

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

FEMINISMS AND POLITICS IN INTERWAR BALKANS AND EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Book of Abstracts

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Introduction

The Conference "Feminisms and Politics in Interwar Balkans and East-Central Europe" is part of the research project "Feminisms and Politics in Interwar Balkans (1923-1939)", which is run by the University of Crete and supported by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) under the "2nd Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to support Faculty Members & Researchers" (Project Number: 03050).

The conference aims to explore feminist movements in the region of Balkans and East - Central Europe in the uneasy interwar historical context. placing emphasis on transnational contacts and collaborations of feminist and women's organizations. the entanglement of their activity with politics and diplomacy at regional and international scale, and the tensions emerged between national and international agendas.

The First World War was followed by an increased and intensive political movement aiming to eliminate likelihood of new wars and consolidate peace on a global scale. This movement is reflected in the foundation of international peace and diplomacy organizations, with the League of Nations prevailing among them, the signing of a series of treaties between states securing the new border status quo, minority treaties and amity and cooperation agreements, as well as in elaborated visions of forming "state federations" across Europe. In this context, the Balkan states with a long history of competing nationalisms, wars, and rallying to rival war camps, gradually shifted towards pursuing political rapprochement and mitigating national-political differences, while the new Central European states that had arisen from the dissolution of the central empires and the redrawing of national borders sought alliances to enhance security against presumptive revisionist attempts by neighboring countries.

At the same time, the unsolved national-transnational political issues and the new ones created by the post-war treaties, most notably that of ethnic minorities, the rivalries of the victorious Great Powers in the region, the gradual dominance of totalitarian and bellicose politics and the risk of a new great war that began to loom on the horizon, prioritized national security and acted as centrifugal forces from 'the transnational and international' to 'the national', while the revisionist and anti-revisionist camps and politics began to form distinct.

In this context, feminist movement, reconstituted and increased in density and massiveness, found a fertile ground for linking its activity to international politics and diplomacy. International women's organizations (feminist, professional, peace organizations), national affiliated organizations, as well as regional associations emerged at the time, recognizing that progress towards full political and social rights and security for women depends on a peaceful and stabilized world, declared it "their duty" to work for friendly international relations and humanitarian progress worldwide, and to support national and international agents working towards these ends. Thus, conferences, meetings, commissions, resolutions, memoranda, public events, and publications emerged dense in the service of these objectives.

The Conference "Feminisms and Politics in Interwar Balkans and East-Central Europe" will seek to explore and discuss this intensive and dense women's movement.



Thursday, November 28 / 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Francisca de Haan

Professor Emerita, Central European University (CEU)



Francisca de Haan is Professor Emerita of Gender Studies and History at Central European University (CEU) and currently Adjunct Program Head of the MATILDA MA in Women's and Gender History. She is also a Fellow at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Her research interests focus on transnational and intersectional women's and gender history, the histories of international women's organizations, socialist and communist women's political activism, women's work, and women's archives. In 2023, she edited The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World, which has been published by Palgrave Macmillan.

Expanding Our Research Agenda: Women From the Region in the World Women's Committee Against War and Fascism (WWCAWF, est. 1934)

Feminist historians are paying increasing attention to the World Women's Committee Against War and Fascism (WWC, also: Comité Mondial des Femmes or CMF) and its role as an international women's organization in the interwar period. We now know more of the WWC/CMF as co-initiator of "feminism for the Americas" (Katherine Marino, 2019), its role in France and some of its international outreach (Jasmine Calver, 2023), and its "substantial impact" on the Yugoslav women's movement of the interwar years (Isidora Grubacki, 2024). But this is only a beginning. The WWC/CMF was established at a congress in Paris in 1934. The existing historiography does not discuss all delegations of Western countries, although some of these were of considerable size. Nor does it discuss countries or member organizations from this region even though—according to the WWC/CMF's own sources—its founding congress was attended by women from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Yugoslavia.

In my lecture, I will first provide a short historiographical overview. What do we know of the WWC/CMF and its member organizations? Secondly, what can we find out about the WWC/CMF women and member organizations not yet included in the historiography? It will become clear that many of its participants were involved in well-known national and international women's organizations, then or later. Rather than seeing the WWC/CMF as a sort of anomaly in the international women's movement, as seems to have been the case until recently, I will argue that its history can help us better understand linkages between women's organizations, connections between women activists across Europe and through time, as well as the formative role of anti-fascism for a lot of women's activism.

Friday, November 29 / 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Fatmagül Berktay

Professor Emerita, Istanbul University



Fatmagül Berktay is Professor Emerita of Political Science and Women's Studies and former Director of the Women's Research Centre of Istanbul University has been part of the Turkish Women's Movement since early 1980s. She acted as adviser to the state minister in charge of women's affairs and represented Turkey in various international forums including the UN 1995 Beijing Women's Conference. Her published books include Being a Woman, Living and Writing (in Turkish, 1991), Woman in the Face of Monotheistic Religions (in Turkish, 1996), Women and Religion (BlackRose Books, 1998), The Gender of History (in Turkish, 2003) which was also published in Arabic (Dar Kreideh, Beyrouth, 2009), The Call of Politics (in Turkish, 2010), Loving the World in the Present, Hannah Arendt's Political Theory (in Turkish, 2012) and Ethics of Thinking (in Turkish, 2021). She was designated as a leader in Education in Turkey and was part of "The Hope Brigade" of Women in the World (WOW) Festival (March 2021). Currently she is working on political ethics, political evil and feminist history.

