

Conference proceedings

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*Europäische Frauen in der politischen Sphäre der
Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*

*European Women in the Political Sphere from Early
Modern Times to the Present*

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**Proletarian Feminism in Germany and Spain: the Anarchist Women's Groups
Syndikalischer Frauenbund (Syndicalist Women's Union) and Mujeres Libres
(Free Women) in the Interwar Period**

1. Object of research

In the interwar period, anarchist women founded two women's organisations with many local groups: in 1920 the Syndicalist Women's Union (SFB) in Germany, in 1936 the Mujeres Libres (Free Women) in Spain. The women's groups considered women as political subjects; their political mobilization had top priority in order to achieve equal rights for women, besides they cared for the immediate needs of the female workers: education and support in everyday life. The most of the 2000 members of SFB and of 20.000 members of Free Women came from the working class.

2. Thesis

The thesis should be verified that the influence of similar basic factors led to the constitution of two similar anarchist women's organisations, although the socio-political circumstances were different: the situation of civil war was different – latent in Germany, apparent in Spain, the European circumstances in the early 1920's were different from those in the middle of the 1930's, and the labour movement was Marxist in Germany and anarchist in Spain.

In opposition to these differences, there are analogies between the two groups which separate them from other women's groups. Today their beliefs are called proletarian feminism or anarcha-feminism, because they linked the oppression as women to the oppression as worker and had anarchist views. However, at that time the members never called themselves feminists, because feminism was understood as the struggle of upper- and middle-class women for the right to vote in public elections, within existing society. In contrast, the members of SFB and Free Women as anarchists stood up for a revolutionary change of society so that all humans can live free of domination and restraint. By means of a temporary women's group they wanted to achieve gender equality, and they had to cope with sexism and patriarchal behaviour inside of the anarchist movement.

The Mujeres Libres and the SFB saw their own function to give the women means as a kind of catalyst or promoter so that they will be able to liberate themselves. With their educational and cultural opportunities they attended also non-anarchist women.

3. Methods

The analogies and differences between the two women's groups will be analysed with the methods of intersectionality and praxeology. The object of these two methods are the concrete acting people, their social practices and their strategies of legitimization within the existing structures of dominance.

With the praxeological approach, in accordance with Bourdieu, three social levels are regarded: the macro level, the meso level and the micro level. Social facts are interpreted by relating them to the specific contexts. Also intersectionality emphasises relationality: it focuses on the interdependencies between dimensions of oppression; the forms of oppression like racism, classism and sexism interrelate and create a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination.

The approaches of praxeology and intersectionality are joined in the intersectional multi-level analysis by Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele. Primarily, it denominates reciprocities between gender, race and class. However, it also allows the integration of other socially defined categories, such as sexuality, nationality or age. The intersectional multi-level analysis takes into account reciprocal effects between the various levels, the level of social structures, the level of constructions of identity or the level of symbolic representations. This approach includes an analytical grasp and methodical reflection on these reciprocal effects, making them empirically accessible. It is a combination of deductive and inductive methods; in the micro and meso level theoretical categories do not necessarily comply with empirical categories. This results in the need for empirical analysis not to start out with theoretical concepts but instead to begin with social practices. Starting out from the social practices of a person, we are able to reconstruct identities they construct, as well as the structures and norms they draw on.

In the inductive method to find categories of differentiation in the social practices I refer with Winker and Degele to the Grounded Theory of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss that generates theories in an open process on the basis of data.

"The task on the structural level consists of identifying concrete relations of power and then analysing their interrelatedness and changes. (...) Thus, before thinking about their interrelations, inequality-creating phenomena must first be able to be properly described. For this reason, conceptual differentiations on a theoretical basis are required. Contrastingly, the interrelatedness of these power relations can be empirically, that is to say historically, observed and investigated and are not deducible in a purely theoretical way. Accordingly, we can distinguish between categories of class, gender, race and body on the socio-structural level" (G. Winker, N. Degele, *Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality*, [in:] European Journal of Women's Studies 18(1), p. 51–66, here: p. 54-55).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Vera Bianchi was born in 1974 in Freiburg im Breisgau. She completed her MA Studies in New History/German/Sociology at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg and Technische Universität Dresden (1994-2002). In 2003-2015 she distributed books in the HGV publishing service for the publishing houses S. Fischer, Rowohlt, Campus and others. Since 2015 she is doing doctoral research studies at Technische Universität Dresden (specialization: economic and social history) under the supervision of Prof. Susanne Schötz. Working title of her doctoral thesis is: *Female Anarchists in the Civil War. Processes of constitution of Syndikalischer Frauenbund (Syndicalist Women's Union) and Mujeres Libres (Free Women)*.

