There is considerable analysis of the ways in which women in the former Soviet bloc spent lives split between state and family spheres. This is to be contrasted with Western feminists' description of the dichotomy between public and private spheres. Many of the authors in both collections explain in meaningful detail why women who had been artificially mobilized into an unsatisfying public sphere identify home as the location for meaningful life. For example, Eva Fodor's chapter, "The Political Woman?" in Women in the Politics of Post-Communist Eastern Europe, is especially convincing because of its rich examination of discourse that makes family and other immediate communities far more appealing to women than the current language of political recruitment. Given the varied connotations of feminist words in different contexts, Irene Dolling's interpretive essay on photographic representations in the GDR ("But the Pictures Stay the Same...": The Image of Women in the Journal Für Dich Before and After the 'Turning Point" in Gender Politics and Post-Communism) provide a refreshing interlude.

Both collections indicate that in a time of rapid societal and economic transformation, when the future is, perhaps, more manipulable than at other times in history, people remain naive empiricists. Authors in both texts indicate widespread societal views that correlation equals causation, that the expropriated association of feminism with Bolshevism or state socialism now leads to a common belief that a culture in which women have roles other than mother and wife is destructive to the natural order. In her conclusion to Women in the Politics of Post-Communist Eastern Europe, Rueschemeyer expresses concern that while women's political retreat is understandable, it is dangerous, precisely because new institutions and expectations are in the process of formation and these will establish expectations for some time to come.

Given this flux, Maria Todorova's question, "If we assume that conditions are not 'ripe' for a feminist movement because of a low socioeconomic level, what makes them ripe for democracy?" ("The Bulgarian Case: Women's Issues or Feminist Issues," p. 30 in Gender Politics and Post-Communism) is both pertinent and troubling. It is echoed by Zillah Eisenstein's assertion in the same collection that while feminists have already analyzed and discussed Marx' and Lenin's failure to conceptualize gender, the failure of Gorbachev and Havel to theorize about gender is newly problematic in an entirely different way ("Eastern Europe Male Democracies: A Problem of Unequal Equality," p. 304).

Both anthologies indicate that the failure to conceptualize the role of gender in democratic transformation is consequential. Moreover, they demonstrate that at least a few young scholars are deep at work interpreting the warp and weft of gender and politics in their societies. Their words deserve to be read.

Barbara Welling Hall


The post-1989 events in East Central Europe focused the attention of political and social scientists on gender equality, workforce structure, women's emancipation and political activism, including differences and similarities among the countries of this region. The result was an eruption of articles and books on the degree of influence that the socialist system had on restructuring women's status in the family, economy, and society. Scholars with feminist interests tried to
analyze views on freedom of choice, reproductive rights, and evaluate the chances for increased understanding and communication. Some studies received their impetus from disappointment over escalating nationalism, prejudice, and return to obsolete, patriarchal social structures. The "Cinderella" story matches this pattern.

Marxist ideas on the family and women's issues, legislation and gender relations in socialist systems, population policies and abortion, the conflict between female employment and family roles, and women in socialist and post-socialist politics are the main areas of exploration in Barbara Einhorn's book. The author centers her analysis on the links between women's autonomy as individuals and their ties with the community through a study of citizenship, women's double roles at home and on the job, the intentions and outcome of protective legislation for working women, women's roles in political organizations, and the public/private divide. Sources used in this book represent a substantial sample of publications related to the initial phase of transition. Most of the examined materials refer to the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and specially East Germany, before and during unification. The author argues that the winning ideology marks a return to unequal gender relations, a loss of reproductive rights granted by the previous system, and the decrease in importance of women's citizenship rights. She also analyzes women's stereotyped role models of the past and their link with nationalistic aspirations. A depiction of the press for women during the transition period appropriately puts an emphasis on its ambiguity in projecting role models and in supplying information about women's status. The discrepancy between Western understanding of such issues and their unique interpretation in Eastern Europe is also surveyed. Her enquiry presents change as a process of transition, with elements of the pre-socialist and socialist past intertwined within the tumultuous present. The questions of: "Whether the subordination of women's interests [before and during transition to democracy and to a market economy — B. L.] represents a change from, or continuity, with the past?" and "Was women's citizenship and political representation central to state socialist projects, or does the record point rather in the direction of ... instrumentalization of women...?" (p. 149) point out contradictions between intentions and reality, inconsistencies between legislative principles and their working out in social relations which reveal the patriarchal substance of state socialism. Einhorn comments that in the wake of withdrawal from socialism, the past became idealized by post-socialist teachings, older models of single-role women became revitalized.

In the author's opinion, the private sphere of women's lives was not adequately acknowledged under socialism and the double-burden was too onerous, which made "return to home" trends more acceptable. This might be true for the majority of older women, and female workers with low or without occupational skills. Studies conducted among younger, occupationally trained and/or educated professionals indicate that such attitudes are alien to them, since they identify with and take pride in their work, in spite of their double-burden.

Equally troubling are instances when the German experience is inaccurately extrapolated to fit all the described countries. The following can serve as an example: "The present era is dominated ... not so much by efforts to create the substantive conditions for truly participatory democracy as by an almost obsessive concern for new legislation as the preeminent symbol of the rule of law, especially as regards formal legal guarantees for reinstated private property rights. (p. 150) Each country in question has its own, individual "obsessions," and the reinstatement of private property is not always a primary concern.

Like a still photograph of an image in motion, Einhorn's record reflects an exact moment in history. She uses research studies, publications, and interviews generated primarily during the