

# WOMEN AND MINORITIES ARCHIVES

WAYS OF ARCHIVING



SEMARSH

**Book Series: Women and Minorities Archives**

**Volume 1**

**Kristina Popova, Marijana Piskova, Margareth Lanzinger, Nikola Langreiter,  
Petar Vodenicharov (eds.)**

**WOMEN AND MINORITIES: WAYS OF ARCHIVING**

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**DocWoment**

**Book Series: Women and Minorities Archives**

**Editorial Board:** Kristina Popova, Marijana Piskova, Petar Vodenicharov,  
Anastasya Pashova, Milena Angelova, Nurie Muratova

**Volume 1**

**WOMEN AND MINORITIES: WAYS OF ARCHIVING**

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© Kristina Popova, Marijana Piskova, Margareth Lanzinger, Nikola Langreiter,  
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## Women and Minorities: the Different Ways of Archiving

### Introduction

#### The Project

The idea to exchange experiences, ideas, and practices in the field of women and minority archives came up some years ago as a result of the long years of collaboration between Austrian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Macedonian scholars especially in the framework of the yearly “Winter Balkan Meetings”. The deficit of documents and catalogues in this field challenged us to develop a project “Women and Minority Documentation”. In 2007 the project got the support of the ASO Ljubljana-Sofia, which made possible the exchange of ideas on workshops and conferences, and finally to publish a book.

The main objective of the project was to organize a functioning network between the partners, to inform each other about the state of art in our countries in order to develop a future collaboration. We planned three workshops - in Bulgaria (Razlog), Serbia (Belgrade), and Austria (Vienna) - and a final conference in Blagoevgrad. We had also to elaborate a project website and to make initial steps in the digitalization of the archive information about women's and minorities' documentation.

The first workshop “Women and Minorities: Ways of Archiving” which was held in **Razlog** (10.09-12.09.2007) brought together 12 specialists in Archive Studies and Gender and Minority Studies from Sofia and Blagoevgrad University. The existing memory prescriptions and practices of preservation of the women's and minority's documentation in Bulgaria in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were identified and discussed.

The second workshop “Women and Minority Documents in the Social Memory of South-East Europe” took place in **Belgrade** (26.10-27.10.2007). Historians from Austria, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria shared their experience in archive practices, elaboration of catalogues, and inventories of regional and national archives as well as the different publication policies. Common gaps and deficits concerning women's and minorities' documentation were identified; we discussed also the possibilities of developing thematic digital catalogues and data bases in this field. Two young scholars from the University of Belgrade recommended by Prof. Miroslav Jovanović – Slobodan Mandić and Jovana Pavlović joined the project. We visited the historical Archives of



Belgrade and had the possibility to observe the process of digitalization of documents and to discuss the opportunities the digital collections offer to researchers.

Our Austrian partners hosted the third workshop “Women Archives – Realities, Desires, Reflections. Women and Politics” (Vienna 30.11.– 01.12. 2007). The organisers invited representatives of various archives and museums: the Austrian State Archives, the National Library, the Jewish Museum Vienna, the Women’s Archive Bozen, the Johanna Dohnal-Archive in the trust of Bruno Kreisky-Archive, the STICHWORT. Archive of the Women’s & Lesbian’s Movements. The Collection of Women’s Estates at the University of Vienna was also presented as a successful example of archive, educational, and scientific work which attracts more and more students and encourages them for gender history research.

It was most interesting, astonishing for some of us, and consoling for all of us to learn that altogether the women’s and minorities’ archives have to deal with the same problems and challenges – albeit sometimes on different levels. Very often the starting points of women and minority documentation trace back to some private or at least personal initiative. The histories as well as the current conditions of these archives are characterised by long-time and time consuming struggles for money. It means writing countless applications to potential financiers and public authorities, and working hard on convincing various publicities about the need for women and minority documentation, about the necessity of the public visibility of these social groups marginalised by the official memory policies. And once established, very often the archives have to work at rather low if not poor standard, because high requirements of adequate archiving can not be met within the existing framework. This especially is the case when it comes to technical equipment for storage and conservation, where, of course, all the experts know about the state of the art.

It is easier to meet the own demands when it comes to contents and questions of accessibility and support of users. Of course, in this field lack of resources causes restrictions but regularly they are made up by personal engagement. For example, all of the institutions represented at the workshop appreciate being used by differing target groups with differing claims. This openness on one hand causes great effort concerning customer liaison and support, but it is vital for public relations on the other. It was most interesting to think about new methods of collecting, describing, and cataloguing of the archived documents, and to rethink the established systems with reference to their ad-

vantages and drawbacks.

A hot topic aloof finances and resources are ethical concerns – for example when dealing with ego- and other personal documents. Should these relicts of individuals be published (p. e. online) in the name of research, in the name of education, of public memory? In this concern, it is important to point out the theoretical background of these initiatives and institutions: It is based on a non- and anti-hierarchic concept of history and memory. History no longer confines itself only to ‘big names’, the experiences and the perceptions of various social groups and the so called ‘ordinary people’ entered many areas of historiography.

The second part of the Viennese workshop for example was dedicated to women and politics. Four studies located in Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, and former Yugoslavia assembled and analysed online sources allowing work on the history of female suffrage. Doing so they contributed to the emerging compilation of (new) electronic thematically organised catalogues, which will create better research opportunities for scholars engaged in women’s, gender and minority studies.

The final conference of the project took place in **Blagoevgrad** (16.02–18.02.2008). Scholars from Sofia University and the National College for Information Technologies, Institute and Museum for Ethnography in Sofia and others – as well as the project members from Austria, Macedonia, Serbia – took part in the Conference Panel “Women and Minority Documentation and Digital Presentation”. The main topic for the discussion was the need of initiatives of preservation and presentation of women’s and minorities documents **Krassimira Daskalova** presented the history of the women archives in the last century and their appearance in the framework of women’s movements in Europe as well as their importance for Gender Studies and as contribution for the democratization of history. It was in the twenties of the last decade as the President of the Bulgarian Women’s Union Dimitrana Ivanova informed about the Women’s Movement Archive in Amsterdam and discussed the need of archiving documents. She ordered her personal archive and left it in the Historical Archive of the National Library in Sofia. This archive of course is a very important source for the women’s history. The digitalization of guides, catalogues, inventories or documents also offers new possibilities for research. The project website about women and minorities in Bulgarian State Archive system is a step to make the access to information easier.

**The volume “Women and Minorities: Ways of Archiving”**

The initial thematic concept of the volume's structure was to start with the presentation of the different state policies and strategies of archiving. It seemed to be a good approach to explain the deficits of documents, inventories, or catalogues for women and minorities. But this approach also prescribes a general view of women and minorities as "victims" of state archive policies. To avoid this black and white perspective, after reading all texts, we decided to reach this topic of the archiving policy step by step after presenting the importance of the women's and minorities memories, different women's documentations, and corresponding activities. The aim is to reveal more unused archives and documents stressing not the deficits but their diversity and research potential. We start with an interview with **Edith Saurer**, one of the initiators of the *Collection of Women's Estates* of University of Vienna in order to present the women's initiatives for preserving their memories. In the interview Edith Saurer gives a glance in the history of the collection and the large opportunities it offers for research and education. **Li Gerhalter**, who runs the everyday business of the Viennese *Sammlung Frauennachlass* (*Collection of Women's Estates*), represents the archive – its founding, its development, its holdings, and its management. After this general introduction she focuses her interest on the aspect of how women's personal testimonies reach the archive, showing in a very impressive way the range of circumstances and accidents taking effect in such a process. She inspired some sort of motivation research by outlining only some of the reasons why women's estates are given to an institution such as the *Collection of Women's Estates*. They reach it from wanting to be memorised, to contribute to scientific progress, to get rid of something without chucking it out. **Nikola Langreiter** introduces a source kept in the *Collection of Women's Estates* at the University of Vienna – the diary of Wetti Teuschl – and focuses on the question whether this journal rather was an instrument for remembering or an instrument for forgetting. The records, containing just a few years of a long life, bear a manifold story rich in tensions. While the first part of the book is typical for a young girl's diary, the second part accompanies the rapid financial and social descent of a married couple during the economic crises of the 1870s. The diary shows how engaged and vehement the woman tries to oppose – not only with the means and strategies assigned to her gender. Through the autobiographies and other documents, preserved in the private archive of the prominent Stanchioff's family, **Mari Firkatian** presents the preservation of memory as a deliberately intergenerational affair of both women and men in this family, who played an important role in the Bulgarian political life as

ministers and diplomats in a long period of more than 100 years and preserved their archive tradition in emigration. **Milena Angelova** researches the documents of the state centralized memorial movement in socialist Bulgaria during the 1980s and traces the place of the women's memoirs in this huge records collection. **Renate Telser** introduces the *Frauenarchiv / Archivio storico delle donne / Women's Historical Archives* Bolzano / Bozen (Italy) which goes back to a political decision on the communal level – it was not a grassroots project, but it was established in 2003 by a group of women from different cultural and social backgrounds. In the following years it was integrated in a broader structure of associations and in an infrastructure which includes a women's bar (*Frauencafé*). The *Frauenarchiv* collects material with a special focus on the twentieth century. Furthermore, the archivists involved are preparing a main catalogue of documents concerning women's history that are available in South-Tyrolean archives. In 2007 they also launched an oral-history project on women's biographical memories. *STICHWORT – a Feminist Archive and Library in Vienna* is presented by the head of this organization, **Margit Hauser**. *STICHWORT* is a political project of the autonomous women's and lesbians' movements. Since 1981 it has collected all kinds of documents, such as, for instance, posters and leaflets, journals, or books which, at that time, were not bought by mainstream libraries. Thus *STICHWORT* has some unique documents that are not, like in other archives, hidden in patriarchal categories or keywords. It provides access to a broad range of literature relevant for students, artists, activists and others who do feminist research; since 1999 it has also been offering services to feminist researchers. *STICHWORT* also organizes a wide range of events, such as readings, discussions, exhibitions, workshops, etc. Information about its activities can be found in the bi-annual "Stichwort-Newsletter".

The section **Women & Minority Archives** discusses the interaction between minority people and state in the process of documentation. **Daniela Koleva** introduces in her article the importance of oral history sources. She analyses the interviews with Jewish women of different generations in order to explain what was "to be Jewish" for them and the changes of Jewish identity as cultural capital through the generations. The question about the differences in the documentation written by and concerning the Roma minority in the socialist Bulgaria is analysed by **Anastasia Pashova**. She explains why Roma people became a "silent" minority in the archives as well as the state strategies of their assimilation by changing their religious and ethnic identity. **Gabriele**

**Kohlbauer** and **Wiebke Krohn** from the *Jewish Museum Vienna* present their exhibition “Best of all Women. Female Dimensions in Judaism“, pointing out which gaps had to be overcome between ideas and implementation possibilities. They focus their attention on the roles of Jewish women in religious, economical, social, and cultural contexts. Doing so they also displayed how some ‘female’ or ‘male’ points of view very often lead to completely different perceptions of history. The two historians especially reflect on their strategy to work with biographic examples without wanting to tell life stories. In the exhibition they tried to stress all kinds of activities conducted by Jewish women rather than exposing persons. The two of them neither disguised the pitfalls of such an approach nor the difficulties they had been confronted with finding support for a show concentrating on a presentation of women’s history through women’s objects and documents.

**Georgeta Nazarska** draws our attention to the state strategies of religious and ethnic assimilation. She discusses the question why Muslim women become a state priority during the socialism and how official state policies uses women’s societies to integrate Muslim women in its assimilation efforts.

The third part of the volume “**Women in State Politics**” is dedicated to the documentation of the political participation of women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Nurie Muratova and Kristina Popova** have based their joint research on the documents of the first participations of women in the elections in Bulgaria in the late 1930s, following their inclusion/exclusion from the organization of the elections, the state’s strategy to connect their participation to the family life and the attempts of the Bulgarian Women’s Union to encourage their own choice.

**Maria Steiner** presents the *Johanna Dohnal Archive* in Vienna. This institution, department of an archive dedicated to the estates of one of the most famous Austrian politicians, Bruno Kreisky, has to put up with most severe financial problems. The documentation hosts all sorts of sources considered not official enough to be kept in the *Austrian State Archive*, audio material, letters, photographs, brochures, grey literature, bills introduced to the parliament by Johanna Dohnal, the first Women’s Minister of Austria, and her two successors. The archive tries to digitalize the ‘most crucial’ documents as well as the most attractive sources (such as posters, and other campaigning material) to provide easy access to teachers, researchers and non-professional users. Maria Steiner discusses the most delicate questions of privacy rights and public interest, as well

as the matter of taking fees or not. **Roxana Cheschebek** analyses the discussion about women's suffrage in Rumania since the beginning of the women's movement in 1894 as well as the role of the different women's societies in the next decades. The rising of the political importance of women is also presented by **Jovana Pavlović** and **Slobodan Mandić** in their contribution about the Belgrade daily newspaper "Politika" and its 'women's page'. Through publications and cartoons "Politika" supported also some traditional biases and stereotypes about the political participation of women. An important group of political privileged women is presented by **Petar Vodenicharov** and **Milena Angelova**. They have researched the social and educational background, biographies, and political activities of the women – former guerrilla fighters and members of the Unions of the Fighters against Fascism in socialist Bulgaria which became in the course of time male clientelistic units.

The third part of the volume "**Women and Family, Women and Society**" connects the history of law and gender history. **Margareth Lanzinger's** paper on marriage contracts focuses on several essential points of pre-nuptial negotiations. Contracts mediate between the law and personal interests and therefore serve to reconcile norms and practices as well as norms and preferences. The analysis of marriage contracts reveals what men, women, and their families felt necessary to be based upon mutual agreement. Therefore this material is, from a gender-history perspective, a particularly rich source: it shows the various roles and scopes of action for both women and men, and it reveals gender-specific inequalities and possible forms of action in order to modify and mitigate certain inequalities. Last but not least, the paper shows that negotiations in the context of marriage and the various forms of settlement were based on gender-related concepts. Also in the field between law and gender history, **Anastasia Pashova** exposes some of the popular myths about the patriarchal Balkan family popular in the Bulgarian family research. Based on a large church documentation about divorces from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, she argues that women were initiators of the divorces in most of the cases. The last contribution in this section is that of **Jovana Pavlović** and **Slobodan Mandić** who represent the documentation of the Yugoslav University Educated Women Association in the 1920s and 1930s which had intensive international contacts. The Association published a bibliography of the women's writers in Yugoslavia and had an important place in the public discourse.

**The Policy of Archiving** in the frames of centralized state archive systems in the former socialist countries is a central topic in the volume. The lack of concepts of archiving women's and minorities' documentation is a common issue for the Macedonian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Romanian scholars. **Marijana Piskova** analyses the prescriptions of archiving in Bulgaria during the socialist period as well as the different levels of presentation of women and minorities in the archives: inventories, catalogues, publications. The article shows how the universalistic approach and criteria in archiving led to a marginalization of these groups in the process of documentation and archive description. **Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska** presents the Collections of Women's Documents in the Central Archives, which started in 1929 in Macedonia (then part of Yugoslavia). Further on she describes different women's societies and initiatives, and the documentation they left. She underlines their contribution for the democratic process in Macedonia and for the women's political participation. **Jovana Pavlović** and **Slobodan Mandić** also describe the development of the Serbian archive system after its beginning in 1898 and the place of women and minorities. With the present process of digitalization it becomes possible to make this groups more visible.