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The Long Breath. Women Emerging in East Germany between Pluralisation, Professionalization and Institutional Integration on the Example of Leipzig in the 1990s

In my paper, I present and discuss a part of my PhD thesis dealing with the Eastern German women's movement from 1980 to 2000 using the example of Leipzig. Their continuities and breaks, structures, actors, topics, fields of activity and networks are investigated. The micro study is based not only on the archives, but also on the sources from private tradition and narrative contemporary witness interviews. The work seeks to stimulate a change in perspective, by looking at the East German women's movement not only as a product, in many cases „Leittragende“ of social and political change, but also as its motor and frequently profiteers.

The collapse of the GDR in the fall of 1989 was accompanied by a feminist awakening of the East German women. Between October and December 1989 many women's groups are based in the major cities of the GDR, where they actively interfered in the democratization and transformation processes. In Leipzig in the end of September 1989 Fraueninitiative (FIL) was formed. With the intention to interfere in a democratic society form, the Women's Initiative exerted a radical critique of domination which was not "only" referred to the situation of women. They put women's political models of society; the vision statements contained in a societal perspective and responsibility along with demands for the safeguarding of women's rights and women's rooms.

Within a short time the FIL evolved into an important local political representative of women's interests in Leipzig. With its goal of democratizing gender relations, it persecuted women with an initiative, having a dual strategy ("power and cultural orientation").

On the one hand, it saw itself as a network of autonomous working women's groups. Under the umbrella of the initiative were formed various working and interest groups, from which later a variety of well-known women's projects grew and some of them still form the feminist infrastructure of the city today: the women's culture, the women and gender Library monaliesa, the refuge or the woman art centre. On the other hand, it took influence on local political developments and decisions. It sent representatives to the newly formed policy-making bodies, such as the round table and the newly elected city council.

The implementation of its two-pronged strategy was accompanied by some considerable setbacks during the 1990s. Already in the 1980s, they used to fight

public and visibility of women and their interests, which continued in the 1990s and culminated in the dispute over the Henriette Goldschmidt's house.

As part of my presentation, I will discuss the following thesis: in 1990 that started in Leipzig establishment and differentiation of Frauenverein landscape can be read not only as evidence of external and internal movement mobilization and as a sign of the growing political relevance of women's and gender issues. It is primarily a response to the failure of democratization of gender relations.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jessica Bock was born in 1983. She studied medieval and modern history, historical ancillary science and onomastics at the University of Leipzig and in Kraków. She finished her studies with her master thesis titled „Memory Culture and Gender”. Since then she worked primarily in feminist educational and cultural facilities. She collaborated in international Oral History Projects in Poland and Ukraine. In 2014 she started her PhD studies; she writes about the Eastern German Women's Movement from 1980 to 2000 using the example of Leipzig. From 2015 until June 2016 Jessica was a fellow of the „Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur”. Currently, she works as a research assistant at the „Digital German Women's Archiv”.

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Working Woman - Political Activity of Women and the Struggle for Women's Job Opportunities in Poland between 1918-1939

For centuries Polish women were committed to the role of wife, hence all the housework was allocated by this division. Women from lower class did all housework, which were linked with seasons and work in the field. Next to housekeeping, childminding and education, women also took care of some livestock, such as cows and poultry. Peasant women did not do any other work beside that, although there were some exceptions - if family did not possess enough field to feed itself. Among merchants and craftsmen, women usually helped with business, but their role was not noteworthy. Education of women in lower middle class was usually limited to reading and writing. For years women possessed knowledge of maintaining shops which could be owned only by men; they were also not allowed to join crafts guilds. Furthermore, elite and upper class women were not involved in any works, apart from assigning duties to the housekeepers and taking control of children's education. Lastly, they were responsible for social life of the house.