Women's struggle for rights is never ending

The interwar period in Turkey was a time of radical transformations. In 1923 a Republic was proclaimed ending the centuries old Ottoman Empire and the Sharia law which forbade the participation of women in the public space. Women and their social status were central to the reform agenda of the young republic which brought about the secularization of legal and educational structures. The new Civil and Penal codes replacing the Sharia provided for women's legal equality and enabled them to enter the public arena. In 1935 the 12th Conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance was held in İstanbul and also celebrated the recently introduced women's suffrage in Turkey. Secular laws indeed made a radical change in women's lives providing them with educational and career opportunities. However, discriminatory mentality, institutional structures and practices resisted to change as witnessed by the remaining biases in the secular civil and penal codes. Women's struggle for emancipation gained momentum after 1980's and especially in the 90's focused on the demand for abolishing those biases in the law. The struggle finally achieved its goal in 2001 when the said laws were amended in favor of gender equality.

However now, after more than two decades of this achievement and when the 100th year of the Republic is being celebrated, women are faced with a backlash putting secularism and women's gained rights in jeopardy. This bears witness to the fact that women's rights are always fragile and that struggle for gaining and keeping them is a never ending process.



THE LITTLE ENTENTE OF WOMEN: FEMINIST (TRANS)NATIONALISM AND PACIFISM IN ECE

MARIJANA KARDUM, Dr. Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb

Emerging just after the Great War as its consequence, the Little Entente of Women (LEW) from 1923 brought together (intellectual) women from Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland and Romania. In various capacities, the LEW represented a feminist, regionalist, transnational but also nationalist organization of interwar East Central Europe (ECE). Overly ambitious, the LEW aimed at unifying women beyond national borders and bringing the desired peace, while demanding civil and political rights to its frequently voiceless and politically powerless female parts of populations.

So far, I researched in depth the illusory transnationalism of the organization, explaining how the national interests of each member represented a considerable strain on the overall pacifist and feminist goals of the LEW. In this presentation, building on the complex dynamic of national and transnational, I intend to elaborate on its pacifist efforts and the challenges stemming from ever-changing regional geopolitics. What were the regional feminist visions of permanent peace? How could women, many still being unenfranchised, build a new and lasting (East Central) European order? To understand the complex relationship between regional feminism and pacifism of the interbellum, one has to look beyond national borders – the example of the Little Entente of Women being one of the most inspiring projects of its era.

Keywords: East Central Europe, Little Entente of Women (LEW), nationalism, pacifism, transnationalism

FEMINISM, POLITICS, AND REGIONAL DIPLOMACY: FROM THE LITTLE ENTENTE OF WOMEN TO THE BALKAN CONFERENCE (1923-1939)

KATERINA DALAKOURA, Professor, University of Crete

The paper investigates the attempts of the inter-Balkan and Central Europe feminist associations to intervene in the regional politics and diplomacy during the Interwar period. The paper focuses on two cases of regional collaborations: the *Little Entente of Women (LEW)*, an association founded in 1923 by feminist organizations from Balkan and Central European countries, pursuing gender equality, collaboration among member-states, and peace in the region; and the *Balkan Conference*, an inter-Balkan organization, established in 1930 on the initiative of politicians and intellectuals from the region, with national delegations -including representatives of women's and feminist organizations - from all Balkan countries being its members, and the aim to create favorable conditions for Balkan countries' collaboration and ultimate goal to establish a Balkan federation.

The research question which the paper addresses is whether the shift of the feminist organizations, after 1929, towards participation in or close cooperation with political institutions and alliances (such as the Balkan Conference or defensive/military Little Entente) that openly served the foreign policy of their member-countries strengthened women's role as agents of politics and diplomacy in the region -a goal they were striving for- or marginalized their role and visibility, limiting their activity to social and cultural diplomacy, and therefore to a rather far more 'feminine' aspect of policy-making. The paper adopting an inter/transnational perspective, and drawn on rich sources (published and unpublished) attempts to understand women's and feminist organizations' interventions in the Balkan politics and diplomacy as an entangled feminist history of the local (national/transnational), regional (Balkans), and international.

Keywords: Feminism and regional diplomacy, Little Entente of Women, Balkan Conference, Interwar period

THE MODERN AND NATIONAL TURKISH WOMAN AS A BIOPOLITICAL STRATEGY IN THE MAGAZINE TÜRK KADIN YOLU

BIRSEN TALAY KEŞOĞLU, Professor, Beykoz University

In this study, I will examine the magazine Türk Kadın Yolu (Turkish Woman's Path), a women's magazine published in Turkey between 1925 and 1927, from the perspectives of feminism and nationalism. The founder of this magazine is Nezihe Muhittin, and it served as the official publication of the Turkish Women's Association. The magazine, which published 30 issues, prominently featured discourse on the rights and freedoms provided to women by the newly established Republican regime and received a grant of 300 lira from the government for two years. Under the leadership of Nezihe Muhiddin, women's circles united in June 1923 to form a coalition to fight for women's suffrage. Although the establishment of the Women's People's Party was not permitted due to the "classless" public policy of the Turkish Republic, the name Turkish Women's Association was deemed appropriate, and Türk Kadın Yolu magazine took its place in press history as an expression of this association. The content of the magazine generally included news about women from around the world, writings from literary figures, kitchen culture, interviews, cartoons, and news from various fields such as democracy and feminism, as well as women's associations. Within the nationstate structure that emerged with the Republic, the magazine took on the role of creating the "new woman" or "national woman." When examining this magazine or other sources from the period, it becomes clear that nationalism should be perceived not only as a form of political ideology but also as a worldview, necessitating cultural inquiries.

