

ILLUSTRATION: KATRIN STENMARK

femininity these stories present and how they are embedded within a broader anticommunist discourse.

The relevance of this research project is twofold: rather than building upon feminist historiography projects developed in academia and civil society in Slovakia in previous years, the oral histories of women analyzed here are embedded in the conservative discourse in Slovakia. Since the oral histories presented gain political and media attention and involve schools from all around the country, the subjectivities they construct and present deserve close attention. At the same time, the conservative framework of the oral history projects discussed gains further significance in the context of a more general conservative turn in the public and political discourse in the country,¹¹ and in the context of historical revisionism in other postsocialist countries.¹² As Andrea Petó argues, an antimodernist variant of history writing is gaining momentum in post-communist Eastern Europe.¹³ Since the post-1989 political culture has been built upon anticommunism, the memory of communism and the leftist tradition are omitted and new memories are constructed, reproducing the same principle by which communist revisionist history production worked. History is constructed to serve its political aim, promoting the identities it envisions for the future.¹⁴ Traditional images of femininity and masculinity are reproduced in these processes. This development, facilitated by various conservative political actors, is embedded in a fundamentalist interpretation of history based on national and individual past suffering, but with the promise of future redemption.¹⁵

Emerging oral histories as an opportunity and a limitation

A need for searching and articulating women's voices in post-socialist countries is illustrated by the genesis of the international project "Women's Memory". As the feminist philosopher Zuzana Kiczková describes, in the first half of the 1990s, feminists from the US and Western Europe started visiting the postsocialist countries and researching the experiences and situations of local women. However, their work often resulted in gross generalizations, and women were represented in dichotomies: as either victims of the regime or heroines. Analyses and evaluations of the situation were often made without regard to the social, political, cultural, and historical context.¹⁶ "Many distortions were caused by the fact that the researchers used their own social criteria and experience, often very different from ours, and they used paradigms which could not always be applied to the experiences of women during socialism," Kiczková explains.¹⁷ A search for tools that would enable women to express their experiences in socialism – different from the experiences of men captured by general history and from descriptions made by the "Western" feminist researchers – led to an exploration of biographical narrative and oral history as research methods.

Oral history brings with it the opportunity to put women's voices at the centre of history, highlight gender as a category of analysis, focus on those topics that are important to women themselves, integrate women into historical scholarship, and

challenge the mainstream historical narratives and the common definitions that obscure women's lives in the

social, economic, and political spheres.¹⁸ While oral history has been considered a tool of empowerment for individual women who recollect and construct their stories, it can also illuminate the collective scripts of a particular social group¹⁹ and allow us to trace the ways in which society frames and channels subjects' stories and memory fields.²⁰ Feminist oral history often asks how historical memory is shaped by dominant ideologies and the intersection of gender, class, race, and other axes of power.²¹

Despite the opportunities, limitations and risks of oral history must not be overlooked,²² and the question "Whose voice has been represented?" is of particular relevance for this article. While oral history can be an opportunity for women to talk about their lives and topics that are relevant to them, the outcome of the interview and the narrative analysis are always influenced by the researcher as well as the narrator.²³ The researcher is inherently present in the story and shapes the overall discourse: they decide on questions, reflect answers, influence the course of the interview, and conduct the interpretation and analysis. The fact that the researcher is in a position of power should be reflected in the research process, and the relationship between the researcher and the participant ought to be a part of the interpretation.²⁴ Transparent research processes which do not further silence women participants and a clearly reflected researcher's position are some of the necessary ethical concerns of oral history.