In the 19th century, especially in the 70's and the 80's, women began to realise their rights. Some of historians call those women a "breakthrough generation" who initiated changes in Polish lands. Those essential changes were a result of uprisings in 1830 and 1863. Men involved in military actions died or they were captured and sent to Siberia, which increased the role of women, in both work and social life. Women became head of families, beside aforementioned traditional roles, they started replacing men with all other duties, such as representing family, appointing visits in local councils etc. Women started to think of better future for their children, by emphasising education, even women from lower class participated in those changes by writing letters to folk and catholic magazines. The end of the 19th century is also time of women's struggle to access higher education and hold a university degree.

The watershed moment was the First World War - when women started taking male careers over. Men were fighting at the front, so women started replacing them career wise. But when the war ended, they didn't want to come back to their traditional roles. They wanted more. In the end of the 19th century women wanted to have more rights, especially in the public sphere. In the end of the First World War they wanted to work in many different jobs (male too) and vote. They wanted to have the same rights all men had. When in 1918 Poland proclaimed its independence, Polish women still fought for their rights. In the Second Polish Republic, the law gave women some public rights. They voted, but most of public rights were impaired. For

instance, they couldn't spend their money without their husband's permission, as well as couldn't go to the court without their approval. After the Great Depression in 1929, most of politicians wanted to fire women and hire men. In Poland in 1918-1939 the discussion about women's role in society started. Most of women's demands were accomplished, but not all of them. Women couldn't get promoted at work. They should be primarily wives and mothers, but if they wanted, they could work (in many different careers, but they didn't get the same wages as men), and studied. That fight was still going on.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Anna Jajor-Morawiec is a PhD student at the Historical Institute of the University of Wrocław. She specializes in Polish history 1918-1939, as well as history of the twentieth century (especially women's history and social history). Her major publication is: „(...) idźmy twardym krokiem, niech wróg nie widzi łez” - *Wanda Cejkówka-Kiałka, świadek historii*” (“(...) move on in a tireless stride, so that the enemy cannot see our tears” - *Wanda Cejkówka-Kiałka, a Witness of History*”), [in:] “*Nie tylko walka...: żołnierze Armii Krajowej w powojennym Wrocławiu i na Dolnym Śląsku*” (Not Only a Fight...: *Home Army Soldiers in afterwar Wrocław and Lower Silesia*), ed. G. Kowal, W. Kucharski, J. Maliniak, G. Strauchold, Warsaw 2010.

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Defending Women's Rights – Social Activity of Irena Krzywicka over the period 1919-1939

Irena Krzywicka was a Polish writer, publicist and feminist. In private life – the wife of Jerzy Krzywicki, son of Ludwik Krzywicki, the creator of Polish sociology. Krzywicka was also a longtime lover of Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński. She was a woman, who demanded independence, freedom and equality of rights. She was anticipating the end of "men's civilization". Her social activity was directed towards the dissemination of conscious motherhood. Krzywicka wanted to liberate women from social restrictions; she fought for women's rights, their sexual freedom and the right to abortion. Her efforts were also devoted to children's rights – she discussed the issues of using violence against the most vulnerable ones. She supported the view that aggressive behavior towards a child would negatively impact a child's future. Krzywicka was a member and organizer /together with Boy-Żeleński/ of the League for Sexual Reform (*Liga Reformy Seksualnej*). They both wanted to introduce and implement moral reforms in Poland.

Krzywicka wrote about relations of the Church and the state with community workers – she blamed the latter for not understanding the demand for promoting sexual awareness, conscious motherhood, the right to abortion or civil weddings. Together with Boy-Żeleński they proclaimed the total abolition of punishment for women when it comes to the mentioned issues.

Her work mainly revolved around the topics related to women. She was well aware of men's domination. She wanted women to be stronger and conscious of their value and possibilities – it was not an easy task, though. Female flaws and weaknesses were clearly visible.

She was one of the representatives of „boyszewizm” – proclaiming left-wing views and modern lifestyle. Her private life, however, proved that she was faithful to the traditional model of family.

This paper was mainly based on the articles published in the journal "Wiadomości Literackie" ("Literary News") and its supplement "Życie Świadome" ("Conscious Life"), as Krzywicka mainly wrote her articles to the aforementioned paper. This magazine provides a great source of information regarding the subjects related to women's lives, youth upbringing or viewpoints on men.