Keywords: Türk Kadın Yolu (Turkish Woman's Path), nation-state, feminism, women's rights, nationalism

THE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD: REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST

IOANNIS CHAROKOPOS, MA Student, University of Crete

In the interwar period, Europe was in turmoil, while Turkey, under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's leadership, presented itself as a stabilizing force with the motto "Peace at Home, Peace in the World." This study investigates whether Turkey genuinely sought to maintain the international political order or pursued a distinct diplomatic strategy based on its national interests. Central to this analysis is the first establish movement of modern Turkey National Pact (Misak-I Milli), a core principle of Turkish foreign policy, as confessed by Atatürk during his meeting with American General McArthur in Ankara.

This research is divided into three key sections. First, it offers a historical framework outlining Turkey's political relationships during this period, with a focus on its bilateral agreements and involvement in international organizations such as the Balkan Conferences. The second section analyzes how the doctrine of the National Pact was applied in Turkey's diplomatic strategies, especially in relation to the western and southeastern borders of Anatolia, just before and during the prelude to World War II. Lastly, the third section explores the internal cultural and intellectual fermentations within Turkey and how these developments influenced the state's foreign and domestic policies.

By examining the first establish movement and the goals and strategies of the military figures who participated in it, this study aims to shed light on Turkey's approach to international diplomacy in the interwar period, the ideological foundations driving its policies, and the ongoing contradiction between maintaining the status quo and pursuing national ambitions.

Keywords: Turkish Foreign Policy, National Pact (Misak-ı Milli), Intellectual Movements, Political Doctrine, Diplomatic Strategy

PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S POLITICAL CLUB AND ITS ACTIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN INTERWAR PERIOD

KATARZYNA SIERAKOWSKA, Associate Professor, Institute of History Polish Academy of Sciences

Why did Polish women associated in the KPKP decide to join international organizations? How did they understand international cooperation? How did they want and try to propagate their views in the forum of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom and the Little Entente of Women? What ideas discussed at the congresses of these organizations were implemented in the Second Polish Republic? And who were the women active in the KPKP? In my text, I will try to answer these questions.

Keywords: Poland 1918-1939, Women's movement, LEW, WLPF

THE LYCEUM CLUB OF GREEK WOMEN: AN APPROACH TO ITS INTERNATIONAL AND INTER-BALKAN COLLABORATIONS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

ELENI FOURNARAKI, Associate Professor, University of Crete

The paper focuses on the Lykeion ton Ellinidon - Lyceum Club of Greek Women (LCGW) and its international, especially inter-Balkan, collaborations. The LCGW was founded in 1911 as member of the international (European) network of the Women's Lyceum Clubs (WLC). However, the Greek Lyceum from its inception privileged nationalist principals and ethnocentric activities such as preserving "Greek traditions": the LCGW dedicated a considerable part of its activities to the nationalization of the 'humble' folk dances, as well as the organization of monumental festivals of the Greek past, performing its "continuity through the ages". As I suggest, the LCGW assumed a hegemonic role in producing mass traditions of the Greek nation, thus developing in the public sphere a kind of "female" cultural national politics.

Due especially to this *unifying "national role"*, the LCGW soon became one of the most important voluntary associations of upper- and middle-class women in interwar Greece, with pan-Hellenic reach. Although not hostile to women's suffrage, after the mid-1920s the LCGW forged its conservatism, and clearly distanced itself from the new feminist organizations that struggled for women's political rights in interwar Greece. However, the above choices did not prevent the LCGW from frequently collaborating with organizations of the local feminist movement and keeping relations with international women's networking where "women's politics" were welcomed, such as action for peace.

Taking under consideration the multifaceted action of the LCGW, the paper tries to understand the way in which this specific women's voluntary association was involved in the field of inter-Balkan political developments, the Balkan Conferences (1930-1934), and collaborated with national and regional women's/feminist organizations equally involved in the latter. My main argument is that the LCGW makes an interesting case-study to raise questions such as the *tension between internationalism* or *pacifism* and *nationalism* or *ethnocentrism* in the history of women's movements in the interwar period.

Keywords: Invented traditions, nationalism, internationalism, feminism, politics

ENTANGLED FEMINIST DEMANDS AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES: DISCOURSES ON WOMEN IN THE ROMANIAN WOMEN'S AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS OF TRANSYLVANIA DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

GEORGETA FODOR, Associate Professor, "George Emil Palade" University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Sciences and Technology of Târgu Mureș

This paper examines the impact of political changes following the Great War on the discourse surrounding women's roles in public life, with a particular focus on how major women's and cultural associations in Transylvania redefined their positions concerning feminism. Building on our previous research on women and the national emancipation movement, we investigate whether these associations and their leaders transitioned from a predominantly traditional perspective—which confined women to the private sphere as biological and cultural reproducers of the nation—toward embracing feminist demands.

Our research focuses on the analysis of debates and public statements of the leaders and members of the women's societies in Transylvania, as well as those from ASTRA, the most significant cultural association of Romanians in the region as it shared a common perspective and was deeply influential on the perspective of women's emancipation within the members of women societies, and in general. In addition, we examine the public resonance and reaction towards feminist activism, incorporating an analysis of propaganda materials such as press articles and popularization conferences conducted by members of the above-mentioned societies.

The paper also offers a comparative analysis, juxtaposing regional perspectives from Transylvania with those from the Old Romanian Kingdom, as they were already explored by Romanian historians. This comparative approach aims to identify and understand the regional particularities of feminist movements within the national framework.

