



Gender and the Construction of Wartime Heroism in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union

Lisa A. Kirschenbaum and Nancy M. Wingfield

West Chester University of Pennsylvania and Northern Illinois University

ABSTRACT

During World War II, the Soviet media featured both male and female military heroes as part of an effort to mobilize the entire nation for the protection of hearth and home. The wartime hero cults inspired post-war commemoration in both the Soviet Union and in countries it 'liberated' from Nazism. However, no single Communist/Soviet model of commemoration and heroism was imposed on post-World War II Eastern Europe. The relative lack of female heroes constituted one of the most striking differences between the 'cults' of the war in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. The difference can be explained in part as a consequence of the very different Soviet and Czechoslovak wartime experiences. The absence of female heroes also points to post-war differences in how the two states' leaders understood and employed the legitimizing potential of the war. These differences in turn shaped the post-Communist fate of hero cults in both countries.

KEY WORDS: commemoration, gender, hero, World War II

From the very first days of the war against Nazi Germany, the Soviet media worked to mythologize what was immediately dubbed the 'Great Fatherland War'. Heroes and martyrs filled the pages of the wartime press. The immediate goal of such hero cults was mobilization against the invader. Because they effectively underscored the magnitude of the threat the Germans posed to both the Soviet motherland (*rodina*) and the most intimate of relationships, heroines and female martyrs emerged as central figures in mobilization campaigns. The prominence of women in Soviet war coverage signalled an important ideological shift. Whether depicted as mothers, soldiers, or war workers, women functioned in Soviet wartime propaganda as part of the 'counter-narrative' of individual initiative and private motives, as opposed to party discipline and devotion to Joseph Stalin, that dominated the centrally controlled press's coverage of the first years of the war.¹ Female heroes – on the home front, the battle front, or behind the lines – underscored the need to mobilize the *entire*

nation for the protection of hearth and home. With the war, native place (*rodina*), home, and family – all figured as female – became key constituents of Soviet patriotism.

The wartime cults of Soviet heroes also inspired post-war commemoration in those countries 'liberated' from Nazism by the Red Army. However, no single Communist/Soviet model of commemoration and heroism was imposed on post-World War II Eastern Europe. Rather, usable national histories and traditions were adapted to general Communist/Soviet commemorative practices in early examples of 'national communism'.² Post-war commemoration and formation of cults of heroic memory of World War II in Czechoslovakia took forms that reflected the country's particular, traumatic and demasculinizing wartime experience, including the humiliation of accepting the Munich Diktat in September 1938 and subsequent Nazi occupation.

In the immediate post-war period, Czechoslovak commemorative practices and cults of heroism both drew on interwar heroic cults, where women had served only an auxiliary role, and constructed new Communist heroes. The focus continued to be the on-going battle against the historic German enemy for the survival of the Czech(-oslovak) nation. In contrast to the Soviet Union, the war commemorated in Czechoslovakia remained a more traditionally male affair. Moreover, even before the Communist seizure of power in February 1948, commemorative practices and the cults of heroism also reflected Communist priorities and politics.³ The multinational Czechoslovak Communist Party (the KSČ) had an historic advantage over other political parties in its claims to most patriotic wartime behaviour: the party had neither participated in the coalition government that had been forced to accept the Munich Diktat nor had it collaborated with the German occupation under the wartime Protectorate. By 'Victorious February', as the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia is known, the KSČ had had almost 30 years of practice adapting elements of Czech(-oslovak) history to create a usable past. Thus, the reunified post-war state recognized the sacrifices of Czechoslovakia's own martyrs from the Communist Party and the anti-fascist underground. Moreover, Red Army soldiers who liberated much of the country were celebrated together with the partisans in Slovakia, and the Czechoslovak divisions – usually represented as male, although some participants were female – attached to the Red Army.

The comparison of Soviet and Czechoslovak war heroes and commemorations provides a useful vantage point for examining the interconnections and local specificity of official war cults in Communist Eastern Europe. Real appreciation for the Red Army's role in liberating the country was not unique to Czechoslovakia, as Nikolai Vukov's study of Bulgarian war monuments illustrates. However, the sort of historic connection to Russia that underpinned Bulgarian memorials was absent in Czech and Slovak memorials, where the emphasis was firmly on the Soviet defeat of the Nazis and thus the insuring of Czech(-oslovak) national survival and Czechoslovak state independence from German aggression. Both stand in contrast to

other future 'Eastern Bloc' countries, notably Poland, where the Soviet Union (and before 1917, the Russian Empire) had been an aggressor before it became a self-proclaimed liberator, and where there was thus little local enthusiasm for either Soviet monuments or the Polish Communists.⁴ Even after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in the wake of the 1968 'Prague Spring' some measure of gratitude for the Soviet Union's wartime role in the defeat of the traditional German enemy persisted in that country. Moreover, as in the Soviet Union, the cult of wartime heroism remained an important part of Czechoslovak public life and commemorative ritual into the 1980s.

The comparative under-representation of female heroes constituted one of the most striking differences between the 'cults' of the war in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, despite the fact that women also played important roles in public cultural and political life in interwar Czechoslovakia. The difference can be explained in part as a straightforward consequence of the very different Soviet and Czechoslovak wartime experiences. The total war fought in the Soviet Union required the mobilization of men, women, and children, and thus the wartime press and post-war monuments celebrated not only male warriors, who can be found in abundance in Soviet memorials, but also the real and symbolic significance of women in the Soviet war effort. In occupied and divided Czechoslovakia, where there was no equivalent mass mobilization, there was no equivalent memory. The relative absence of female heroes also points to post-war differences in how the two states' leaders understood and employed the legitimizing potential of the war. In the Soviet Union, the emphasis on women's wartime contributions recalled the wartime loosening of party (or Stalin's) control and the new and resonant sanctification of hearth and home as primary sources of identity and citizenship. By contrast, in Czechoslovakia the war cult sought to identify Communists and the Communist Party as the agents – together with the Red Army – of national rebirth. With the emphasis squarely on the task (traditionally gendered male) of liberating the country from the Nazi German occupiers and building an independent Czechoslovak state, female fighters and martyrs played a limited role in Czechoslovak war memory. In addition, there was a relatively small group of Communists from which to choose exemplars due to multi-party rule in Czechoslovakia before World War II.

The openness fostered by Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost and the revolutions of 1989 allowed – perhaps forced – a reassessment of the myths of the Great Fatherland War as well as the wartime role of Czechoslovak Communists in the opposition to the Nazis and the Soviet 'liberation' of Czechoslovakia. In both countries, the mythic feats of heroes and martyrs were openly debated and often debunked. However, whereas in the Soviet Union, the myths – even those with weak factual bases – proved resilient, in Czechoslovakia, even some genuine anti-fascists have been forgotten. In Russia, where the war had always been represented as a national (as opposed to purely Communist) achievement it proved easier than in post-Communist Czechoslovakia to remove the taint of Communism from wartime

martyrs, heroes, and heroines and to transform them into emblems of national pride and identity.

Gender and the Construction of Wartime Myths

In its state-controlled media, Stalinist Russia appeared as a place where ‘fairy tales can come true’, a land populated by selfless, steadfast, modern heroes and cunning, ruthless – but inevitably defeated – villains.⁵ By the mid-1930s, the Soviet press overflowed with tales of everyday citizens who achieved prodigious feats of production in factories and on collective farms, of daring arctic explorers and dashing aviators.⁶ These heroes did not necessarily battle directly with the regime’s enemies, the ‘wreckers’, class enemies, and enemies of the people, unmasked and ‘liquidated’ in the purges. Rather, they stood as emblems of the future. That many of these heroes were women testified most eloquently to the state’s purported triumph over backwardness and superstition, over the peasant woman (*baba*), the personification in early Soviet propaganda of ‘the wretched, brutal and patriarchal world of the peasant wife who was subordinated to husband, priest, and police’.⁷ Polina Osipenko, Valentina Grizodubova, and Marina Raskova, celebrated for their record-setting flight from Moscow to eastern Siberia, became in 1938 the first women to win the prestigious Hero of the Soviet Union award and so became the smiling faces of the (allegedly) egalitarian, modern, and joyful Stalinist revolution.⁸