The last thematic field in the volume concerns the **Digital Women Archives and Presentations**. **Regina Wonisch** presents an internet multimedia project, casting a feminist view on museum exhibits: "MuSieum – displaying gender". The term "MuSieum" combines the German word for museum with the female pronoun (sie = she). In this way the title visualizes the aims of the project: the claim that female history should be made more visible in museum presentations, and the demand to focus the display on the way in which female history has already been included in the visual programme of the museum. What can the exhibits tell about the history of men and women? Several objects of four Viennese museums have been selected and regrouped, from a feminist perspective, in new configurations under different labelling to open up novel vistas in the virtual room. The project is to facilitate the formulation of key questions pertaining to the presentation of gender topics in museum displays and collections. **Lydia Jammerneegg** describes *Ariadne* – a knowledge portal and virtual library of literature and information sources for Women's and Gender Studies. *Ariadne's* main areas of work are the collection and documentation of women's, feminist, and gender studies, the elaboration of the library's historical holdings, and an online database (including articles from journals and anthologies). The *Ariadne* online project "Women in Motion" pre-

sents documents of the Austrian historical women's movement (1848–1918) with a chronology of its most important events, with information on outstanding persons, associations, organizations, schools, and educational institutions, and with women's periodicals and texts. The *Ariadne* team provides full online texts, supplemented with thematic, alphabetical, and chronological indexes as well as a bibliography. It also conducted various projects, such as “Women vote!”, an online exhibition of “85 years of women's vote in Austria”. In addition to these activities and offers, *Ariadne* provides an online content index and online articles from selected Historical Women's Journals.

At the end of the volume **Nurie Muratova** finally presents the first web catalogue of women and minorities archive fonds in Bulgaria. The website reveals that there are a lot of fonds and documents we did not know about. This proved that by any principle differences between free initiatives to preserve documents and the centralized state way of archiving the most importance precondition for the research is the interest for these documents and histories. That's why we decided to start a book serial in Women's and Minority Archives, which name is **DocWoment**.

For making the whole project as well as the book possible we would like to thank We would like to all participants who joined and supported the project activities: first of all to Felix Gajdusek, head of the ASO Sofia. Many thanks to the Belgrade University, the Research Platform Repositioning Women's and Gender History at the University of Vienna and the Southwestern University where the interesting discussions took place. And also to our colleague and friend Timothy Ashplant who was so very kind to correct some of the English versions of the articles.



EDITH SAURER: “FOR WOMEN, THE ACT OF WRITING – WHETHER  
LETTERS OR DIARIES – EXPRESSES THEIR IDENTITY, THEIR LIFE’S  
AMBITION, THE WILL TO SURVIVE”

Interview with EDITH SAURER



**Kristina Popova:** “How did the interest in women’s written estates emerge? How did the collection of such archives change women’s place in history?”

**Edith Saurer:** “I can say that the emergence of the collection of women’s written estates was a process and not a decision as in ‘Let’s make a collection of women’s written estates’. It probably could not have been decided as such. Nonetheless, from the start we had an interest in women’s history and gender history and that made us conscious of sources of this type.

Personally, I had been interested in the history of the lower class and of women since the 1970s. In 1989, a group of female historians prepared an exhibition “70 years of women’s right to vote” and wondered where we could find the sources which would demonstrate the experience of women taking part in the first vote. After putting an advertisement in the paper, we later received some documents at the institute – which I actually collected myself – after the exhibition had finished. However, we needed sources for women’s and gender history. This first acquisition remains the largest of all, even though over a period of 20 years we have received 200 different unpublished works in our collection. We realised what a wealth of references for women existed, which we had previously known nothing about. We were amazed how many women had put pen to paper. Not only letters, but also diaries. And not only middle class women of urban backgrounds, but women from rural backgrounds as well. Particularly significant for me is part of the written legacy of ‘Matilde Hanzel-Нѣbner’. There was an exchange of letters between this woman and a female friend, which began when they were still girls.

They wrote to each other every Wednesday, as they had arranged between themselves, even though they both lived in Vienna. It was more important to them to write than to meet and talk to each other. Obviously, writing gave them opportunities to express more important subjects. The practice of writing led to a specific possibility of self-knowledge, the clarification of relationships and also a type of sensuality. Writing is a sensual experience. I had no idea before of this intensive and extensive world of writing. The many letters written by the upper classes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also became the practice of middle class women in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (if they have still been kept). However, women of the lower classes also had some experience of writing.”

**Kristina Popova:** “Where did women of the lower classes write and keep their letters? People need a bit of space to do this. What sort of space did these women have to write?”

**Edith Saurer:** “I believe that under various circumstances, possibilities were found when the strong desire to write prevailed, as we are shown. In our collection, there is a diary of a female miller, which was originally a notebook used to account for income and expenditure. But later, when her son did not return from the war in 1945, she used it as a diary. She did it as a means to overcome this crisis in her life and rows of numbers turned into rows of sentences. She grabbed hold of a lifeline – which no-one had recommended to her – that created a diversion. She found time and space to write down her feelings.”

**Kristina Popova:** “The ability to write is dormant.”

**Edith Saurer:** “The ability to write is dormant and the need to write can erupt; or simply, writing as a means of communication is important – as in the case of migration. Amongst our collection there is a record of a woman who emigrated from Germany to New York, where she worked as a maid. Writing letters was the only possible means to stay in touch with her relatives. Even though she was not previously familiar with the practice of writing, her new circumstances made it a necessity. This had more to do with her own identity than her past, her family and her origin implied in this case.

An important aspect of writing is the will to live or will to survive. In the number

of documents we have, especially valuable to us are some printed postcards sent by a woman in a concentration camp in Theresienstadt to her relatives. For the relatives they were presumably the only proof that she was alive; for herself – although abridged, standardised and censored – they were a chance to ‘escape’ from the concentration camp through writing.

This was an important new discovery for us, it meant that women’s writing had/ has given them the option of defining their own experiences, their identity, and their will to live and survive. We would like to pass on this discovery in our research to our students.

In continuation, you perhaps know that we publish the “L’HOMME. *Archive*” series, where sources from our collection appear, as well as other publications. We had intended also to make a new publication of classics but have not yet completed this project. The first series was “Autobiography and Women’s Questions. Diaries, Correspondence, Political Works of Mathilde Hanzel-Hübner (1884–1970)” edited by Monika Bernold and Johanna Gehmacher. Now we have the next series, about Therese Lindenberg, by Christa Hämmerle and Li Gehalter with the collaboration of Ingrid Brommer and Christine Karner, and about Wetti Teuschl, by Nikola Langreiter. Therese Lindenberg was a singer, who wrote her diary during the Second World War, and unequivocally discussed the problems, persecution and humiliation she experienced as a result of her ‘mixed marriage’ – as they were called at that time – between Jews and Aryans.

Diaries and letters give an insight into the meaning that writing had for women and often the resistance they showed against political conditions. This is a well known fact during the First World War, also that there were numerous examples of forbidden love affairs which women maintained with prisoners-of-war. But such personal subjects are rarely documented. The diary of Johanna K., found in an attic in Klagenfurt, is one exception to this rule. It consists of two parts, that of a girl’s diary and the diary of an adult woman, who fell in love with a French officer. It concerns her desires, the skepticism she felt towards German nationalism and her social environment. She was born in 1892 near Cottbus in northern Germany. I really don’t know how this diary came to be in an attic in Klagenfurt. No idea! But I do know that it means a lot that it made the journey from Cottbus to Klagenfurt. It was intended to be kept. Certainly we do not know how

many diaries and letters from women have been thrown away, but we know that many were deliberately saved. This means that the authors themselves and those who saved the contents thought them worth saving as a record for the next generation; on condition that it be recognised as part of their history ...”

**Kristina Popova:** “Has this affected how you see yourself?”

**Edith Saurer:** “Writing is a focal point of my life. It is definitely professional writing. Now and again I keep a diary, when I feel the need to. I do not further reflect as to ‘why’, but of course there is the ‘collection’ and my professional occupation with diaries. This sometimes causes problems, whereby I start to analyse and this imposes limits. As a historian, the sources of the collection have given me an insight into women’s courses of action when, regardless of restrictions imposed by law, still went their own unusual ways. Civil laws had a big influence on the limited conditions imposed on women, but the extent of alternatives was nonetheless much greater. And they used it.”

**Kristina Popova:** “What do these personal references mean to young students, for young historians? Are they interested? Do they want to read them?”

**Edith Saurer:** “The students are very interested in these documents, since they lead them into another world, which they also have to reconstruct for themselves. They have to make contexts from the written words, establish their authenticity, identify people. Here is an example: Therese Lindenberg, who I have already spoken about, had a travel diary in her archive, written in her handwriting. In the course of her work on the diary, the graduate student Eva Weidinger-Vols discovered that this was simply a copy from the diary of another woman, who had travelled to Egypt, and whom Therese Lindenberg had cared for during a serious illness. She was able to reconstruct the text. It concerns the search for clues, which not only inspires knowledge, but also deepens the field of study.”

## WOMEN'S MEMORIES

### DECISIONS AND CHANCES – THE WINDING PATH OF WOMEN'S PERSONAL TESTIMONIES. *THE COLLECTION OF WOMEN'S ESTATES / SAMMLUNG FRAUENNACHL SSE, VIENNA*

Li Gerhalter

The *Collection of Women's Estates – Sammlung Frauennachl sse*<sup>1</sup> – at the *Department of History of the University of Vienna* currently maintains the estates of 196 persons (spring 2009). They were teachers, a miller, wives of factory owners, one photographer, housewives, maids, aristocratic women, women of independent means, pupils, students, farmers, Red Cross assistants, one butcher, artists, writers and dressmakers. They were young and old, urban and rural women, and sometimes the estates of their families, partners, or friends are included. None of them played a prominent role in public life.

All in all, the estates contain

- 523 diaries and diary-like records,
- 479 other book-like documents like almanacs, household accounts, poetry albums, etc.,
- about 25,000 pieces of correspondence,
- about 7,950 photographs,
- about 2,550 official and business documents, certificates, etc.,
- 45 autobiographical texts,
- 7 literary estates.

Slightly more than one fifth of the estates contain not only written records, but also small objects like awards and medals, so-called Star of David badges or caskets used for keeping letters.

The earliest record is an official document from 1738, the most recent one a diary

from 2002. However, most of the personal testimonies archived in the collection were written in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a regional focus on what is today Austria. Several estates, however, come from the crown lands of the former Habsburg monarchy, and some correspondences even span several continents.<sup>2</sup>

The estates' sizes vary greatly: the largest correspondence archived in the *Collection of Women's Estates* contains about 3,500 letters, about 2,000 of which were written during World War I alone. The largest diary estates comprise 47, 55, and 60 books respectively, the largest photographic estate includes around 2,500 pictures. On the other hand, numerous estates only contain single documents.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these private estates, the *Collection of Women's Estates* also includes the estate of a women's welfare association, the *Wiener Settlement*.<sup>4</sup>

### **What is remembered and what is not: The winding path of a source to an archive**

The inventory of the *Collection of Women's Estates* exhibits great diversity regarding the contents and materials as well as the life stories of authors. All the records have in common that they are material objects and written expression of individual practices of self-representation and memory, stored in a public archive and open for scholarly research. But how did these documents get into this institutional place?

Certain preconditions must be met for personal testimonies of non-prominent women to find their way into an archive – preconditions that are part of different histories: the history of the concrete historical documents (1), the history of the archives and – in interdependency – the history of the scholarly interests (2) and the history of the documents' donation (3):

- 1 a) The documents must have been written.
- 1 b) The documents must have been preserved.
- 2 a) There have to be archives collecting personal testimonies of women who were not prominent in public life.
- 2 b) The owners of the documents need to know about these archives.
- 3 a) The owners of the documents need to consider it useful to donate the personal testimonies of women to an archive.
- 3 b) The owners of the documents need to be prepared to pass them on to the archive.

Thus, the “winding path” of women’s estates into a public archive is determined by a number of decisions made by different persons. When it comes to historical archives for personal testimonies of women, chance plays an especially important role, as Christa Himmerle points out right at the beginning of her portrait of the *Collection of Women’s Estates* “Fragmente aus vielen Leben”.<sup>5</sup>

In the following, I will give a concrete description of the “route” of preconditions listed above. On the basis of my experience as custodian of the *Collection of Women’s Estates*, I will give special attention to the role of the donors’ being the persons passing the documents on to the archive.

### 1 a) The writing of documents: Who writes what and for whom?

The diversity of sources archived in the *Collection of Women’s Estates* – which can hardly be reduced to a common denominator – gives an impression that urban as well as rural women performed writing practices in the past – and that they continue to do so.<sup>6</sup> Personal testimonials serve different purposes, namely communication and the wish for, and the convention of, (self-)documentation.<sup>7</sup> Numerous examples from the *Collection of Women’s Estates* demonstrate that some writers in fact had long-term plans: we have a total of 47 diaries written by the Viennese Bernhardine Alma between 1908 and 1979 that is from the age of 13 to the age of 84. Already in the first preserved book, the then 13-year-old took down the following thought: “... when one day I’ll read this diary as an old woman!! What will I think about it then?” According to this entry, the object of her diary was her own self – and she herself also was the reader she imagined. Six years later, she intensified the writing project: “From now on, I will write more often in my diary; otherwise, when reading it in years to come, I will not have any idea about my girlhood at all.”<sup>8</sup>

Quite often, diary writers comment on their entries in a very self-critical manner when reading them again later on. For example, 19-year-old teacher-to-be Mathilde Hanzel-Hbner titled her entry of 1 January 1901 two and a half years later with the commentary “I hardly think this was worth writing.”<sup>9</sup> Her daughter Ruthild Hanzel, who herself even typed out her own diary later on, commented on it in an ironical as well as self-critical manner: “When reading one’s whinings two years later, one cannot help but think: Good Lord what an awkward girl.”<sup>10</sup> The young student probably

“reworked” her girlhood diary in order to communicate her personal development to her fiancé. Opposed to that, the Viennese writer and musician Therese Lindenberg transcribed her diaries from World War II only decades later on the request of her son-in-law. When comparing the transcription with the originals, it is striking that the latter contain only fragmentary information on the Jewish family’s life-threatening situation during National Socialism; this can be seen as evidence of the many instances of writing censorship.<sup>11</sup>

Therese Lindenberg wrote diaries for eight decades, and the wartime diaries are only one part of the large total lot of 60 books. Many writers, however, were prompted by times of war or crises to start writing diaries or letters. In times of sudden separation, people who probably wouldn’t have communicated in written form otherwise were forced to write letters. Accordingly, many of the large correspondences of the *Collection of Women’s Estates* are wartime letters from both World Wars.<sup>12</sup>

## 1 b) Keeping the documents: Who has room – what for?

Whether the recipients keep personal testimonies like letters or not is usually determined by their appreciation for the authors as well as by the importance of the contents. Additionally, I feel that there is a certain hierarchy concerning the different genres, where for example love letters<sup>13</sup> or wartime correspondences receive special attention. Dressmaker Julie Schreiber, for example, wrote 461 letters to her husband at the front line between 1943 and 1945 on an almost daily basis. They were collected by the recipient, sorted into small parcels, labelled and kept in a specially designed cardboard box. Other letters by the couple have not been preserved.