Although our focus is on a specific regional context, we argue that this study provides valuable insights into the intersections of nationalism and feminist movements, contributing to a broader understanding of these complex dynamics, and fostering dialogue and comparative analysis with other provinces formerly belonging to the multinational empires.

Keywords: Feminism, nationalism, regional feminist and cultural associations, militantism

NATIONAL AIMS, TRANSNATIONAL RECOGNITION: TURKISH WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD

HALE ÖVEROĞLU, PhD Candidate, Koç University

The interwar period was home to an important breakpoint in the history of Turkey, namely the official foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, which increased the pace of the changes in women's role. Opposing the idea of women as passive subjects waiting to receive the citizenship status, this paper will focus on women's claims regarding women's rights. This, in turn, will firstly show the Turkish women's movement in the national setting. Secondly, it will show that Turkish women had transnational connections with women from Europe. A particular focus will be on the relationship between Turkish women and their British and Spanish counterparts. Women from these three settings, in many accounts put into different categories as Western (British), peripheral (Spanish) and oriental (Turkish) shared similar goals and met in the congresses of International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), which has a particular importance for the Turkish women, as the 12th conference was held in Istanbul, Turkey.

To show this connection and women's active role in the Early Republican women's movement, three magazines are of crucial importance, (Türk) Kadın Yolu [(Turkish) Woman's Path] from Turkey, the official publication of the Turkish Women's Union; Mundo Femenino [Feminine World] from Spain, the official publication of the Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas [National Association of Spanish Women] and Jus Suffragii, official publication of IWSA. While the strengths of women's movements from Britain, Spain and Turkey varied, women's connections led women to become part of the trends of the global network of women.

Keywords: Women's movements, Turkey, Spain, Britain, transnationalism



WOMEN, WRITING AND POLITICS IN INTERWAR ALBANIA. MUSINE KOKALARI'S LIFE WRITING, POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND PERSECUTION IN COMMUNIST ALBANIA

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This paper aims to discuss the late presence of women in Albanian literature, politics and culture and how this impacted the development of the country in the first decades of the 20th century.

The paper will focus on the work of the first dissident in the Eastern Blok and the first woman politician and writer in Albania, Musine Kokalari.

By means of close reading, the cultural and a biographic approach, there will be addressed the views of Kokalari on national issues of the time and her political activity, which ultimately led to her arrest and imprisonment in the dawn of communism. She suffered 20 years of prison and life time exile until dying in her early 60s of untreated breast cancer.

While not a feminist, Kokalari was the first and most important woman writer of her time, a pioneer in women involvement in politics and in the cultural life of the country whose legacy is crucial to Albanian history.

The paper will address her memoirs and epistolary written while in political exile. It will first present a synthesized view of her short stories and the way she sees women in relation to the cultural and traditional context of the time; there will be explored her memoir in relation to the topic of national imperatives during World War II and her stand as a woman (writer) and an Albanian; furthermore, there will be discussed her political views and contribution as well as her legacy as the first woman politician in Albania.

Keywords: Women (writing), politics, persecution, communism, Albania

MIRA KOČONDA VODVARŠKA - A HIDDEN PIONEER OF FEMINISM IN CROATIA

IDA OGRAJŠEK GORENJAK, Dr. Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb

Mira Kočonda Vodvarška may not be entirely unknown to those who study women's history. Anyone exploring women's and cultural movements in early 20th-century Croatia and Yugoslavia will likely encounter her name. She was one of the first female students at the University of Zagreb and participant of a landmark feminist debate in Zvonac in 1908. She was active in suffragist initiatives toward the end of World War I and during the interwar period. As president of the Women's Movement in Zagreb, affiliated with the Alliance of Women's Movements, she was instrumental in founding the Zagreb chapter of the Association of University Women. She also participated in international women's conferences and wrote extensively for various women's and daily newspapers. Despite these contributions, there has been no thorough biographical entry on her life, let alone an in-depth analysis of her work.

This presentation aims to achieve three main goals. First, it will place Kočonda's work within her historical context, highlighting her role as part of a new generation of educated women professionals in Croatia. This group grew significantly during the interwar period, forming a closely-knit community that initiated various cultural, social, and feminist activities. Second, the presentation will focus on her feminist activism and thought, including her involvement in different initiatives and organizations, and her efforts to promote collaboration among them. Finally, it will explore reasons for her relative obscurity in historical records, investigating why her contributions have been overlooked in contemporary historiography.

Keywords: Kočonda, Women's Movemet, Feminism, Croatia

"HOW DO YOU DESIRE US?": OLENA TELIHA AND SITUATIONAL MILITARISTIC FEMININITY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY UKRAINE

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This paper examines the life and contributions of Olena Teliha, a Ukrainian poet, publicist, and nationalist who played a significant role in the nationalist movements of twentieth-century Ukraine. It explores the concept of "situational militaristic femininity," a term coined to describe how Teliha's literary and political endeavors challenged traditional gender roles within the nationalist context. The study traces Teliha's journey from her early life in Russia to her eventual embrace of Ukrainian nationalism, highlighting the transformative events and influences, such as her relationships with prominent nationalist figures and her immersion in Ukrainian intellectual circles.

The analysis focuses on Teliha's literary works, particularly her poetry and essays, which reflect her vision of a militant femininity that transcends conventional domestic roles. Teliha's writings reveal her belief in the integral role of women in the national struggle, portraying them as both nurturing figures and active participants in political and military endeavors. The paper also contextualizes Teliha's contributions within the broader historiography of women's roles in fascist and nationalist movements, noting the shift from viewing women merely as passive supporters to recognizing their active involvement and influence.