With the coming of World War II Soviet heroes became increasingly, but not exclusively, martial. Nonetheless, women continued to figure prominently as heroes in the Soviet media. Many, like the sniper Liudmila Pavlichenko, ‘the girl [*devushka*] who killed 300 fascists’, were celebrated for their military prowess. Others were feted for their heroic efforts to supply the front with ammunition and food.⁹ Both male and female heroes became household names, celebrated not only in the press, but in songs, movies, and poems: Captain Nikolai Gastello, the young bomber pilot who just days after the German invasion crashed his burning plane into an enemy armoured division; the 28 Panfilov men who in November 1941 stopped a German tank division and perished on the approaches to Moscow; Aleksandr Matrosov, a tough orphan released from prison to defend the *rodina*, who in February 1942 threw himself on a German machine gun nest to block its fire; partisans – the Krasnodon Young Guards, Liza Chaikina, and Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia – arrested, tortured, and executed by the Germans.¹⁰ Women constituted a relatively small percentage of those awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union designation – about 90 out of more than 10,000.¹¹ However, they garnered a disproportionate share of the coverage. Indeed some of the best known heroes, including Chaikina and Kosmodem’ianskaia, the most famous of them all, were the female martyrs, who gave their lives at the Soviet Union’s darkest hour, in the catastrophic circumstances of invasion and occupation.¹²

Women in Soviet wartime propaganda – whether fighters or mothers – embodied resonant alternatives to the pre-war emphasis on loyalty to the party and comrade

Stalin as motives for individual sacrifice. Chaikina, a Komsomolka (member of the Young Communist League) from a remote Russian village, was among the first female martyrs of the war to be mythologized. The story of this 'true daughter of the Soviet people' appeared in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in December 1941.¹³ Like all Soviet martyrs, Chaikina remained steadfast and loyal under torture, refusing to reveal the identities and locations of her fellow partisans. Shot and dying in the snow, she 'kissed the earth, and with the last moments of her life again threw her people's slogans in the enemy's face: "Death to the German occupiers! Long live Stalin! Long live victory!"' Stalin emerges as Chaikina's inspiration and her source of hope, but her martyrdom provides an alternative, less ideological, perhaps more powerful call to arms. Liza Chaikina, the article concluded 'is immortal' and 'her death calls for vengeance'.

Less than a month later, another martyred Komsomolka turned partisan overshadowed Chaikina. On 27 January 1942, both *Pravda* and *Komsomol'skaia pravda* ran the story of a young female guerrilla, known only by her nom de guerre, Tania, who, caught attempting to burn down stables in an occupied village, was tortured and hanged by the Germans.¹⁴ Following the advancing Red Army into liberated areas of Moscow province in early 1942, *Pravda* correspondent Petr Lidov visited the village of Petrishchevo where the events occurred. He reported that Tania did not break under torture, and that her last words had been, 'It is happiness to die for one's people . . . Goodbye, comrades! Fight, don't be afraid! Stalin is with us! Stalin will come!'¹⁵

Lidov not only interviewed witnesses, but also, in a bid to determine the heroine's true identity, returned to the village with photojournalist Sergei Strunnikov to disinter and photograph her remains.¹⁶ The photo of the murdered 'Tania', bare-breasted, serene, and with the executioner's noose still around her neck, accompanied the initial article in *Pravda*. As the historian Rosalinde Sartorti has noted, the photograph, with its 'strong erotic component', was a powerful anomaly in the 'traditional iconographic context of those times, when women were depicted as either martial or maternal figures'.¹⁷ (*Komsomol'skaia pravda* demurely cropped the photo at the neck, and ran it with another of the grave itself.) In his 1943 pamphlet *Tania*, which did not reproduce the photograph, Lidov noted that in death her face remained 'the face of a beautiful Russian girl, somehow retaining its freshness and purity [*chistotu*]' . Like the remains of saints, Tania's body resisted putrefaction.¹⁸

The Soviet media, quickly identifying and mythologizing the unknown *partizanka*, constructed her as hero. The initial publicity led to the discovery of the partisan's mother, who travelled to Petrishchevo to identify the body. On 16 February 1942, the state conferred the title Hero of the Soviet Union on Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia, an 18-year-old from Moscow.¹⁹ The following day, Zoia's mother Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia, addressed the country by radio, expressing her grief and her pride and calling for vengeance. On the radio, as in later articles in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, and a pamphlet published in 1942, Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia emphasized

the purity of her daughter's character as well as her love for the *rodina* and the Komsomol. She recounted Zoia's premonition of her own fate: 'I will return a hero, or I will die a hero', she told her mother when they parted.²⁰

At least 25 different publications on Zoia appeared during the war. A song honouring her feat became part of the Young Pioneer repertoire. Margarit Aliger's long poem 'Zoia', published in September 1942, became the basis for director Lev Arnshtam's 1944 film *Zoia* (with music by Dmitrii Shostakovich). Drawing heavily on Soviet reports and an interview with Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia, the American correspondent Maurice Hindus brought Zoia's story to an international audience, presenting it as emblematic of 'Russia's flaming youth'.²¹

The mother's sorrowful and stirring narrative of Zoia's childhood and youth coupled with graphic descriptions of the tortures she endured and powerful photographs of the young partisan combined to produce a compelling story of idealism, courage, and martyrdom: an innocent, steadfast girl (*devushka*) defying the enemy on territory defined by the failure of the (male) army. In her poem 'Zoia', Aliger addressed 'you, who stood on the field of honour/Russian warriors', and explained that: 'I wanted to write about Zoia/so that you would not know the way back./So that all her daring/ striving will in the future be regarded as/a step toward victory/maybe half a step/but forward/forward, not back.'²²The female partisan-martyr served as a reminder of catastrophic losses even as she embodied the indomitable spirit of the Soviet people.

The sniper Liudmila Pavlichenko, who made a bigger international splash than Zoia but enjoyed less fame at home, embodied an alternative type of female heroism. Whereas Zoia fought briefly behind enemy lines, sabotaging telephone lines and burning stables and huts, Pavlichenko served for an extended period on the Sevastopol front with the regular army, toured the United States and Britain to promote the Soviet cause, and survived the war.²³ Yet as in Zoia's case, Pavlichenko's story was publicized via the intimate recollections of her comrades in arms and her mother. Moreover, like Zoia, the Soviet media represented her, even as she mercilessly gunned down more than 300 fascists, as a sweet, serious, cultured Soviet 'girl'. Sergeant V. Grigorov, who served with her, emphasized that Pavlichenko, who had come to the front from university, was both a 'warrior' and a 'historian' — 'one of the most cultured and educated warriors'.²⁴ In a photo that ran with her mother's letter to *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, her smile and her youth contrasted sharply with her officer's uniform. Her mother quoted a playful, faux flirtatious letter from the front: 'I exchange "sweet nothings" with the Fritzes by means of optical sight and solitary shots. I must tell you that this is the truest and most correct relationship with the Germans'.²⁵

The myth of the hero, no less than the myth of the martyr, employed feminized images of family connections and personal ties to heighten the pathos, to underscore both the difficulty and the necessity of sacrifice. Pavlichenko's mother confessed that when she thought about the hardships her daughter was facing at the front, 'my heart

contracts in pain'. Still, despite the dangers, 'Liudmila's successes gladdened my maternal heart', and she had no doubt her daughter 'would fulfil her duty to the end'.²⁶ Their status as both 'immortal daughters of the Soviet people' and their mothers' beloved daughters helps to explain how wartime heroines 'became deeply ingrained in popular consciousness'²⁷ and moving emblems of the nation at war.