Teacher Tilde Mell describes herself the privileged handling she gave to the letters of a former school friend: “I still have every small piece of paper you sent to me. A large bundle! ... Look, my left desk drawer contains it all .... When I open the drawer, I see everything laying there in ... pretty parcels, bound with bright yellow laces. On those quiet Sunday evenings in winter, when everything is silent around me, I like to rummage through it all.”<sup>14</sup>

Compared to that, the maid Martha Teichmann – who emigrated from Leipzig (Germany) to the United States at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – seems to have kept all the letters she ever received. Her correspondence includes around 800 letters from different senders. In storing the letters, however, she does not seem to have applied



any systematic order (or at least none that is obvious to outsiders). She rather kept them in unconventional places like handbags.

As I have mentioned above, diary projects usually were (at least) planned on a long-term basis by their authors; in any way, diaries belong to the type of documents that are quite often preserved. Still, the already mentioned practice of re-reading them harbours a certain risk: the journalist Helga K., for example, reported to have thrown away the first nine of her overall 31 girlhood diaries after reading them again at a later time because she couldn't identify with the adolescent writer of her own self any more.

In addition to the decisions based on the appreciation of authors and recipients, there are external factors playing a role in keeping personal testimonies over a long period of time, for example the question of space. This aspect might explain at least in part why so many more documents written by persons from the upper social classes at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been preserved than those written by working-class people. On the one hand, bourgeois women and men certainly had a better chance of creating written sources – and additionally, it was a social practice of self-representation that came naturally to them. On the other hand, these persons had larger apartments or houses and did not move quite as often. Other important external factors are wartime destructions or (forced) migration.

I think that an especially difficult turning point is reached when the author or recipient dies. If the heirs (are able to) look into the written estate at all, they often do



The wartime correspondence of Julie Schreiber was organized by the recipient Anton Schreiber (SFN NL 86)



The sorted correspondence of the  
social worker Fini Tietz with her  
female boss (SFN NL 96)

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Love letters from Martha Teichman (SFN NL 67)



A Handbag from Martha Teichman, filled with pieces of correspondence (SFN NL 67)



The *Collection of Women's Estates* received Martha Teichmann's estate as a complete chaos in boxes that looked like that (SFN NL 67)

not realize why this or that document was important to the author/recipient. Additionally, the practical question of where to keep it (at a new place?) comes up again.

## 2 a) Archives and scholarly interest: The chicken or the egg, who is looking for what?

The focus on “great events” and “important men” from the fields of politics (and maybe art, science, economy and military) as major objects of historiography also set the standard of which sources were regarded to have historical value and importance. In the hegemonic collecting practice of the (modern) state, which finds expression for example in state archives or museums, the texts written by women who were not in the public eye were not considered to be worthy of tradition. Accordingly, these documents did not find their way into such an institution. This is also true for men from the middle or lower classes and for members of so-called minorities.

During the last three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a large number of special purpose archives have been founded that focus exactly on formerly neglected groups. Women’s estates are of special interest to the several information institutions of the so-called new feminist movement.<sup>15</sup>

According to Dagmar Jank, however, these numerous initiatives cannot “compensate for the shortcomings of a male-dominated world of archives and libraries”.<sup>16</sup> She supports her claim for Germany by taking the *Zentrale Datenbank Nachlässe* (*Central Database Estates*) as an example. The database contains the names of 25,000 persons – whereas Jank compiled a list of women’s estates archived in a public (German) institution that contains 2,000 names.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, it should also be mentioned that women’s estates are often neglected when it comes to processing them. Communal or state archives do contain the written estates of women; due to traditional academic approaches (and the notorious tightness of resources), however, the processing of these estates is postponed – and the documents remain inaccessible. Additionally, many documents written by women are archived with the estates of men they had some relation to.<sup>18</sup>

### The *Collection of Women’s Estates*

The initiators and staff members of the *Collection of Women’s Estates* pursue academic as well as political objectives. On the political level, the collection aims at giving

institutionalised space to documents written by women, thus granting them historical significance.

As an academic institution, the *Collection of Women's Estates* can be seen as an example of a changing sense of history. Firstly, it follows the 'new' approaches that have been incorporated into historical research since the 1970s: that is, the "history of everyday life", the History of Mentality, and Social History in general, and shows an increasing breadth in the field of autobiographical and biographical research. At the same time, the collection's establishment corresponds with the growing importance and institutionalisation of Women's and Gender History.

Indeed, scholars have underestimated for a long time the prevalence of writing as a social practice, especially among the strata of society with little or no education. They simply did not know how much had been written or how many of these personal notes, letters, etc. were kept in private attics. It is the collection's mission to gather exactly this kind of document, to archive them and to make them available for research. In this spirit, the collection of Women's Estates regards itself as a kind of "counter-hegemonic memory store".<sup>19</sup> Its focus on collecting the personal testimonies of women outside the public eye in particular is unique at least in Central Europe.

### *The Archive's History*

The *Collection of Women's Estates* at the Department of History of the University of Vienna was initiated by Edith Saurer in 1989. Today, she is head of the archive together with Christa Himmerle.

The collection originated in connection with research of the political anniversary "70 Years of Women's Suffrage in Austria": because the planned exhibition also wanted to represent the voices of non-prominent women, an ad was launched in the newspapers. The residents of Vienna were asked to hand in personal testimonies that might fit the cause. Indeed, the estate of a woman who was active in the First Women's Movement around 1900 – Mathilde Hanzel-Hübner – has been uncovered. This very substantial estate is the collection's largest so far. It has been researched and edited in large parts.<sup>20</sup>

In 2000, an association was founded; since 2006, the archive has been part of the "Research Platform for the Repositioning of Women's and Gender History in the New European Context" based at the *University of Vienna*.<sup>21</sup> However, funds are not secure in the long term, and subsidies are only granted on a one-year basis.

## 2 b) Archives and donors: Who finds whom?

The 196 estates currently archived in the *Collection of Women's Estates* were handed over by a total of 111 donors (that is some donors gave us the estates of several persons). Contact between the owners of historical women's estates and the archive was established in different ways.

- The donors learned about the collection in ads, newspaper articles, or radio shows (35 donors or 35.32 percent)
- The donors are co-workers, friends or relatives of one of the archive's staff members (22 donors or 22.20 percent)
- Other donors directed them to us (8 donors or 7 percent)
- The donors contacted us on their own account (9 donors or 8 percent)
- Most donors were directed to us by other archives with a different focus (37 donors or 33 percent).<sup>22</sup>

In any case – like in all oral history projects – the personal contact to the persons who wish to donate an estate or already have done so is an important and central part of the work as custodian of an archive like the *Collection of Women's Estates*.

## 3 a) The transfer of documents: Who aims at achieving what?

In recent years, more and more often a (designated) donor of an estate has established contact with the *Collection of Women's Estates* (or a person or an institution who then directed her or him to the archive) on his or her own initiative. This may hint at a changing sense of history in at least part of the population, being the (interdependent) result of the many-fold oral history projects as well as of the publication of popular science biographies, TV and radio shows that have enjoyed increasing popularity for some time (at least in Austria).

At any rate, the donors have their own motivation for giving specific documents to the archive – and the transfer is always a story unto itself.

In most cases, the owners fear that the documents could not be meaningful to anyone anymore and be thrown away after their death, and therefore donate them to an archive.

“I don't have anyone anymore”,<sup>23</sup> Franziska Grasel said. For fear that her written

memories might get *into the wrong hands* after her death, she even wanted to burn them: “I have to throw them into the stove, or they will end up in the recycling bin. And what do you think these people are doing in the paper mill? They’ll have a fine laugh. And that’s something I don’t want. And I couldn’t bring myself to burn them. It was really like ... more than once I had them in the basement at the furnace, and I always carried them up again.”

When a friend established contact with the *Collection of Women’s Estates*, it suited Franziska Grasel just fine and she decided to donate her memories of the time of *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (*Reich Labour Service*) during World War II: 145 letters, 370 photographs and other records. The fact that the souvenirs so important to her were thus accessible to an academic public gave her an additional sense of identity.

Franziska Grasel’s wish to communicate her memories to someone is exemplary for the motivation for giving one’s own documents into an archive. In total, however, those 35 estates containing documents that were written by the donors themselves do not account for the majority of archived records (18 percent of all records).

The majority of 105 estates (54 percent) were donated by relatives of the authors (children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces or nephews, cousins or children-in-law). 22 estates (16 percent) were donated by the author’s acquaintances (neighbours, acquaintances of relatives, friends, the employer’s son, the daughter of a student, the granddaughter of the second wife of the author’s divorced husband). Often it seems that these donors – many of whom are of old age themselves – want to secure their mothers or relatives some posthumous appreciation by giving their written estates to a public institution, such as the university.

Franziska Nunnally, who, being Jewish, had to flee from Austria during World War II, describes this in a very powerful way: “My parents, brother, grandmother, aunts, uncles and so on – all of them perished in the Shoa. *Nothing* remains of them – no pieces of furniture, no works of art, no golden watch, no ring – all the things that are passed on from generation to generation in other families. They don’t even have a grave. The *only proof* of their existence lies in their *letters*.”<sup>24</sup>

Sometimes, chance and luck play a great role as well. The most spectacular case in our collection is a correspondence of about three hundred letters from an upper-class family from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The letters were thrown into a paper recycling bin, where a journalist found them – otherwise they would have been lost.

Other documents are regularly dug out from flea markets or attics. The collection contains 24 estates (12 percent) where there is no personal relationship between donors and authors of the documents. Still, it seemed to be important to the donors that they save the memory of these – unknown – people.

We can assume that all donors of an estate wish that somebody occupy herself (or himself) with the documents. The way I see it, this does not necessarily mean that they expect the publication of a book or even a bestseller. I rather have the feeling that these people want the documents to be kept in a suitable place like the university. On the other hand, I have the impression that in most instances it is not really important for the donors to which archive they hand over their sources. What is important for them is the interest taken in their personal lives – or the lives of their ancestors. The way these sources are used afterwards seem less relevant to them; even more so, as most have little insight into the possibilities and limitations of academic research.

### 3 b) The transfer of documents: Decision or chance?

The final “turning point” on the difficult path of women’s personal testimonies is their actual delivery. In the case of the *Collection of Women’s Estates*, it usually takes place over a longer period of time. Whether it be that the donors compile the documents only by and by,<sup>25</sup> or that they wish to “distance” themselves from single documents at a different pace.<sup>26</sup> In general, the delivery of the documents follows the terms of a contract between the estate donors and the *Collection of Women’s Estates*. This way the archive is granted the right to use the documents. Additionally, it is possible to stipulate special conditions of use.

For example, we offer to take copies or scans of the documents into the archive, whereas the original source remains with the donor.<sup>27</sup> Another possibility is anonymous research on an estate’s author. This option is rarely taken, however – and usually anonymity is requested for other persons named in the documents, and not for the author herself. Such “other persons” might be an early love whom she has not seen for a long time ... It seems that those who give their own personal testimonies into an archive – or testimonies they have been entrusted with – prefer to be known by their own name. This is even true if the sources cover a phase of their lives that might be problematic from a current viewpoint, such as the time of National Socialism.



I have gained the overall impression that usually the donors are very deliberate about which sources to hand over to the archive. We have some very large estates that maybe span the written legacy of several generations; they certainly contain every written record ever preserved in the family. At least as many estates, however, contain only a selection of documents, while other records remain with the family.

In most cases the motivation for donating only certain documents is to preserve the memory of a certain person or a certain event. I can only presume that other documents – or whole family estates – are kept back or even destroyed in order to withhold them from the public. After all, as an archives staff member, I only meet those persons wishing to donate some documents. Should the donors hold back certain documents, they usually keep the fact to themselves, and there have been only two cases where such a decision was mentioned.

In some cases, however, the delivery of documents seems to express a paradoxical wish for “forgetfulness”. A lady from Vienna, for example, gave us the love letters her former boyfriend had written to her in World War II. She had kept the relationship a secret from her family later on, and the letters were stored safely in the closet. It seems a paradoxical situation that this woman wanted to give her secret letters to a public institution. Another donor gave the written estate of her whole family to the *Collection of Women's Estates* so that (among other reasons) her sister could not get the documents.

Both women did not want to keep the documents at home any longer for certain reasons – but throwing them away had obviously not been an option. Giving them to an archive probably seemed like a good compromise.

Translation by Birgitt Wagner

<sup>1</sup> See <<http://www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/sfn>> (in German).

<sup>2</sup> We were able to identify the names of 88 Austrian, 119 European and 15 non-European places where at least one of the archived sources was written. We estimate the actual number to be much higher; however, it will be impossible to establish in detail as the Collection contains a large number of wartime letters (around 7,360) where usually the names of the places where they were written are not specified for reasons of censorship.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Li Gerhalter, Bestandsverzeichnis der Sammlung Frauennachlässe am Institut für Geschichte [Inventory of the Collection of Women's Estates at the Department of History], Wien 2008. The catalogue offers a description of every estate processed by January 2008 as well as a register of all archived documents and the places where they were written.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Elisabeth Malleier, Das Ottakringer Settlement. Zur Geschichte eines frühen internationalen Sozialprojekts [The Ottakring Settlement. History of an Early International Welfare Project], Wien 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Christa Himmerle, Fragmente aus vielen Leben. Ein Portrait der “Sammlung Frauennachlässe” am Institut für Geschichte der Universität Wien [Fragments of Many Lives. A Portrait of the “Collection of

Women's Estates" at the Department of History of the University of Vienna], in: L'HOMME. Z. F. G., 14, 1 (2003), 375–378, 375.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Christa Himmerle, Nebenpfade? Populäre Selbstzeugnisse des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts in geschlechtervergleichender Perspektive [Byways? Popular Personal Testimonies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries in Gender-Comparative Perspective], in: Thomas Winkelbauer ed., Vom Lebenslauf zur Biographie. Geschichte, Quellen und Probleme der historischen Biographik und Autobiographik [From *Curriculum Vitae* to Biography. History, Sources and Problems of Writing Historical Biographies and Autobiographies], Krems 2000, 135–167; ead., "Und etwas von mir wird bleiben ..." Von Frauennachlässen und ihrer historischen (Nicht-)berlieferung ["And something of myself will remain ..." Of Women's Estates and Their Historical (Non-)Tradition], in: Montfort. Vierteljahresschrift für Geschichte und Gegenwart Vorarlbergs, 55, 2 (2003), 154–174; ead., Fragmente, see note 5; ead., Die "Sammlung Frauennachlässe" am Institut für Geschichte der Universität Wien [The "Collection of Women's Estates" at the Department of History of the University of Vienna], in: Peter Eigner, Christa Himmerle and Gnter Mller eds., Briefe – Tagebücher – Autobiographien. Studien und Quellen für den Unterricht [Letters – Diaries – Autobiographies. Studies and Sources for Teaching], Wien 2006, 132–139.

<sup>7</sup> From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, it was *comme il faut* for bourgeois girls to keep a diary that sometimes was even checked by their mothers and teachers. During the World Wars, children and adolescents were also encouraged from different sides to write a diary. Cf. Christa Himmerle, Diaries, in: Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann eds., Reading Primary Sources. The Interpretation of Texts from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century History, London, 2008, 141–158.

<sup>8</sup> Sammlung Frauennachlässe (hereafter SFN) NL 9 I: Bernhardine Alma, February 2, 1908 and October 7, 1914. Cf. Ulrike Moser, Herzensbildung. Ausbildung, Moral und Sexualität in den Tagebüchern junger bürgerlicher Frauen um 1900 [Development of the Heart. Education, Morality and Sexuality in the Diaries of Young Bourgeois Women Around 1900], Wien (PhD) 2006 and Ulrike Seiss: "... ich will keinen Krieg oder als Krankenschwester mit!" Selbstinszenierungen, Kriegsrezeption und Männlichkeitsbilder im Tagebuch einer jungen Frau im Ersten Weltkrieg ["... I don't want any war at all or come along as a nurse!" Self-Creation, War Reception and Images of Maleness in the Diary of a Young Woman in World War I], Wien (MA) Wien 2002.