Lastly, another important source of information were the memories of Irena Krzywicka gathered in her autobiography titled *Wyznania gorszycielki* ("Self-confessions of a scandalist") (1992). This specific work allows us to look at the publicist from more private side. Consequently, we can admire the strong woman who was

aware of her worth and who fought for other's rights. The book gives us a better understanding of Krzywicka's activity in the period of time when the social awareness of women was taking shape.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Natalia Kotrys is a PhD student at the University of Wrocław. Her Bachelor thesis was devoted to Irena Krzywicka's social and literary activity. In her Master thesis she focused on the problem of tuberculosis as a social problem of the city of Wrocław in the Weimar Republic between 1919-1933. Currently, her research interests revolve around the issue of social diseases, with particular emphasis on the development of tuberculosis in Poland during the Interwar period. However, her area of focus is not limited only to the above mentioned subjects. For Natalia, a huge field for research is also the matter of women in society, politics and family.

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Gender, Class and Ethnicity on the Labour Market of the Federal Republic of Germany 1964-1969

In historical research, the 1960s of the Federal Republic of Germany are now commonly regarded as a period of change. If the focus is on the life of women, a less dynamic picture emerges. In the Federal Republic of Germany there was broad consensus that marriage and maternity, and not an employment, should shape the lives of women. If women still pursued an employment, this should only be possible in the years before the marriage or after the children no longer depend on the care of their mothers. From an economic point of view this could not be maintained at the beginning of the 1960s due to the growing economic demand for labour. Therefore, not only married German women but also a growing number of "guest workers", mostly from the Mediterranean countries, were recruited for employment in the Federal Republic of Germany.

On the one hand, there were numerous political measures to open up the labour market for women, for example in the form of newly created jobs, but on the other hand, it is shown that the policy seemed to have a regulating effect on the labour market if the *gender different order* seemed to be threatened.

The topic of female employment and the recruitment of foreign workers or "guest workers" is therefore only appropriate in the context of West German gender relations. This is due to the fact that the mobilization of married or otherwise family-dependent German women and the recruitment of foreign full-time workers did not take place as a separate but simultaneous labour market policy measure. This process, which is based on gender, ethnicity and class, has to be investigated in order to: 1. the lines of argumentation, 2. the practices of inclusion and exclusion, and 3. the effects on women, to uncover and explain continuities of *doing gender*.

Therefore, the Concept of Intersectionality offers the possibility to uncover gender-specific positioning of women on certain areas of the labour market (especially the industry) and to connect them with the underlying construction of gender, class and ethnicity. Furthermore, the concept offers the possibility to uncover the intersections of multiple categories. The fact that people are categorized, their actions classified, can be proved for all areas of life, even on the labour market. This is most clearly shown by the fact that we still speak of men's and women's jobs. The analysis of the labour market allows to show that this is a continuum of gender construction in the sense of a definition of male and female activities at work.

The approach can be briefly presented by using the wage structure as an example for disadvantage based on multiple reasons. Documents of the Ministry of

Labour show that in the 1960s the wages of men and women in selected industrial areas were based on unequal structures. The wage level of women was usually 1 to 2 DM below that of men. This can be attributed to, then, the common practice of the evaluation of work. Since women seemed to be less able to work because of their physically constitution than men, their wage had to be reduced. The work of migrant women was also measured on this basis. As a result, they were paid less than migrant men and also less than German men and women. In the case of migrant women the Ministry of Labour also argued with difficulties in habituation, lack of qualification and language skills. Disadvantages on the labour market therefore were not only based on gender and class, but also on ethnicity.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Judith Märksch completed her studies in history at Technischen Universität Dresden (Bachelor (2012) and Master (2016)). She was a student assistant at the Lehrstuhl für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte (SoSe 2015). She worked as a Besucherreferentin in the memorial Bautzen II, Münchner Platz Dresden (2009-2015) and in Museum Edwin-Scharff in Neu-Ulm (since 2016). Currently, she is doing her PhD studies at Technischen Universität Dresden.