The Cult of the War after 1945

In the immediate post-war years, the cults of wartime heroes faded or were suppressed in the Soviet Union. The Stalinist state worked to quash the self-reliance and emphasis on personal motivations and attachments that had characterized wartime propaganda. Victory Day ceased to be a national holiday in 1947. Only after Stalin's death in 1953 did a full-blown cult of the war emerge in the Soviet Union. His successor Nikita Khrushchev attacked the dictator's 'cult of personality', and looked to the war as the source of the post-Stalinist state's legitimacy. Khrushchev's successors followed his lead, bringing the war cult to its apogee in the mid-1980s. The cult aimed to restore the wartime sense of national unity by reviving the stories of individual initiative and sacrifice – as opposed to Stalin's or even the party's genius – that had dominated Soviet propaganda in the first years of the war. The war cult thus brought back wartime songs, stories, and hero cults. Zoia remained an emblematic figure. In 1965, Victory Day became once again a public holiday. By 1985, thousands of monuments large and small saturated the Soviet landscape, and the heroes of the Great Fatherland War – male and female – had become central figures in Soviet commemorative practices and in Soviet school curricula (see Figures 1 and 2).²⁸

By contrast, in newly resurrected Czechoslovakia the immediate post-war period saw the growth of a cult of the war, both popular and state directed. As in the Soviet Union, the cult of the war in Czechoslovakia played an important legitimizing role, but unlike the Soviet cult, it emphasized not national mobilization in the name of protection of hearth and home, but national rebirth under Communist auspices. The destruction of the First Czechoslovak Republic at the Munich Conference at the hands of the Nazis and Czechoslovakia's erstwhile Western allies, France and Great Britain, together with its subsequent liberation primarily by the Red Army, meant that the heroic efforts of the Soviet Union on behalf of the country were also lauded in the aftermath of the war. In Czechoslovakia, the concerns and needs of the present shaped the profuse post-war memorialization. This socially constructed past was not only imposed by the state (Czechoslovak or Soviet) but also had some popular support.²⁹

Two men – both 'National Heroes' in the Communist period – particularly personified Czechoslovak heroism and martyrdom in the face of Nazi atrocities. Although their role in the Communist party hierarchy was central to the decision to advance them as heroes in the new Communist Czechoslovakia, their cults also drew on traditional ideas about masculinity and martyrdom for the Czech(-oslovak)



Figures 1 and 2 Dedicated in 1960, Piskarevskoe Cemetery commemorates the hundreds of thousands of Leningraders who died in the blockade. The bas relief includes two standard images of the Soviet war cult: a young woman joining the defence of the rodina and a woman holding a dead or dying child (photographs by Lisa A. Kirschenbaum)

nation. *Rudé právo* journalists and Communist party functionaries both, they became celebrated anti-fascists. Julius Fučík, who was imprisoned, tortured, and beheaded by the Nazis, and Jan Šverma, who died in the mountains of Slovakia in the wake of the Slovak National Uprising (*Slovenské národné povstanie*, SNP) on 10 November 1944, became the most recognizable and systematically promoted of Czechoslovak wartime heroes throughout the entire Communist period. At holiday festivities, when unveiling statutes or at other displays of the Czech(-oslovak) past, the Communists employed a messianic discourse that consecrated the volunteers' extraordinary feats and identified them as heroes who died in a holy war on behalf of the holy cause – Communism. In going to the mountains of Slovakia to battle the Nazis and refusing to be evacuated despite his illness, Jan Šverma sacrificed himself for the future of the nation. Julius Fučík exhibited exemplary bravery by singing the 'Internationale' as he was led to his execution.³⁰

Šverma's cult linked the newly reunited Czechoslovak state to the 'heroic' Soviet Union. A state funeral held in Prague to mourn Šverma's death in autumn 1945 signalled his ascendance as a national hero. In connection with the celebration of the Russian Revolution in November of that same year, Czechoslovak National Socialist Chairman of the Parliament,³¹ Josef David, eulogized Šverma. After the KSC was banned in the wake of Munich, Šverma went to Paris and then to the Soviet Union, where he spent the war until, already very ill, he joined the SNP. David

lauded him as a 'worker journalist, and socialist leader, orator, agitator, and populizer, champion, and patriot, with few others like him. Indeed, he never thought of his own ill health, but went with the Slovak partisans to the hills and forests'.³²

Similarly, literary critic Fučík, the better known and the more contested of the two heroes, was represented as an exemplary Communist. He had joined the KSČ in 1921. In contrast to a number of other left-leaning Czech and Slovak writers of the era, he allied himself in 1929 with the radical wing of the party, which sought to recast the KSČ according to the Stalinist model. Editor of the underground *Rudé právo* and a member of the Communist resistance during World War II from June 1941 until his arrest in April 1942, Fučík chronicled his experience during the spring and summer of 1943 at the hands of the Gestapo in Prague's Pankrác prison in *Reportáž psaná na oprátce* (*Notes from the Gallows*). It is this memoir that led him to be so lauded posthumously.

The Communists officially – and energetically – promoted the cult of Fučík, the 'undying hero', up to 1989.³³ He was widely eulogized, and Czech artist Max Švabinský's frequently reproduced 1950 portrait of him was hung in many school classrooms.³⁴ His cult reached its zenith in the early 1950s, when Fučík's memoirs were virtually required reading, and Party functionaries endlessly cited them in speeches.³⁵ Novelists Milan Kundera and Pavel Kohout, as well as the Communist Minister of Information and Enlightenment and journalist Václav Kopecký were among the best known Fučík hagiographers of that decade.³⁶ Made into a film in 1961, *Reportáž* was also translated into numerous languages, including English.³⁷ *Notes from the Gallows* (New York 1948) is notably inaccurate. The transliteration of Czech names and other errors indicate this version was based on the Russian translation of the book rather than the Czech original. Indeed, it seems likely that the Moscow-led Cominform was involved in boosting the international success of *Reportáž*.³⁸

Although no heroic cult in the sense of Fučík or Šverma developed around their wartime actions, two female martyrs, Jožka Jabůrková and Marie Kudeřiková, were also honoured in the aftermath of the war and throughout the Communist era. Their memories served to reinforce the official cults of Fučík and Šverma. Jabůrková, like Fučík and Šverma, was a Communist journalist-writer. From Vítkovice in northern Moravia, she had long been active in the women's movement and was the chief editor of the Czechoslovak Communist women's weekly, *Rozséváčka*. A Communist Party representative on the Prague city council, Jabůrková was arrested on 15 March 1939, the date the Germans marched into Prague, and deported to Ravensbrück, where she was executed in 1942. Kudeřiková, a young Moravian woman who joined the illegal Czechoslovak Communist Party and the anti-fascist underground at the outbreak of the war, was captured by the Gestapo in 1941. She was sentenced to death the following year, and executed at the age of 22 in Breslau, Germany (today Wrocław, Poland) in March 1943.

Kudeřiková's and Jabůrková's wartime experiences were regularly included in

post-war publications commemorating national heroes. Moreover, both women were the subjects of documentary and feature films (Kudeříková was memorialized in the 1972 film, . . . *a pozdravuji vlaštovky* [And Give my Love to the Swallows] and Jabůrková's story was told in the 1986 *Zastihla mě noc* [Night Caught up with Me]), as well as books, essays, artwork, and even symphonies.³⁹ Their portraits – fighters against fascism under occupation – were also twinned on a Czechoslovak stamp issued in 1973. Their writings – although less ubiquitously than those of Fučík and Šverma – were published and republished, and numerous books chronicling their lives and their heroic wartime experiences appeared. Like Fučík, Kudeříková chronicled her experiences in prison, as *Zlomky života: listy z vězení* (*Fragments of Life: Letters from Prison*). Her memoir, too, appeared in several editions (and several languages) during the 1960s, with introductory words taken from Fučík. A collection of Jabůrková's articles from *Rozsévačka* was also published.

Both of Czechoslovakia's male 'national heroes,' and to a much lesser extent, the female heroes, became part of the increasingly politicized commemorative landscape of post-1948 Czechoslovakia. Šverma's and Fučík's wartime achievements were memorialized especially after 1948 when their heroic cults were strongly propagated from the centre. Their photographs formed backdrops for speakers at important politico-cultural gatherings.⁴⁰ As in the Soviet Union, the cult of the war included wartime patriotic songs, stories, and hero-martyr cults. Throughout the country, streets and squares were named for Fučík and Šverma. Telgárt, a village in central Slovakia, was even renamed Švermovo in 1948. By 1989, thousands of monuments had been unveiled to the heroes of the battle against the Nazis who were among the central figures in Communist commemorative practices and school curricula in Czechoslovakia.