In recent years, Slovakia has witnessed a burst of oral history projects. Personal stories have been recorded and archived by a number of actors, ranging from the Nation's Memory Institute, which is a public-law institution, to various nongovernmental organisations.²⁵ Although they have the potential to diversify or challenge the dominant popular memory,²⁶ most of these oral history projects have been presented in a way that supports the mainstream historical construction of a nation of suffering. For instance, the most extensive project of the Nation's Memory Institute is called *Witnesses of the Oppression Period* and contains more than 550 stories. As presented by the Institute's website, the structure of the database covers three main historical periods: Slovakia in the years 1938–1945; the transitional period (1945–1948); and the communist regime (1948–1989), which is the most extensive part of the collection with a more detailed structure. Regardless of the period, suffering and repression are the key topics. According to the titles of subtopics presented, the stories are framed as testimonies about the end of democracy, repression and Holocaust, concentration camps and gulags, communist totalitarianism, persecution and criminal legal processes, violent collectivization, the persecution of churches, and



normalization. The “other side” of history is constructed using stories of remedy and heroism, such as those about anti-Nazi resistance, dissent activities, anticommunist resistance, November 1989, and the fall of communism.²⁷

In this frame of national suffering and rare-but-precious heroism, new initiatives emerged aimed at further exploration of the “communist past”. In 2010, numerous institutions and more than 3000 citizens supported a public call to establish a Museum of the Crimes of Communism.²⁸ The Ministry of Culture was commissioned to realize the idea, but later the museum disappeared from the state agenda. At the moment, it is run by the nongovernmental organization *Nenápadní hrdinovia* [The inconspicuous heroes] and is financially and institutionally supported primarily by volunteers.²⁹ The organization aims to establish the Museum as a public institution because “the totalitarian period significantly influenced the history of our country, and for Slovakia it is very important, if not indeed necessary, to have a decent institution that would point out the crimes of this period and their victims.”³⁰ The dichotomy of victims and perpetrators is further reflected in the name of the institution, which is currently called the Museum of Crimes and Victims of Communism. It is worth mentioning that the institution is called a “museum” even though it has not been registered as such by the Ministry of Culture.³¹

Since the very beginning, the need for a Museum of Communism was legitimized by the existence of similar institutions in other post-socialist countries, the House of Terror in Budapest being one of the better examples. As Andrea Pető notes, the House of Terror, like other similar museums in the Baltic countries, employs the narrative built upon dichotomies of affective politics without significant factual basis. The museum becomes a place where history is supposed to be experienced through the body in search of a promised authenticity, and thus becomes a medium used in the process of redefining heritage.³² It seems that histories and ideologies of these anticommunist museums share some similarities with the Museum of Crimes and Victims of Communism in Bratislava, such as a dichotomist victims/perpetrators approach to history and the fact that they are embedded in the conservative discourse. Even though the Museum of Crimes and Victims of Communism is currently a minor institution in Slovakia, the experiences of other countries suggest that it may have the potential to shape the public memory more significantly in the future, and therefore it merits deeper inquiry.

The Museum is closely related to the other activities organized by “The Inconspicuous Heroes”, whose mission is that of “processing and spreading information about the period of oppression in Slovakia and in the world”.³³ One of the organization’s main activities is the oral history project “The Inconspicuous Heroes in the Fight against Communism,” a contest for primary and secondary school students who are asked to record personal stories of people persecuted during communism.

Every year, the project is chronologically framed by two anniversaries: the Candle Demonstration, which was the biggest mass demonstration against state socialism in Slovakia before 1989 and which was organized by Catholic dissent; and the Velvet Revolution which led to a democratic change after 1989. Thus the topic of the project is announced in March and the best stories are publicly presented in November.

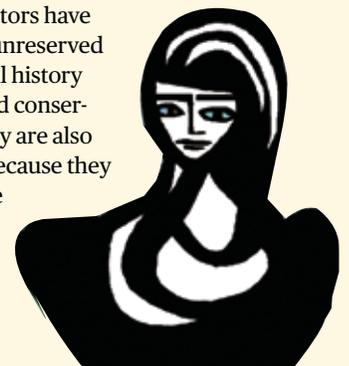
In 2016, the topic of the project was ‘Girls and Women against Totalitarianism’, calling on students “to pay attention to women, girls, daughters, and their role in the fight against the communist regime and totalitarianism.”³⁴ While oral history projects in general – and this one in particular – have led to increased numbers of women who recollect the past publicly, the subjectivity they present is quite limited and very specific. This contributes to the construction of a narrow memory field for women who recall their pasts and narrow discursive spaces within which girls and women can create their own subjectivities. These initiatives do not build on previous activities which examined history from a feminist and gender perspective,³⁵ but rather present a conservative image of faithful women, nuns, mothers, and daughters who were willing to sacrifice themselves for the nation and their faith. This symbolic representation is not that surprising considering that the Museum of Communism was originally initiated by the Forum of Christian Organizations, an umbrella for around 50 Christian organizations, and that this is also the home

