europe', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82 (2008), 1-17

McTavish, Lianne, 'Maternity', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Poska, Allyson, Jane Couchman and Katherine McIver (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 173-94

CHANGING GENDER ROLES IN INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES

Sioned Griffiths

Mainstream memory of indigenous women is incredibly limited. Beyond the world of ‘savages’, ‘good Indians’ and Pocahontas, indigenous women have historically displayed forgotten agency and empowering resilience in the face of oppression and adversity.

Oral history and a re-examination of the documents of colonisers and missionaries reveals stories from women who fought against colonisation, redefining our understanding of a woman’s position in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Colonists arrived in North America during the sixteenth century to find nations and societies functioning in incredibly different ways to the standard in Europe. Warfare, governance and trade bore little resemblance to the capitalist societies on the European continent. Gender roles in North America pre-Columbus were dramatically different to those enforced in Europe, with a greater distribution of power and influence, and polygamy a normality for many indigenous nations.

Indigenous women took on crucial roles, both in social and economic spheres in nations found in New France. Seeing as there wasn’t such a distinction between public and private life, neither women nor men were confined to either. However, this is not to say that there was no gender distinction, most nations maintained a gender divide, although these complimented each other as opposed to dominating each other.

A man’s place in traditional indigenous life was as a hunter and his place and authority depended on his skills, while women had a more authoritative role with the responsibility of governing the distribution of goods, for example, in rationing food. Some historians even argue that these were predominantly matriarchal societies.

Moreover, women were often deemed desirable wives if they were skilled and industrious, giving them far more bargaining power when choosing a husband. Skill proved to be much more important in these nations than wealth and power.

Additionally, a woman’s consent was also required before marriage, as well as that of her family, displaying more control than was given to their counterparts in Europe in the same period. One anecdote tells of a tradition in ‘Oleepa’, wherein if a man wanted to marry a woman, he would first ask her parents’ consent, and if accepted, he would have to demonstrate his skills by searching for his hidden intended. If he could find her two out of three times, she would marry him. This anecdote demonstrates an autonomy given to women, because if she liked him, she could hide where she could be easily found, and if not, she’d hide more thoroughly. Although there were undoubtedly restrictions on women’s freedoms in indigenous societies, it is certain they generally enjoyed more control than women in Europe.

Women were essential for socioeconomic wellbeing in traditional indigenous communities in North America. As one healer reported, to live in an indigenous community without a wife is to be a vagabond, because, without a wife, men could no longer offer hospitality for visitors, ambassadors and trading partners and would be cut off from society.

Women shared the burden of public life with the male members of their family, as well as sharing the burdens of private life. This dependency on female counterparts explains why many men opted for polyamorous relationships, in order to avoid the risk of being widowed and left without a wife. However, these relationships are not to be misconstrued as a display of a liberal, modern society, there were certain double standards to this practice, as wives caught having affairs were sometimes brutally punished and it was generally less accepted.

However, the arrival of colonisers meant that women’s elevated socioeconomic status would soon be diminished. In the name of civilization, European traders and missionaries were keen to adjust gender distribution to what they deemed appropriate. Unlike the more equal distribution of power and responsibility indigenous women previously experienced, European civilization would see them reduced to the property of a male relative and diminishing their role in public life.

Missionaries found it incredibly difficult to convert women especially, and although there are many other reasons for this, their resistance to Christianity can undoubtedly be seen as an attempt to preserve a way of life which maximised female autonomy and authority. There are reports of women violently objecting to conversion, in a bid to maintain their influence. Eventually, however, many indigenous women did convert to avoid punishment and ultimately ensure survival.

History of indigenous communities should be preserved and prioritised, not only because a fair focus on these communities prevents a Euro-centric view of history, but also, because it adds dimension to people too often portrayed as victims at best, and savages at worst. Changing gender roles is one of the many indicators of the lifestyles impacted by colonisation.

Further Reading:

Carol Devens, "Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization in New France", *American Quarterly*, Summer 1986, Vol 38(3), p.461.

Sarah M.S. Pearsall "Native American Men – and Women – at Home in Plural Marriages in Seventeenth-Century New France" *Gender & History*, November 2015, Vol.27(3), pp.591-610.

'SEXUAL DEVIANCE' & HERESY

in 18th & 19th Century

Ottoman Empire

Rebecca Illidge

Pre-modern sexualities in the Middle East and the contemporaneous discourse around it were complex and gradually became a source of tension. The pre-modern Ottoman world had rich, sexual discourse, but during the 18th and 19th centuries much of this discussion became virtually non-existent. Religious and legal stand points increasingly came to frown upon sex and sexuality, and subsequently attempted to control it. It is essential to consider the links between sex and heresy in this period; were crackdowns on sexual deviance purely due to prudish attitudes? Were they a guise for wanting to prosecute religious heresy? Or were there other factors at play?

In April 1735, Muhammad ibn Hajj 'Ali and his mother Tajiyya were brought before a court. Neighbours had testified that Muhammad was intimately involved with men who were known as 'sodomites', in his mother's home. The judge ordered the two to be expelled from their home for 'spreading evil and harm'. This was the only case in which same-sex intercourse was the direct target of prosecution in Aleppo's shari'a courts in 359 years, raising questions of why the shari'a courts were not generally interested in the prosecution of same sex intercourse, and why they suddenly were for this case. (Shari'a law refers to sacred Islamic law) To answer these questions, one must look to the colonial and religious context.

Neither being associated with 'sodomites' nor the act of male penetration was illegal in Aleppo. The penetrator and the penetrated were discussed in different terms, the latter associated with medical terms. ; they were suggested to have a biological defect, therefore the act of being penetrated was seen as a disease. Furthermore, the court did not seek to charge his partners which further indicates that they were pursuing the case on different grounds. One explanation is Sufism. Sufism is an unorthodox form of Islam which is mystic and emphasises introspection and spiritual closeness with God. Sufism and Sufi practice were deemed heretical by some contemporaries, especially Sufi constructions of erotic love between men. Some of the devotional ceremonies included music and dance performances that served as meditations on the divine aspects of God.; one of those aspects was divine beauty, which some found symbolised in the beauty of beardless boys. The idea of gazing at the beauty of these young boys was part of a ritual known as dhikr, consisting of music, song, dance, and often sitting close together. It became a focal point of heresy accusations. The presence of the beautiful youth facilitated the transcendence into ecstasy desired by Sufis on their path to divine union. Early modern writing condemned Sufism as sexual libertinism, and that it went hand in hand with 'sodomy'. Returning to the case of Muhammad, it is possible that he was not being charged for having sex

with men, but rather performing Sufi rituals at a time when society was condemning the practice.

Another explanation could be the growing self-consciousness of Arabs at this time. In the early 19th century, printing presses were established in urban centres in the Middle East to print manuscripts in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish. In a very short time, this development initiated a serious expansion in the literacy of the public; books previously only accessible to a small minority now reached sectors of society that previously had little or no access to them. For government and powerful elites, this meant a potential loss of control over what was published, especially delicate subjects such as sexuality. However, the advent of printing provides only a partial answer. Much more important was the impact of Western published travelogues. During this time period in Europe, new categories dividing sexual practices into natural and unnatural, or normal and abnormal, tagged various acts or sensibilities as deviant. 18th and 19th century European politics presented perceived sexual deviation as a trait and failure of government itself. One of the most explicit manifestations of this is Adolphus Slade's travelogue from the mid-19th century; he writes that 'sodomy' is rampant, and has become a disease of the state and a corrupt form of government. Oriental paintings also conjured up images of deviant and sexually promiscuous animals from the East. This was part of the emergence of the European 'standard of civilisation' and the need to clearly define it against an uncivilised 'other'. These works had a profound impact on how Ottomans thought about their own sexuality. Furthermore, this was happening at a time when the Middle East was exploring Europe and perceiving its morality as inferior to their own. Therefore, at a time when the Middle East and Ottoman world was convinced of its own moral superiority, it became essential to crackdown on any deviant behaviour as if to prove themselves to Europeans. Therefore, Muhammad's sentencing may have been part of a wider counterattack to shut down sexual discourse; it may have been the 'test case' to show that this sort of 'sexual deviance' would no longer be tolerated.

Ultimately, we will never know the true reasoning behind Muhammed and his mother's trial. I would argue that both elements of colonial context and religious heresy are at play, and even intertwine together. This case makes explicit how ideas of sexual deviance and heresy came to be interlinked, and how colonialism and Orientalism exacerbated the issue.

Further Reading

Semerdjian, Elyse, "'Because He Is So Tender And Pretty': Sexual Deviance And Heresy In Eighteenth-Century Aleppo", *Social Identities*, 18 (2012), 175-199

HIJRA COMMUNITIES IN INDIA & the

Sara Green

Legacies of Colonial Gender Thinking

The Hijra are a ‘third gender’ community in South Asia whose history on the subcontinent dates back to antiquity, as evidenced by their inclusion in the Sanskrit text Kama Sutra. The Hindustani term Hijra (as well as its Urdu equivalent, Khwaja Sara) had been somewhat pejoratively translated in British Colonial texts as ‘eunuch’ or ‘hermaphrodite,’ and has only recently become connoted with ‘transgender’ and ‘genderfluidity’ in the postcolonial era. This etymology denotes a broader history of exclusion and ‘otherisation’ of Hijra communities; their liminal and fluid relationship to markers of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ were viewed in both colonial and postcolonial contexts as having a destabilising effect on gender, biological sex, family and kinship. This perspective finds its roots in British colonial endeavours to formalise and systematise knowledge of the Indian subcontinent, both as a tool of the ‘civilising mission’ and as a means to extend and perpetuate colonial power. Just as racial, caste and religious binaries were being constructed and fomented in colonial law, a rigid and heteronormative gender binary was also constructed to make ‘sense’ of indigenous societal structures. This article asks the question; how have these rigid binary tropes permeated into the treatment of Hijra communities in the postcolonial nations of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and how can they be broached?