The most famous statues of Fučík and Šverma were in Prague. That of Fučík stood in front of Prague's Výstaviště (the Prague Fairgrounds), then known as Park kultura a oddech Julia Fučíka (Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Leisure). Although not located in central Prague, this was an important site of a site of popular 'enlightenment' and entertainment. A memorial to Fučík was also unveiled in Pankow Park in East Berlin. The tri-lingual – Czech, German, and Russian – inscription quoting from the conclusion Fučík's *Reportáž* reads 'People, I have loved you. Be vigilant! Be vigilant!' ('Lidé měl jsem vás rád. Bděte! Bďte!') The well known abbreviated form, 'People, Be Vigilant' ('Lidé, bděte!') could be found – often without attribution – on memorials to World War II dead throughout Czechoslovakia.⁴¹

Working with the state, and especially with the Communist cultural critic Zdeněk Nejedlý, who held a variety of educational/cultural ministerial portfolios between 1945 and 1953, and was instrumental in the creation of Communist Cold War cults, Fučík's wife, Communist journalist and 'national widow', Gusta Fučíková, actively promoted his cult. Sent to the German concentration camp at Ravensbrück because she protested her husband's death, Fučíková was instrumental in retrieving her late husband's notes, seeing his *Reportáž* manuscript through publication, and maintain-

ing his memory. Indeed, she arguably made a living off of Fučík's memory. She helped create and maintain his historic narrative by publishing three books on him, the last of them in 1971, at the beginning of 'Normalization' (the re-imposition of Communist orthodoxy), when there were attempts to rejuvenate his cult.⁴² In contrast, Šverma's widow, Marie, was unable to propagate her husband's image, having been imprisoned as a co-conspirator in the 1952 show trial of general secretary of the KSČ Rudolf Slánský.⁴³

Fostered by the party and the state, Šverma's cult also had popular resonance. After 1948, his status as a hero was furthered by groups like the Association of Freedom Fighters (*Svaz bojovníků za svobodu*), which were not explicitly governmental and which sponsored statues and busts of this wartime hero-martyr, some of which were unveiled in connection with patriotic holidays. The organization ensured that in addition to Šverma memorials in Slovakia, statues honouring the 'hero in the battle for freedom' were also constructed in the Czech lands.⁴⁴

Reflecting the need for local Communist heroes in the wake of the Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact invasion, when the country was federalized into the Czech and Slovak Socialist Republics (the ČSSR), the government actively promoted the Šverma cult. Šverma, who represented a link between the Czech and Slovak wartime experience, helped strengthen the largely elusive construction of a Czechoslovak identity. The larger-than-life bronze statue of Šverma was unveiled in Prague in 1969 on the 25th anniversary of his death before the bridge named for him, Švermův most. On 23 August 1969, he was also designated a 'hero of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic' – an honour initially accorded heroes of World War II, including several Czechoslovak military officers who participated in the Battle of Dukla. (This was the most famous battle in the offensive that the 38th Soviet Army, together with the Czechoslovak First Army Corps, undertook in autumn 1944 into German-occupied Slovakia to support the Slovak National Uprising, which had started that August.) Šverma's medal was the eighth of 31 stars awarded between 1965 and 1984, all of them to men, including General Ludvík Svoboda, leader of the Czechoslovak First Army Corps and president of the country following the Prague Spring, who was awarded the honour three times.⁴⁵

Although they attracted far less attention than monuments to male heroes, not least because there were fewer of them, memorials to Jabůrková and Kudeřiková were also put up throughout the Communist era. A statue in Jabůrková's memory was unveiled in the Prague district of Košíře. Kudeřiková was also honoured, beginning in the 1950s with commemorative plaques throughout Moravia. Moreover, the local administration of Vnorovy, the village of her birth, unveiled with great fanfare in 1978, a memorial honouring her sacrifice housed in a hall bearing her name at the local grade school.

Notwithstanding the attention given to Kudeřiková and Jabůrková, and despite the fact that Czech and Slovak women joined men in the anti-fascist underground, the political emigration, and the Czechoslovak military abroad, the war memorialized in

Czechoslovakia – both before and after the Communist seizure of power – was overwhelmingly male.⁴⁶ The survivors among the approximately 1000 women who served in the Czechoslovak army in the Soviet Union, and the smaller numbers who served in the Middle East, in the Czechoslovak divisions in Yugoslavia, and in Great Britain's Women's Auxiliary Air Force, were publicly welcomed upon their return by the cheering residents as they marched on 17 May 1945 through the centre of a flag-bedecked Prague, past many of the Czechs' most important national sites of commemoration. Although they appeared en masse a few other times, the memory of these women's sacrifice was long limited to plaques dedicated to victims of the war, and female combatants are absent from the numerous figurative monuments to World War II.⁴⁷ The statues and monuments – like the many new place-names – unveiled in Czechoslovakia starting in 1945 celebrated male Czechoslovak and Soviet heroes from the recently ended war. The effect of statues lies in their permanent visibility. Like statues from other liminal political periods in the history of Czechoslovakia and the Bohemian Lands, women have no place in heroic narrative constructed to make ordinary people politically conscious.⁴⁸

Why did the Soviet Union promote more women war heroines than Czechoslovakia? One answer lies in the fact that Soviet women, literally and symbolically, defended the home front. Indeed, in some cases, the distinction between the home front and the fighting front disappeared. Moreover, the men were away fighting in places like (eventually) Czechoslovakia. Women soldiers, martyrs, and mothers waiting for their children to return home also underscored the degree to which the Soviet war was understood in personal and local terms, as a defence of home and family rather than the Communist state. By contrast, in Czechoslovakia the women could not defend the home front, and most of the men were equally defenceless, unable to fight at home or to leave home for the front. Thus the Soviets, who did defend the Czechoslovak home front, filled out the monuments.

In Czechoslovakia, both the symbols and the claims of traditional male heroism (whether Soviet, Czech, or Slovak) helped legitimate the Communist seizure of power. From the war's end through to the 1970s, numerous plaques and monuments celebrated wartime heroes. The statues can be roughly divided into: those for the fallen soldiers of the Red Army; figurative statues of the victorious Red Army soldiers who liberated the country; and vernacular memorials, most of which were not figural and which incorporated a variety of national Czech and Slovak motifs or already existing World War I memorials. In Slovakia, the commemorative landscape also focused on the fallen of the Slovak National Uprising, one of the largest anti-Nazi uprisings in the whole of Europe. Cities throughout that country are still likely to have a *Námestie SNP*, but especially in the small towns and villages of northern and eastern Slovakia where much of the fiercest fighting occurred, there are numerous figurative representations of heroic (male) partisans and soldiers who gave their lives in the struggle to liberate Slovakia from the Nazis, often unveiled on the anniversary of the liberation.



Figure 3 Czechoslovak man greeting liberating Red Army soldier. The statue, now without inscription, stands in the garden before Prague's main train station (Praha hlavní nádraží) (photograph by Nancy M. Wingfield)

Alongside plaques and statues honouring heroes, memorials to the Czechoslovak dead, male and female, designated 'victims of the occupation' (Obětím okupace 1939–1945) and 'victims of fascist repression' (Obetiam fašistických represálií), which were constructed through the 1970s, occupied cemeteries, town squares, and other important public spaces. After 1948, those who 'fell so that we could live' were increasingly identified as having died for 'national, political, economic, and social regeneration' as well as the liberation of the nation.⁴⁹ The memory of those they recalled were honoured on patriotic holidays, especially 9 May, when wreaths, bouquets, and flags were attached to the plaques or placed in front of the statues.⁵⁰

War memorials in Czechoslovakia both connected Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union's wartime victories and recognized Soviet losses in the struggle to liberate it from Nazi rule. Although as elsewhere in Europe, the names of the dead from World



Figure 4 Czechoslovak female veterans participating in celebratory March past the Powder Tower (Prašná brána) down Celetná Ulice to Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí) in Prague (photograph courtesy of <http://www.zeny-bojujici.cz/fotogalerie/17-kveten-1945>)

War II were added to memorials commemorating the dead from the Great War in Czechoslovakia, the Communists sometimes internationalized the memorials for the World War I dead there with the inclusion of inscriptions honouring the Red Army war dead. Moreover, the employment of Communist emblems such as the red star or the hammer and sickle on Czechoslovak war memorials highlighted the indebtedness of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union. Such symbols both tied the liberation and the fate of the post-war Czechoslovak Republic to that of the Soviet Union and reminded locals of Soviet power. They strengthened the claim – originally made not only by the Communists – that the USSR provided Czechoslovakia's only defence against German expellee-driven revanchism: 'The city of Pilsen cheers thirty victorious years of the USSR. The fraternal Soviet Union, the best guarantor of our national independence; a toast to 7 November 1947 – thirty years of its existence'.⁵¹ Figural monuments of Red Army soldiers became part of an international cult of male Red Army/Communist heroism and sacrifice, of guarded readiness, that the Soviet Union propagated throughout occupied Eastern Europe.