<sup>9</sup> SFN NL 1, diary of Mathilde Hanzel Hbner, September 28, 1903. See among others Monika Bernold and Johanna Gehmacher, Auto/Biographie und Frauenfrage. Tagebücher, Briefwechsel und Politische Schriften von Mathilde Hanzel-Hbner (1884–1970) [Auto/Biography and Women's Question. Diaries, Correspondences, and Political Writings by Mathilde Hanzel-Hbner (1884–1970)], (L'HOMME Archiv, 1), Wien 2003.

<sup>10</sup> SFN NL 2 I, diary transcript of Ruthild Lemche (born Hanzel), September 8, 1926. Cf. Birgitt Wagner, "Matura. Htte dich gerne gekstet, bevor wir begannen." Frauenbildung und Selbstentwurf. Die Tagebücher der Philosophiestudentin Ruthild Hanzel (1926–1929) ["Final Exams. I'd have liked to kiss you before the start." Women's Education and Concepts of the Self. The Diaries of the Student of Philosophy Ruthild Hanzel (1926–1929)], Wien (unpublished term paper) 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Christa Himmerle and Li Gerhalter eds. with the cooperation of Ingrid Brommer and Christine Karner, Apokalyptische Jahre. Die Tagebücher der Therese Lindenberg (1938 bis 1946) [Apocalyptic Years. The Diaries of Therese Lindenberg (1938 to 1946)], Kln/Weimar/Wien forthcoming.

<sup>12</sup> Of the 165 estates currently archived, 57 contain letters from soldiers or prisoners of war, 16 estates only consist of wartime correspondence. Cf. Gerhalter, Bestandsverzeichnis, see note 3.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Nikola Langreiter, "...greif' zur Feder wieder, schreib', ach schreibe nur ein Wort..." Mit Liebesbriefen in den Geschichtsunterricht ["... put the pen to paper again and write, oh write just one single word..." With Love Letters into the History Lesson], in: Eigner/Himmerle/Mller, Briefe, see note 6, Wien 2006, 46–62.

<sup>14</sup> SFN NL 1, Tilde Mell to Tilly Hbner, 1 November 1907. See Li Gerhalter, Freundschaft als geschriebener Ort. Briefliche Selbst-Inszenierungen von Frauenfreundschaften der jungen Lehrerin Tilde Mell, Wien 1903 bis 1912 [Friendship in Writing. Self/Construction of Women's Friendship in the Letters of the Young Teacher Tilde Mell, Vienna 1903 to 1912], in: Ariadne. Forum für Frauen- und Geschlechterstudien, 48

(2005), 62–69.

<sup>15</sup> In Vienna, there are among others *STICHWORT – Archiv der Frauen- & Lesbenbewegung* [Archives of the Women's and Lesbian's Movements], the *Johanna Dohnal Archiv* (cf. Margit Hauser's and Maria Steiner's articles in this volume) or the database *biografiA. Biografische Datenbank und Lexikon österreichischer Frauen* [biografiA. Biographical Database and Dictionary of Austrian Women] (<http://www.biografia.at/>).

<sup>16</sup> Dagmar Jank, *Frauennachlass in Archiven, Bibliotheken und Spezialeinrichtungen. Beispiele, Probleme und Erfordernisse* [Women's Estates in Archives, Libraries and Special Institutions. Examples, Problems and Desiderata], in: Botho Brachmann et al. eds., *Die Kunst des Vernetzens. Festschrift für Wolfgang Hempel* [The Art of Networking. Celebration Publication for Wolfgang Hempel], Berlin 2006, 411–419, 412.

<sup>17</sup> See note 16 and cf. Gesa Heinrich, *Gibt es eine Gleichstellungsquote für archivalische Quellen? Problematik der Quellen zur Frauengeschichte in Archiven und Wege zu ihrer Sichtbarkeit* [Is there an Equal Opportunities Quota for Archive Sources? Difficulties with Sources on Women's History in Archives and Ways to Increase Their Visibility], in: Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Frauenforschung und die Frauenbeauftragte der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin eds., *Zur Geschichte des Frauenstudiums und weiblicher Berufskarrieren an der Berliner Universität* [History of Women's Academic Studies and Occupational Careers at the Berlin University], Berlin 1996, 6–17; Jutta Weber, *Jenseits des Kanons – Jenseits der Vernetzung. Die Person für sich* [Beyond the Canon – Beyond Networking. The Person-For-Itself], in: Christiane Caemmerer et al. eds., *Die totale Erinnerung. Sicherung und Zerstörung kulturhistorischer Vergangenheit und Gegenwart in den modernen Industriegesellschaften* [Total Recall. Protection and Destruction of Cultural-Historical Past and Present in Modern Industrialised Societies], Bern et al. 1997, 113–126.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Alessandra Contini, “Archivio per la memoria e la scrittura delle donne”: un cantiere aperto [“Archive for the Memory and the Writings of Women”: An Open Construction Site], in: *Archivio storico italiano*, CLX (2002), 769–787. A detailed description of the project can be found at the website <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/memoriadonne/> (in Italian). The „Research Platform for the Repositioning of Women's and Gender History“ has started a similar initiative: as a first step, the *hidden* diaries of women are being researched in the archives of Vienna.

<sup>19</sup> Himmerle, *Fragmente*, see note 5, 375.

<sup>20</sup> See among others Bernold/Gehmacher, *Auto/Biographie und Frauenfrage*, see note 9.

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/Neuverortung-Geschlechtergeschichte/>.

<sup>22</sup> The largest part of these donations came about thanks to *Dokumentation lebensgeschichtlicher Aufzeichnungen* [Documentation of Autobiographical Writings], an archive at the Department of Economic and Social History of the University of Vienna, a close cooperation partner of the SFN. Cf. Gnter Mller, *Writing Life-Stories in Dialogue. The example of collecting and interpreting life stories in the “Dokumentation lebensgeschichtlicher Aufzeichnungen” at the University of Vienna*, in: *Bulgarian Ethnology*, XXX, 4 (2004), 108–121 and <http://wirtges.univie.ac.at/doku> (in German).

<sup>23</sup> Interview by Martina Smutny, November 2003, in: ead., *Der Reichsarbeitsdienst in der Erinnerung. Ein Nachlass als Gedächtnisort* [Remembering the Reichs Labour Service. An Estate as a Site of Memory], Wien (MA) Wien 2004, 85.

<sup>24</sup> SFN NL 36, letter by Frances Nunnally from the US to SFN, 21 February 2000.

<sup>25</sup> This is true for the already mentioned estate of Mathilde Hanzel-Höbner (SFN, NL 1), where the donors have repeatedly delivered single documents to the archive for by now ten years, some of which were newly found in foreign places.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Smutny, *Reichsarbeitsdienst*, see note 23.

<sup>27</sup> In 45 estates (23 per cent), some of the materials are copies. In some cases, the documents were first donated to the SFN as copies and then in the original later on.

## THE DIARY OF WETTI TEUSCHL: AN INSTRUMENT FOR REMEMBERING? – AN INSTRUMENT FOR FORGETTING?

Nikola Langreiter

Studies in the area of memory have been booming for quite some time. They are about policy of remembrance, cultural commemoration and such of memory; there is a certain focus on memory storage – literature, museums, and art, places loaded with reminiscence have been investigated. And what happens if some past – due to ideological pressures or beliefs – is officially excluded from memory, has been thoroughly discussed. Delicate aspects and difficult questions such as discourse and construction of any memory being a (re-)invention have been integrated, and some grand theories drafted – the *lieux de mémoire*-concept for example or the idea of *cosmopolitan memory/mémoire croisée* (especially concerning the Shoah). In biographical research the relationship between individuals and the social side has been explored, and the gaps between official reminiscence as collective reality and the so called private remembrance have been fathomed. In this field, so far, comparatively less energy has been put in the antonym of remembrance – in forgetting, abandoning the past, earlier experiences, and former selves. So it was a nice surprise to find the opposition of remembering and forgetting in the title of this year's XVII International Round Table "Memory and Forgetfulness" in Blagoevgrad. In our project "Women and Minority Documentation and Digital Presentation – from Fragmented Data to Integration in the Information Society" we – and this is somehow self evident, if working on improving documentation and archiving – never talked about the advantages of deliberately forgetting, about throwing out and discarding. And we did not consider (modern) life maybe requiring forgetfulness from individuals in order to keep them functioning.

Despite this, I am just about to put together an edition of the diary of an Austrian woman, born in 1851 in Krems, which is a small but then quite prosperous merchants' town in Lower Austria, not too far from the capital Vienna. Wetti Teuschl began to write at the age of eighteen and had been continuing her diary for fifteen years. Her records cover only a few years of a long life (as she lived to 1944). Nevertheless, they tell a manifold and dynamic story. I am grateful for the encouragement to explore this mate-

rial on the subject of memory and forgetfulness. I will first give a short description of the source – not just concerning the content, but I would also like to draw attention to the diary as an object. Then I will present a rough overview of the state of the research on diaries and remembrance/forgetfulness. This will be followed by some exemplary analyses of Wetti Teuschl's diary.

### The diary of Wetti Teuschl as an object

The small book that Wetti Teuschl declares to be her diary is a very pure and simple one, not a typical ready-made diary with gold foil stamping, gilt edging, and the obligatory little lock. In 1998 Wetti Teuschl's diary was given to the *Collection of Women Estates* at the *University of Vienna* to be reproduced and archived. The original stayed in private hands, it belongs to the author's great-grandson. About 180 sheets are bound between dark, marbled cardboard. The pages have been numbered with a pencil, most likely by the writer herself. The figures look like the author's and after a certain page (103/104) the writing will overlap the numeration every now and then. The cover was labelled only in 1978 (by the great-grandson). This marking is an irritating and interesting interference – particularly in the context of remembrance. The label provides orientation and recall ("Diary of my Great-grandmother Betti<sup>1</sup> Teuschl, born 1851 died 1944, for the years 1870–1885"). But furthermore it is an expression of the desire to eternalise the self – even in the memory/testimony of others. Not just because of the possessive pronoun, moreover the great-grandson remarks on the tag that he did transcribe this book in 1977.

#### Wetti Teuschl's diary





The first page of the diary – the photograph was taken in the late 1930s / early 1940s

The book measures 12.2 by 19.3 cm and – as a small sticker on the inside cover tells – came from a stationery shop in the home town of Wetti Teuschl. The aged yellowish paper is not of good quality, but is thin and transparent. The writer used black, at times also blue, ink and mainly she used a very fine pen. The pages are densely covered; she hardly leaves any margins, writes in small, narrow and very symmetric German handwriting (*Kurrent*). Quite often an entry comes to an end with the end of the page. One sheet seems like an ocean of letters, the long loops of some characters put little curls on this quiet sea. The writer's hand is steady, even if there is trouble ahead, one could not tell just by looking at the writing as an image.

Her writing looks controlled, well considered – she hardly ever smudges and very rarely deletes anything. At the same time the writing seems fluent, sometimes fast. Every now and then she adds corrections – obviously she reads her entries again and again, as inserts and comments suggest, since they are not often in the same ink.

To give some impression of the content – a very short abstract: Wetti Teuschl marries (not befitting her family's rank) and follows her husband to Vienna. There the spouse, Johann Baumgartner, had started a small grocery business of his own. While the first part of the journal is a typical young woman's diary, the second part accompanies the rapid financial and social descent of the couple during an overall economic crisis.<sup>2</sup>

The diary documents how with dedication, she vehemently tried to stop the developments – not just with means and strategies intended for her gender.

## State of the research

What do scholars say about diaries and remembrance/forgetfulness? And especially: What do feminist researchers discuss concerning the functions of women's diaries? I refer to the identified purposes of the writers themselves and to the utilities for Women's and Gender Studies – again in correlation with remembering and forgetting. Doing so in the following passage, I will concentrate on (English) literature, and on statements, respectively hypotheses, which have been particularly useful for my research so far.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century diary-writing became increasingly fashionable, above all with the bourgeois, and perhaps especially among young women and girls. The following reasons are employed for explaining the general hype of journal-writing: the increasing secularization; a shift from oral communication to widespread literacy and print technology; new conceptualizations about time and the way it should be employed; an assumption that 'man' is a unitary, consistent, and rational 'self'; a philosophy taking its roots in empiricism and idealism, and an expanded concern for the creation of the private realm of the individual.<sup>3</sup> Some of these arguments ought to be diversified, to be inspected, whether they apply to both genders and if so, to what extent. Christa Hammerle with regard to the French *journal intime*, the successful literary diary of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which initiated a wave of private diary-writing, states: "the trend was also orientated around women, particularly as the polarisation of gender roles ... led to the fixation of women and girls in the private, non-public spheres."<sup>4</sup> Girls had increasingly been encouraged to keep a journal at school, of course with quite some instructive impetus and controlled by their mothers or teachers.<sup>5</sup> They had been urged to prepare themselves for being women of virtue and decent brides – supported by diary-writing. In German language these young women's diaries were called "Warte-Hefte" that is 'waiting notebooks' (the English expression is 'courtship diaries'). "We can have no reviews of diaries, no forcing them through the dominant ideologies", exhorts Felicity Nussbaum, whilst stressing at the same time that moving articulation of experience through the process of the public consciousness, they potentially subvert it.<sup>6</sup>

Despite various influences deriving from the tradition of the genre (e. g. the spiritual Puritan diary), from norms and rules, as well as from social expectations and ideologies, women have been creative and diverse practitioners of diary-writing.<sup>7</sup> This might sound banal but it is a very important argument to oppose the classical debates on genre, which somehow always are debates on genre and gender. And – not really surprising – forms, possibly for or favoured by female writers (novels, short stories, and above all letters, diaries and journals), were described as “less literary, less intellectual, less wide-ranging, less profound”.<sup>8</sup> These classifications caused inertia on literary studies, which concentrated on more acknowledged (so called ‘male’) genres, but also on feminist researchers, who therefore had neglected diaries as object of research for quite a long time.<sup>9</sup> And of course such devaluation somehow also affected the writers, even the ‘private’ ones.

Many scholars agree that diaries of women contain “a kind of ‘truth’ about women’s lives not found in other places”. But as diaries are texts and hence verbal constructions they raise an “array of concerns ... including questions of audience (real or implied), narrative, shape and structure, persona, voice, imagistic and thematic repetition, and ... ‘metaphors of self’”<sup>10</sup> – just to mention some of the problems. People write in a specific time and at a specific place – thus presence of time/historicity and space ought to be considered. The writer’s relation to ‘real time’ and her or his representation of ‘time passing’ create “formal tensions and ironies”. Most diaries are a series of surprise to writer and reader alike. The unique dynamic of diaries emerges from the continual change of presence. From entry to entry, the text incorporates its future as it reconstructs its past. The diary is always in process, and it will always stay a fragment. It receives its shape from its existence in time passing.<sup>11</sup>

The specialist in British (women’s) literature Felicity A. Nussbaum calls the diary a “liminal form”, “poised between past and future, self and other, public and private, universal and particular”.<sup>12</sup> She assumes that these texts may be read as modes of signification, as linguistic representations deduced from the many discourses available at a particular historical moment.<sup>13</sup> Diaries should rather be conceived personal than “simply private or intimate”.<sup>14</sup>

Thinking about the possibilities of a critical combination of New Historicism, feminist research, and poststructuralist theory of language, Helen M. Buss propagates reading strategies “that take into account language’s double nature ... Besides language’s



consciously apprehended referential uses and its function as power discourse, we need to explore language's ability to maximize some conditions of existence, to make their value real in the economy of a culture, and its ability to suppress and absent other conditions, to repress their existence into powerlessness and inarticulation."<sup>15</sup> But what language suppresses is still present – it may wait for decoding, for reading between the lines. In the same way Buss tries to discover the self-construction of women, "revealing the linguistic and ideological sources of oppression".<sup>16</sup>

The act of diary-writing involves in complex literary and psychological processes. Very often the writing self wishes to establish self-continuity through writing. But doing so, the subject has to create a distance from itself, or to turn the subject into object, as Margo Culley, a US-American researcher on women's literature, describes this process of self-observation from outside.<sup>17</sup> The diarist knows the self from inside and imagines the attitude of the others towards him- or herself.