Scholars such as Anjali Arondekar have highlighted the problematic nature of uncovering histories of sexuality in the colonial archive, wherein narratives of sexuality are filtered through Victorian sexual sensibilities, in addition to the denigration of indigenous social practices inherent to colonial thinking. Therefore, British observers had no epistemological equivalent for the complex social role fulfilled by the Hijra, whose renunciation of sexuality altogether to redirect sexual energy into sacred powers and devotional rituals was incomprehensible under a heteronormative British lens. Their significant social role as badhai dancers at the celebration of the birth of a male child further bristled Victorian sensibilities, as the sexual innuendos and satirising of femininity publicly destabilised the prescriptive heteronormative gendered binaries by which the British attempted to make ‘sense’ of Indian bodies in the late colonial period. This period was also contextualised by an increased British appetite for exerting control and surveillance on supposedly ‘recalcitrant’ and ‘deviant’ groups following the failed uprising of 1857. These contexts allow us to understand the euphemistic and often pejorative appearance of the Hijra in later colonial law; ‘obscene acts and songs’ were criminalised in 1860, alongside any sexual intercourse the state considered ‘against the order of nature.’ This eroded the livelihoods of Hijra as both ritual badhai dancers and as sex workers, whilst fomenting attitudes towards gender nonconformity as ‘obscene’ and ‘unnatural.’ The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 further subjected any ‘persons of the male sex who admit themselves, or on medical inspection clearly appear to be impotent’ to registration, surveillance and control. This explicitly targeted Hijras with male sexual anatomy who chose to go under castration procedures, attempting to use institutional surveillance and control as a mechanism to ‘correct’ gendered behaviours perceived as innately ‘other’ and ‘criminal.’

This classification of the Hijra as a ‘criminal tribe’ was officially denotified in post-independence India in 1952 – however, the systematic attempt to ostracise and erase the Hijra from ‘polite’ society and public view has perpetuated continued stigma into the postcolonial era. The process of Indian nation-building itself was a response to late colonial gendered rhetoric,

which juxtaposed the ‘innate hypermasculine virility’ of the white man with the ‘emasculated and morally adolescent’ Hindu man. This dichotomy was played out in public debates of the abolition of sati, or ritual widow immolation (1830), wherein the relatively obscure practice was perceived by British observers as an indictment of the ‘primitivism’ of Hindu patriarchy, from which helpless Indian women needed to be ‘saved.’ This narrative provided a rationale for white male chauvinism and paternalism – and by extension, increased British control on Indian private life – whilst ‘emasculating’ Indian men as unfit for self-rule. Indian nationalists in the postcolonial era responded to this destabilisation of Indian gender relations through the reinforcement of heteronormativity as an allegory for the nation itself. Indian women, having been symbolically ‘saved’ from Indian men, were re-appropriated by enshrining the ‘reproducing mother’ as a symbol of the nation; equally, Indian nationalists attempted to ‘reclaim’ Indian masculinity with this same focus on heterosexuality. Homosexuality and other queering practices were systematically alienated from Indian culture, which was conceptualised as rigidly heteropatriarchal; a norm to which the performative, fluid and ambiguous Hijra body was the antithesis.



Hijra and companions, Eastern Bengal c. 1860s.

Although the Hijra, living in fictive families whereby the guru functions as the mother and the other chelas as sisters, may seem to exist outside the national ‘family,’ or indeed destabilise traditional notions of family, gender and kinship, they can alternatively be viewed as an example of how rigid, prescriptive binaries can be broached. Their badhai dance, wherein social perceptions of femininity are parodied and satirised through ‘burlesque enactments,’ is a significant example of how the performing body can mediate and rearticulate rigid social norms and indeed, reveal their arbitrariness. This subversive role played by Hijra communities reveals that attempting to define them under a Western LGBTQ+ lens undermines their inclusion in a more robust postcolonial understanding of Indian society and sexual norms, of which they are an undeniable part.

Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hijra_and_companions_in_Eastern_Bengal.jpg

INTERACTIVE POWER & ASANTE GENDER ROLES

Annabel Cook



A market in Kumasi in the Asante Region, where women Market Queens exerted influence.

"It is a woman who gave birth to the King."

This proverb demonstrates the matrilineal origins of Asante culture; a culture where anyone could access power and have the ability to bring about change (*tumi*). Knowledge and age were valued highly, the former being crucial in obtaining the spiritual essence of power. Elders were an example of this, where a man and woman occupied stools – the loci of their spiritual ancestors – and made decisions together for their clan. Within this period, before the advent of the patriarchy, women held power by giving life to descendants and transmitting lineage through their bloodline. This was important in their agricultural system because it allowed for outside labour - men from different clans - and alliances to be formed without the loss of Asante culture.

However, as Asante grew economically, external labour and alliances became less important and the creation of an extensive system of authority was needed. Political power gradually became associated with male rule; an arrangement between the disproportion of wealth and patriarchy that fastened itself to Asante's consolidation. On a political level, only one position remained for women: Queen Mother. Ruling alongside the King (*asantehe*), the Queen Mother had unique qualities of knowledge and compassion that influenced the decisions of the *asantehe*.

Despite the lack of representation politically, women remained arguably more important than the *asantehe* in the lives of their communities as ritual specialists and people of wisdom. They channelled *tumi* within their spiritual rituals and implemented their knowledge on a local level to practice specific healing rites that gave them authority.

In the 20th century, after Ghana's independence, women adapted their role as ritualists to become Market Queens (*ohemma*) and elders that were viewed as reliable negotiators in the marketplace economy. Representing 80%

of women in Ghanaian cities, such as Accra and Kumasi, they have remained essential for local populations by settling disputes between traders and authorities which mirrors the Asante values of consultation and mutual consent. The power of the Market Queen also replaced the values of the *asantehe*, where elders acted as advisors for her on official business which implies her position is one of authority and bravery to act.

Under military rule in the late 1970s though, the state depicted these women as despicable to deflect from failures in economic policies, which reduced the influence of Market Queens. In 1984, neoliberal austerity measures were then implemented because of national bankruptcy. Infrastructure projects took place, but Market Queens were excluded from development planning, and only in 1989 did this improve with female traders on advisory commissions and winning seats on provincial district assemblies.

Overall, state centralisation of power and its consolidation reinforces patriarchy, but a more localised approach can foster greater equality for traders and power for women in the economy. Asante culture promotes equality through their belief in *tumi* and how power can be accessed by anyone should they have the knowledge. This is contradicted by the system of patriarchy – a development of economic growth and political power through state construction – that is separate from Asante culture.

Further Reading:

Akyeampong, Emmanuel, and Pashington Obeng, 'Spirituality, Gender, and Power in Asante History', in *African Gender Studies: A Reader*, ed. by Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 23-48

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ANNE LISTER:

Lesbians & the Industrial Revolution

in the North

Rebecca Allan

Lesbian history, like most queer history, has been either systematically erased or presented as inconsequential compared to the 'real picture' of history. Anne Lister's involvement as a critical player in the coal business of Yorkshire shows us that this is far from the truth.

In the 1990s, a collection of historians set out to reinterpret the numerous volumes of Lister's diaries. Of these, Helena Whitbread was the most important; her decoding of the diaries and subsequent primary focus on their lesbian content has changed perspectives of early nineteenth-century sexuality for many. This new perspective ran alongside a rise in lesbian studies which set out to destroy the myth that lesbianism either did not exist or could be conveniently reduced to 'romantic female friendship'.

While historians should validate Lister's identity as a lesbian, it is also vital to not merely focus on token lesbian examples within history but to see them as their own people who effected the world around them. Lister's role must be examined not just in lesbian history, suspended above its context, but must be placed back into her importance regarding the social factors of the time. Lister was an unconventional and multidimensional woman; a grounded landowner, a traveller, and a scholar. Her role as an economic agent is arguably as important as her role in our understanding of sexuality and identity.

Studying Lister's effect on the Industrial Revolution in Yorkshire is crucial in helping historians to dismantle some ideas of how industries operated in the increasingly gendered and hierarchical English society. Through her 'marriage' to the wealthy Ann Walker, Lister had authority over three coal pits and managed their income accordingly, while still operating alongside the hierarchy of male craftsmen and her male rivals.

Lister's social class and its effect on the expression of her lesbian identity is also a fascinating aspect to study. Anne used classic texts' depictions of sexual acts to test out another women's sexuality; if she was familiar with the likes of Ovid and other Roman poets, Lister could be somewhat confident in pursuing her as a companion. This behaviour is similar to the Handkerchief Code of gay men in 1960s USA. Throughout history, we can see similarities in the way queer people historically have used covert methods to flag themselves as LGBT to sexual and/or romantic partners in a way that does not expose them or put them in danger.