By early November 1945, when the bodies of 429 Red Army soldiers who died during the liberation of Prague were re-interred in the military section of that city's

Olšanské Cemetery, much of the Czech-designed monument honouring them had already been completed. The pedestal of the monument today contains two outsized bronze statues of Soviet soldiers under a large star with a hammer and sickle superimposed on it, which were completed soon afterward. The soldiers stand watch over their named (and sometimes pictured) war dead, among them at least one female soldier. The cemetery in Brno incorporates a Red Army soldier high atop a column, watching over his fallen comrades, together with many of the formal architectural components, among them colonnades and massive concrete murals, common to Soviet war memorial complexes elsewhere in Czechoslovakia and other parts of Eastern Europe liberated or occupied by the Red Army. Throughout post-war Czechoslovakia the graves of the Russian war dead, often communal, were designated by columns topped by the ubiquitous red star. Like dedications on memorials elsewhere in the country, that in Moravská Ostrava, dating from 1946, both recognizes the national enemy (the Germans) and explicitly ties the fate of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union. It reads: 'Eternal Glory to the Heroes; Fallen in Battle for Freedom and Independence of the Soviet Union. Glory to the Red Army, Liberators of Czechoslovakia from the Yoke of the German-Fascist Occupiers'.

Local groups, some formed for the sole purpose of putting up a particular statue, seized the initiative in organizing committees and seeking funds, often from Prague, to construct monuments honouring their own local heroes or their Soviet 'brothers'.⁵² Communist Party members and their allies in these groups sought to establish hegemony for the ideas represented in these statues, because monuments were an immediate and unmediated way of communicating political values to people whose political loyalties might be wavering. The local inscriptions used terms similar to those employed by the national government in paying homage to the Soviet Union, which reflected Communist claims: 'The Guarantor of Our Freedom and Security: Our Fate Is Forever Connected with the Fate of the Soviet Union'.⁵³ The ceremonies that accompanied the unveiling of many of these statues increasingly incorporated Communist slogans and Communist organizations as well as the singing of worker songs and the Soviet anthem. They thus charged the monuments with special meaning and aided in the orchestrated construction of state socialism, serving to reinforce a particular view of history. (Whether ordinary Czechs and Slovaks accepted the official meanings of these monuments is another matter and a difficult study.)⁵⁴

Emphasizing the might and protectiveness of the Soviet 'big brother', the power of these symbolic images rested in their simplicity and recognizability, which made the statues ideal for expressing the linked concepts of Soviet power and military supremacy. Such concepts can also be found in the larger-than-life statues of Red Army soldiers, many of which remain in the squares of cities and towns of the former Czechoslovakia, although they have been stripped of their original inscriptions that identified them as representatives of Soviet power. These stone men stand erect and unwounded with a gun raised in victory or a helmet or furled flag in hand, in a classical pose that identifies them as men of action whose tasks have been completed.

These victory statues of Soviet soldiers in public spaces stand in marked contrast to those who maintain watchful guard over their fallen comrades in the Russian military cemeteries in Bratislava, Brno, and Prague, or those who simply stand watch in Berlin and Vienna. In Brno, the provincial capital of Moravia, a Red Army soldier stood on his pedestal high above what was then called Rudé náměstí (Red Square). Until 1989, it formed the backdrop for speeches at the city's May Day celebrations, when the 'working people' marched around it, reminding the city's residents of their debt to the Red Army and the Soviet Union.

The End of Communism and the Legacy of War Cults

Glasnost and the revolution of 1989 made it possible to raise questions about the realities behind the myths of wartime heroism. In post-Communist Czechoslovakia, where the war cult had long been linked to the foundation and legitimization of Communist rule, hero cults and the cult of the Red Army were significantly curtailed because they had become increasingly linked with 'foreign', Soviet occupation, especially after 1968. One indicator of the waning of the myth of Soviet liberation was the unveiling after 1989 of a variety of monuments to the American army's role in liberating western Czechoslovakia. Nor did the most prominent Communist national heroes – above all, Fučík and Šverma – serve a sufficiently integrating function to hold the state together long after the fall of Communism 1989, as the formation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993 demonstrates. By contrast, in post-Soviet Russia, most wartime heroes have remained heroes, and the myth of the 'holy war', while certainly challenged, has proved tenacious. As the particularly long and sometimes nasty debate on whether Zoia was a true heroine or a mere 'myth' demonstrates, Soviet heroes could, more easily than their Czechoslovak counterparts, be transformed into repositories of post-Communist national pride.

In Czechoslovakia, growing scepticism regarding all things connected to Communism undermined even hero myths firmly grounded in fact. The veracity of *Reportáž*, and thus the Communist construction of Fučík as a hero, was the subject of academic and popular discussion for the duration of Communist rule and after. Early on, émigrés began raising questions about Fučík's behaviour vis-à-vis the Gestapo which arrested him. They were joined by dissidents at home during the Prague Spring, although during the period of 'Normalization' that followed the Prague Spring, such discussions could take place only in underground literature. After 1989, a variety of rumours about Fučík appeared in print, including that he had not been executed in Germany, but rather had emigrated to South America. The authoritative edition of *Reportáž*, dating from 1995, however, confirms that the Communist interpretation was correct: Fučík had been a hero. But by then, nobody really cared, as the forgetting of Fučík and the dwindling of his cult after 1989 demonstrates.⁵⁵

Yet not all the heroes the Communists constructed in Czechoslovakia immediately lost their status. Because Šverma actually had some claim to being a *national* hero

as well as a Communist one, his statue remained in place a decade longer than statues of other Czechoslovak Communist figures, many of which were removed in the immediate wake of the revolution of 1989. Ignoring the furious complaints of the post-‘Velvet Divorce’ iteration of the KSČ, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, about removing a statue of a former parliamentary deputy and famed anti-fascist fighter, officials had it taken down early on the morning of 3 November 1999. The statue of Jabůrková, like those of other Czechoslovak Communists, had been removed in 1992 to the disused aeroplane hangar near Lány that is a depository of the City of Prague Gallery although a plaque on the apartment building where she lived commemorating the site of her arrest remained. The Jabůrková statue was relocated to Prague’s Olšanské Cemetery a decade after its removal from its original location. Due to efforts of the Communist Party, the Šverma statue was resurrected in the same cemetery in 2004. Although the hall dedicated to her memory in Vnorovy was turned into the grade school cafeteria in 1989, the memory of Kudeříková’s sacrifice (only 20 when the Gestapo arrested her, she had not been part of the party hierarchy, and thus her memory had fewer anticommunist detractors) remains relatively uncontested elsewhere. Thus the statue of her still stands in Prague and the bust of her has been on a downtown street in Olomouc, Moravia since 1966. Her name also remains on a student hostel at the Palacký University there.