This draws attention to the question of whom the diarist is addressing: "One can argue that the act of writing, and thus communicating, always presupposes an audience."<sup>18</sup> The addressees – imagined or real – always affect what is being written and how. God, mother, best friend, husband to be, a future self – they form a powerful 'you' to the diarist.<sup>19</sup> They mould selection and detailing and coin the self-construction which the writer presents. So researchers ought to note that the diary-self is never complete or total but made up, constructed. There might be a great big distance between the figure created in the diary and the much more complex lived life.

Some scientists have suggested that the genre diary is "attractive to women because its private serial nature makes it an inherently female form, 'like the fragmented, interrupted and formless nature of their lives'". Many women of course did not feel that their lives were formless. They wrote about family and domestic concerns because that often dominated their lives, they took short notes, because they were short of time.<sup>20</sup> The surplus of women's and girls' diaries can rather be connected with diaries being a permitted genre that matched up with the so called female gender character which dedicated women to sentiment, to longing, to the private and family affairs, and also to fear, self-doubt, and disorientation. "The topics represented in women's diaries are thus diverse: even in ... works, which may even appear conventional in theme and structure, women give an account of their gendered position within a culture or historical period often extensively documented by men."<sup>21</sup>

During history, a change of form and function can be observed: “Many women have subsequently viewed the diary as a space for private and personal reflection, although this space has been configured in multiple ways.”<sup>22</sup> The German researcher Anke Melchior identifies ten main functions of the diary/of diary-writing for ‘Western’ 19<sup>th</sup> century women: memory, need to write, emphasis of the self, coping with difficult situations in life, self reflection, compensation (of personal relation), self disciplining, free space, opinion making, and resistance.<sup>23</sup> It is most interesting<sup>24</sup> that the aspect ‘taking pleasure in writing’ is missing in this inventory.

### *On the edition*

Just a few words on the planned edition to follow this overview on the state of the art: The transcription of the diary is a literal one<sup>25</sup> that is as close as possible to the original text, as the edition tries to reproduce Wetti Teuschl’s most characteristic way of writing. Thus it copies her spelling errors and sticks to the syntactic structure of her writing.<sup>26</sup> These features can be most useful in the process of historical interpretation.<sup>27</sup> Especially the author’s punctuation is remarkable; she strings together sentences or parts of sentences often without full stop or comma. She loves to use *en vogue* French expressions, and spells them from the ear, and the words do sound differently every so often. This – I refer to Carolyn Steedman – might allow some reconstruction of “the way in which people spoke in the past, and also allow a reconstruction of the process by which they were taught to read”. One may, for example, detect constant shifting from language as written-down-speech and parallel to this writing referring to a linguistic system of its own.<sup>28</sup> Vocabulary hardly known nowadays will get explained in annotations, as well as the used dialect lingo. The footnotes will also include information on important persons and places mentioned in the diary. Their aim is to supply the background for understanding and categorising the institutions and events Wetti Teuschl wrote about, and the explanations and interpretations she gives in the diary.

Alongside the diary a memorial page, containing some short autobiographical notes and memories concerning Wetti Teuschl’s father, will be edited too. The author wrote this paper in 1936 for her granddaughter, to whom she also gave the diary. As Betti Gerstl, the diarist has published some journalistic articles in 1925. Because these texts are very much connected with her biography – or furthermore her biographies as Wetti Teuschl/Barbara Baumgartner/Betti Gerstl – they will be (re)printed as well.

## Some exemplary analyses

I will now take a closer look at some exemplary passages of the diary of Wetti Teuschl. She starts her journal with a kind of mission statement: “With God! Yes, with God I begin this diary and with God I will end it. But in between there is a span of time and I will hope to God that I largely will have to inscribe pleasant matters.”<sup>29</sup> Such an explicit opening is quite typical for the genre. – “The beginning of a diary is almost always indicated: it is rare to begin one without saying so.” In one way or another authors “mark off this new territory of writing” – for a start they put down their name, a title, an epigraph, a commitment or some self-presentation.<sup>30</sup> Wetti Teuschl continues telling about being separated from her boyfriend, who anyway had not been her parent’s favourite candidate to marry their daughter. If there would be a chance to reconcile, she argues, her father most likely would not accept this. Her preamble ends with some sort of self-motivation as she writes: “I must not already be despondent from the beginning, but look ahead with patience and trust in God.”<sup>31</sup> Just as in this preface, the little diary very often becomes the author’s cheerleader, conscience, and reckoner. What else may be interpreted in these few first lines?

The diarist believes that her individual experience is meaningful enough to be preserved. Maybe at first she planned to use her diary to accompany her until marriage. Right at the beginning she thinks of the end, she imagines the time to be, she has hopes, desires, and also worries regarding this period. She suggests that somewhere along the way she will look back, and will have the diary at hand to support her memory. From the beginning she programmes the diary’s re-reading.

At this stage she seems to use the diary as she meant to. She entrusts herself to God, just as a young woman should.<sup>32</sup> But right from the start some subversion can also be detected: Wetti Teuschl wrangles over her father, she complains, she knows that if she insists on her wishes and decisions, she will have to fight. An attitude which seems not all that conventional und adapted. And moreover she asks herself if the – for now – ex-darling is worth fighting for. This is probably not the most decent attitude for a bride to be, practising the role of the modest, selfless and subordinating obedient wife and mother. Regarding linguistics the formulistic phrasing may not be striking in a preamble, but such formulas are preservative. In the first half of the diary these passages will often refer to God, to the Virgin Mary. As she uses formulaic expressions, sending quick prayers to



**The first entry in Wetti Teuschl's diary**

heaven, she will immediately break the mould. Later on, formulas will communicate her happiness with her child; and no (emotional) outburst expressed in free words will follow this – but I must not anticipate. Anyhow: “Diary, simultaneously preserving and evaluating, makes meaning inherent in the choice of words, the sequence of phrases, and the assignment of dialogue to self or other.”<sup>33</sup>

As the writer does not repress self-pity and obstinacy, she probably had not designed the diary for family consumption, but intended to keep it personal. Even if we had not been confronted with her strict self-censorship, we would stumble upon it only some pages ahead. As it appears, Wetti Teuschl apparently had written about conflicts with her future spouse and sometime later resolutely cut out three quarters of a page. The diary is open to future re-interpretations. In the first half of the book, covering the years from 1870 to 1872, the time before her marriage, she will repeatedly use the scissors to get rid of unpleasant passages.<sup>34</sup> From then on until the diary ends in 1885, she starts the cutting out even before writing – when there are problems such as marital conflict, infidelity, too much drinking und rudeness – she will suggest, but not write about it. Even though many things seem just too outrageous, they can not be written down. In order to find relief and comfort, hints must suffice. This practice, this self-

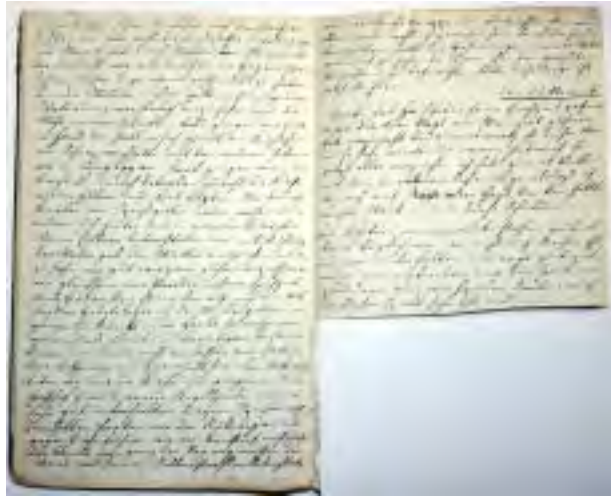
ensorship, strengthens the assumption that the writer herself did cut out the disagreeable passages in the first part of the journal. On the other hand there is also the suggestion that the situation may be even more complicated than words could clarify.

At the beginning of the relationship to her spouse she expresses her feelings in the diary – even though as rather encrypted assertion, (self-)assurance, and sentimental twaddle. Later, and until a certain point in time, this discourse flares up after crises and conflict.

There are only very few passages when the author writes about sex, always very covertly – I cite the most outspoken statement: “Just now my sweetheart looks over my shoulder and says I should also write about how we spend the evenings, and that the two of us often are very naughty. But this would have to be called telling tales out of school and we must not do that.”<sup>35</sup> Having studied French girls’ diaries, Philippe Lejeune concludes that most of the girls would not write about physical matters or about sexuality. They express their feelings and emotions towards men “usually extremely reserved; the need to express must find its way into indirect *mentions*, general statements, or vague lyrical outbursts”.<sup>36</sup> While at the end of the diary Wetti Teuschl describes the horror of nursing her sick mother in a very emotional way, she hardly ever communicates openly about the hard time her husband apparently gave her. Of course I have to add that in context of taking care of her dying mother, she ripped out a whole page (unique in this diary).<sup>37</sup> The inner feelings may be regarded as too dangerous to be revealed openly and directly, a more banal reason for the rigid self censorship could be fear that someone might read the diary.

Wetti Teuschl is the censor and critic of her own discourse, and of her own memory.<sup>38</sup> And via her diary she regulated her forgetfulness. The destroyed pages draw the attention to the personal use of the diary. Obviously she did re-read it to herself repeatedly. Going back to past times, she sometimes felt disconcerted; some records seemed not suitable anymore and had to be removed. Observing this, researchers may gain understanding about the constructive character of a diary, about its process-related quality, about its very presence. The self-constructions in the pages of a diary are fixed in time and space, and available to the diarist for later viewing. Diaries can be read and re-read, and the diarist become aware of the charged experience of encountering past selves in the pages of the journal.

Wetti Teuschl’s diary also shows how – depending on the phase of life – topics



### Wetti Teuschl: censor of her own discourse and memory?

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and the motivation to write can change. Functions of so called private writing are continually changing – in history, and in life stories, on a personal level as well as on a social level. Ambivalence will likely appear.<sup>39</sup> Before getting married Wetti Teuschl writes a lot about social events – visiting balls, going to the theatre, watching the first train arriving in the town, she tells about trips with her family – and most elaborately about happiness and despair in her love affair. She is very much concentrated on her boyfriend Johann Baumgartner, has to reject some other proposals of marriage, and steadily she acquires parental consent concerning this relationship. She writes about the town gossip and at the same time is very much afraid of it. When the boyfriend leaves for Vienna, because he could not manage to find a position good enough to marry Wetti Teuschl, she is very sad and for months she puts down all her distress in the diary. In all, she wrote not every day but quite frequently, sometimes she copied letters into the journal, very important dates – anniversaries, her name-day and other personal jubilees – and at the end of the year usually the writing was especially extensive and also retrospective, recalling the past year or the last months since the last ‘ritual entry’ on a similar occasion.

The structure and rhythm of the diary change completely with her marriage. The second half of the journal covering the years from 1872 to 1885 is written by the merchant’s wife Barbara Baumgartner (besides her surname she also lost her nickname

‘Wetti’).<sup>40</sup> She usually inscribes only every now and then and regularly only at Christmas/New Year, on average she makes only about two or three entries a year. Then she writes: “Almost six months passed since I made the last entry; hence I have been married for this time ...”<sup>41</sup> “Six months swept in the stream of time, hence my beloved child is already aged half a year old ...”<sup>42</sup>

For the following three years she only wrote about illnesses, business, moving flat, new beginnings, and about her child. She hardly ever narrates, but records in a reduced form – Barbara Baumgartner turned into a prosaic chronicler of the ongoing. The child seems to be almost the only bright spot – but even this child gets registered rather than pictured. The short statements about the son often end with a formula – like a little prayer: “The child is our only delight, my greatest happiness, God let the most precious being stay with me, as it is all I have.”<sup>44</sup> Apart from that, God does not appear anymore. She wrote this entry on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1875; it started as follows:

With the beginning of a new year I have to bare my heart, and anyway it has been a fairly long time since I have inscribed anything, even though since that time many things have changed. My beloved child Hansi<sup>45</sup> already walks, he started at 16 months has already 10 teeth and imitates everything he hears, pronouncing much of it very well.<sup>46</sup>

Then the ‘prayer’ mentioned above follows. Next she tells about being well again after feeling ill for almost one year, after suffering from an abdominal colic. But – she adds – she cannot regain her looks, in which she rejoiced earlier. “This might be because I am weighed down with sorrow.” And due to sorrow, she explains, the husband has changed a lot: Barbara Baumgartner – and here I return to 1873/74 – calls him absentminded, moody and



Wetti Teuschl and Johann Baumgartner at their wedding<sup>43</sup>

volatile, numb. Now in most of the entries she deals with accidents and illnesses, and also with major (national) events, such as the Viennese World Fair of 1873, or going to the opera with her mother for the first time. But here she laconically just writes: “I don’t feel authorised to give a record on the world fair, firstly because I have seen much too little (I have only been 3 times, and then for very few hours) and secondly much smarter pens have written about it, which will never become lost for posterity.” And: “This is also not the right place to give a review about the play, I just say nobody, who wants to treasure something beautiful, should miss the treat of spending an evening at the opera house.”<sup>47</sup>

Finally she explains why she hardly ever gets around writing in her “dear diary” – the child takes up all her time, awaking early and going to bed not before the “10th hour”, the time he sleeps during the day cannot be taken in account”.<sup>48</sup> The frequency of the entries stays the same, unless something tragic happens, then the entries increase. For example in 1876 – when their business crashes completely, when they even cannot afford a flat of their own anymore, and the husband is finally imprisoned because of betrayal and embezzlement. Then she writes often a lot and – sporadically – again almost daily. The diary is her wailing wall:

A long time lies between this page and the one before, but what has happened during this time, terrible things occurred, which I would not have imagined in my worst fears, things ... which I would not have believed I would have survived. I will start: ...<sup>49</sup>