While Anne is adored by historians for her relative openness regarding her sexuality compared to most, such as her rejection of a conventional heterosexual marriage, we must still remember that to be queer was to be careful. Lister's position as a landowning elite gave



Portrait of Anne Lister by Joshua Horner, ca. 1830.

her the time and money to be well-read, while lower-class sapphics would not have had the privilege.

Anne Lister was unique in constructing her own lesbian identity and her identity as a businesswoman. She showed that while both were difficult, both were possible. She had a strong effect on her local economy through not only owning coal pits but managing them herself. She continues to have a substantial effect on our understanding of queer history and reminds us to always question binary understandings of gender and sexuality.

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LOSS OF IDENTITY: Militant Suffragettes & Prison Experience

Emma Berger



Dora Thewlis, the 'Baby Suffragette', being arrested in 1907.

In the process of remembering the Suffragettes as a political organisation we fail to acknowledge how these women lost their identities in their fight for the vote. Militant suffragettes, usually members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and known for their methods of direct action, were exposed to traumatic abuse at the hands of the authorities and a loss of power due to the removal of their fashionable identity. The image of the tortured Suffragette alone in her prison cell persists, but this woman was moulded by systematic torture and maltreatment to lose her sense of individuality and adopt the identity of the social outcast.

Ill-fitting uniforms were a challenge to the identity of prisoners; women of all classes were made undistinguishable in a society which respected strict class boundaries. Coarse undergarments and a lack of suspenders also meant that the prisoners were underdressed by conventional contemporary standards. Alongside the mixing of ranks, this would be a removal of respectability and class, a significant aspect of identity for middle- and upper-class militants. Furthermore, fashion was a key part of the suffrage campaign, with members of the WSPU choosing to wear feminine and stylish clothes

to promote the movement as respectable. Removal of this fashionable image caused Suffragettes to appear as common criminals, rather than political campaigners.

Suffragettes also had no political identity when imprisoned; they were not classed as political prisoners, meaning they were not entitled to receive visitors or other luxuries such as writing books or articles. In the struggle for recognition as political prisoners, they began the first hunger strike, beginning in July 1909 when militant Marion Wallace Dunlop refused food as a method of protesting about her lack of status. The struggles of hunger and thirst strikes were later recorded by a number of suffragettes, including the leader, Emmeline Pankhurst, who recalled the refusal of food and water as 'acute suffering of the entire physical being', showing the pain women were willing to endure to have a political identity despite this never being granted.

Invasive and cruel treatment such as force feeding removed any remnants of identity prisoners had left. A forceful and cruel treatment, it caused widespread emotional and physical suffering. As Carolyn Collette writes, it was a deliberate act to deter others, masked as concern for health. Suffragette, Mary Leigh described the experience in 1909: 'The drums of the ears seem to be bursting and there is a horrible pain in the throat... The tube is pushed down 20 inches.' A blatant assault on the free will of the victims, force feeding has become a notorious act in the history of suffrage. Women felt abused from persistent invasions of their bodies – with some being force fed over 200 times. Class identity meant some women suffered more due to prejudice from prison guards; they were more likely to be force fed and suffer abuse. Dora Thewlis was imprisoned at the age of seventeen for one week, during which she suffered verbal and physical abuse due to her identity as a young and working-class woman.

During the militant campaign for the vote, women sacrificed their identities as respectable women to campaign for their rights as political prisoners. The opposition they faced resulted in them becoming identifiable only as social pariahs in the early twentieth century.

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PATRIOTISM SUBVERTING GENDER?: The White Feather Movement and the Female Emasculation of Men During the First World War

Harriet Purbrick

Almost immediately after the national call to enlist in the First World War, patriotic British women up and down the country began handing out white feathers to men not in uniform, in what became known as the White Feather Movement (WFM). These women sought to strip away the militant masculine identity of these men. This was a time full of chivalric ideals where women were expected to support the masculine identity, through objectifying themselves as sexual incentives and rewards for soldierly heroes. The WFM instead reveals the story of how some women attempted to use their patriotism alone to emasculate male ‘shirkers’ and represents a radical inversion of gender roles.

In order to understand how men were affected by the actions of the WFM, it is important to first understand the ideal of masculinity on the eve of the First World War. Gender historians describe a militant masculinity, epitomised by the soldierly hero, with rare unanimity. The introduction of physical education and its rapid militarisation in schools—to some extent still seen as an escape from the feminine domestic sphere—deliberately blurred the distinction between the military and civilian worlds. It is no coincidence that the war poet Siegfried Sassoon later recalled being in the army as “very much like being in school.” Inspired by his experiences in the Boer War, Robert Baden-Powell attempted to instil chivalric values of honour and courage more overtly in his Boy Scouts from 1910. Thus, the military, including the process of recruitment, was certainly a man’s world, and men were incentivised to engage with it. In fact, a key part of their identity, their gender, was seen as incomplete if they shirked from the military.

But ideals of gender interact, in the words of some historians, like two threads in a “double helix.” Women did play a role in the recruitment process, albeit one that was predicated almost exclusively on sexual terms. Propaganda posters featuring slogans like, “Is your best boy wearing khaki?” suggest that the role of women was to sexually lure men into enlisting. Reduced to their sexualities, women were not to play any rational or intellectual debate on conscription, nor were they to encourage anyone other than their lover to enlist. Further examples of recruitment propaganda demonstrate the prevalence of chivalric imagery, of knights rescuing damsels in distress, or as in Belgium, as “an innocent woman in need of a paternal male’s protection.” Women were not only expected to be sexual incentives to fight, they were also rewards for those who scaled the heights of the militant ideal of masculinity.

By contrast, instead of pandering to male lust, the WFM distanced themselves from this female role and targeted men’s masculine identities directly in non-sexual terms. As they saw it, they were simply reminding men of their duties, as any patriotic person, male or female should do. They encouraged men to fight not by upholding their masculine identity, but by bringing it down. The face-to-face confrontation where the woman’s patriotism was stronger than the man’s, showed an inversion of the gender ideals, dishonouring and emasculating the man, as the importance of the militant ideal of masculinity contrasted the reality of meeting the expectations of a man at the outbreak of a world war.

It comes as no surprise that the public and active role that the WFM played heightened gender tensions, particularly as the war progressed. The return of injured soldiers brought the reality of warfare to the home front and created a clash of both ideology and gender. Having experienced the brutal reality of the first total war, some wounded men began to doubt the nobility of warfare. Some personally knew men who had been pushed to enlist because of the aggressive efforts of the WFM and who had died or become wounded in action. What quite literally added insult to injury was how the WFM ploughed on with the recruitment activities well into 1918, still only relying on the single metric of whether the suspected shirker was in uniform. In reality, this led to visibly wounded or disabled men receiving white feathers which caused a crisis of gender. The WFM women were seen as incompetent to have ignored something so obvious—reinforcing older stereotypes of women—or else as deliberately inciting a gender-based conflict, something much more dangerous. For the wounded men, having perhaps faced a crisis of masculinity already, as their harrowing experience of attritional trench warfare crushed their means to demonstrate their manhood through chivalric, militaristic success, the confidence and authority of the WFM women added another dynamic to their gender crisis.

This is especially true when the wider context of gender roles during the First World War is taken into account. The WFM were a public representation of the female experience of the war, and the WFM was a tangible outlet for broader distrust of gender relations during the war. This was a time when women across the country were also facing up to men in the workplace, gaining new authority as they took on ‘male’ positions. The continuing activities of the WFM highlighted the chasm in male and female experiences of the war. Whilst men were risking their lives on the front, women were ‘dancing on the home front’, and keeping the jingoistic ‘war fever’ alive.

The First World War was certainly a gendered conflict, one in which both gender identities underwent a reckoning. On a large scale, the male experience of war threw the criteria into proving one’s masculinity into question, whilst on a smaller scale, the activities of the WFM intensified this crisis of masculinity as these women still upheld chivalric values. At the same time, the WFM demonstrates how women were able to carve out a new interpretation of the female gender, whilst navigating the male-dominated recruitment process for the first time.

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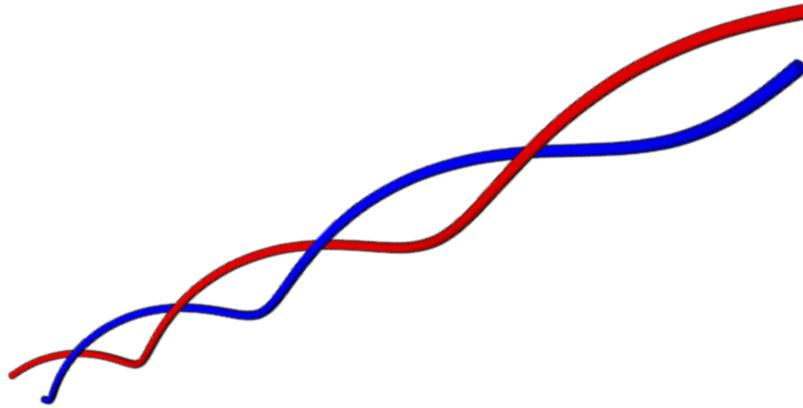
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CONFINEMENT v FREEDOM

in First World War Britain



Double Helix diagram.