In late- and post-Soviet Russia, revelations of the Soviet Union’s less than ‘holy’ behaviour in World War II – notably the Nazi–Soviet pact of August 1939, the massacre of some 15,000 Polish army officers at Katyń Forest in 1940, and the brutal implementation of Stalin’s ‘not one step back’ policy prohibiting retreat – challenged the cult of the war. Gastello’s decision to crash his burning plane into enemy oil tankers became perhaps less heroic when historians emphasized that even if he had bailed out, he was unlikely to have survived behind enemy lines. Matrosov was not the first to cover an enemy emplacement with his own body, but simply the first to be noticed by Stalin. His heroism can thus be understood as a creation of the ‘propaganda machine’, which changed the date of his act to coincide with ‘a glorious jubilee – the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Red Army’.⁵⁶ Other historians questioned the heroism of his suicidal act, asking whether it was simply ‘a result of extreme psychological stress in a deadlock situation’ or – an even greater blow to the myth – the extreme coercion that characterized ‘punishment battalions’.⁵⁷ Likewise, the Panfilovtsy might have ‘fought to the last bullet, in part because retreat would mean tribunals and a death sentence’.⁵⁸ For some commentators, the repressiveness of the state for which Soviet citizens fought compromised their heroism.⁵⁹

Zoia, who stood on the highest pedestal, was subjected to the most ferocious and wide-ranging attacks. Beginning in 1991, a series of articles called into question the veracity of every part of her story and impugned her character. The claims were often contradictory. One version held that there were no German troops in Petrishchevo at the time of Zoia’s execution; carrying out Stalin’s ‘scorched earth’ policy, she was torching peasant huts, and the locals turned her over to the Nazis.⁶⁰ Another version

has her fellow partisan Vasillii Klubkov, who broke under torture, betraying her to the Germans.⁶¹ It has also been argued that 'Tania' was not Zoia Kosmodem'ianska, but another partisan, Lilia Azolina. Her 'heroism' has also been explained as the product of a sick mind. Hospital workers claimed she was treated for schizophrenia at age 14, and that the records of her illness were destroyed after the war.⁶²

That the locals turned Zoia in or at least were not uniformly supportive of her acts of arson is certainly plausible. The peasants had a decidedly ambivalent if not hostile attitude toward the partisans, who when not carrying out orders to destroy anything – crops, shelter, livestock – that might be useful to the Germans, pilfered peasant stores to meet their own needs.⁶³ When set in the context of the realities of partisan war, Zoia's story dramatizes the complexities of canonizing partisans, who in the process of making conditions 'unbearable' for the enemy, as Stalin decreed in his 3 July 1941 radio address, also made life more difficult for Soviet civilians in occupied territory.

Still, Zoia has her defenders. On the 60th anniversary of her death in November 2001, an article in *Pravda* bemoaned the 'enormous lies' about Zoia that had gained currency in the 'perestroika years' and aimed to set the record straight.⁶⁴ More recently, the historian Mikhail Gorinov has drawn on interviews conducted by investigators in 1942 and other archival materials to refute every challenge to the official Zoia story. He argues in some detail, for example, that she suffered not from schizophrenia, but from meningitis. Indeed the only problem he finds with the story reported in the wartime press was Zoia's last declamation. In an interview from 3 February 1942, an eyewitness named V. A. Kulik testified that she had cried out, 'Comrades, victory will be ours. Very soon German soldiers will surrender (*sdavaites' v plen*)'.⁶⁵ Thus he concludes that the only fictional, or at least questionable, piece of the story was her 'Stalin is with us! Stalin will come!'

The resilience of the Zoia myth, as the questions raised about her last words suggest, depended not only on establishing the facts of the case but on representing her as dying for her the *rodina* – not Stalin. As Viktor Kozhemiako noted in *Pravda* in 2001, the solemn celebrations of the 75th anniversary of her birth (in 1908) and of the 60th anniversary of her death (2001) perhaps owed something to the shifting political currents: Russian President Vladimir 'Putin, in contrast to [Boris] Yeltsin, no longer talked about patriotism as if it were a swear word'. Indeed on the 66th anniversary of her execution, Moscow schoolchildren laid wreaths at her grave, and veterans recounted their memories of the battle of Moscow.⁶⁶ Like Victory Day, Zoia has been refurbished as an emblem of Russian national achievement and as an important lesson in patriotism for young people.

From the perspective of post-Soviet Russian nationalism, the war was about the survival of the Russian nation, not the Stalinist state. Gorinov grants that the Soviet leadership's 'Scythian policy', which directed soldiers and partisans to 'destroy and burn to the ground all population centres to the rear of German troops for forty to sixty kilometres behind the front and twenty to thirty kilometres on either side of the

road', might seem on its face a classic example of Stalinist repression. However, he defends, or at least explains, the policy as the proper, if extreme, *national* response to the 'Hitlerites' stated goal of destroying the Russian state and turning any Russians who remained alive into the powerless slaves of the Aryan race'.⁶⁷ The Zoia myth continues to resonate because the virtues it celebrates can be understood as contributing to a great national victory. As it did during the war, Zoia's story continues to underscore the emotional stakes of the war as a defence of homeland.

Conclusion: Communism, Nationalism, and Gender

Ostensibly commemorating a shared, Soviet-engineered victory over German fascism, Soviet and Czechoslovak World War II hero cults nonetheless differed substantially. In the Soviet war cult, images of women taking up 'men's' work, risking their lives as partisans, or joining men at the front, while often subordinate to ubiquitous images of male warriors, underscored that the catastrophe of war demanded sacrifices from all Soviet citizens. The glorification of female martyrs, even when they died with Stalin's name on their lips, also suggested the Soviet leadership's willingness to temper Communist ideology with emotional appeals to the defence of motherland, hearth, and home. In Czechoslovakia, by contrast, the most celebrated heroes were Communists, who gave their lives to build a Communist state.

What the Czechoslovak and Soviet cults shared was an emphasis on sacred sacrifice. While drawing on pre-war hero cults that made women emblems of revolutionary transformation, the cults of Soviet war heroes also relied on veiled religious references and on traditional 'clichés about duty, masculinity, honour'.⁶⁸ The unbroken bodies of heroic male warriors dominated monuments in both countries. In the Soviet Union, the warriors were joined by female allegories of the motherland – mourning mothers holding dead children in their arms, the alert and steadfast Zoia, a towering woman wielding a sword. In this regard, both differed from commemorations of World War II elsewhere in Western Europe, where, as the historian Jay Winter has noted, 'After 1945, older forms of the language of the sacred faded'.⁶⁹

In contrast to the Soviet Union, where hero cults were constructed during the war, wartime cults simply could not exist in occupied Czechoslovakia. After 1948, the Communist-dominated government, while clearly indebted to the Soviet Union, did not adopt Soviet models wholesale. Rather, it drew on already existing national holidays and commemorative traditions and also invented new holidays and traditions to celebrate wartime anti-fascist actions, to reinforce the memory of the Soviet Union's historic role in the liberation of Czechoslovakia, and to link liberation to Communism. Thus the entire country celebrated the Prague Uprising of 1945, which the Communists designated the May Revolution, on 5 May, and four days later everyone went back into the streets to celebrate the 'glorious' Soviet army's final defeat of Hitler's Germany and Czechoslovakia's liberation from Nazi occupation.⁷⁰

Calling on pre-war traditions of honouring male military heroism and squarely focused on the victory of the Red Army and the triumph of the Communist state, Czechoslovak hero cults had limited room for women, whether as heroines, martyrs, or symbols of the nation. With its emphasis on centralized control and military power, the Communist state, particularly in its Stalinist form, was coded male. Still, commemoration of the war did have some popular support in Czechoslovakia, as demonstrated by the formation of numerous organizations to build memorials to honour the undying memory of 'our heroes', who 'fell that we may live', as well as the many suggestions for people to be honoured in the aftermath of the war.⁷¹

In the Soviet Union the predominantly national aspects of hero cults allowed them to survive after Communism. Women fighting for the motherland, perhaps more easily than men, were transformed into symbols of the 'sacred' nation in arms, into emblems of the *rodina*. In the Soviet Union, the myth of the war thus became the regime's last effective, although not especially 'Communist', legitimizing myth. Largely stripped of its Stalinist associations, it survived into the post-Soviet period. In Czechoslovakia, the gratitude toward the liberating Red Army was real at least until 1968, and thus many Soviet statues remain, if sometimes without their original inscriptions. However, the war cult's close association with Soviet and Czechoslovak Communism – and its lack of the sort of emotional, patriotic element provided by women in the Soviet cult – largely doomed even authentic Czech(-oslovak) anti-fascists (male and female) to obscurity after 1989. In search of heroes with a nationally integrating function, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, like other former Eastern Bloc states, have refurbished the cults of interwar heroes ignored by the Communists. While Soviet heroes of the Great Patriotic War have become Russian national heroes, Czechoslovak heroes have mostly faded because they remain what the post-1948 Czechoslovak state made them: *Communist* heroes.