organization of the current head of the NGO Inconspicuous Heroes, who also works for the Nation’s Memory Institute. This limited representation of women’s subjectivity has not been publicly challenged by the political and cultural elites, who often present themselves as liberal, and the project “The Inconspicuous Heroes in the

Fight against Communism” has received substantial political and cultural support. For instance, the annual conference at which the chosen students’ stories are presented has been held twice under the patronage of the president,³⁶ and the mainstream media, including the newspaper which presents itself as center-left, revised stories of some personalities presented by “The Inconspicuous Heroes”.³⁷

To a certain extent, the oral history projects do help to diversify public discussion about different historical events and to shed more light on “the small histories”. It is also necessary to say that education on the modern history of Slovakia is usually limited to a couple of hours in the last years of high school, and that the Secret Church and the Catholic dissent played a key role in activities challenging state socialism before 1989.³⁸ These contextual factors have contributed to a wide and almost unreserved acceptance of the conservative oral history activities. Moreover, the obstructed conservative representations of femininity are also allowed to remain unchallenged because they are embedded in a broader picture

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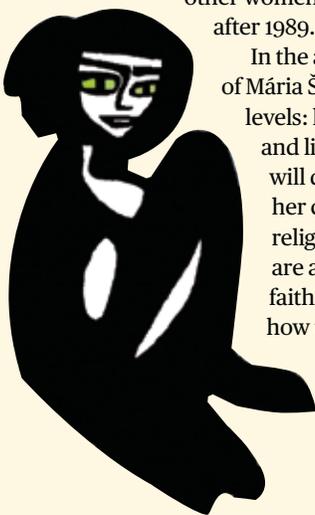
of women's anticommunist subjectivity as constructed by the canonical dissenting authors.³⁹

The stories of resistance and suffering

"The totalitarian period significantly influenced the history of our country, and for Slovakia, it is very important to have a decent institution that will point out the crimes of the era and its victims," the Museum of Crimes and Victims of Communism states, adding that in the first phase it will focus on recording the stories of people who were unfairly condemned.⁴⁰ The oral history activities of The Inconspicuous Heroes, the organisation that runs the Museum, can thus be understood as part of this first phase. Stories collected and retold (these are not transcriptions of the interviews, but rather processed, edited stories with a common structure) as part of the students' project described above are of particular interest for this article. In the social context in which the historical agency of women is at best limited in public discourse and school curricula,⁴¹ these stories, widely represented in the media and accompanied by various events throughout the year, may have a significant impact on the social distribution of memory of women.⁴² Analysing two examples of women's life stories that received distinction in the project "The Inconspicuous Heroes in the Fight against Communism", I will illustrate how women's subjectivity is constructed through resistance and suffering. The object of the analysis is the story as retold and presented in the project, since the original narrative is not publicly available.