Ana Hill Lopez-Menchero

The First World War had opposing effects on women and men. Women were freed, offered jobs which they wouldn't have dreamed of gaining without the war, whereas men were confined, returning to a very different society to the one they had left to fight. This article will focus mainly on Britain during the First World War but also its aftermath.

Margaret Higonnet and Patrice Higonnet put forward 'The Double Helix' theory in 1987. They argued that the war led to a change in the meaning of gender. While there was and still is a long way to go before complete equality, it was the First World War which brought the beginning of this freedom. Their argument continues to state that women's status didn't actually improve even though they were given more opportunities. This is when the Double Helix argument is used as it 'permits us to look at woman not in isolation but within a persistent system of gender relationships.' The image of the Double Helix is to show that the relationship between men and women remains constant no matter what the cultural changes are. The two opposing strands are male and female suggesting that the 'position on the female strand is subordinate to position on the male strand' and this diagram suggests that the position of male superiority is constant, implying that the war had no change on the female status in relation to men's in society.

This argument claims that there wasn't as great a change for women as historians have argued in the past. After the war there was a substantial difference in the positions of men and women. The increased freedom of women meant that men had their masculinity tested, as they weren't used to their usual jobs being undertaken by their wives and sisters.

Jessica Meyer argues this in her book 'Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain' suggesting that the soldiers came back fearful, but also that their bodies had physically suffered. These weren't the men who the women had sent off to war. The pre-war masculine identity throughout Europe made it difficult for men to accept their difficulties after the war, as this wouldn't mirror the ideal of the soldier hero. However, the reality was that each soldier had been affected in some way by their experience and this meant that they couldn't fulfil the conventional ideal of masculinity. Therefore, there was a clear new state of confinement which the war had created for men, trapping them into the social ideal of a soldier hero on the outside, but left tormented on the inside.

This state of confinement for men was clearly juxtaposed by women who were used to the freedoms which war had granted them. This created conflict when the soldiers returned as many felt society should return to how it was before the war. Women had tasted freedom and now knew that it was possible, they were involved more in the public rather than domestic sphere.

Erika Kulman even claims that the post-war peace-making decisions were gendered, suggesting that although women had an unofficial role in the peace-making progress that they were still involved in a way through female pacifist groups.

In the Higonnet's 'The Double Helix' article the idea is put forward that the war only created short-term changes for women, but the argument that the meaning of gender changed seems to create a contradiction between these ideas. The war caused the meaning of gender to become more blurred than it had been before and therefore creating more long-term changes than may have seemed apparent at the time. Women were freed, whereas men, having been completely happy with their social position before the war, were thrown into a society where they felt they had been moved downwards. To think of it this way would be wrong, but that's how it would have seemed to returning soldiers. Even so, the reality was just that they were made more equal than before. Men, being used to an elevated position in society, would have viewed this as a downgrade.

These conclusions clearly changed over time and with a retrospective view of the post-war period it is clearer to modern-day historians that this was more of a turning point for women than change in men's position in society. The male position in society didn't change, it was women's position which had changed and improved. This period was a spectacular adjustment for women, but a cage for men, or that's how it would have been seen. Each gender saw the period as being centred around them, in reality it was becoming more equal in every way.

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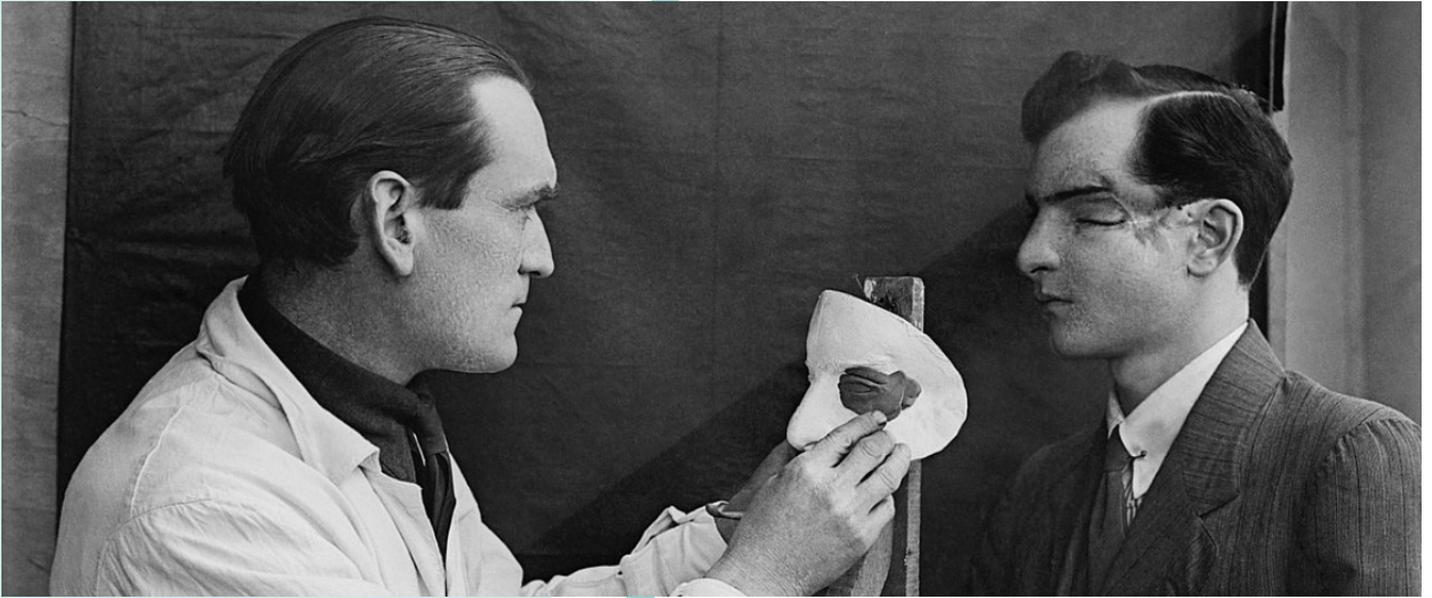
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THE “GEULLES CASSÉES” OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR: Broken Faces, Broken Men



Captain Francis Derwent Wood RA puts the finishing touches to a cosmetic plate made for a British soldier with a serious facial wound, c. 1914-18.

Olivia Tait

As the first industrial and mechanised war, World War One challenged pre-war conceptions of masculinity and heroism. In the pre-war period, masculine ideals defined men as the breadwinner and provider of the family, and martial heroism was an exemplar that all men sought to aspire to. For the French, war was a way to restore French pride and restore the Napoleonic glory of the past. In Britain, the soldier hero was distinguished as a man of physical strength, courage and beauty, and as someone willing to sacrifice himself for his country. However, the technological nature of mass industrialised warfare impacted the male experience of war, as well as its aftermath. The combination of new, highly destructive weaponry, and medical advancement allowing doctors to treat the terrible injuries inflicted by such weapons, meant that an unprecedented number of men survived the horror of mechanised war, albeit severely facially disfigured. These disfigurements rendered pre-war ideals of masculinity and heroism impossible to fulfil.

Gehrhardt recognises the difficulty in determining the exact number of men who returned home as “Geulles Cassées” – meaning, the “mutilated faces” or, “broken mugs” in French – yet estimates suggest that around 280,000 soldiers remained disfigured in France, Germany and Britain. Despite physical disability having become more visible in post-war society, these men didn’t return home the heroes they had wished to become. Indeed, advancements in facial reconstruction allowed some “Geulles Cassées” to receive pioneering reconstructive treatment at special facial hospitals such as that at Sidcup. Other men also had access to custom-made masks to cover their broken faces, painted by artists with such attention to detail that each mask took a month to complete. Yet, despite these attempts to reintegrate the facially disfigured into normal civilian life, as highlighted by Sidcup’s blue painted benches, a sign to warn the people of Sidcup that those sitting on the benches could be distressing to look at, the “Geulles Cassées” were outsiders.

Unable to fulfil their previous masculine roles as breadwinner and patriarch, many men retreated from civilian life altogether. Some men simply left their families and lived on the fringes of society, while others saw suicide as the only way to escape the shame of disability. Despite attempts to reintegrate disabled and disfigured men back into society and work, workshops in hospitals (“écoles des mutilés”) provided training in toymaking and woodwork. Yet for most men, these jobs were lower-paid and required lower-skill than their pre-war jobs, and so their masculine pride in being able to provide for their family was damaged as they were unable to fulfil their previous roles in society.

Similarly, other “Geulles Cassées” were completely unable to work as their condition rendered them dependant on their family for day-to-day care (such as spoon or tube feeding) and dependant on the state for financial care. The British pension scheme for example, awarded 1,600,000 men with a pension or gratuity for war disabilities. However, being recipients of this charity was seen as humiliating, as it indicated that the state had taken over their role as provider.

Ultimately, for the “Geulles Cassées”, the First World War destroyed both their faces and their masculine pride and hope for heroic status. The facially disfigured were ultimately outsiders, and although war increased the visibility of disability, this was not necessarily well-received, with the public often responding simply by “not looking”. They were imprisoned both by the long-lasting effect of the injuries of mechanised warfare, and by the pre-war ideals of masculinity that they were now unable to fulfil.

