

They were fair game for soldiers: a victim breaks her silence on a taboo subject

January 1945. Gabi Köpp was 15 years old when she and her sister Juliane were forced to flee their home in Posen-West Prussia to escape the advancing Russian Army. While Juliane failed to survive the bombardment of their train, Gabi found shelter in a farm where other refugees were already hiding from the enemy. But her youthful beauty proved her downfall. Red Army soldiers abused her repeatedly – she was betrayed by women who had also suffered the soldiers' brutality, and they handed her over to them. The author depicts a wartime taboo in clear and powerful words: **the rape of women in contravention of international law.**



Gabi Köpp
Why did I have to be a girl?
 One refugee's traumatic experience in 1945

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»Gabi Köpp was repeatedly raped by Russian soldiers in 1945, when she was just 15. At the age of 80, she has become the first German woman to write a book under her own name about the sexual violence she experienced during World War II.«

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Gabi Köpp, who was born in 1929 in Schneidemühl, in the former border province of Posen-West Prussia, studied physics in Hamburg following her escape. She has been a lecturer in theoretical physics at RWTH Aachen University since 1966, where she also held an extraordinary professorial chair from 1986 to 1994. She continued to hold this post on an honorary basis until 1999. Gabi Köpp died on 6th August 2010.

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