The story of Mária Štefunková appears to be a narrative of active resistance and mobilization followed by prosecution. In the early 1950s, a group of 300 women from different towns organized and marched to the office of the local authorities to get information about a new chaplain who had been arrested before arriving in the town of Zborov. As no one had any information on his whereabouts or the reason for his arrest, these women mobilized and organized two "visits" to the authorities to find out more and to get the chaplain released. During the second visit, they caused some material damage, breaking the door that the authorities had locked to prevent them from entering. The situation resulted in the prosecution of Mária Štefunková and four other women. All of them were rehabilitated after 1989.⁴³

In the award-winning story, the heroism of Mária Štefunková is constructed at three levels: her courage to fight for the chaplain and liberate him from prison; her strong will during her own incarceration; and her contribution to the nation and the religious community. All three levels are assumed to be driven by her deep faith in God. The story first describes how the women marched 10 kilometres to get to the local authorities, noting that they "did not stop praying" on their way. On their second visit, "they entered with



courage while singing Christian songs". In this spiritual narrative, their courage is followed by punishment, and the main character's resistance, which was at first expressed publicly (against the authorities), turns into an inner one, lived through the forbidden faith in prison. Despite its intense and active beginning, the main focus of the story is on suffering, with detailed descriptions of living conditions in the prison.

The second part, describing punishment, is also accompanied by more quotations from Ms. Štefunková. The detailed account of struggle and hardship carries implications of remedy and salvation. While there is a vision of returning to the family, the promise of spiritual salvation through suffering is even more significant. "When they took us for a walk, they bound our eyes. I spent Christmas there. I decided not to shed a tear, because these are joyful holidays and I was to be with my kids again in a year. Indeed, that's how it went. When I came to Košice, I found a cross engraved on the wall and the graffiti 'God is love, God is strength, God is our sanctuary.' [...] This is what gave me strength, because every time I knelt down to pray, they shouted at me, 'Get up! Hands up!'"⁴⁴

The mythical aspect of the narrative is further reinforced by the idealized notion of motherhood. As the story goes, the communist regime punished not only the individual woman but her whole family, as her small children were deprived of their mother for a year. The tragedy of a damaged family is presented throughout the story and the reader is reminded several times that the main character is a mother of three. Through motherhood, the main character is constructed as a good woman and a Christian who did not give up her faith, who endured injustice and resisted. It is also through motherhood that she makes her contribution to the community: "as she suffered for a priest, a great desire to have a son become a priest was born in her". She therefore "sacrificed" her two sons to God and they became priests. The closing of the story reinforces the dichotomy of good and bad, as the main character forgives the perpetrators and prays for their salvation.

Like other fundamentalist narratives, the story presented draws on religious legends and myths and builds on antagonisms by proclaiming members of the religious community (and potential members) to be guardians of truth and fidelity. The individual story thus becomes a collective story, "a socially and historically grounded story of the faithful remnant standing for righteousness in a society gone astray".⁴⁵ Fundamentalist narratives are evocative and compelling because they embrace religious myths and scriptural idealism in such a way that they place the readers in a story which must be either endorsed or rejected.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, to reject narratives presented by The Inconspicuous Heroes is not an easy task, as the reader would not only have to reject religious salvation but also the anticommunist struggle it represents. To challenge these narratives means to risk being called a communist.

The second story analyzed also describes suffering in prison preceded by engagement in a religious group, but offers more nuanced characters and motivations. The life story of Františka Muziková is framed by family relations and begins with an intro-

duction of her siblings and parents and the role that family plays in her life. Despite some difficulties, the relations are described as very good and empowering, which is documented by some happy memories from her childhood. Her later heroism is thus constructed as a heritage of her upbringing.⁴⁷

In the story presented, Ms. Muziková experienced the first difficulties in high school, where she was almost prevented from taking the state exams. She received a negative assessment from the representatives of the Communist Party with an explanation that her family owned land which was supposed to be collectivized. Only after the intervention of the school director, who cared about good results of the institution, was she allowed to finish her studies. After Muziková started working as a nurse at a hospital, she joined her colleagues in a religious group. She describes the group as a place for young people to meet, share their experience and spend their free time together. However, as a result of these meetings, she and her friends, her colleagues, and her younger sister were arrested. She was sentenced to two years of detention.

In this story, work is the main topic through which the main character's subjectivity is constructed, as well as her suffering and remedy. Work provides a symbolic site on which the distinction between good and bad is inscribed. For instance, the arrest takes place in the operating room where she was working and nobody was allowed to enter. This invasion of the protected, almost holy place where the staff was saving people's lives may symbolize the invasion of people's private lives by the political regime. At the same time, a dichotomous perspective is constructed between work for others and work against people.