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THE PARRALLELS OF WOMEN IN NAZI GERMANY AND STALINIST RUSSIA

Katie Winfield

Although both existing in the same period, Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia represent differing ideologies. Hitler campaigned for fascism whilst Stalin continued the pre-established system of Communism. This article will discuss the similarities and differences of women's experiences within these regimes, demonstrating life under these opposing ideas was not so different.

One similarity for women was the encouragement of children for a married couple. Hitler created the Law of the encouragement of marriage in 1933. This law offered a loan of 1000 marks to newlyweds and the loan was to be paid back based on the number of children the couple had. 25% of the loan was wiped once a single child was born, 50% was wiped for two children and so on. If the couple had four children, the loan did not have to be paid back. This was an attractive offer as 800,000 newlyweds were involved in the scheme. Similarly having children was also encouraged in Russia under Stalin through payments related to the number of children a couple had. If a couple had 6 children, they were paid 2000 roubles for each subsequent child and this figure was increased to 5000 roubles following the birth of a 10th child. Stalin also had taxes on men between 20-50 years of age and women between 20-45 if they had 2 or less children. These measures show that in both Germany and Russia, children were highly encouraged, and a woman's role was to produce offspring for the regime.

Furthermore, there was more specific encouragement on women to be mothers with the use of awards in both countries. In Germany, on the 12th August each year, also the date of Hitler's mother's birthday, the Motherhood Cross was awarded. Women were given a bronze medal for four children, a silver for six and gold for eight. Hitler created this to reward women as, in his words, it was their 'greatest honour' to be a mother. Russia had similar measures with the Motherhood Medal for those with five or six children, the

СЛАВА МАТЕРИ ГЕРОИНЕ!



"Glory to the Mother-Heroine!" Propaganda poster on a Soviet mother's duty to the state, 1944.

Motherhood Glory for those with seven, eight or nine children and finally, the Heroine Mother for those with 10 children. The encouragement of being a mother is evident as it creates the idea of worth based on the number of children a woman has, showing that in both regimes, increasing the population by rearing and raising children was women's primary role.

The idea of motherhood being the primary identity of woman is also prevalent with their abortion ban. Abortions were illegal in Germany unless for eugenic purposes in which 5000 were carried out in a period of six years. It was an offence taken seriously as doctors who carried out unauthorised abortions faced the death penalty. Stalin introduced similar measures with abortion being made illegal in 1936. Official abortion rates dropped dramatically from 1.9 million in 1935 to 570,000 in 1937. This shows the impact on the population that this law created as mothers were forced to continue with unwanted pregnancies. Russia did however, have a large underground network of Babki abortion services which evaded the government and allowed some abortions, although illegal, to take place. The lack of choice given to women demonstrates the view that women were made to reproduce even if that meant sacrificing autonomy over their bodies.

There are also differences for women mainly focusing on their right to work. In Nazi Germany, there were a series of laws to prevent women from working such as a 1936 law banning women from high-powered positions within the justice and medical system. Many women lost their jobs including female doctors. This was also reflected in their limited role in the Nazi party as they were not allowed to hold certain jobs such as a party executive. Not only were their rights to work adjusted, but also, they were also socialised to be housewives and mothers through young girls being made to join the Band of German Maidens which trained them in this role. On the other hand, Russia was slightly more liberal for women's jobs. Following their Bolshevik revolution, women were given a more equal status including the equal rights article in 1936. Women were used mainly in agricultural labour in low paid jobs or within the iron and steel industry. Employment of women rose from 4 million in 1928 to 123 million in 1940. Therefore, in Stalinist Russia, unlike Nazi Germany, women were encouraged to work, although their jobs were still limited, and it was not the full gender equality that Stalin claimed.

Overall, there are many similarities between the two regimes in terms of the states' treatment and views of women. They were both regressive in perpetuating the view of women solely existing to be a mother due to the need for a strong population to create an army for war. Although both countries criticised the ideology of the other, their treatment of women was similarly oppressive, especially compared to the standards of equality today.

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CREATING THE SOVIET FEMALE SOLDIER

Hannah Cocker

The profound impact that the Second World War had on Western gender roles is well-documented. Women were mobilised to serve on the home front on an unprecedented scale, with propaganda symbols such as Rosie the Riveter becoming ingrained in the public consciousness. The same is also true of the Soviet Union, with one key difference – Soviet women, unlike their Western counterparts, also served in combat.

Roughly one million women joined their male comrades in the Red Army during the Great Patriotic War, with an estimated 570,000 seeing front-line action; a significant contribution that has been mostly neglected in historiography. Participation in direct combat was traditionally considered the preserve of men, with gender roles under Stalin in the 1930s seemingly conservative. Why, then, were so many young women compelled to take up arms in defence of their homeland?

Soviet Society Under Stalin

Since the late 1920s, commencing with the first Five-Year Plan in 1928, Soviet society underwent an intensive process of militarisation. Images of war flooded the public sphere, accompanied by bellicose rhetoric encouraging combat readiness amongst its citizens, as explored by Wendy Goldman. Critically, militarism was linked to rapid industrialisation, deliberately paired together by the state to create a sense of urgency and stimulate the mass mobilisation of the people. Such productive energy, political leadership surmised, could then be put to other uses after economic transformation – such as defence.

It is important to note that during this time, the Soviet Union was a ‘paranoid’ state. Lacking friends and allies on the world stage and incredibly suspicious of its European neighbours given their involvement in the Russian Civil War, defending against hypothetical invasion was of top priority.

Around the same time as rapid industrialisation, paramilitary training was widely expanded to young people through the Komsomol, the Communist youth wing. Organisations such as Osoaviakhim, established in 1927, aimed to induct the next generation of army reserves through training in rifle shooting, aviation and parachuting. Coveted badges – such as the Voroshilov ‘sharpshooter’ – were awarded to the most promising students, providing an incentive to improve one’s skills. In 1938, the expectation was that Komsomol members should master a military skill alongside their ordinary civilian duties, in preparation for a future war.

Stalinism and Gender

Despite the academic tendency to view Stalinist ideology as monolithic, the Soviet approach to gender in the 1930s was nuanced and often contradictory. At the same time as being told the sky was the limit regarding education and work, the Anti-Abortion Law of 1936 attempted to confine women to the domestic sphere. This inconsistency is apparent in the emergence of the ‘New Soviet Woman’ ideal, analysed by Choi Chatterjee. While not necessarily

reflective of lived reality for the majority of women, the Soviet heroine represented an ideal to strive towards. Simultaneously forward-thinking but dependent on the patriarchal state with Stalin at its head, the ambiguity of this ideal often produced unintended results – such as the development of female militarism.

Given the entrenched conservatism of Stalinist society, particularly concerning gender roles, it seems paradoxical that a significant contingent of young women expressed a desire to fight in 1941. However, as illustrated by Anna Krylova, it was precisely this Stalinist system that laid the foundations for the creation of the female soldier.

In conceptualising the Soviet Union at this time as uniformly conservative, more nuanced constructions of gender are obscured. While Krylova’s argument that Stalinism permitted a greater range of gender expression than the post-Stalin period is perhaps an overstatement, the speed at which traditional values were reshaped – in one decade – is significant.

(En)gendering Militarism

It is important to place female militarism of the 1930s in its wider historical context. A precedent for women’s involvement in combat had been set by the Civil War, which reinforced early Bolshevik emphasis on gender equality. Female military heroines in literature and film, such as the Civil War machine gunner Anka in Chaparev (1934), became common points of cultural reference and encouraged female identification with combat long before the German invasion in 1941.

State discourse around paramilitarism, for instance, remained gender-neutral. Official pronouncements referred to ‘revolutionary youth’ and ‘armed young people’, while contemporary posters displayed young men and women training shoulder-to-shoulder. Meanwhile, young rifle shooters such as Vera Stafinskaya were presented as role models of military excellence for both genders, which served to popularise images of women in uniform and (unintentionally) normalise the idea of female combatants.

As a result, young women felt a powerful identification with the state, which had provided them with equal education and an opportunity to work. A product of the system in which they lived, Soviet women were mobilised by the industrialisation drives of the 1930s and encouraged to identify with the courageous ‘New Soviet Woman’. Fighting not necessarily as women but as patriots, Soviet female soldiers aspired to defend the state which – in their eyes – was a state worthy of defending.

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WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE: Female Combatants in the Red Army, 1941-1945

The role of female soldiers in the Second World War is often overlooked, and while most armies excluded women from the frontlines, thousands served throughout the war in a variety of roles. British and German women crewed anti-aircraft guns, while in Yugoslavia many fought against the Axis occupation as partisans. But the Soviet Union was unique among the war's major belligerents in allowing women to fight on the frontlines as infantry, snipers, tank crews and pilots. Even those in 'non-combatant' roles such as medics were trained to use weapons and operated under enemy fire. In fact, by the end of the war women accounted for around 8% of the Red Army's combatants – a tremendous increase from the 1,000 women serving at the time of the German invasion in June 1941.

While women's legal and political equality was enshrined in the Soviet constitution, this was rarely reflected in practice. Before the war, many women were relegated to low-ranking positions in the workplace and were still expected to fulfil traditional roles at home. However, the German invasion of 1941 created a situation so desperate that necessity took precedence over cultural norms. The constitution specified that it was the duty of all Soviet citizens to defend the motherland, presenting women with an opportunity to serve in the army on equal terms with men. Although not conscripted on the same scale as men, huge numbers of women joined up voluntarily and while exact numbers are unclear, it is estimated that as many as 800,000 served during the war.