By restoring Teliha's agency and examining her literary output as standalone intellectual contributions, this paper challenges the male-centric narratives that have historically dominated the study of nationalism. It argues for a nuanced understanding of how gender and nationalism intersected in the stateless context of early twentieth-century Ukraine, ultimately advocating for a reevaluation of women's contributions to nationalist movements beyond traditional gender stereotypes.

Keywords: Nationalism, Olena Teliha, Femininity, Ukraine

TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION, NATIONAL TENSIONS. THE CRITICISM OF IZABELA SADOVEANU ON LITTLE ENTENTE OF WOMEN

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In my paper, I will focus on Izabela Sadoveanu's critique of Little Entente of Women (LEW) as published in newspaper Dimineața during the period 1923-1925. A prominent writer and active feminist, Sadoveanu was a founding member of Asociația pentru emanciparea civilă și politică a femeilor române [Association for the Civil and Political Emancipation of Romanian Women] (ACPERW). Through the articles she authored for *Pagina Femeii*, a weekly feminist page in the daily newspaper Dimineața, Sadoveanu criticized LEW on numerous occasions during these years.

The presentation and analysis of Sadoveanu's arguments against LEW aim to provide an insight into the reception of a transnational collaboration in Romania. I will suggest that the creation of LEW played an important role in fueling rivalries between the country's largest feminist organizations struggling for representation, both on a national and international levels. Furthermore, the analysis of Sadoveanu's argumentation will outline, on one hand, the strategies used in this struggle for influence within the Romanian feminist movement of the interwar period, and on the other hand, the oscillations of this prominent representative of the women's emancipation struggle between a socialist perspective and a nationalistic rhetoric.

Keywords: Little Entente of Women, Romanian Feminism, Nationalism, Izabela Sadoveanu

FEMINISM AND PACIFISM: REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCES IN INTERWAR YUGOSLAVIA

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JASMINA MILANOVIĆ, Principal Research Fellow, Institute of Contemporary History, Belgrade

The goal of this research is to analyse how feminism and pacifism were constructed in the interwar Yugoslavia by comparing four conferences that were held in Yugoslavia. We shall analyse the contents of: 1. two regional and 2. two international women's conferences: 1. a) The Second conference of the Little Entente of Women (LEW) and b) The Third Congress of the Unity of Slavic Women (USW); 2. a) The Congress of International Women Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), during which a special peace conference was organized, and b) The Congress of International Council of Women (ICW).

We will analyse the work, development, and transformation of Yugoslav women's organizations and the goals of women's activism and concepts of pacifism(s) in 1920s and 1930s.

We will also present women's networking through regional and international women's organizations in two segments: local cooperation of Yugoslav women's organizations with different programs and goals within the framework of LAW, USW and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom activities, and cooperation and networking of Yugoslav societies with regional and international women's organizations.

The research is based on Yugoslav interwar women's periodicals and newspapers from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and archive material from the Historical Archive of Belgrade: Fond Glavinić Family and Fond of International Federation of University Women (Yugoslav Branch). Our analysis methodologically relies on transnational and feminist historical approaches by Fracisca De Haan, as well as the concept of European Feminisms by Karen Offen, and the concept of internationalism by Leila J. Rupp. We also included methodology of feminist pacifism by Jo Vellacott.

Keywords: feminism, pacifism, women's organizations, Kingdom of Yugoslavia

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH: WAR AND PEACE IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF FEMINIST AND COMMUNIST WOMEN IN ROMANIA DURING THE 1930's

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How did feminist and communist women from Romania think about war and peace during the 1930s? The period was marked by the rise of fascism and rearmament, across Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkans. These developments went together with "treaty-revisionist" claims.

In this context, Romanian feminists had to forge international alliances and political concepts through which to oppose fascism, territorial revision as well as communism. In the 1920s, most feminists in Romania were reluctant to engage openly with organizations critical of a post-World War I diplomatic and geopolitical consensus hugely advantageous to the Kingdom of Romania. This led to reserved interactions with a major feminist pacifist organization such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Meanwhile, most communist women –interested in international revolution rather than the suffrage pursued by liberal feminists – were being chased by the political police as threats to state order, in Romania as in various neighboring countries. Communist women's international alliances were much clearer yet their discourses on war and peace were shaped by local dynamics as well.

My paper will focus on the political thought of feminist and communist women in Romania during the rise of fascist politics in Europe. It will explore feminist and communist women's stances on such issues as: the ethics of war and peace, peace treaty revision, disarmament and defense spending, recruitment and conscription, international solidarity and cooperation, minority rights, fascism and antifascism. Beginning from the Romanian case study, it will seek to tease out questions for future transnational research on pacifism and antimilitarism in the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: Pacifism, rearmament, political thought, Romania, communist women

POOR GREEK WOMEN DURING THE LONG GREAT WAR: WAR EXPERIENCE, POLITICS AND CONFLICT, 1914-1925

GEORGE CHRANIOTIS, Dr. Historian

The women's war experience during the First World War has been diligently analyzed in the international historiographical production as it is an unequivocal prerequisite for the interpretation of total war. International historiography has come to fruitful conclusions concerning the role of women as agents of anti-war and social protest. On the contrary, in Greece the history of the war period 1912 – 1922 was limited to accounts relating to the military, diplomatic and political dimensions, as pertaining only to men and the elite or the history of the bourgeois feminists.