Notes

1. The concept of 'counter-narrative' is developed by Jeffrey Brooks, 'Pravda Goes to War', in Richard Stites (ed.), *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia* (Bloomington 1995), 14.
2. For example, Nikolia Vukov, "'Brotherly Help': Representations or "Imperial" Legacy: Monuments to the Soviet Army in Bulgaria before and after 1989', *Ab Imperio*, Vol. 1 (2006): 267–92.
3. In *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism* (Lanham MD 2004), Bradley F. Abrams asserts that the great political rupture came in Czechoslovakia at the war's end rather than following the Communist seizure of power in 1948.
4. We thank Patrice Dabrowski for bringing these articles to our attention: Richard S. Esbenshade, 'Remembering to Forget: Memory, History, National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe', *Representations*, Vol. 49 (Winter 1995), 81; and Thomas Gladsky, 'Polish Post-War Historical Monuments: Heroic Art and Cultural Preservation', *Polish Review*, Vol. 31, nos. 2–3 (1986), 149–58.
5. In *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York, 1992), 66, Richard Stites characterizes the famous tractor driver Pasha Angelina as 'the socialist Cinderella supreme'.

71. On folkloric heroes in socialist realist fiction, see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago 1981), 72–77, 148–50.
6. Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 68–72; Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington 2000), 46–84.
 7. Quotation from Victoria Bonnell, 'The Representation of Women in Early Soviet Political Art', *Russian Review*, Vol. 50 (July 1991), 285. Choi Chatterjee makes this argument in 'Soviet Heroines and the Language of Modernity, 1930–39', in Melanie Ilić (ed.), *Women in the Stalin Era* (Basingstoke 2001), 49–68. See also Elizabeth Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington 1997).
 8. Reina Pennington provides details on the flight in *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Lawrence KS 2007), 14–17. On the complexities and limits of Soviet modernity and the Soviet emancipation of women visible in the stories of heroines, see Anna Krylova, 'Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender: Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women-Fighters in 1930s Stalinist Russia', in Shani D' Cruze and Anupama Rao (eds), *Violence, Vulnerability, and Embodiment: Gender and History* (Oxford 2005), 149–56 and Chatterjee, 'Soviet Heroines', 62–4.
 9. 'Streliai, kak Liudmila Pavlichenko: Devushka unichtozhila 300 fashistov', *Komsomol'skaia pravda* (hereafter, *KP*), 2 June 1942. Heroes of labour appeared frequently in the press. An early example is, 'Devushki stanoviatsia k stankam', *KP*, 26 June 1941. Russian peasant women as active participants in war had figured in the propaganda of the original Fatherland War against Napoleon in 1812; Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812–1945* (DeKalb IL 2006), 23–24. Earlier female heroes such as the 'cavalry maiden' Nadezhda Durova functioned less as inspiration than as useable past during World War II. Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War*, 64.
 10. Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 99; Rosalinde Sartorti, 'On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints', in Richard Stites (ed.), *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia* (Bloomington 1995), 177; Maurice Hindus, *Mother Russia* (Garden City NY 1942), 3–54.
 11. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 176.
 12. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 177; Maurice Hindus, *Mother Russia* (Garden City NY 1942), 3–54.
 13. 'Vernaia doch' sovetskogo naroda Liza Chaikina', *KP*, 30 December 1941. All quotations are from this article. Drawing heavily on official Soviet sources, Maurice Hindus tells Chaikina's story in *Mother Russia*, 18–32. See also Juliane Fürst, 'Heroes, Lovers, Victims: Partisan Girls during the Great Fatherland War', *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military*, Vol. 18 (Fall–Winter 2000), 38–75.
 14. P. Lidov, 'Tania', *Pravda*, 27 January 1942; S. Liubimov, 'My ne zabudem tebia, Tania!', *KP*, 27 January 1942.
 15. Lidov, 'Tania'; P. Lidov, *Tania* (Moscow 1943), 17–18.
 16. M.M. Gorinov, 'Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia (1923–1941)', *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 2003, no. 1, 87.
 17. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 184–5. On the images of women in Soviet wartime propaganda see Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, "'Our Cities, Our Families, Our Hearths': Private Life and Local Loyalties in Soviet World War II Propaganda', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59 (Winter 2000), 825–47.
 18. Lidov, *Tania*, 18–19. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 185.
 19. Gorinov, 'Zoia', 87. The order is reproduced in Lidov, *Tania*, 3.
 20. 'Vystuplenie po radio L. T. Kosmodem'ianskoi – materi Geroia Sovetskogo Soiuzza Z. A. Kosmodem'ianskoi', *Pravda*, 18 February 1942. The 'die a hero' line is repeated in L. Kosmodem'ianskaia, 'Moia Zoia', *KP*, 23 May 1942 and idem, *Moia Zoia* (Moscow 1942).
 21. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 184–5. Hindus, *Mother Russia*, 32–54.
 22. Margarita Aliger, 'Zoia' in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, Vol. 1, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy, 1932–1945* (Moscow 1984), 317.

23. On her appearances abroad see, 'Lady Sniper', *Time*, 28 September 1942 (available online at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,773683,00.html>; accessed 1 June 2008); 'Girl Sniper Calm over Killing Nazis', *New York Times*, 29 August 1942; 'Pistol to a Woman Sniper', *New York Times*, 20 October 1942; 'British Women Praised: Lieut. Pavlichenko, Soviet Sniper, Amazed by Discrimination', *New York Times*, 5 December 1942.
24. 'Streliai, kak Liudmila Pavlichenko'.
25. 'Moia doch': Pis'mo materi snajpera Liudmila Pavlichenko E.T. Belovoi', *KP*, 2 July 1942. Soviet-style femininity differed from expectations in the United States, where reporters asked the sniper about her use of cosmetics and commented that her uniform made her 'look fat'. 'Lady Sniper'; see also 'Girl Sniper Calm'.
26. Familial language pervades Soviet World War II propaganda. See for example 'Brat geroia' [A hero's brother], *KP*, 2 June 1944 and 1 November 1944 on how Aleksander Matrosov inspired his brother's heroism and 'Sestram Tani' [To Tania's sisters], *KP*, 18 April 1942, comparing the places of women in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.
27. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 177. The popular reception of the hero cults lies beyond the scope of this article. See for example Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Boston 1990), 19–24; Svetlana Alexiyevich, *War's Unwomanly Face* (Moscow 1988), 26.
28. On the war cult, see Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York 1994) and Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad: Myth, Memories, and Monuments* (New York 2006).
29. Barry Schwartz, 'Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington', *American Sociological Review*, 56 (April 1991), 221–2.
30. We thank Cathleen Giustino for bringing our attention to the article in an official Belgian publication commemorating the 50th anniversary of Fučík's death, 'Nous Commemorons le Quinzième Anniversaire de l'Execution de Julius Fucik', *La Tchecoslovaquie à Brussels*, 58, no. 5, published by Le Commissaire General du Gouvernement belge pour l'Exposition (1958), 48.
31. Founded in 1898 as the Czech National Socialist Party, it was not related to the German National Socialist (Nazi) Party.
32. For Josef David's speech, Ústavodárné Národní shromáždění republiky Československá 1946–1948 Stenoprotokoly, 4 schůze, 8 November 1945. Front-page articles in the Slovak Communist newspaper *Pravda* (Bratislava) begin in late July and continue throughout August, publicizing the upcoming commemoration of the SNP. See also 'Národ vzdává čest národnímu hrdinovi', *Rudé právo*, 10 November 1945, for Šverma's state funeral.
33. 'Nesmrtelnému hrdinovi', comes from the film journal, *Filmový přehled* (15/1953). Thus was Fučík described in the official text of the distributor of the film version of *Reportáž*.
34. See Peter Steiner, *The Deserts of Bohemia: Czech Fiction in its Social Context* (Ithaca 2000), 95–6; Václav Černý, *Paměti III 1945–1972* (Brno 1992), 308, on streets (schools, statues, busts, postage stamps) dedicated to Fučík; correspondence with Doctor Dagmar Hájková, April 2008, for his portrait in the classroom.
35. See Josef Škvorecký's 'Foreword: The Legend and My Gun Loader', in Peter Steiner, 'Making a Czech Hero: Julius Fučík through his Writings', *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 1501 (2000), 2–3; and Robert Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality* (Budapest 1994), 207.
36. See also Stefan Zwicker, 'Nationale Märtyrer': *Albert Leo Schlageter und Julius Fucik: Heldenkult, Propaganda und Erinnerungskultur* (Paderborn 2006), 151.
37. The various editions of *Reportáž* have been collected in Prague's Museum of the Workers' Movement (Muzeum dělnického hnutí).