Women's experiences of frontline combat varied greatly during the 'Great Patriotic War' as it is commonly known in Russia, but many relished the opportunity to fight the invaders head-on. In the first year of war on the Eastern Front Lyudmila Pavlichenko, nicknamed 'Lady Death', killed 309 Axis soldiers, becoming the most prolific female sniper in history. Yet for others, the experience of combat proved overwhelming, and a minority managed to be reassigned to administrative duties – a luxury not afforded to their male counterparts. For those who continued to fight, the stress of combat could have psychological and physical effects that were unique to women. A pilot serving with the famous all-female 'Night Witches' recalled that she and her comrades stopped menstruating. After the war, many of them found themselves unable to have children – a permanent consequence of flying nightly missions in flimsy wooden biplanes usually used to train new pilots.

But despite sharing in the horrors of combat, female soldiers were not always treated equally. Women's chances of promotion were relatively slim compared with those of their male comrades, and only a few reached the rank of colonel during the war. Most female officers commanded small formations, and in mixed-gender units this could present its own problems. Upon her promotion, one officer commanding a unit of combat engineers found herself subjected to the mockery of her male subordinates, who initially refused to accept her as their superior. While their chauvinism subsided following their first experience of combat, this was by no means an isolated case. In partisan units operating behind enemy lines, male chauvinism was particularly rampant, with women commonly being relegated to the mundane tasks of cooking and cleaning for fear that they threatened the partisans' 'masculine image'.

Matthew Hough

One particularly ugly aspect of women's experiences in the Red Army was the taking of 'frontline wives' by male senior officers. These relationships, usually non-consensual, were characterised by coercion, as senior officers who possessed their own private quarters exploited their positions of authority to procure female subordinates for sexual services, often on a long-term basis and with little regard for their views on the matter. These women, distinguished by the black berets they wore in place of the usual pilotka cap, were despised by the ordinary soldiers of both sexes, who accused them of using sex to improve their own personal positions, despite the women being given little choice. However, relations with male soldiers of lower ranks were usually more friendly. One medical assistant in an infantry company, a recipient of a Red Cross medal for having rescued 147 wounded soldiers while under enemy fire before her eighteenth birthday, described her relationship with her male comrades as being similar to that of siblings.

Despite the USSR's female soldiers proving themselves time and time again in combat, traditional understandings of gender roles ultimately prevailed. As early as 1943 the government began planning to exclude women from the post-war military, and a decree was issued in autumn 1945 demobilising all female personnel. An article published in March 1945 in *Pravda*, the Communist Party's official newspaper, reminded women that their main duty to the Soviet state was motherhood, signalling that their wartime service had done little to advance their place in post-war society. Upon returning home, female veterans were often shunned and the Soviet state tacitly encouraged a climate of discrimination in which their wartime achievements went largely ignored until the 1980s. Only then was public interest in these female fighters rekindled, 91 of whom were made Heroes of the Soviet Union – the USSR's highest decoration for bravery – for their service in history's most brutal conflict.

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THE 'FEMALE FACE' OF WAR:

Germany after 1945

Hannah Cocker

8th May 1945, Victory in Europe Day, was celebrated with jubilation by the Allies. Marking the end of an exhausting war and the total defeat of the Nazi regime, soldiers and civilians alike came together across the continent to rejoice. The same cannot be said, however, for Germany. Once the occupiers, now the occupied, the sheer magnitude of destruction wrought upon the country was staggering. From Düsseldorf to Dresden, entire cities had been ground to dust by Allied bombing raids. Left to clear through the rubble and begin the mammoth task of reconstruction were German women, comprising the majority of the population at the time. Although women were only one piece of the puzzle that was post-war Germany in the aftermath of 1945, analysing their experiences in these years is critical to deepening our overall understanding of war and violence.

The Women of the Rubble

Popular memory came to label the initial post-war period as 'the hour of the woman' – and to an extent, this myth was true. Elizabeth Heineman and other scholars of gender history have pointed out that the emasculation of total defeat and subsequent occupation by foreign powers, combined with the demographic imbalance produced by war, fed into the image of women standing alone in the post-war landscape.

In 1945, there were 1,700 women for every 1,000 men in the western zones aged between 25 and 30, and it was these women who were primarily responsible for immediate reconstruction efforts. The national legend of the so-called *trümmerfrauen* or 'rubble women' became part of popular consciousness across the country. Although not every aspect of the legend is true – for example, rubble clearing was initially viewed as a punishment and therefore loathed – women played a key role in kickstarting economic recovery. Additionally, they acted as the primary caregivers for their families, what with the male population decimated by participation in combat. Female participation in the black market, for instance, arguably saved the population through providing access to food.

The Legacy of Sexual Violence

The darker, and much more traumatic, collateral of war was that of sexual violence, experienced by German women across the Allied zones of occupation. This took on a variety of forms, encompassing rape, coercion, and the exchange of sex for protection or certain privileges. While there can be no definitive figure, an estimated 1-2 million women experienced rape, as high as 1 in 3 women in Berlin. According to Atina Grossmann, sexual violence became a 'collective event', a normalised part of a woman's every-day routine that had to be endured.

This is particularly evident in the Soviet zone of occupied Germany; in the words of Norman Naimark, rape became intrinsic to its social history. Diary-writing, an incredibly widespread practice during the war, sheds light on this inherently gendered aspect of defeat. The anonymous diary *A Woman in Berlin*, for instance, reveals the extent to which women became desensitised to the violence they were subjected to on a daily basis. Narrated in an uncomfortably matter-of-fact tone, the author relates her encounters with Soviet soldiers with directness, demonstrating just how normalised such experiences had become.

Gender and National Identity

Both of these experiences intertwined to leave a lasting mark on post-war identity in both Germanies. From 1949 onwards, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic sought to incorporate the experiences of women, albeit selectively, into their respective foundational myths. In the West, for example, the symbol of the 'rubble women' served to erase and replace the troubling legacy of sexual assault, instead coming to represent a brighter future. Comparatively, tying into attempts in the East to forge a socialist state, the image of working women was used to represent a 'brave new world' of equality and industrial dynamism, plastered across factory recruitment posters.

However, in analysing what both states sought to emphasise in their attempts at nation-building, it is equally important to study what was left out. The legacy of sexual violence, while never explicitly silenced, was also never tackled directly by either state. In the East, memories of rape were trivialised and denied by the authorities, with accounts of such violence presented in the press as rumours. Additionally, in the West, rape committed by American GIs was brushed under the carpet and ignored, as Miriam Gebhardt demonstrates. Rather, the state sought to weaponise the legacy of sexual violence once the Cold War set in during the 1950s, hypocritically using Soviet atrocities as a stick with which to beat their Eastern rival.

As such, the experiences of women in post-war Germany are vital to developing our understanding not just of German history, but the history of violence in the twentieth century. Women, while not the majority of direct participants in combat at the time, often bore the brunt of the consequences of war, in both reconstruction and ruthless violence against their person. Without considering their experiences, our analysis of war remains incomplete.

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A SHORT HISTORY of London Gay

Phoebe Watkins

Clubs before 1967

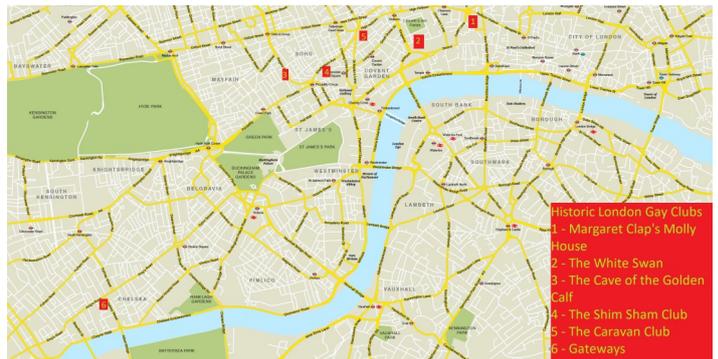
Gay nightclubs are important sites in many modern queer people's lives. Places to drink, dance, and meet people, they seem to typify the liberal urban landscape. These venues have formed important places of socialisation and political activity in the aftermath of the 1967 Sexual Offence Act, which decriminalised private homosexual acts between men (acts between women have never been criminalised but were not socially acceptable). However, meeting places of this nature can be traced back to the late seventeenth-century. London was the first place in the UK to develop a recognisable homosexual subculture, defined by a network of individuals who had certain patterns of behaviour, dress, and jargon.

Reports of 'molly-houses' alerted authorities to the first recognisable-to-a-modern-eye 'gay clubs' in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These were alehouses, coffee shops, or simply a room, for which on a certain night, usually a Sunday, was exclusive to 'sodomites' or 'mollies', as they came to be known. By 1725, there were around 20 open at any one time, kept secret and scattered around London. Different to brothels, molly-house were places where men could meet, socialise, flirt, and consummate their relationships. There are records of masquerade balls where men would dance and dress up as emperors and shepherdesses, indicating that the network was advanced enough to hold social events that mirrored fashionable and controversial balls that were sweeping through London at the time. A jargon developed: euphemisms such as 'chapel' to describe the room for 'marriage' – sex with 'husbands' for sexual partners, mocking the violent intolerance for the acts that mollies were partaking in. Molly-clubs were often run for a modest profit by other homosexual men, some who lived with male partners. The best known molly-house, due to the well-publicised trial it generated, was owned by Margaret Clap, a woman whose trial heard that the mollies "talked all manner of gross and vile obscenity in the prisoner's hearing, and she appeared to be wonderfully pleased with it."