The present paper based on the history from below approach, focuses on poor and underprivileged Greek women and attempts to trace their experience in the context of the transformations the total war brought to Greek society, their struggle against and perception of wartime conditions, mobilization and state policies about them. More specifically wives or relatives of reservists and veterans, widows and orphans are researched and examined both as being the agents of "cultural demobilization" after 1922, namely agents of the opposition to the prolongation of wars and the enforcement of peace and as agents of social welfare and land distribution.

Making use of elaborate theoretical concepts such as "total war", "economy of sacrifice", "war contract", "cultural demobilization" in conjunction with gender, an attempt will be made to record and analyze the peculiarities of the Greek case by integrating it in the wider European context. For the present proposal, new archival sources from General State Archives of Greece, newspapers of the time and texts concerning women will be researched.

Keywords: Women, War, Greece, Anti-war Protest, Cultural Demobilization



FEMINISMS, PACIFISM, AND POLITICS IN INTERWAR BALKANS/EUROPE THROUGH THE PERSONAL LIFE OF ZHENI BOZHILOVA-PATEVA

KRASSIMIRA DASKALOVA, Professor, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia

My paper deals with the life trajectory of Zheni Bozhilova-Pateva (1878-1955) – a socialist, feminist, pacifist, journalist and social reformer and one of the most visible activists of the Bulgarian women's movement during the first decades of the 20th C.

Using biographical and entangled history approaches, it shows how various entanglements resulted in crossing a number of boundaries – educational, professional, ideological, organizational. It questions the use of fixed binary (labels of) identities such as socialist-liberal, showing the fluidity of personal identities which are always on the move, always in the making, and a result of various contextual entanglements.

Keywords: Interwar Bulgaria/Balkans/Europe, feminisms, pacifism, entanglements

THE BULGARIAN WOMEN'S SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC UNION (1921-1934): ENTANGLEMENTS AND SPECIFICS OF FEMINIST STRATEGIES IN THE INTERWAR EAST-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

VALENTINA MITKOVA, Associate Professor, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia

The current paper focuses on the Women's Social Democratic Union, WSDU - an influential left-wing women's organization established in Bulgaria between the two world wars (in 1921). The latter comes to illustrate the way the socialist paradigm was introduced and contextualized through the lens of women's activism in Bulgaria, as well to offer a glimpse at the diversity of feminisms that existed as transformative forces in different historical and social contexts. Sharing the views of the male Social Democratic Union - the former "broad" socialists led by Yanko Sakazov, being affiliated to the International Women's Socialist Movement, and at the same time articulating some of the key arguments of the Bulgarian and international liberal feminism, the WSDU developed a syncretic project for women's emancipation that could be traced and analyzed at several levels. The ideological entanglements between bourgeois and left feminisms, the crossing of their strategies related to improving women's social, economic, and political situation can be outlined in the reformist program of the WSDU popularized by its printed organs - the newspapers Blagodenstvie (Prosperity), 1931-1934, and Nedovolnata (The Dissatisfied), 1931-1931; ideological overlapping and personal influences among activists are also readable in the in the biographies of some of the most prominent women social democrats, at certain periods closely related to the structures and activities of the Bulgarian Women's Union - the largest (liberal) feminist organization in the country till the 1940s; feminist convergences are at last visible in the spectrum of international and Balkan conferences of women's activism in which women social democrats took part and/or represented on the pages of their press.

Keywords: socialist feminism, liberal feminism, women social democrats, reformist project for women's emancipation, socialist women's press, women's conferences.

GREEK SOCIALIST WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD: AMBIGUOUS TRAJECTORIES

ELEFTHERIA PAPASTEFANAKI, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Crete

The Socialist Women's Group (SWG), the organization that promoted socialist feminist ideas in Greece, sought to build bridges with feminist organizations abroad. The paper explores the participation of the SWG in international and regional meetings during the interwar era and their ambiguous stance towards the organizations of bourgeois feminism to reveal the networks of collaboration it developed at both levels as well as its contribution. On the one hand it adopted the guidelines of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) on the policy of alliances and, on the other, recognizing the need for the coordination of women across the Balkan region, it took a positive stance towards initiatives such as the ones undertaken by agents of "bourgeois" feminism, as the SWG names them in its official documents (i.e. the Little Entente of Women and the First Inter-Balkan Conference for the Protection of Children held in 1936). The analysis focuses on the nature of their collaboration, the critique the SWG directed at bourgeois feminist organizations, and the shared assumptions among various feminist groups. By looking at the case of the small but particularly active both internationally and domestically- SWG, it contributes to a wider understanding of the entangled histories of the feminisms of the time (socialist, liberal) (Fr. de Haan). To this end, it draws upon little-studied archival material: the Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou Archive (Secretary and founding member of the SWG); the Stratis Someritis Archive (Secretary of the Socialist Party of Greece, after 1933; the correspondence of the SWG and Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou); and the feminist press of the time.

Keywords: Socialist Women's Group, international socialist congresses, Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou

FEMINIST POLITICAL THOUGHT IN INTERWAR EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE: THE CASE OF ALOJZIJA ŠTEBI

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This paper explores the political thought of Alojzija Štebi (1883-1956), a pre-First World War social democrat active in Ljubljana who, in the early 1920s, became one of the leading feminist activists in interwar Yugoslavia. Štebi was predominantly active in the Alijansa ženskih pokreta (the Alliance of Women's Movements, initially founded as the Feminist Alliance in 1923), which she presided over until 1940. She can be considered one of the leading feminist voices of her time.

By examining the political thought of Alojzija Štebi, this paper aims to do two things. First, it reflects on the methodological approaches to researching feminisms in interwar East Central Europe, arguing that the history of political thought in the region is a useful framework for researching and rethinking the relationship between feminisms and politics of the time. Secondly, the paper reflects on the utility and limitations of using the liberal/socialist binary when researching the history of feminism in interwar East Central Europe.