Muziková's stay in various prisons and the difficulties she experienced there are also presented through work. According to the account, in Prague she was able to continue her work as a nurse, and after coming back to Slovakia she had to work manually very hard, sometimes even outdoors in cold weather. Her work is represented here not only as a punishment, but also a sacrifice she offered to protect older prisoners.

Later, it seems her release from prison did not bring the main character an immediate remedy, as it was very difficult for her to find a job: "Even though I was free, I could not get adequate employment, and the door kept closing in front of me as if I were unwanted." Through work the story constructs the main character as a good, exceptional person. Her hard work, which was always directed towards other people and was always supposed to help somebody else, represents the main distinction between the heroine and the others. Moreover, her work as a nurse seems to imply a "clean" personality in terms of physical and moral characteristics. This is illustrated by the episode in which a doctor in prison finds out that she has lice, which is described as one of the most embarrassing moments of her life. "For her as a

nurse, it was very embarrassing and it proved very bad hygienic conditions in prison," the story recounts. However, the parasites are presented not only as a matter of physical condition, but also as a consequence of the presence of "gypsies and prostitutes" who were also imprisoned. This distinction between different women is further reinforced by including political prisoners in the story and describing them as "the elite" of the nation. Although such a victimizing categorization of people and the implications of physically and morally "unclean" women challenge the pure image of altruistic work, this is not reflected upon in the story.

The story ends with Muziková establishing new family. Here, she is constructed as a threat and her husband as a very brave man for marrying her. As described, the husband "became more vulnerable" after their marriage and he was fired from his job because of her past. The quotation of the main character reaffirms this unequal relation: "They did not care that he had a three-year-old at home. [...] But I must say that he has never blamed me for my criminal past." In the narrative, the main character is constructed as accepting guilt for her "criminal" past, even though she was not a criminal at all. The story presents a humble woman who did what was necessary and tried to help where possible. She is also presented as an introverted person who did not speak much or miss people intensely and therefore coped with prison better than others.

The structure of the story of Františka Muziková reveals some inner tensions. While the participation in the religious group is a reason for her arrest, faith in God is not mentioned later. It is rather work that provides the fulfilment of life. Nonetheless, the story is given a religious framing by the title, "Always Faithful to God". Like the first story, the life of Františka Muziková is presented as suffering as a means to a better life, represented by her new family.

The picture of two sides in a struggle – one which destroys people's lives and one which suffers – is the background against which the life story takes place. The fundamentalist presentation of truth, heroes, and devils is not only the resource on which the story draws, but it is its message. The story thus does not challenge or examine the moral values it is embedded in, but rather confirms them.

Women's life stories in a broader discursive field of anticommunism

The stories of The Inconspicuous Heroes are constructed in a frame of national suffering which allows them to create the special forms of resistance and heroism. Anticommunist, dissident identities constitute a part of this frame, and an examination of their gender dynamics permits a better understanding of the broad social acceptance of the conservative women's identities.

The Czech literary scientist Jan Matonoha argues in his

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analysis of the canonical dissent literature (1948–1989)⁴⁸ that the discursive practice of these texts significantly contributes to the gendered disciplining of individual subjects and internalization of the patriarchal order.⁴⁹ The anti-regime literary texts from the period between 1948 and 1989 present a women's subjectivity which appears progressive at a first glance but in fact reaffirms patriarchal values that reproduce traditional gender roles. Matonoha claims that this paradox is a risky part of the texts that have high social capital and therefore a strong interpellative potential. In other words, readers of these texts "are being interpellated to constitute their solidarity with resistant discourses of [...] dissent on the grounds of identification with its symbolic capital and set of values and, concurrently, on the grounds of [a] volitional, marginalizing and unreflected patriarchal notion of gender roles."⁵⁰ As Matonoha argues, the ethos of dissent and counteraction against the oppressive regime intensified the interpellative potential of these injuring identities. His analysis illustrates that, although they appear nonconformist, heroic, and almost martyr-like, they employ traditional gender stereotypes. As a result of this paradox, the interpellative images, such as motherhood, partnership, and resistance to the political regime, and the discursive places where they occur may have a stronger effect on readers than the usual value attributes (physical beauty or social status, personal and social success, or personal prestige) presented by the mainstream culture.⁵¹