The evidence from the 19th Century points to the continuation of molly-house culture. 1810 saw police raids on The White Swan in Vere Street, which was run by two apparently straight men who could see that molly-houses could be a profitable business. The house they ran had various attractions, most notably a kind-of chapel, where the Reverend John Church, a preacher from the St. George's Fields church is believed to have officiated same-sex marriages between men. It is thought that Church himself was gay. There was also a room in the style of a ladies dressing room, with make-up to be used and, similarly to earlier houses, there was a room with four beds in it to consummate relationships.

The gay social scene in the early 20th Century was dominated not by exclusively 'gay clubs', but by bohemian music clubs which pulled an artistic crowd which were accepting of homosexuality. Many were private members clubs which meant they could secure more liberal licencing rules and less police scrutiny. From 1912 to 1914, the Cave of the Golden Calf club, just off Regent Street was a haven for gay people who could afford admittance. Decorated by the artist Spencer Gore, and set up in the model of European clubs, it was an avant-garde centre of jazz, cabaret, and art. The Shim Sham Club in Soho, named after the popular tap dance that originated in Harlem, New York, open during the 1930s, importing the newest jazz music from across the Atlantic and was a place that welcomed black, white, Jewish, and homosexual members. The gay African American pianist, Garland Wilson was a performer there. The police investigations into the club noted that there were both male and female same-sex couples seen dancing together, as well as interracial couples.

The Caravan Club, a private members club in Endell Street near Covent Garden, exemplified the temporal nature of many interwar gay nightclubs. Its name signifies how many clubs would open up unlicensed for a matter of months, fully expecting to be shut down. The creative director of the National Trust said of the décor: "They came into this space, a dingy basement, and just hung material and brought in whatever furniture they could find and set up to the best of their abilities." Police reports showed same-sex couples of both sexes dancing together, "acting in a very obscene manner".



Map of historic London LGBTQ+ Clubs.

The post-war years saw a transition to a markedly lesbian subculture, usually exclusive from the gay male scene, with codes of behaviour and dress. Gateways, in Chelsea, West London, was the centre of the post-war Lesbian scene. Run by a presumably lesbian couple, the club was dark and dimly lit, with portraits lining the walls and had a 200-person capacity. The club was hidden from view and hard to find, located on a smaller street off the bustling King's Road, the lively and fashionable epicentre of the Swinging 60s. Lesbian patrons were either 'butch' or 'femme', adhering to the strict unwritten rules of the subculture that dictated how you dressed and who you could dance with. During the 70s the ideas of the new generation of lesbians, influenced by the Gay and Women's Liberation movements, brought intergenerational conflict based upon what the younger women saw as outdated and heterosexual modes of courtship and dress, but pre-legalisation, Gateways was notably non-political.

The history of London gay clubs is one marked by, conversely, both fear and joy. Evidence of these clubs paints a picture of vibrance, tolerance, and excitement, however much of the evidence for this comes from police raid reports. Before the 1967 decriminalisation of homosexuality, they were a place where people could practice self-expression and develop both a protective subculture and a network of accepting friends. As far back as the seventeenth-century, gay clubs have provided their marginalised clientele with a shelter from a hostile world, in the most rudimentary and immediate forms, through dancing, music and friendship.

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TAINTED LOVE: A Brief Chronology of Soft Cell's Relationship with the LGBT+ Community

Harriet Purbrick & Matt Purbrick

As you pass Leeds Beckett's Student Union directly opposite Dry Dock, you may notice a rainbow plaque. The rainbow plaques across Leeds tell the LGBT+ history of the city by honouring LGBT+ figures. This particular plaque is dedicated to Marc Almond and David Bell, who formed the synth-pop duo Soft Cell whilst at what-was-then-known-as Leeds Polytechnic. Soft Cell are best known for their 1981 hit version of Tainted Love which was the best-selling single of 1981 in the UK and topped the charts in sixteen other countries.

The rise of synth-pop as a genre can tell us a lot about attitudes towards gender and sexuality in the early 1980s as many synth-pop artists, not just Soft Cell, flirted with a queer aesthetic. It also helps us explore the complicated relationship of queerness between 'art' and 'artist', and how the interpretation of this has changed over time. After all, Soft Cell are much more associated with queer culture now than in their heyday.

After moving from Leeds to Soho, Soft Cell wrote their debut 1981 album 'Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret' around the sex industry they found themselves living next door to. Dave Ball recalled "we would go to places like the Naked City Cinema just to get the vibe of it. We were like sex tourists, but without doing the sex!" Their songs were subversively sexual. But they were not directly LGBT+, and instead often detail heterosexual encounters. For example, in their ode to sex cinemas 'Seedy Films', Almond is heard flirting with a woman by asking her "isn't that you up on the screen?".

Soft Cell produced an incredibly transgressive music video for their track 'Sex Dwarf', which featured a man with dwarfism pitted against women wielding whips and chainsaws with everyone, including Almond, wearing fetish clothing. The video was banned and is still difficult to find online. It opens with Almond teasing a woman chained to a table, her breasts exposed, once again showing that during their time in the limelight, Soft Cell presented heterosexual sleaze, rather than queerness.

By contrast, other synth-pop was overtly queer. Again in 1981, the all-male synth-pop group Depeche Mode released their debut album which featured lyrics such as "you're such a pretty boy" and "boys meet boys / get together / boys meet boys / it's forever". Meanwhile, the Human League released their best-known hit 'Don't You Want Me' whilst lead vocalist Philip Oakey flaunted full make-up and androgynous clothing.

Also, in 1981, punk pioneer Pete Shelley released a surprisingly synth-pop song 'Homosapien'. He had previously written songs in the punk style with LGBT+ themes such as 'Ever Fallen in Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)'. As well as using more synthesizer, 'Homosapien' was also much more explicitly queer: the couplet "homo superior / in my interior" was enough to get the track banned by the BBC.

However, some of these groups are no longer seen as LGBT+. Perhaps due to the group members' personal lives and their subsequent musical output, Depeche Mode are no longer overtly associated with queer culture. And although there is a disconnect between the lack of queerness found in Soft Cell's music itself and how Soft Cell are remembered, it can be explained by how Marc Almond presented himself later in his career alongside the wider evolution of synth-pop as a genre.

In 1984, the synth-pop group Bronski Beat came to prominence. All the band-members were openly gay, which was highly significant at the time. Departing from the outrageously camp aesthetic of earlier synth-pop, Bronski Beat used the genre to poignantly share their experiences as gay men. Their seminal single 'Smalltown Boy', and its accompanying video, describes a young man who departs from his hometown to leave behind homophobic attacks and a family that doesn't understand him. The song reached number 3 in the UK charts, and remains a gay anthem.

In that same year, Marc Almond teamed up with Bronski Beat to

cover Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love', a disco song that was extremely popular in gay nightclubs.

In 1985, Coil (John Balance and Peter Christopherson, who were also a couple) released a bleak cover of 'Tainted Love' to raise funds for the Terrence Higgins Trust: this single has since been recognised as the first benefit record for an HIV/AIDS charity. Christopherson's music video for their version of the song featured a cameo appearance from Marc Almond.

However Almond only publicly came out as gay in 1987, three years after Soft Cell's split. He has said "I didn't want to be defined as a gay artist. I didn't want to be labelled and go into a ghetto. I just wanted to be a pop singer."

Four years later in 1991, a dissolved Soft Cell released a re-recorded version of 'Tainted Love', with an accompanying music video directed by Coil's Christopherson. The video featured Almond apparently singing through the cosmos to a handsome young man, who tosses and turns in bed before getting up and dressed as a Castro clone (LGBT+ slang for the style of the idealised working-class man).

Whilst Soft Cell's association with the LGBT+ community evolved through the years; they are clearly deserving of their Rainbow Plaque. Not only did they have the biggest hit in a broadly queer movement, they continued to align themselves with the gay community over the next decade.



Soft Cell Rainbow Plaque on the Woodhouse Building of Leeds Beckett University, Woodhouse Lane.

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TEARING DOWN WALLS & BARRIERS: Gender, Diversity and Clubbing in Berlin



Nightclub scene.

In 1989 the Berlin Wall came down. It had separated East and West Berlin, and symbolically represented the division of Germany – and Europe – along ideological lines. In one heady night it fell. Berliners crossed the old boundaries that divided them. Photos of disbelieving locals stood atop of the wall were beamed around the world. The events were interpreted by many as the triumph of liberty over repression, freedom over the old communist dictatorship of the GDR.

A year later and Germany had been reunified. A process began of reacquaintance; of reimagining what a united Germany could mean, what it could stand for. In Berlin, clubbing served as a neutral round for people to meet, mingle and express themselves. Neglected spaces were repurposed, as empty industrial buildings began to serve as homes and studios available at low rents. The global queer community would rush to make Berlin its home.