After she had been working hard in her husband’s various businesses and moving flat four times during less than four years in Vienna (five moves follow by the end of January 1878), she had taken over the last of his grocery businesses for some months in order to prevent seizure of goods and equipment,<sup>50</sup> in March 1876 she opened her own little shop selling wool and yarn, and providing a cleaning service for clothes. She was busy and accumulated over 200 regular customers in only three months; but she could not succeed: finally she was again not able to pay the rent and all the other living expenses. To be fed and to recover she went back to her parents with the little son. The husband stayed at Vienna, trying to find a job, little by little selling his wife’s furniture (part of her dowry).<sup>51</sup> After the summer Barbara Baumgartner returned to Vienna, leaving her child behind. As her husband was jailed, she once again fled to Krems. There she waited for news from or about him, wrote letters to his solicitor, to friends asking for



help, and letters of petition to the priest and other notabilities.<sup>52</sup> She took in needlework to earn at least a little money, and hid from the public. In Vienna at least her dreadful situation had remained ‘private’ apart from the highly formalized ways that spread it into the bureaucratic system. Here in Krems, in the small community it threatened to become public, a most welcome topic enriching the gossip in the neighbourhood. Barbara Baumgartner was terrified of that. She fell ill again and in her diary, which she used almost daily now, she wrote: “Today I am glad to be able to get up again, but my appearance looks cowardly my eyes lie deep in the holes and my cheeks are pale and haggard ...”<sup>53</sup> And the New Year’s Eve entry – during these years almost ritual – she inscribed:

Let’s take leave of this for me dreadful year[,] 1876[.] I could easily count the hours when I felt happy in this year, I have suffered from the awful[.] God will know if this will come to end now. And still everything was bearable as I found a temporary home (*Heimath*) at my parents, what would have happened if I would have been faced with these bitterest hardships without parents and home? Then probably I would have lacked the courage to continue such a miserable existence and would hardly have lived to see the end of the year 1876. The end of the year is reached but not the end of the suffering. ... Every evening I go to bed terrified of what the next day will bring to me ... For 4 years it has been a chain of suffering, and I won’t cherish the illusion that the next year will be a better one. I hope only slightly.<sup>54</sup>

When Philippe Lejeune outlines the distinct functions of the diary he specifies the value “to express oneself” in “to communicate” and “to release”. He describes the use of releasing, that is to unload the weight of emotions and thoughts in putting them down on paper. “This impulse can be associated with conservation, but its affinities are closer to the impulse to destroy. Putting something down on paper means separating it from yourself, purifying and cleansing yourself. You can also push purification to its limits and get rid of the paper.”<sup>55</sup> A strategy Barbara Baumgartner employed earlier and will use again soon. This passage stayed undamaged – on the one hand the writer may have felt released, with her complaining to her diary about the horrible last year and the situation altogether; on the other she might have created some memory very deliberately. She feels grateful to her parents for having her and her son, and records this in her journal – maybe also for other (future) readers than herself. So in only one entry, in just

a few sentences the opposites of forgetting/putting behind herself, and documentation/commemoration can be the central concerns at the same time.

In spring 1877 she went to Vienna again but not so much to live again with her husband (who had been released in January) as to start a midwife's education. Owing to the experiences of the last years, she felt the need to find some secure income of her own and not be completely dependent on her spouse. He opposed her plans, but as the parents supported Barbara Baumgartner's plans and he had apparently lost much of his power and influence, she went ahead with it. Here the diary is an interesting source concerning women's strategies in a system of patriarchal power that on its surface seems to be nothing more than suppressive towards women. As the husband does not fulfil the role of the breadwinner, the parents – and above all the father – take over again. They take over responsibility for Barbara Baumgartner and her child, and also take control. But within this framework, she is still able to develop plans to gain independence and to negotiate, to convince her family about her plans.

The journal becomes dense again; she tells about the entrance examination for her course, puts down the schedule and describes the procedures, etc. She seems happy and full of opinions again. However – I am obliged to say 'of course' – she had to quit this course after only a few weeks, because her husband developed a severe illness (pox) and needed care.

After all these years of trouble they finally move back to Krems at the beginning of 1878 to take over a general store in Barbara Baumgartner's parent's house. The entries become rare again. She notes deaths of relatives, school results of her son, and puts down special occurrences, such as her husband taking guardianship for an orphan, caprices of weather, and special private annoyances. In May 1885, one month after the death of her mother, Barbara Baumgartner's diary ends:

The long self-sacrificing nursing did give me some nervous fever as soon as everything was over it threw me on the sick bed for 4 weeks. Now again I am ready to enter the combat with destiny anew. The love for my pleasant good child upholds. What will come now?<sup>56</sup>

The actual diary stops, but nevertheless its last inscription is experienced as writing without an end as the ending is a "horizont of expectation",<sup>57</sup> even though Barbara Baumgartner's gaze into the future is full of anxiety and her expectations fearful and worried. As stated before perhaps Wetti Teuschl started her journal as a courtship-diary

– this subgenre usually ends with marriage. Barbara Baumgartner ignored this predetermined ending and continued writing, changing the book into an ‘all purpose’-diary. She stretched the possibly aboriginal limits of her diary concerning chronology *and* topic. After the marriage, the entries had not been devoted to a special phase anymore, and they had not been organised around a particular area of experience but referred to ‘life’. Even at times when Wetti Teuschl/Barbara Baumgartner had written a lot, this diary-writing corresponded only to one type of activity in her life, and had limited functions and meanings.<sup>58</sup>

We do not know whether this closure comes at the end of a period, at the completion of a circle; it might not have met the writer’s needs anymore; maybe the flow of energy that courses through the practice of writing in a diary was directed elsewhere;<sup>59</sup> perhaps after the death of her mother Barbara Baumgartner resigned. “What a contrast between the simplicity of a diary’s beginning and the evanescence of its ending ...; and the impossibility, most of the time, of grasping this dead of writing”,<sup>60</sup> Philippe Lejeune concludes the question how diaries end. And Felicity A. Nussbaum reminds us: “The diary delivers narrative and frustrates it; it simultaneously displays and withholds.”<sup>61</sup>

Thinking of my personal obsession with Wetti Teuschl’s text and life story at this point maybe I should tell the readers: The husband of Barbara Baumgartner died seven years after the closure of her diary (of alcohol abuse); the widow fell in love with a student, living as a lodger in her house in Krems. She went to Vienna with this 18-years-younger man and married him. When this second husband found employment as a civil servant (working for the railways), she lived from then on without the risks involved in being self-employed, which she always hated. The diarist lived until 1944; her second husband outlived her for four months.

<sup>1</sup> Betti is, just as Wetti, a short-form of the name Barbara. When starting the diary the author called herself Wetti; she continued (as a married woman) as Barbara Baumgartner, and later on started calling herself Betti (not in the diary but in press advertisements promoting her preprints [for embroidery]), sounding much more modern than the slightly old fashioned Wetti. These adverts had been placed in the diary with some paperclips.

<sup>2</sup> This crisis – caused by overabundance and lack of competition in the industry, in repeatedly bad harvests, in generally excessive price increases and the lack of consumers – broke out just after the opening of the Viennese World Exhibition in May 1873.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Toward Conceptualizing Diary*, in: Trev Lynn Broughton ed., *Autobiography. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. IV, London/New York 2007 (Orig. 1988), 3–13, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Christa Himmerle, *Diaries*, in: Benjamin Ziemann and Miriam Dobson eds., *Reading Primary Sources. The Interpretation of Texts from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century History*, London 2008 (in print).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Philippe Lejeune, *The "Journal de Jeune Fille" in Nineteenth-Century France*, in: Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff eds., *Inscribing the Daily. Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, Amherst 1996, 107–122, 115f. He found hardly any boy's diaries.

<sup>6</sup> Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Sarah M. Edwards, *Women's Diaries and Journals*, in: Margaretta Jolly ed., *Encyclopedia of Life Writing. Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*, London 2001, 950R952, 950.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Eagleton, *Genre and Gender*, in: David Duff, *Modern Genre Theory*, London 2000, 250b262, 252.

<sup>9</sup> Diaries got employed as illustrative sources, but hardly ever studied as texts.

<sup>10</sup> Margo Culley, *Introduction to A Day at a Time: Diary Literature of American Women, from 1764 to 1985*, in: Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson eds., *Women, Autobiography, Theory. A Reader*, Wisconsin 1998, 217–221, 217.

<sup>11</sup> Culley, *Introduction*, see note 10, 220, cf. 221.

<sup>12</sup> Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 4. "In diary and journal, linguistic constructs of the self (or, more accurately, the significations of the subject) are produced through social, historical, and cultural factors; and the 'self' both positions itself in the discourses available to it, and is produced by them." Nussbaum, *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Himmerle, *Diaries*, see note 4, (in print).

<sup>15</sup> Helen M. Buss, *A Feminist Revision of New Historicism to Give Fuller Readings of Women's Private Writing*, in: Broughton, *Autobiography*, vol. IV (Orig. 1996), see note 3, 14–31, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Buss, *Revision*, see note 15, 29; cf. 26ff.

<sup>17</sup> Culley, *Introduction*, see note 10, 216.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, *Women's Diaries*, see note 7, 951.

<sup>19</sup> Culley, *Introduction*, see note 10, 218.

<sup>20</sup> Edwards, *Women's Diaries*, see note 7, 950; concerning a different genre – coined by same processes – Carolyn Steedman explains why the Victorian autobiography almost alienated women from the form (not being able to perform the interpretative task, incapable of drawing out meaning and from the events of a life); cf. Carolyn Steedman, *Forms of History, Histories of Form*, in: ead., *Past Tenses. Essays on Writing, Autobiography and History*, London 1992, 159p170, esp. 167.

<sup>21</sup> Edwards, *Women's Diaries*, see note 7, 951

<sup>22</sup> Edwards, *Women's Diaries*, see note 7, 951.

<sup>23</sup> Anke M. Melichor, "Liebesprobleme ... waren schon immer ein Anlass für mich, Tagebuch zu führen." Liebe, Ehe und Partnerschaft in Frauentagebüchern ["Love problems have always been an occasion for me to write diary". Love, Marriage and Partnership in Women's Diaries], K nigstein 1998, 27.

<sup>24</sup> And meeting gender prejudices mentioned above.

<sup>25</sup> I had some help with the transcription: Eva Weidinger-Vols did the transcribing, and after my revision, Eva Wackerlig cross read the transcription and the original hand writing. I mentioned before that the author's great-grandson did a transcription in 1977; we did not use this version as it was not word for word.

<sup>26</sup> Though it is not faithful to her line endings (owing to printing requirements).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Carolyn Steedman, *The Radical Policeman's Tale: Working-class Men and Writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, in: ead., *Tenses*, see note 20, 142U155, 151.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Steedman, *Policeman's Tale*, see note 27, 150.

<sup>29</sup> *Diary of Wetti Teuschl*, Collection of Women's Estates (Sammlung Frauennachlass), Department of History, University of Vienna, NL 13, manuscript (hereafter: NL 13), entry for Apr. 2, 1870, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Philippe Lejeune, *How do Diaries End?*, in: Broughton, *Autobiography*, vol. IV (Orig. 2001), see note 3, 88–101.

<sup>31</sup> NL 13, entry for Apr. 2, 1870, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Christa Himmerle demonstrates that diary-writing sometimes retrained a religious function until

long in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: “diaries were written, among other things, to reflect on and put religiousness into words, or even to enter into dialogue with God.” H mmerle, *Diaries*, see note 4, (in print). The diary of Wetti Teuschl shows such tendency only to some extent.

<sup>33</sup> Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 10.

<sup>34</sup> Of course I cannot tell for sure whether the author or someone else destroyed these inscriptions. It could well be that successors decided that some passages transmit too bad a picture of their ancestor.

<sup>35</sup> NL 13, entry for Nov. 20, 1872, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Lejeune, *Journal*, see note 5, 111.

<sup>37</sup> Again: also a reader could have destroyed the page.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Christa H mmerle, *Ein Ort f r Geheimnisse? Jugendtageb cher im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* [A Place for Secrets? Youth-diaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries], in: Peter Eigner, Christa H mmerle and G nter M ller eds., *Briefe – Tageb cher – Autobiographien. Studien und Quellen f r den Unterricht* [Letters – Diaries – Autobiographies. Studies and Sources for Teaching], Wien 2006, 28E45, 29.

<sup>40</sup> While the first part embraces two years, two months in 74 entries on 49 pages, the second part covering twelve years, six months (69 entries) on 111 pages is fairly limited.

<sup>41</sup> NL 13, entry for Nov. 20, 1872, 51.

<sup>42</sup> NL 13, entry for Jan. 7, 1874, 54.

<sup>43</sup> This private photography is published with the owner’s permission.

<sup>44</sup> NL 13, entry for Jan. 1, 1875, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Hansi is an affectionate form of the child’s name Hans/John.

<sup>46</sup> NL 13, entry for Jan. 1, 1875, 61.

<sup>47</sup> NL 13, entry for Jan. 7, 1874, 57f.

<sup>48</sup> NL 13, entry for Jan. 7, 1874, 58.

<sup>49</sup> NL 13, entry for Oct. 23, 1876, 74.

<sup>50</sup> Later she will have to solve severe tax troubles because of this business strategy.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Margareth Lanzinger’s text in this volume.

<sup>52</sup> On this topic cf. Christa H mmerle, *Requests, Complaints, Demands. Preliminary Thoughts on the Petitioning Letters of Lower-class Austrian Women, 1865–1918*, in: Caroline Bland and M ire Cross eds., *Gender and Politics in the Age of Letter Writing: 1750–2000*, Aldershot 2004, 115–133.

<sup>53</sup> NL 13, entry for Nov. 14, 1876, 84.

<sup>54</sup> NL 13, entry for Dec. 31, 1876, 93.

<sup>55</sup> Lejeune, *Diaries*, see note 30, 95. He calls the destruction of a diary a “little suicide”.

<sup>56</sup> NL 13, entry for May 1885, 152. To be exact: In 1931 (almost certainly) the author adds a little note, written on different paper, glued into the diary, memorizing the 10 year-jubilee of the return of her son Hans from Soviet war captivity.

<sup>57</sup> Lejeune, *Diaries*, see note 30, 89

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 7.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Lejeune *Diaries*, see note 30, 97

<sup>60</sup> Lejeune, *Diaries*, see note 30, 88.

<sup>61</sup> Nussbaum, *Conceptualizing*, see note 3, 11.

# THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND BIOGRAPHY AS MODELED BY A BULGARIAN FAMILY OF PUBLIC SERVANTS

Mari A. Firkatian

Memorializing events for personal and public consumption is often done in the form of written work: autobiographies, biographies, and memoirs. Memory or the experience of remembering is a highly subjective practice. In this paper I examine four works written by members of a single family in addition to documents from the unpublished family archive (PASF).

There are several factors that distinguish these biographies and memoirs; class, religion, and ethnicity. In addition, they are differentiated by gender, the amount of time elapsed from the recorded events, and finally a generational difference. The recollection of the past includes the evocation of memories that often emerge from comparing and combining a present situation with a past one. Furthermore, certain memories remain unvoiced while others are voiced. Finally, accurate recollections frequently depend on recall that is visual and at the same time what researchers in memory studies call “source memory” or when and where an event occurred.

The family in question, whose lives have produced a copious amount of written memorials to the past, the Stancioffs, were diplomats for, and courtiers to, the Bulgarian monarchy. Their efforts at “identity construction” are legitimated through their staunch support of the system in power. Their professional lives, in the service of Bulgaria, begin in 1887 and end after the communist take over of the country.<sup>1</sup> The Stancioff family has a plethora of recollections to memorialize, their collective professional experiences included the positions of Bulgarian Minister Plenipotentiary, Foreign Minister, Prime Minister, official interpreter to the Prime Minister at the post-World War I Peace conferences, First Secretary at Bulgarian Legations abroad – one in London and the other at Washington D.C. – and a multitude of secondary and tertiary positions. The mother and her daughters acted as Ladies-in-Waiting to Bulgarian queens and princesses.