Keywords: Feminist political thought, Alojzija Štebi, interwar Yugoslavia

CONNECTING THE PIECES: DOCUMENTING AND INTERLINKING THE HISTORY OF FEMINISM WITH THE USE OF COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

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LIDA CHARAMI, MA Museologist, FORTH-ICS
KONSTANTINA KONSOLAKI, R&D Engineer, FORTH-ICS
CHRYSOULA BEKIARI, R&D Engineer, FORTH-ICS

Studying the history of feminism is a complex task that involves a wide range of activities, from discovering and gathering archival material, to systematically analyzing it for extracting evidence and insights. In this process, it is essential to document detailed information about the key "entities of interest", such as individuals, locations, organisations, and events, and to understand how these entities are interconnected within a broader context. To support this effort, we present a set of web-based information management systems designed to assist researchers and domain experts in recording rich, interlinked information related to their research objectives, and exploring the data through user-friendly interfaces.

The first system, called SYNTHESIS, facilitates the collaborative documentation of entities relevant to the domain under study. It is configurable for specific use cases and needs, while also allowing the recording of data provenance information. SYNTHESIS complies with the documentation standard CIDOC CRM (ISO 21127:2023), ensuring the integration and exchange of data with clear, unambiguous meaning. The goal is to produce sustainable, high-value data with long-term validity that can be reused. Another system, THEMAS, is a web-based platform for the creation and management of controlled vocabularies (thesauri), which display hierarchical, associative and equivalence relations among terms or concepts. A documentation field in SYNTHESIS can be directly linked to a thesaurus term in THEMAS. Lastly, the AQuB system is a web-based tool for data querying and exploration. It operates over a semantic network of linked data (SYNTHESIS has embedded processes for producing such a network) and offers an assistive query-building interface that helps researchers to gradually construct and execute advanced queries.

Keywords: information systems, scientific documentation, data exploration, digital humanities

RESEARCHING THE ARCHIVES: THE SILENCES OF MARGINALIZED WOMEN BECOME CRIES

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This presentation aims to examine how women of *loose morals* appear or disappear from the archives in Greece and Bulgaria during the interwar period. The comparative approach to the subject in two modern nation-states is linked to the role and contribution of women in production, reproduction, and the education of the new generation based on national ideals. Specifically, the presentation focuses on the cases of Greece and Bulgaria and the investigation of archival material concerning *women*, particularly *women of loose morals*. This approach allows us to trace how their silences are transformed into voices during this particular time period, which defines the data, moral values and laws that mark the deviant behavior of an era and a society, while by defining morality, the boundaries of "exclusion" and "separation" are established, marginalizing certain groups and rendering them voiceless. Therefore, the comparative study of related texts will contribute to highlighting the issue of *prostitution* and *public morality* in interwar Bulgaria and Greece. Furthermore, it will offer insights into the *inclusion and exclusion of women* as political subjects within the framework of nation-state formation during this period.

Keywords: prostitutes, archives, women of free morals, Balkan history, silence, interwar history, Bulgaria and Greece

FEMINISM AND WOMEN'S ADVOCACY IN INTERWAR ALBANIA

ANNA BATZELI, Postdoctoral Researcher, Democritus University of Thrace

The first reports of Albanian women's movement date back to the second half of the 19th century, while the first women-led organization established in 1909. After the end of World War I, in the newly established Albanian state, the women's and feminist movement gradually flourished. Organizations like Ylli i Mëngjezit (The Morning Star) and Motermate (Sisters) advocated for equal access to education, core social rights and maternal healthcare. These organizations had divisions across the country, established their own journals to advocate for women's rights and actively participated in the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1924. When Zog I acceded to the throne in 1928, the landscape of feminism and women-led organizations was reformed. Zog, in an effort to control women's movement and to eliminate opposition, abolished existing organizations and established the Gruaja Shiqiptare (Albanian Woman). This state-run organization promoted the implementation of several social and economic rights and had branches in twenty locations across the country, but its impact was limited to women belonging to upper class. In 1929, a new women association under the patronage of the King's family was created. Shqiptarja (The Albanian Woman) through its magazine gave voice to women leaders of the time to advocate for equal social and economic rights. Additionally, Shqiptarja developed links with the International Alliance of Women in Geneva and dispatched representatives to Little Entente of Women meetings in 1934 and 1936. The aim of the proposed paper is to present feminism and women's advocacy, highlighting their particularities in interwar Albania.

Keywords: Albania, feminism, advocacy, rights

FEMINIST DISCOURSES ON THE BODY IN INTERWAR GREECE 1923-1936

KOSTAS TSAMPOURAS, MA Student, University of Crete

At the beginning of the 20th century, public discourse on issues related to sex expanded significantly, driven by the rising incidence of venereal diseases, as evidenced by records from that period, and literature. This discourse reflected concerns about ethics, personal and social hygiene, and sexuality. Prostitution and the women involved were often blamed as the primary cause of the spread of infections. In response, doctors and politicians proposed state intervention in prostitution as a means to combat the spread of these diseases. The approach taken by Greece mirrored that of many European states, which adopted the regulation system to address the issue.

This paper, through an analysis of public discourses expressed by Greek feminists in publications of that time, such as the journals *O Agon tis Gynaikas* (1923-1936, 1964-1967, 1979-2017) and *Ellinis* (1921-1940), explores the topic of prostitution and the related laws enacted in response. These discourses, which are an extension of debates on the body, reveal feminist perspectives on morality and women's sexuality. While these feminists advocated for women's freedom to choose their profession, including prostitution, they also promoted a moral way of life for women, emphasizing the importance of family and devotion to its members.