In 1989 Berlin hosted the inaugural Love Parade celebrating its alternative techno and gay scenes. Just 150 people attended. By the dawn of the millennium it was a world-renowned occasion: between 1997 and 2000 the parade saw one million take to the streets annually.

Berlin found itself experiencing a unique historical moment: a strange alchemy of gender experimentation, left-wing politics, brutalist architecture and the intermingling of black American GIs (bringing with them knowledge of New York garage, Chicago house and Detroit techno). This diversity, combined with a rare sense of collective social purpose, suffused the Berlin scene. Clubbing had an aim: to create spaces in which new identities could be forged after years of division and separation. According to Nadine Moser, a Berlin DJ, you can't see today's situation without looking into that past. A part of Berlin's nightlife scene was always connected to politics.

The clubs that now dominate Berlin's nightlife were founded in this early reunification period. In 1991 the techno club Tresor opened, and, in 1994, KitKat, a club notorious for its sexual licence. Berghain – which found its home in an old power plant and is now the most famous club in Berlin – is a reincarnation of Ostgut, a gay fetish club open between 1998 and 2003. A recent 'Promote Diversity' fundraiser at Berghain declared, 'equality on all levels and tolerance are basic values that the club and music scene has always supported.'

Most Berlin clubs operate on a strict no phone and no photography policy. They are designed as spaces in which people can experiment freely. The organisers of 'Homopatik,' an LGBT+ party hosted at the club [://aboutblank](https://aboutblank.com), recently told Crack Magazine they were 'over gender.'

Joe Ronan

In this narrative, clubs emerged as spaces within which the old social divisions were broken down. The fall of the Berlin Wall was certainly the pivotal moment, but what the collapse of communism meant for East Berliners is less clear. For many, the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolises a new era of freedom and liberty for all. Those who had lived under the Stasi for four decades were now free and they were ready to party. But it would be easy to slip into this narrative when it comes to the Berlin club scene. That Berlin was repressed under communism and freed under capitalism, is, however, a false dichotomy. The city defies easy classification. The truth, as ever, lies in the spaces in between.

Clubbing in Berlin was rooted in left-wing politics. In the nineties it occupied the abandoned industrial spaces and built within them sites of identity building, collective acceptance, and personal liberty. In this sense, it can be seen as the melding of the ideological legacies of East and West – clubbing was committed to a conception of personal liberty that was expressed in a radical and subversive form.

Yet, by definition, all forms of community are socially exclusive as well as socially inclusive; communities have borders and boundaries. Berlin is no exception. Door policy in Berlin has seen innumerable accusations of racism. Likewise, the commercialisation of clubs has left them inaccessible for less financially endowed individuals, who tend disproportionately to be of ethnic minority origin. The foreign-born population of Berlin is twice as likely to be unemployed. It costs €18 for entry to Berghain, and in 2019 the club introduced a controversial new €5 re-entry fee.

The collapse of communism and the unification of Berlin may have created the opportunity for the emergence of an LGBT+ scene, but now gentrification threatens its existence. Over a hundred venues have closed in the last ten years, including the famed Griessmuehle, located in an old East German grain mill and home to the much-loved Cocktail d'Amore gay party. Local property prices have more than doubled in the last decade, and both [://aboutblank](https://aboutblank.com) and KitKat face uncertain futures.

Ultimately, the great liberalising wave that swept through the city in the 1990s may have torn down both walls and barriers, but we should not assume they will stay down forever. At a time when inclusivity and diversity within public space is taking on renewed importance, Berlin faces an ongoing battle to keep new barriers from being erected.

LGBTQ+ ICONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Phoebe Kirkland

Although there are many incredible icons throughout LGBTQ+ history, this article will show some of the lesser known individuals who have faced injustices because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. These individuals made powerful impacts towards the gay rights movement, resisting the status quo and legal system that disenfranchised them over the decades.

Christine Jorgensen – 1950s

Jorgensen was an American transgender woman who was the first person to be known publicly for having sex reassignment surgery. She was drafted into the army in 1945. After her service, she travelled to Europe and in Denmark received permission to undergo transition surgery in 1952. She returned to the United States after and worked as an advocate for transgender people as a celebrity, normalising transgender individuals.

Bayard Rustin – 1960s

Bayard Rustin was a civil rights activist during the 1950s and 1960s, working alongside Martin Luther King Jr. for equal rights for African Americans. He was also a gay man arrested in 1953 for engaging in 'public sex' with another man, eventually serving 60 days in prison. Following his arrest, he became open about his sexuality and did not let it prevent him from campaigning for civil rights. He was a pacifist, a Quaker and a member of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), campaigning for equal rights using peaceful methods. Later, in the 1980s, he became a public activist for LGBTQ+ causes. He died in 1987, aged 75, due to a perforated appendix. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013 by President Obama.

Maureen Colquhoun – 1970s

Maureen Colquhoun is the first Lesbian MP in the House of Commons. She was in office as Labour MP for Northampton North from 1974 to 1979. She was a married mother of two and left her husband in 1975 for the publisher of Sappho magazine Barbara Todd. She was summarily harassed by the British tabloids, with one journalist trespassing into her and Todd's housewarming party. In September 1977, Colquhoun was deselected due to her sexuality and her feminist beliefs. Members of the Labour Party's General Management Committee voted her out 23 votes to 18 (with one abstention). The reasons behind her dismissal included "obsession with trivialities such as women's rights." The decision was overruled in January 1978, but in the 1979 general election she lost her seat to the Conservative competition. Regardless of her lost seat, Colquhoun was unwilling to let those who dismissed her for her sexuality ignore her politics and she continued to work in public service until 2015.

Mark Ashton – 1980s

Mark Ashton is most famously known as the founder of Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners. The organisation was founded in 1984 to support the miners during their year long strike. Ashton understood that the miners and members of the LGBTQ+ community were united by what they opposed: oppression from the government, press

and police, and should unite together to resist them. Over the year they worked they raised over the equivalent of £69,000 (inflation adjusted) and in return at the 1985 Pride Parade, hundreds of miners marched alongside the organisation's members. The support of the National Union of Mineworkers encouraged the Labour Party to incorporate rights for gay people in their manifesto. Ashton was intrinsic to this development. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in January 1987 and died 12 days later, but his death prompted an incredible response from the gay community.

David Wojnarowicz – 1990s

Wojnarowicz was an American artist and AIDS activist in New York City. He used his art to politicise the struggles of AIDS, which he personally suffered from, until his death from the disease in 1992. He was 37 years old. His art is considered controversial in the religious world for the representations of religious imagery such as the Cross. In 2010 there was a controversy as the Smithsonian removed his short film *A Fire in My Belly* from the exhibition due to the depiction of ants crawling over a cross, which had drawn complaints from the Catholic league, and threats of removing federal funding. Following the removal, many members of the art community spoke out against the decision, leading to Andy Warhol foundation announcing it was pulling funding for the museum. Other museums scheduled showings of the removed work in protest. His art remains provocative and important in representing the AIDS crisis and educating people about HIV/AIDS in the present day.

Eddie Windsor – 2000s

Eddie Windsor met her wife Thea Clara Spyer in 1965. Spyer proposed to Windsor in 1967, although it was not legal for women to be married in the USA, and they became engaged and moved to Long Island. In fact, homosexuality was still illegal in the state of New York when they became engaged. In 1977, Spyer was diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis, causing her increasing paralysis, and Windsor became her full-time carer. In 1993, they entered a domestic partnership. After Spyer's condition worsened, the pair opted to marry in Canada in 2007 (where marriage had been legalised). Spyer died two years later. Following the death of her wife, Windsor had to pay over \$350,000 in taxes on her inheritance because the USA did not recognise her marriage to Spyer as valid. She fought to claim tax exemption but was denied from doing so due to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) which exclusively defined marriage as the union between one man and one woman. She fought with organisations against DOMA, eventually filing a lawsuit, and in March 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court deemed DOMA unconstitutional.

HELLO FROM HISTSOC

Welcome back historians!

We hope your final exams and deadlines have gone well despite the interruptions and that you're now celebrating as best as you can in these weird times!

Sadly, we didn't get to do any of the things we had planned for this term, but we do have a new committee to celebrate!

Congratulations to:

Rebecca Allan – President

Becca Iliffe – Vice President

Louisa Jordan – Treasurer

Megan Glanville – Academic Secretary

Izzy Edwards – Sponsorship Secretary

Henry Murray – Social Secretary (Trip)

Molly Griffiths – Social Secretary (Ball)

Rachel Forrest – Publicity Secretary

Jemma Wilde – Social Media Secretary

Annie Davies – Sports Secretary (Netball)

Eliot Thomas – Sport Secretary (Football)

That's all from us this year—thanks for the fun!

Lots of HistSoc love,

Emily (Academic Sec)



A THANK YOU TO THE 2019/20 ISSUE 1 HISTORY STUDENT TIMES TEAM

Thank you to all those writers and assistant editors who contributed time and effort to providing articles and meticulous help editing them.

Assistant editing team:

Ana Hill Lopez-Menchero, Annabel Cook, Elizabeth Riddoch, Hannah Cocker, Harriet Purbrick, Jenny Speakman, Jessica Julianne, Joe Ronan, Katie Winfield, Miri Hodnett, Olivia Tait, Phoebe Lee Kirkland, Phoebe Watkins, Sara Green and Sioned Griffiths.



HISTORY STUDENT TIMES