The subjectivities of women in the stories analyzed share some aspects of these characteristics. They present women with a strong positive image: they are brave and resistant towards the oppressive regime; they fight against injustice or sacrifice themselves for others. By appealing to the asymmetry of physical power and the power of faith in God, women's lives are constructed as David's fight against Goliath. They seem to be mythical warriors and role models for young girls. However, as in Matonoha's analysis of dissident literary texts, ambivalence can be found under the strong positive image.⁵²

The paradox of strong women who resist the authoritarian regime but are obedient towards their husbands and fathers extends to the dissident literary texts and can also be seen in the narratives of women's anticommunist subjectivities. These two sets of texts, the literary texts and the life stories, are different in style, purpose, quality of writing, and complexity of inner structures, but they share the ideals of women and reinforce patriarchal values. The life stories present women as silent sufferers and companions of men (priests, family members, or God) and offer women very clear remedies through or after their suffering – mainly a material family and spiritual salvation. In order to achieve these treasures, pain is necessary or inevitable, and needs to be borne bravely and faithfully. The clear distinction be-

tween male oppressors and female victims is further reinforced through women's forgiveness and generosity: suffering women are not angry; they understand, forgive, forget, and wish the perpetrators only good.

If traditional gender roles are an intrinsic part of anticommunist identities, as suggested by the well-known dissident literary texts, it is less surprising that there is almost no resistance against the monopolization of anticommunist female subjectivities by the conservative discourse. As Matonoha concludes, the discursive practice of dissident texts and their paradoxical injuring identities have contributed to resistance against feminism and to the silence about gender after 1989.⁵³ Furthermore, their heritage can also be traced in the conformity with which the current anticommunist identities are placed within the conservative gender order.

Tracing the butterfly effect in history-making

The history presented in the oral history project "The Inconspicuous Heroes in the Fight against Communism" is a fundamentalist one,⁵⁴ based on the suffering of the past and promising future redemption. Recent increased interest in women's life experiences in Slovakia has not led to the differentiation of women's subjectivities, but rather to limited, reductionist memory fields.⁵⁵ Oral histories currently present in the public discourse in Slovakia paradoxically go against some of the principles articulated by the feminists who started oral history projects in 1990s.⁵⁶ While

the initial oral history projects valued women's voices and struggled with methodologies to distinguish them from researchers' and narrators' voices, the current projects publish only the reproduced, retold stories without providing clear methodologies, researchers' reflections or narrators' initial stories. This raises questions about whose voice is really heard and what the purpose of the story is. At the same time, the stories of women fighting against communism reproduce the same dichotomy

the feminist oral histories had tried to avoid and overcome: the simplified dichotomous identities of women as heroines and/or victims.

In the projects analyzed, only a very specific type of women is allowed to publicly share their traumatic memories of state socialism, and only the traumatic memories can be publicly shared. Those represented are mostly religious women, good mothers, men's companions, decent, humble, and hard-working women who forgive and forget everything bad that happens to them. They can resist the oppressive political regime but are obedient towards and reinforce the conservative gender regime. The subjectivities they represent are embedded within the patriarchal order with obvious or hidden but indisputable, unchal-

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lenged hierarchies between the masculine and the feminine.