Keywords: Feminism, prostitution, law, ethics, politics, sexuality

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION: AN ASPECT OF THE FEMINIST SOCIAL POLITICS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

VAIA VANESSA GERAGORI, MA Researcher, University of Crete

In the aftermath of World War I, public discourse across political and social institutions and associations expanded beyond the prevention of future conflicts and the promotion of global peace to address broader goals, including the democratic organization of the states and the advancement of social peace based on the principles of equality and justice. Within this evolving context, the protection of children emerged as a key issue, shaping both public discourses and social and legislative agendas of the states. For feminist organizations, child protection became a focal point of advocacy, with their efforts concentrating on three main areas: child and family, child labor, and juvenile delinquency and justice.

Drawing on available sources of the period, as well as contemporary scholarly literature, these issues were discussed at national level (feminist organizations, press, state), regional level (feminist and political institutions, such as Little Entente of Women, Balkan Conference), and international level (international feminist organizations, League of Nations).

The aim of the presentation is to investigate: i. the interaction between local, regional, and international levels in shaping the politics on child protection, ii. the influence of feminist politics on national legislative reforms. The focus will be on the Greek case (national level), the Little Entente of Women (regional level), and the League of Nations (international level). In exploring the legislative changes, the paper will examine the Greek legislation and its evolution, with references –to a certain extent-to other Balkan and Central European countries.

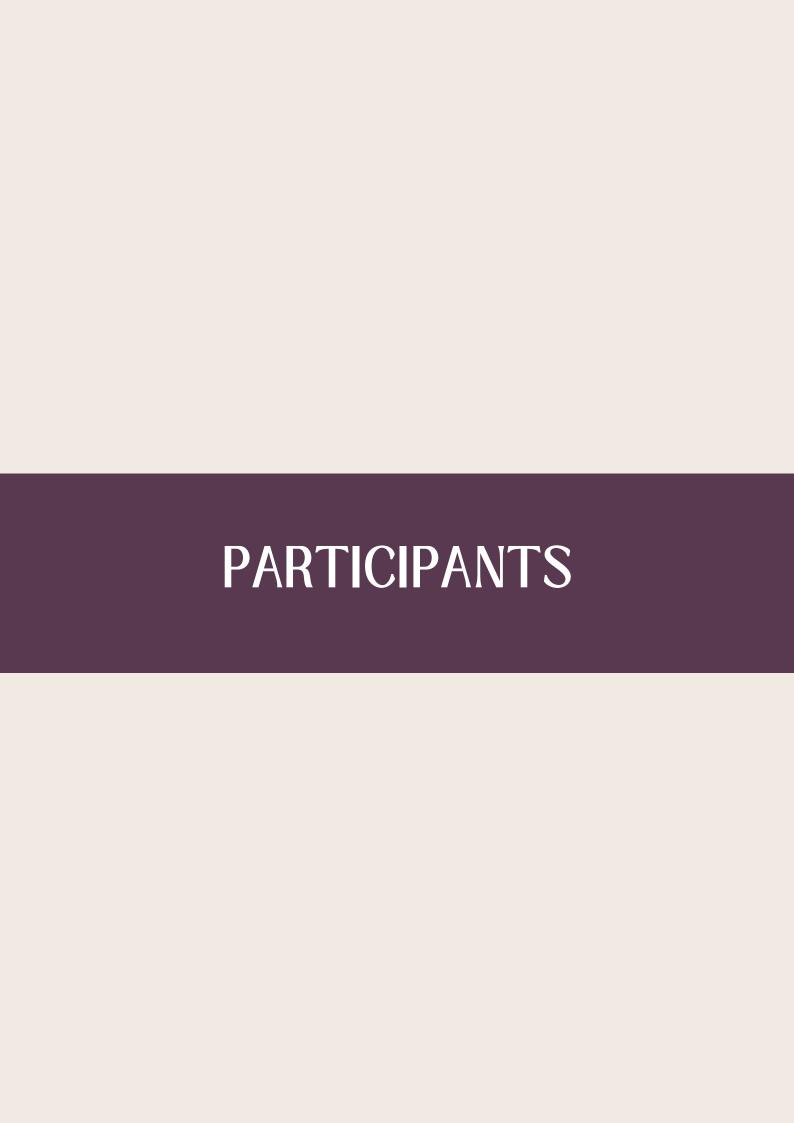
Keywords: Little Entente of Women, Child protection, Legislative reforms, Family, Child labor, Juvenile justice

THE LITTLE ENTENTE OF WOMEN AS A MULTIFACETED FEMINIST ASSOCIATION (1923-1929)

DIMITRA SAMIOU, Dr. Adjunct Academic Staff, Hellenic Open University

This paper provides an overview of the Little Entente of Women (LEW), a regional feminist and pacifist organization active in East-Central Europe and the Balkans between 1923 and 1929. LEW addressed a broad spectrum of feminist issues, ranging from women's rights to fostering cooperation among LEW member states and promoting peace in the region. The paper argues that during its brief existence, LEW's priorities shifted from advocating for voting rights to focusing on the protection of women and children and promoting cross-border economic cooperation. While LEW's agenda paralleled that of many international feminist organizations in the 1920s, the alliance also advanced national diplomatic objectives, distinguishing it from other transnational associations of the time.

Keywords: Little Entente of Women, feminisms, citizenship, peace



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