38. Steiner, *The Deserts of Bohemia*, 97, n. 5
39. Václav Felix's *The First Symphony for Female Voice and Large Orchestra* (1974), was based on Kudeříková's letters from prison before her execution.
40. See Communist Minister Václav Kopecký, dwarfed by huge portraits of Fučík and Šverma, greeting a congress of Czechoslovak journalists, *Rudé právo*, 26 October 1948, 1. In the early post-war years, Šverma's death was regularly commemorated; see *Pravda* (Pilsen), 10 November 1948, 1; also laudatory articles on the fifth anniversary of his death in the 10 November 1949 issue of *Pravda* (Bratislava), 'Závod s menom Jána Šverma' and 'Príklad Jána Šverma', 5, and 'Z bojovej cesty Jána Švermu', 6. 'Nous Commemorons le Quinzième Anniversaire de l'Execution de Julius Fucik', *La Tchécoslovaquie a Brussels*, 58, no. 5 (1958), 3–5.
41. A cultural badge of honour testing knowledge in literature – the so-called Fučík badge, which includes his silhouette – also incorporates this slogan.
42. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity*, 207.
43. Among the crimes of which one-time general secretary of the KSČ Rudolf Slanský was accused in his 1952 show trial was Šverma's murder and the subsequent recruiting of Šverma's widow, Marie, into his conspiracy. 'Men with Two Faces', *Time*, 2 December 1952 (available online at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,817446,00.html>, accessed 31 May 2008); also Černý, *Paměti*, 344–5, 349, 352. The imprisonment, in the 1950s, of both Šverma's wife and his daughter, Jiřina Kopoldová Švermová, who served as a radio operator and signalist in the Czechoslovak Army unit in the Soviet Union during the war, does not seem to have damaged his hero status. Both women were in any case later pardoned.
44. One statue of Šverma was unveiled on 28 October 1949, *Rudé právo*, 2 November 1949, 5. See Archiv kanceláře prezidenta republika (AKPR), 30167/49, announcement of 28 July 1949 laying of the corner stone. The organization [Český] Svaz bojovníků za svobodu still exists and among its activities is maintaining the memory of 'May Revolution', now the 'May Uprising'. See *Národní Osvobození*, no. 9 (2004), 5.
45. It was also awarded 14 times to Soviet military and political officials. On the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia from the Nazis, in May 1970, Leonid Brezhnev was accorded this honour for 'liberation' of the country, the first of three times he was so honoured.
46. This is not to say that there were no heroic female figures in the Czech(-oslovak) past to draw upon. Above all the seventh-century Amazon warrior, Šárka, is part of Czech national mythology.
47. The Czechoslovak National Assembly retroactively recognized the right of its female veterans to serve in the army by a law passed on 29 January 1947. The reform on the service of female officers, long-serving, and non-commissioned officers, however, affected only those women who had already seen service in the military. Their wartime example proved insufficient to convince male deputies that all women should have the right to serve in the army. While there was discussion of women's wartime participation in the military during the Communist era, and they were sometimes honoured individually, an exhibition commemorating Czech and Slovak women's participation in the anti-German opposition abroad appeared only after 1989. See *Ženy bojující v zahraničních jednotkách za druhé světové války* (Prague, 1992); and <http://www.zeny-bojujici.cz>, a website and database detailing these women's wartime experiences. The driving force behind this project is economist-Professor Zoe Klusáková-Svobodová, the daughter of Ludvík Svoboda, herself a participant in the resistance.
48. Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca 2001), 146–7.
49. AKPR, Spolek pro zbudování památníku padlým, 27 July 1948.
50. One of the largest commemorative projects in Czechoslovakia was the rebuilding of, and creation of a monumental space in, Lidice, a village north west of Prague that the Nazis destroyed in retaliation for the assassination of Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich.

51. *Věstník ústředního národního výboru* (Pilsen) 1/18 (1 October 1947), 181; 1/21 (15 November 1947), 221.
52. AKPR, sign. 310204/50 (Pomníky a památníky), inv. č. 2231.
53. *Věstník* (Prague), 15 November 1947, 221.
54. See AKPR, sign. 128663/52 (Pomníky a památníky), for reports of various okresní akční výbory NF (district action committees of the National Front) during the late 1940s and early 1950s on the unveiling ceremonies. On monuments, meaning, and the construction of state socialism, see Rubie S. Watson, 'Memory, History, and Opposition: An Introduction', in idem (ed.) *Memory, History, and Opposition* (Santa Fe, NM 1995), 4; also essays in Emil Brix and Hannes Stekl (eds), *Der Kampf um das Gedächtnis: Öffentliche Gedenktage in Mitteleuropa* (Vienna 1997); and Arnold Bartetzky, Marina Dmitrieva and Stefan Troebst (eds), *Neue Staaten – neue Bilder? Visuelle Kultur im Dienst staatlicher Selbstdarstellung in Zentral- und Osteuropa seit 1918* (Cologne 2002).
55. See Černý, *Paměti*, 148–51, 244; Steiner, *The Deserts of Bohemia*, 150; Zwicker, 'Nationale Märtyrer', 152.
56. Elena S. Seniavskaja, 'Heroic Symbols: The Reality and Mythology of War', *Russian Studies in History*, Vol. 37 (Summer 1998), 73 (Gastello), 74 (quotation). The article was originally published in Russian: Seniavskaja, 'Geroicheskie simvol'y: real'nost' i mifologii voiny', *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 1995, no. 5, 30–44.
57. Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 182.
58. Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945* (New York 2006), 124. The newspaper accounts also seriously understated the number of men in the company. Seniavskaja, 'Heroic Symbols', 78–9.
59. For a rebuttal to this view, see *Pamiati pavshikh: Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina, 1941–1945* (Moscow 1995), 273–6.
60. A. Zhovtis, 'Utochneniia k kanonicheskii versii', *Agumenty i fakty* (hereafter AF), 38 (1991). Seniavskaja, 'Heroic Symbols', 77. The competing theories are summarized in both Sartorti, 'Making of Heroes', 188–90 and Gorinov, 'Zoiia', 78.
61. Iu. Dimitrev, 'Pravda o Zoe: Reportazh-issledovanie s opozdaniem na chetvert' veka', *Trud*, 29 November 1991; Seniavskaja, 'Heroic Symbols', 77; Vladimir Markovchin and Erik Shur, 'Klubkov, kotoryi nazval "Taniu" Zoi', *Izvestiia*, 2 February 2000.
62. Gorinov, 'Zoiia', 78. 'Zoiia Kosmodem'ianskaia: Geroina ili simvol', AF 43 (1991) quoted in Gorinov, 'Zoiia', 90, n. 1.
63. Kenneth Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Lawrence, KS 2006), 75–80.
64. 'Zoiia snova kazniat', *Pravda*, 29 November 2001. The article concluded in the following issue, 30 November 2001.
65. Gorinov, 'Zoiia', 84 (quotation), 87–90 (meningitis).
66. 'Zoiia snova kazniat', *Pravda*, 30 November 2001. 'Miting pamiati Zoi Kosmodem'ianskoi, 28/11/07', Severnyi administrativnyi okrug goroda Moskva (available online: http://sao.mos.ru/?r=13_tv&id=2307, accessed 1 June 2008).
67. Gorinov, 'Zoiia', 79, 80.
68. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (New York 1995), 115.
69. *Ibid.*, 228.
70. See *Rudé právo*, 8 November 1945, 1; Ústavodárné Národní shromáždění republiky Československé 1946–1948, Stenoprotokoly, 114 schůze, 9 May 1948, Klement Gottwald.
71. AKPR, sign. 310204/50 (Pomníky a památníky), Spolek pro zbudování památníku padlým hrdinům v Praze XIV (association for the construction of a memorial to the fallen heroes of Prague 14) to the President (Edvard Beneš), 9 June 1948.

LISA A. KIRSCHENBAUM is Professor of History at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941–1995: Myth, Memories, and Monuments* (Cambridge 2006). She is currently working on a cultural history of international Communism.

NANCY M. WINGFIELD is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. Her current book-length project is a study of prostitution in late-imperial Austria.