The process by which one creates meaningful configurations of information in order to retain it is what experts in memory and cognitive recall call “elaborative encod-

ing.”<sup>2</sup> Human brains undergo enduring changes, and some transient changes, from the encoding process as well as the original experiences. Ergo what “*we perceive and think about an event plays a major role in determining what cues will later elicit recollection of the experience...what matters most is whether a retrieval cue reinstates a person’s subjective perception of the event, including whatever thought, fantasies, or inferences occurred at the time of encoding.*”<sup>3</sup> The Stancioffs practiced encoding most often by gathering as a family and recounting recent events and past experiences as a way to solidify each others’ memories and to relive the episodes that were the glue of family connectedness. The one thing they did consistently was to talk for hours, after a prolonged separation, recounting events, impressions, and “lessons.” In this way they reconfigured and encoded repeatedly to preserve their collective and individual experience. These talks served to also unify the family in work, thought, and deed so that they seemed to share the same opinions, the same attitudes on issues.<sup>4</sup> They deliberately embed their individual and collective “source memory,” through collective repetition.

As members of the *haute bourgeoisie*, this family found its place in the world by scaling the peaks of title and position. Both parents issued from distinguished families – Bulgarian and French elites. Their professional involvement in the diplomatic world added to their cachet as cosmopolitans at ease in any social and international setting – they socialized with aristocratic elites throughout Europe. They chose to uphold the political order necessitated by monarchy while they were on intimate terms with the Bulgarian royal family over three generations.

The Stancioff family produced several works of biography and autobiography or what has been called “memory writing.” Some were published; one remained in manuscript form as a family heirloom. The works I discuss are: *Dimitri Stancioff: Patriot and Cosmopolitan*, a biography, *Recollections of a Diplomatist’s Wife*, and *Ivan Stancioff: Diplomat and Gardner*, both memoirs, and the unpublished manuscript “Memories of Love,” a biographical essay.<sup>5</sup> I also refer to documents, journals, and letters, in the Private Archive of the Stancioff Family (PASF) where I have researched my book, *Diplomats and Dreamers: The Stancioff Family in Bulgarian History*.<sup>6</sup>

These works represent the efforts of a single family to memorialize their past and shape their future; they are a form of self-promotion.<sup>7</sup> As such they offer a “cosmopolitan memory” for their readers. Remembering the past can be a wonderfully freeing experience since the one who remembers is unchained from the immediate present. At

the same time, this process of remembering and re-experiencing the past can serve to shape and mold both the present and the future.

*Recollections of a Diplomatist's Wife*, published in 1931, was the product of a collaborative effort of both the matriarch, Anna de Grenaud Stancioff, (1861-1955), and her husband and children. However, as a memoir it focused on a limited number of years, from the time of Anna's arrival in Bulgaria in 1888 until 1918. The book is extraordinarily selective in its choices of topics. *Patriot and Cosmopolitan* is the biography of the family patriarch, Dimitri Stancioff, (1863-1940), as written by his daughters Nadejda (1894-1957), and Feodora, (1895-1969). A labor of love, it took years to finish and finally appeared the year of Nadejda's death in 1957. Ivan, (1897-1972), began his recording of memoirs in 1969 and *Diplomat and Gardner* was published posthumously in 1998. Long before its publication, the original manuscript was in the family's possession with several copies circulating among them. The last work, "Memoires of Love" has an apt title since it was a whimsical, almost hagiographic text written by one adoring sister, Feodora, about her eldest sibling and best friend, Nadejda.<sup>8</sup> It too was created as a memorial tribute as well as for family consumption.

While societies mold their pasts, with histories that aim to project virtues on to events in the past, the personal histories of public servants too direct the reader's gaze through rosy colored glasses. Furthermore, these "memory books" play an active role in creating the future by recording family lives for posterity and underscoring the impact these individuals and the family collective had on their world. Thus, these works serve several purposes at once, not the least of which is to serve the national interest. "*The great and famous are closely bound up with accountability in the public sphere. The personal account provides both the record of the life, and also a means by which that life can be held to account.*"<sup>9</sup> Hence, the Stancioffs recorded their lives with several goals in mind, they served the present and the past with an eye to the future — their personal and public futures.

The Stancioff children—those most active in "memory writing," Nadejda and Feodora—participated in writing their parents lives. "*The need to preserve memories across intergenerational time...is a fundamental human imperative.*"<sup>10</sup> This is one of the directives that impel humanity to record history. In the case of *Patriot* and *Recollections*, the children had countless documentary resources at hand as well as the living parent to interrogate.

Memory has a critical role in the life of the individual and society. The retelling of a life is a creation which combines the present reality with the past one. The historical



context of both *Patriot* and *Recollections* was similar. Both works were conceptualized and written in an era that emphasized duty, honor, and above all discretion. Each text is a reflection of its time specific context: historical, economic, social, cultural. This was not the era of tell-all-books but rather the end of a long period of circumspect, instructive literature which consciously avoided shocking the reader.

Patriarchal orders evinced almost universal obedience to the unspoken dictum that no untoward revelations or prurient information become part of the public consciousness. The vision of a controlled and well behaved humanity, of any class, was a goal that legitimated strong paternalistic figures. The authoritarian behavior of those in power, (politicians, public figures, and family martinets alike) encouraged individuals to both curb their desires and keep a careful watch on others' expressions of unbecoming cravings. This was not so much a conspiracy to create conformism as an aspiration to advance civilization, to organize humanity and focus its development in positive and constructive directions.<sup>11</sup> How did Europeans internalize the image of external authoritarian forces as the only affective way to curb and control the animalistic urges that governed humanity's frail self-control? According to at least one cultural historian "[the]... *bourgeois* [citizens] *preferred self-control to self-expression, even though they sought, and often found, legitimate channels for letting themselves go.*"<sup>12</sup>

Both Ana and Dimitri had experienced the strictures of bourgeois, middle-class up-bringing where personal desires and individual interest were expected to be relegated to a secondary role when other interests such as family, class, and state competed for attention. The Stancioffs' lives revolved around many public figures—kings, queens, diplomats, and politicians—therefore their works of memorializing had to be conscious of their impact on the reading public. Both *Patriot* and *Recollections* sought to inform and instruct the reading public.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century women writers and especially female autobiographers were still a rarity since the bourgeoisie enjoined women to remain silent about family and domestic life and especially about their roles in family events. Being modest about themselves and keeping family secrets safe, women would have ventured into diary writing but not necessarily autobiographical writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Writing and publishing one's life would have required taking center stage and showing one's role of actor instead of audience in life's dramas and this was difficult if not impossible for a woman.<sup>13</sup> By writing about her life Anna Stancioff broke with the code of silence which required her gender to remain passive.

Her foray into memoir writing, published in 1931, set in motion an effort to place the entire family in the collective memory of their “race” and to carve out a place among members in European society in general as an exceptional exemplar of their class. It is the first published account of the Stancioff family’s role in history. A circumspect narrative, the book is a model of careful self-presentation.<sup>14</sup> Founding member of the Balkan Committee and Member of Parliament, Lord Newton wrote the forward. If it is indeed true that “every auto biography wants to persuade others to learn from her or his life.” then Anna Stancioff taught her readers to be kind to the living and the dead and to never reveal the darker regions of the historically significant characters that crowded the pages of her narrative.<sup>15</sup> For example, Princess Clementine, she wrote, possessed the following admirable qualities: “energy, sincerity, religious and moral convictions, devotion to her family...”<sup>16</sup>

The author had been raised to believe that she had no agency in her life and that to exhibit agency was unbecoming of a woman.<sup>17</sup> Making herself both the subject and object of her story was virtually impossible with her upbringing and conservative, pious background. Anna Stancioff’s work puts her squarely in the role of witness to but not as an actor in events.<sup>18</sup> She uses the personal pronoun only to comment on scenery, unique folk customs, the weather, and to enumerate the positive qualities of her employers, the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha Bulgarian dynastic family. When recording seminal events she uses the passive voice and puts herself in the distant role of vague peripheral shadow but hardly an actor.

*Patriot and Cosmopolitan*, Dimitri’s biography, is an example of memorializing a life and integrating it into the fabric of the national narrative. It is a personalized account of Dimitri’s professional encounters with some subjective commentary on the development of events he witnessed. In the forward, historian G.P. Gooch, a family friend and the editor of the *Contemporary Review*, points out that the book would: “*prove indispensable to students of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke, of the whole eventful reign of Ferdinand, and of the intricacies of Balkan politics....[with] vivid snapshots of the old Europe.*” He also praises Dimitri as a patriot who nonetheless had a “*wider vision of an integrated mankind.*” This sentiment is carried by drawing a comparison of Stancioff the diplomat with Talleyrand, the diplomat, who during the Congress of Vienna in 1814, aspired to be “a good European.” Ergo, the civilizing mission of this biography!

In order to evoke the importance of memory and the role of memory in their lives

the authors, Dimitri's own daughters, include one of his favorite quotations: "*Les peuples ne risquent de périr que lorsqu'ils perdent la mémoire*," by Marechal Foch in the frontispiece of the biography.<sup>19</sup> The Stancioffs understood that the said imperative reinforces the need for this kind of literature. The authors used the third person pronoun to refer to Dimitri, the actor is also the observer, and so the subject of the biography at times recedes into the shadows of larger public figures.

The act of remembering, in a closed circle, can serve to bind the actors closer, especially family members. Ivan Stancioff, in his memoir's foreword, admonished his readers (primarily his descendants) that "*history begins ...at home*."<sup>20</sup> His message, both to his family and to other readers is a combination plea and a caution, he understood the uses of memory since he warned: "*remembering, and talking about things we have lived through together* [is a family affair]...*now* [he began to write his memoirs in 1969] *all the little family history details are less and less mentioned, there is less and less general talk in families than there used to be...there are fewer family anecdotes, fewer long standing old friendships, fewer relatives to whom all ages owe respect*." His perception notes a linear progression from a lack of time and a dearth of opportunities to bring family together to retell the past and hence retain consciousness and shape the collective mentality.

He also links memory closely to the retention and preservation of family documents.<sup>21</sup> His family's migration from one country to another, from one continent to another, the obligatory weeding of documents while fleeing from one global cataclysm to another (wars, revolutions etc.) forced the scattering of written records and the loss of memory cues that formed an essential part of remembering. He, and the rest of his nuclear family, believed that memories and the role of memory in defining the self are critical since without memories there can be no self to express.

Nadejda Stancioff, the eldest child and a diplomat, admonished her family on a regular basis to save her letters for her autobiography.<sup>22</sup> She was conscious of her role in history and took up her role to memorialize her life's accomplishments both for posterity and her family's consistent drive to memorialize their collective history.<sup>23</sup> She is the one member of the family who unfailingly voiced her desire to gather together as a family and discuss everything in person, not just through letters. Throughout her life she urged her family to gather frequently and talk about their experiences as much as possible.

Feodora begins her "Memories" as though it were an autobiographical work: "...I was born in Bucharest on a hot June day..."<sup>24</sup> By the second sentence however, it is

clear that the work is primarily about her older sister Nadejda. Feodora takes great pains to describe her sister's appearance and the fact that Feodora's own early memories are supported by her sister's journals. The entire work is one memory cue followed by the next. Descriptions of what the views from their successive nursery windows are interlaced with vignettes about their favorite childhood games and the constant theme is the perfect big sister who grew into the remarkable woman. The work ends with Nadejda's death. Feodora is full of admiration throughout the work and of Nadejda's life she writes: "She always believed in miracles because her life was one..."<sup>25</sup>

The act of remembering is a self-defining experience. Furthermore, although not stated explicitly in any of these works, what we believe about ourselves is determined by what we remember about our pasts. The Stancioffs were adept at determining and shaping themselves both as social and professional actors. In fact, literal theatrical experience remained an important way to recapture memory for this family and the Stancioffs play acted their way to memorializing events; albeit, they did this not only for family memories but for historical and literary posterity.<sup>26</sup>

While these works retain many commonalities they also show distinctive characteristics; their individuality can be attributed to the passage of time (for example, the social mandates that restricted women to express themselves as actors in the public domain) and political changes, such as the expulsion of the Bulgarian royal family after World War II and the fall of Communism in the country in 1991. The Stancioffs' published works are successively less circumspect in their revelations about personal encounters with historically important notables.

In fact, Ivan's memoir is rather startling in its graphic and detailed portraits of the same personages about whom his other family members made innocuous or even positive commentary. While Dimitri's and Anna's memoirs are wholly positive, even laudatory about King Ferdinand and the effects of his reign, Ivan is less than complementary. Instead, Ivan's memoir mentions rather graphic details of King Ferdinand's acerbic tongue and his penchant for seeking revenge on even his most loyal subjects when he felt slighted.<sup>27</sup> He refers freely to the King's penchant for vindictiveness.<sup>28</sup> Whereas none of the earlier Stancioff works have even a hint of negative characterization of their sovereign. Nadejda's surviving documents retain a mere hint of the abrasive side of the King's personality. Despite numerous instances of having experienced the worst this particular sovereign could mete out the incidents of such mistreatment survived primarily in oral family lore

but were not recorded for posterity in writing. Ivan's memoirs breached that invisible barrier. It is possible Nadejda's unwritten autobiography would have been more critical of the monarchy however, that possibility can only remain a conjecture.

Family memories can present versions of the same events. For example, on the subject of the family's economic state, when their father took up the post of Bulgaria's representative to the Court of St. James, the memories of Ivan and Nadejda differ. Ivan remembers their outdated clothing upon arrival in England and how the girls' black stockings, instead of skin-toned, and his wearing his father's old suit made them the objects of stares, Nadejda does not mention this. While Nadejda makes several references to the difficulties with their staff at the London Legation, who constantly complained about the shortage of funds, Ivan claimed that they made do nicely with only 3 staff members to run a 6 story building.<sup>29</sup> Feo too used poetic license or perhaps a dimming memory of the facts when she claims that she and her sister began working on *Patriot* in the 1950s. However, Nadejda gives detailed descriptions in her journals of how they began work as early as 1925 laboring on it during vacations.<sup>30</sup>

Ivan also recorded for posterity something that would make a Bulgarian cringe today. He recorded an exchange between his mother and a lowly legation functionary, when the family was stationed in London. He describes it as "*one of the most succinct expressions of the inferiority complex which tends to afflict small nation*" blithely painting his country with a broad stroke.<sup>31</sup> Although his mother made similar observations in her book, she did not press the point home with blunt declarative statements. Again, Ivan's is the most candid and unguarded memoir of the lot.

The Stancioffs also made the preservation of memory a deliberately intergenerational affair.<sup>32</sup> The family used all available cues to remember who they were and where they came from. Music, food, and language, were a universal vocabulary for a culturally mixed family of diplomats. The same people who were comfortable in elegant, contemporary Parisian salons wearing the latest society fashions also perennially dried their crop of peppers and other vegetables and took them to their kitchens in Paris or London, to use as sensory reminders of Bulgarianess. They made marmalade and preserved green figs, sometimes with their grandmother, as other Bulgarians did. Those seasonal, monotonous tasks put them in the stream of national consciousness; memorializing of sense of place, time, and belonging. This is cosmopolitan memory construction since smell and taste produce uniquely powerful memories and are a bridge to the past.<sup>33</sup>

Memory is a central part of the brain's attempt to make sense of experiences. Stories about past experiences are powerful influences on how we conduct ourselves and what we do in the future. The Stancioffs' written works place them firmly into their country's history and project onto the next generations a kind of noblesse oblige toward Bulgaria and her people. Today, several members of the family are actively involved in helping to shape the future Bulgaria.