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Political Engagement of Women from Magnate Families in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the Second Half of the 18th Century. An Outline

The engagement of noblewomen in the political life of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the 18th century as well as the effectiveness of measures undertaken by them was already noticed by contemporaneous observers who often highlighted their uniqueness in comparison to elite women from other European countries. This paper will concentrate on the main roles Polish women from magnate families played in the political sphere and it will elucidate their motivation to engage in actions traditionally, it would seem, designated for men. Lastly, it will be important to analyse specific social conditions which facilitated this sort of women's „mobilisation”.

We will present findings coming out from the analyse of the private correspondence of a selected group of women: Ludwika Potocka, Konstancja Czartoryska, Izabella Branicka, Katarzyna Kossakowska, Ludwika Zamoyska and Maria Radziwiłłowa, gathered in Dresden City Archive, the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev and the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw.

First of all, the content of the letters indicates that women from the aristocratic circles were largely focused on the careers of their husbands and sons. Therefore, as it was a privilege but also a responsibility for a nobleman to serve his country, they consequently supported their close relatives on this path. Interestingly, Polish ladies perfectly understood interpersonal relations and their importance in building the family position in the political life. As a result, they made use of clientage processes and reciprocal dependencies: their social status, waste possessions and connections to influential noblemen.

Secondly, elite women actively participated in the exchange of information concerning politics. Consequently, they stayed in touch with numerous more or less prominent politicians and foreigners as well as followed the press. They also observed in person the development of the local diets, the tribunals and the sessions of the national diet. Finally, they took part in social life organising the events themselves but also visiting the court and noble mansions. In this particular context, the quantitative analyse of the data included in their letters (addresses, dates of postage) gives us an opportunity to determine the geography of the most important social circles, having access to which facilitated gathering information, spreading it and discerning noblemen's attitudes, actions and plans.

In addition, women's opinion-making potential together with their effectiveness in obtaining noblemen's support were often used by the leaders of the political parties to gain 'new friends' or end a dispute. For instance, Stanisław August Poniatowski himself admitted that some Polish women were irreplaceable while trying to endear noblemen to his plan of reforms during the Four-Year Diet (1788-1792).

The contemporaneous women got involved in the public sphere mostly because of their care for relatives. This fact is stressed in the studies regarding women's mentality in the first half of the XVIII century of the Polish historian Bożena Popiołek who argues that women placed the God and so-called individual values: health, maternity, family, possession or education in the first place and thereafter the common ones: homeland, king, parliament, local parliament, tribunal. This hierarchy, which resulted from accepted norms and women's traditional roles in society, constituted a direct consequence of their aforementioned specific activity.

What kind of circumstances did enable women's engagement in national politics? We shall enumerate at least two crucial factors: the political system of the country and the law. The latter made Polish women more independent and 'powerful' next to members of the fair sex living in other European societies, whereas the republican regime encouraged them to act shoulder to shoulder with their male relatives, especially if we consider the second half of the XVIII century when, due to the entrenchment of the system of political parties in the 40s and the 50s, noblemen particularly needed women's services while seeking information, planning intrigues or trying to influence certain political actors in terms of potential cooperation. Then, the number of women involved in politics increased at that time as the city of Warsaw became an important political centre after the court moved there in 1756 from Dresden where resided since the election of August I (1697). Moreover, following the long reign of Saxon dynasty, the election of Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764) divided noble society, including women: some demonstrated their support for the new king while others took sides against him and the party he was associated with. Finally, the historical context might surely have influenced the position of women in the political sphere; we may recall their activity during the Confederation of Bar (an association formed by noblemen, clergy, cities, and military forces in order to attain specific objectives or remove the authorities) convened against the king in 1768 or the period after the first partition of Poland, when they took part in actions undertaken by royalists or the king's enemies in order to either introduce Poniatowski's reform to modernise the country or block his manoeuvres.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dorota Wiśniewska is a PhD candidate at the University of Wrocław (Poland). In her MA thesis she concentrated on French politics in the Polish-Lithuanian

Commonwealth in 1752-1756, taking into account the policy of the French Foreign Ministry as well as the projects of Louis XV's secret diplomacy (King's Secret). Currently, she is conducting a research project titled *Woman in Politics. Political Activity of Women Running Literary Salons in France and Poland in the Second Half of the 18th Century*. She has a strong interest in history of diplomacy, women's studies and Franco-Polish political and cultural relations during the Enlightenment.

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