However, these limited and limiting constructions of female identities seem familiar in the anticommunist discourse that accepts, welcomes, and reinforces them. This phenomenon can be partially explained by the relation with the canonical literary texts written by dissidents, exiled authors, and alternative-scene authors from the 1948–1989 period, which reproduce and reaffirm the patriarchal order and injure the identities of women. While operating with extensive social capital, these texts have contributed to the silence on the issue of gender after 1989, and to a broader deficiency in understanding a democracy that overlooks inequalities related to gender and other dimensions.⁵⁷

The conservative anticommunist subjectivities of women are embedded in the dichotomous discursive field of heroism and suffering that does not allow a proper reflection of the stories presented. The readers have entered the field of absolute values where challenging a narrative seems like a subversion of the woman, heroine or victim; where a feminist reflection of the dominant frames of women's subjectivity may be interpreted as an attack on the narrator. Moreover, it is this monopolized connection between the conservative representation of femininity and resistance against oppression that makes "the other" vulnerable because, in this discursive field, to challenge the traditional gender roles or to embody another femininity is to risk accusations of being a communist (i.e., an oppressor). Although the reproduction of the patriarchal order in the current oral history projects in Slovakia has gone almost unnoticed so far, looking at the political context and seeing neighboring Eastern European countries where the conservative representation of women's identities is part of the ongoing historical revisionism raises some concerns and a number of questions. Coming back to the butterfly effect, one can at least ask what societal repercussions these seemingly small-scale conservative activities in history-making will have in future. ✖

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- Kiczková, "Women's Memory: The Experience of Self-shaping in Biographical Interviews," 11. See also Jana Cviková and Jana Juráňová, *Feminizmy pre začiatovníčky: Aspekty zrodu rodového diskurzu na Slovensku* (Bratislava: Aspekt, 2009).
- Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 87–100.
- Sangster, "Telling Our Stories."

- 20 Lomsky-Feder, "Life Stories, War, and Veterans: On the Social Distribution of Memories."
- 21 Sangster, "Telling Our Stories."
- 22 Oral history sources are always socially constructed, variable and partial. Like other historical sources, they never are objective. Moreover, as feminist oral history has been often related with the project of "unsilencing", there are risks of treating women's voices as unquestionable, internally undifferentiated and categorically different from men's. For more limitations and risks of oral history projects, see e.g. Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 63–7; Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető, "Uncomfortable Connections: Gender, Memory, War", in *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető (Routledge, 2016).
- 23 Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different."
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Besides those mentioned in the text, the organisation Post Bellum has spread its activities in Slovakia under the umbrella of the international project Memory of Nations, translated on its website into Slovak as Pamät národa, which shifts the meaning to "Memory of the Nation". See <http://www.memoryofnations.eu/>. The stories collected by the project are published regularly by the daily *Denník N*, and thus have an opportunity to influence the public discourse.
- 26 "Theory, Politics, Method," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 75.
- 27 "Project Oral History: Witnesses of the Oppression Period", accessed December 15, 2017, <http://www.upn.gov.sk/en/project-oral-history-witnesses-of-the-oppression-period/>.
- 28 "Múzeum zločinov a obetí komunizmu," accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.muzeumkomunizmu.sk/muzeum>.
- 29 The museum is located in Bratislava and is currently open one day a week.
- 30 "Múzeum zločinov a obetí komunizmu," accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.muzeumkomunizmu.sk/muzeum>.
- 31 Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, *Múzeá registrované v Registri múzeí a galérií Slovenskej republiky – stav k 22. 5. 2017*, <http://www.culture.gov.sk/posobnost-ministerstva/kulturne-dedicstvo-/muzea-a-galerie/register-muzei-a-galerii-sr-ef.html>.
- 32 Pető, "Revisionist Histories, 'Future Memories'."
- 33 "OZ Nenápadní hrdinovia," accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.november89.eu/obcianske-zdruzenie-nenapadni-hrdinovia/>.
- 34 "Dievčatá a ženy proti totalite," accessed June 16, 2017, <http://www.muzeumkomunizmu.sk/node/72>.
- 35 For instance, the international project *Memory of Women*, which was led in Slovakia by the feminist philosopher Zuzana Kiczková, mentioned above; numerous initiatives led by the feminist organization Aspekt, including the conference and publication *Histories of Women*; the extensive publication by Gabriela Dudeková et al., *Na ceste k modernej žene: Kapitoly z rodových vzťahov na Slovensku* (Bratislava: Veda, 2011).
- 36 *Vyhodnotenie slávnostnej študentskej konferencie Nenápadní hrdinovia 2016*, November 25, 2016, <http://www.november89.eu/aktuality/nenapadni-hrdinovia-2016-vyhodnotenie/>; *Študentská konferencia Nenápadní hrdinovia bude pod záštitou prezidenta SR*, October 9, 2014, <http://www.november89.eu/aktuality/studentska-konferencia-nenapadni-hrdinovia-bude-pod-zastitou-prezidenta-sr/>.
- 37 Soňa Pacherová, "Nenápadného hrdinu odhalila študentská práca," *Pravda*, December 9, 2009, <https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/164487-nenapadneho-hrdinu-odhalila-studentska-praca/>; Andrej Barát, "Nenápadných hrdinov objavujú gymnazisti," *Pravda*, October 25, 2013, <https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/297244-nenapadnych-hrdinov-objavuju-gymnazisti/>.
- 38 Jiří Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce: Aktéři, zápletky a křížovatky jedné politické krize* (Prague: Prostor, 2003).
- 39 Jan Matonoha, "Dispositives of Silence: Gender, Feminism and Czech Literature between 1948 and 1989," in *The Politics of Gender Culture under State Socialism: An Expropriated Voice*, ed. Hana Havelková and Libora Oates-Indruchová (New York: Routledge).
- 40 "Múzeum zločinov a obetí komunizmu," accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.muzeumkomunizmu.sk/muzeum>.
- 41 Cviková, Juráňová and Kobová, *Histórie žien: Aspekty čítania a písania*; Zuzana Maďarová and Alexandra Ostertágová, *Politiky a političky: Aspekty politickej subjektivity žien* (Bratislava: Aspekt, 2011).
- 42 Lomsky-Feder, "Life Stories, War, and Veterans: On the Social Distribution of Memories."
- 43 The story was published in the journal of Konfederácia politických väzňov Slovenska [Confederation of Slovak political prisoners], *Naše svedectvo* 18, no. 1 (2017), <http://www.kpvs.sk/casopis-01-2017.asp>.
- 44 Translated by the author. *Naše svedectvo* 18, no. 1 (2017), <http://www.kpvs.sk/casopis-01-2017.asp>.
- 45 Joseph E. Davis, *Stories of Change* (SUNY Press, 2014), 128.
- 46 Davis, *Stories of Change*.
- 47 *Naše svedectvo* 16, no. 1 (2015), <http://www.kpvs.sk/casopis-01-2015.asp>.
- 48 The materials analyzed include exile and samizdat literary texts, texts associated with the alternative scene, and official production. They were written by Czech authors in the Czechoslovakia period and have become canonical not only in the Czech Republic but in present-day Slovakia as well.
- 49 Matonoha, "Dispositives of Silence", 180.
- 50 Matonoha, "Dispositives of Silence," 167.
- 51 Matonoha, "Dispositives of Silence."
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Matonoha, "Dispositives of Silence." As early as 1994, the Czech philosopher Mirek Vodrážka published an article on the roots of antifeminism in the Czech Republic in which he points to a discourse of bogus humanity at the expense of the specific experiences and rights of women. He also traces roots of antifeminism in Václav Havel's essay *Anatomy of a Reticence*, published in 1985. Mirek Vodrážka, "Before the Great Exodus: The Roots of Czech Antifeminism," in *Aspekt Anthology*, <http://archiv.aspekt.sk/desat.php?desat=73>.
- 54 Davis, *Stories of Change*.
- 55 Lomsky-Feder, "Life Stories, War, and Veterans: On the Social Distribution of Memories."
- 56 Kiczková, *Women's Memory*; Botíková, "O čom ženy rozprávajú."
- 57 Matonoha, "Dispositives of Silence."