<sup>1</sup> I am not taking into account Johnny Stancioff's diplomatic career in the service of Bulgaria.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1996). p. 49. See also, George Johnson, *In the Palaces of Memory: How We Build the Worlds inside Our Heads*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*. Schacter p. 61

<sup>4</sup> "Talks" here includes conversations in person and epistolary conversations, and finally in the form of memoirs.

<sup>5</sup> All these works relied on journal entries and letters to form the substance of their narratives. Journal keepers have a variety of motivations. Once conscious of the potential use of journals and family correspondence, writers tend to keep a careful eye to the future by recording and memorializing present events. Whether because of a desire for immortality, or a need for exercising a type of confession, or possibly to find an echo of one's innermost thoughts, creating a confidant or as a personal intellectual scribble pad their efforts were methodical. Family journal keepers, Nadejda Stancioff's was the most constant, were part of a universal explosion of diary keeping that came of age during the Victorian era. The urge to record, write and read diaries, mundane and exceptional events in one's life was ubiquitous by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This habit to leave some kind of permanent record of one's existence on the earth along with thousands was ubiquitous among certain classes.

<sup>6</sup> The PASF is housed in Varna at present.

<sup>7</sup> I was given access to the un-cataloged family archive, PASF, in order to write my book, *Diplomats and Dreamers*.

<sup>8</sup> Feodora Stancioff, "Nadejda Memories of Love," (London: 1967).

<sup>9</sup> Julia Swindells, *The Uses of Autobiography, Feminist Perspectives on the Past and Present* (London : Bristol Taylor & Francis, 1995). p.9

<sup>10</sup> Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*. p. 305

<sup>11</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 1st American ed. (New York: Urizen Books, 1978).

<sup>12</sup> Peter Gay, *Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture, 1815-1914*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 2002). p. 101

<sup>13</sup> Jill K. Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography*, 1st ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1998). p.87

<sup>14</sup> Anna Stancioff and Nadejda Muir, *Recollections of a Bulgarian Diplomatist's Wife* (London: Hutchinson, 1931). "I found myself suddenly plunged into the troubled atmosphere of a Court, in a world of prejudices and etiquette, which gave me great opportunities to exercise the faculty of observation and to indulge in amused and slightly skeptical comments!" p. 24

<sup>15</sup> Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography*. p.6

<sup>16</sup> Stancioff and Muir, *Recollections of a Bulgarian Diplomatist's Wife*. p. 23

<sup>17</sup> Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography*. Whenever someone tells her story straight and in an authoritative voice, we know she has developed her own sense of agency and can sustain it despite nagging cultural doubts." P.88

<sup>18</sup> Anna states, on page 21, that she does not "wish to study the great political problems of the time..." she instead calls her work of a "strictly intimate nature."

<sup>19</sup> Nadejda Muir, *Dimitri Stancioff Patriot and Cosmopolitan* (London: John Murray, 1957).

<sup>20</sup> Ivan D. Stancioff, *Diplomat and Gardener Memoirs* (Sofia: Petrikov, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> His fear is not so much that the international, cosmopolitan character of his family (his seven married children were strewn over at least three continents) would not necessarily speak a common language but that their lack of cohesiveness would sooner emanate from their lack of common experiences and ultimately the absence or retelling and re-savoring as an exercise in preserving the family stories and memories.

<sup>22</sup> Examples of her admonition here.

<sup>23</sup> Nadejda Stancioff, unpublished letter, 22 December 1920, and 7 January 1923, and 19 September 1921, Nada I, PASE.

<sup>24</sup> Stancioff, "Nadejda Memories of Love." p.1

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 139.

<sup>26</sup> Ivan, Nadejda, and Feodora recalled their childhood play acting escapades and later the next generations' plays for the sake of memory and memorializing. The children's plays were an extension of what they observed as adult play acting, *tableaux vivants*. Ivan claimed that his sisters Nadejda and Chou were able actresses and that their childhood games included creating plays where all the children would participate; perhaps include some servants in secondary roles or failing that use their domestic staff as an audience. On page 27 of his memoir he claims: "*We never lacked for entertainment, particularly while my sister Nadejda was there to array us in exotic garb and to coach us in the dramatic parts her wonderful imagination never tired of inventing.*" These plays were for their amusement but they were just as much for the construction of memorials to the past. Later generations carried on the tradition. On one occasion, when Ivan's children were young, they were organized to recreate the wedding ceremony that brought their grandparents together as husband and wife in 1889. Memory plays were a constant for this family.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. pp.28-29, 31 and elsewhere

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> Stancioff, *Diplomat and Gardener Memoirs*. p.40.

<sup>30</sup> Nadejda Stancioff, unpublished journal, 1925, PASE.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 41

<sup>32</sup> {Schacter, 1996 #1} "*The need to preserve memories across intergenerational time is a fundamental human imperative.*" p. 305

<sup>33</sup> Schacter, *Searching for Memory : The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*. p.26 where he refers to Marcel Proust's retelling of his feeling of joy when consuming tea with madeleines. "...taste and smell alone, are more fragile and more enduring....remain poised for a long time..."

Conway, Jill K. *When Memory Speaks : Reflections on Autobiography*. 1st ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1998.

Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*. 1st American ed. New York: Urizen Books, 1978.

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## WOMEN'S MEMOIRS IN THE COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE "NARRATIVES OF POPULAR MEMORY" CAMPAIGN (1983-1989), PUBLIC ARCHIVE, BLAGOEVGRAD

Milena Angelova

The article looks at one of the collections of memoirs that had been gathered within the framework of the *Narratives of Popular Memory* movement. Related memoirs are kept in the public archives all over the country, and the collection in question is to be found in the public archive of the town of Blagoevgrad. In this article, I have presented the memoirs which were being collected by women and for women in the period from 1983 till 1989.

### *The Narratives of Popular Memory* movement (1983 – 1989)

Till the mid 1970's, the memoirs of those who participated in the 1941 – 1944 partisan movement had become a paragon of autobiographical narration in the public space. The new genre was highly praised and constantly evolved, for there was a great demand for the partisans' memoirs to be incessantly retold, reminded and re-published. As a result, till the end of the 1970's, the otherwise homogenous space where the memories of the near past thrived had already been corrupted.<sup>1</sup>

The *Narratives of Popular Memory* movement was the campaign of the widest scope of the last decade of communistic regime; the movement had for its objective to collect documents and testimonies about the "heroic past of the Bulgarian people", the most inspiring moment of which everybody was made to believe was the anti-fascist struggle.<sup>2</sup> The memoirs were expected to establish patterns for heroic, idealistic and self-sacrificing actions and behavior. Only the heroes of revolutionary struggles were given the legitimate right to recount their memories to the general public.

The *Narratives of Popular Memory* movement was a part of the general memory policy of that period. The whole nation was supposed to be writing down, recounting and listening to such kinds of memoirs.

*The movement began in the early 1980's and coincided with the grandiose celebrations*



on the occasion of the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian state. Within the framework of the “1300 Years of Bulgaria” festivities, a large-scale campaign for collecting historical testimonies and documents was launched.<sup>3</sup>

The memoir campaign was supposed to send once and for all the bourgeois modernity into oblivion, and to ensure privileged status for the so-called “active fighters against fascism and capitalism” by provoking general pride of the mythical resistance movement. The slogan of the movement called for cherishing “*the heroic history of our people, the virtues of the Bulgarian spirit and its deeply rooted striving for social and national freedom...[...] the genuine worth of the memoirs is that they turn those fighters’ moral strength, decency, and idealism into a model to be followed in our present days.*”<sup>4</sup>

The campaign’s concrete ambition was to catch the attention of as many young people as possible and let them be inspired by the exemplary lives and deeds of the children-heroes and the members of the Young Communist League, and as a result of that to have the connection between generations restored.

Special social committees were founded for the purpose to coordinate the activities of several institutions: district committees of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), clubs of the fighters against fascism and capitalism, “Cultural-historical heritage” sections, professional committees, local Comsomol and Pioneer youth organizations. There were published some guide books on how to interview still living participants in the partisan movement. Instructions on how to collect family stories (genealogies) and folklore material were distributed in schools. Relating memories was considered the official standard of remembering. Everything deviating from the biographical norms had to be suppressed or forgotten. As a result of the campaign, 9000 memoirs, 1000 first-hand accounts and hundreds of family stories and genealogies were recorded and transcribed.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Narratives of Popular Memory movement in Blagoevgrad***

On 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1983, in Blagoevgrad, a meeting was held; it was dedicated to the *Narratives of popular memory* campaign and was attended by representatives of the Central Committee of BCP, the local party elite, the Institute of History of BCP, the Central Public Archive, the Culture Committee, museums, the Fatherland Front, etc.

At this meeting, a program and proper methodology for the further development of the *Narratives of Popular Memory* social movement were approved.<sup>6</sup>

**Aims and tasks of the *Narratives of Popular Memory* campaign as stated in the official program:**

1) To provide patriotic and class-conscious education in the spirit of the resolutions adopted at the 12<sup>th</sup> congress of BCP (cultivating proper attitude in order to fit the communistic ideas and the party policy).

2) To increase the campaign's popularity: "*Thousands of people should contribute to the collection and preservation of the spiritual principles of the past and present; people have to share their opinion about the revolutionary struggles of the party and its transforming power*".<sup>7</sup>

**In this connection, several issues can be outlined:**

- The region's history prior 1912;
- 1912-1944: refugees, history of the party organization – "memoirs of the still living participants in the revolutionary struggles";
- The period of the socialist building of the country with its sub periods - the period of establishing and upsurge of the people's power regime; 1946-1948 – the period of macedonization of the South-West region (*'to avoid speculations coming from outside'*); the period following the April's Plenum in 1956 (*'Let us turn to the common people'*). Several anniversaries were commemorated and laid emphasis on: 110 years of the April Uprising, 105 years of the Uprising in Kresna and Razlog; 90 years of the establishment of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization; 80 years of the Ilinden Uprising, 60 years of the September Uprising, 40 years of the Socialist Revolution.

The regional daily newspaper *Pirinsko Delo* and the Blagoevgrad Radio and Television Center were persevering in their efforts to popularize the campaign. During the whole period between the years 1983 and 1989, *Pirinsko Delo* kept publishing a special column bearing the name of the campaign – *Narratives of Popular Memory*. The Blagoevgrad Radio broadcasted a similar radio show under the name of *Strongholds of the Bulgarian spirit*. Within the framework of the campaign, the Blagoevgrad Radio stored up in its gold fond a great many memoirs, related by active members of the Regional Party Organization, which covered the years of the "armed struggle" - 1923 – 1944 - the period when people's power was established and further strengthened in the Pirin region. The

television center shot more than 200 documentaries about “important events and people”, “adherents of revolutionaries”, founders of regional party committees, etc. (p. 12-13).

Of special interest were the memoirs of the women-participants in the antifascist struggle, youth and women’s movement within the framework of the youth-brigade movement.<sup>8</sup>

### **Documents on women’s participation in the *Narratives of Popular Memory* movement, Public archive, Blagoevgrad**

During the 1983 -1984 period, only in the Blagoevgrad district, 914 memoirs, 185 first-hand accounts (around 4000 entities) were collected. A big part of the materials were collected by school pupils (563) with the participation of the active fighters against fascism and capitalism.

Women’s recollections kept in the fond of the *Narratives of popular memory* movement in the Blagoevgrad region totaled up to 191.<sup>9</sup>

### **Thematic features of the memoirs written or related by women:**

- Memoirs about the participation in the antifascist struggle, the activities of the famous antifascists (fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands), the youth revolutionary movement in the district in the years 1937-1944, the activities of the partisan’s supporters (jataci) – around 90 memoirs (half of all the memoirs);
- Participation in the youth-brigade movement – 14 memoirs;
- Macedonian revolutionary movement and uprisings in the region (Jane Sandansky, Gotse-Delchev, the Ilinden Uprising from 1903);
- Participation in the youth-brigade movement – 14 memoirs;
- Memories from the war period (1912-1918) and the years in exile -29 memoirs;
- The macedonization of the South-West Bulgaria (imposing Macedonian national self-consciousness on the population in 1946-1948) – 2 memoirs;
- Women’s memoirs (‘participants in the Resistance’, ‘revolutionaries’) – 7 memoirs;
- Memoirs about the women’s movement and the professional realization of women after 1944; women’s societies; the establishing of the Pioneer organization; the opening

of a meteorological station in the town (1972), a historical museum in Blagoevgrad (1951), and a local radio station; memoirs of the first female pharmacists;

- Memoirs of women about the between-the-wars period (1912-1918), the anti-fascist struggle and women's social and political activities after 1944.

Highlights: Self-sacrifice of women: "Worker, social worker and mother". In the memoirs, women were presented as mothers, all self-sacrificing sisters and wives.

The records are seemingly spontaneous, but they had actually undergone a scrutinized party control, and the party memory, all organized and meticulously edited, was presented as one hundred percent folklore memory that had been related to the youngsters by the elderly people. A special attention was paid to the partisan stories and the emotional impact they had on the audience as an intrinsic part of the whole The-hero-is-always-ready-to-serve-his-country collective ritual; relating the "biography of the school patron" (relatives and close friends of the hero patron are relating about him).<sup>10</sup>

Who were those women whose memories were collected? Most of them had a successful career, they held high positions in different hierarchies, they had privileges, they felt satisfied of what they did for living, and they functioned successfully within the system. The authors lack a sense of individual life path, they often related other people's stories, their friends' and relatives', not their own.. In many cases, the female authors of memoirs recounted their stories in a very insipid and boring manner, as if they were writing some nomenclature papers and not the stories of their lives. In the personal stories the bureaucratic patterns of the official CV's were often reproduced.

In the recounted memories, the anti-fascist personality could easily be identified; it seems that it ran from generation to generation like something hereditary. The partisan biographies would as a rule contain a note full of pathos and heroism.

Extended periods of those women's lives never got included in the stories. Personal experience was often excluded from the formal biographies. Women would rarely use first person, singular when telling their own stories, the style seemed hesitant, and the authors would rather speak about the others than about themselves.

The extensive use of language clichés contributed to the process of sacralization of the image of the heroic partisans. The memoirs replicated to a great extent the formal rhetoric patterns and back in those years they were actually quite successful in convincing the common people that the totalitarian regime was a patriotic, modern, and emancipated form of political control.

In the memoirs, the obligatory propaganda language was used as a stylistic tool in depicting events from the past, and also in reaching out for the future that was always described as a better one.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vodenicharov, P. Bulgaria in the 1970's – nationalism, modernization, emancipation. A critical discourse analysis of the totalitarian memory policies – Balkanistic Forum, 1-2-3, 2004, p. 105; Popova, K. Planning and producing memories. A conference session on "Text of testimonies", Liverpool, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Vodenicharov, P. Bulgaria in the 1970's ..., p. 106. ; Vodenicharov, P., Restructuring gender for preserving nationalism. A critical discourse analysis of totalitarian memory policies, *Anthropological Yearbook on European Cultures, Frankfurt*, 2005

<sup>3</sup> In the beginning of 1980's: "For further improvement and publishing of memoir literature to enhance their influence on the patriotic and international upbringing!" - Krastev, J. Narratives of popular memory, S. 1986, p. 19

<sup>4</sup> Krastev, J. (editor), Narratives of popular memory, S. 1986, p. 34

<sup>5</sup> Krastev, J. (editor), Narratives of popular memory, S. 1986, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Mihajlov, K., Narratives of popular memory, Blagoevgrad, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Krastev, J. (editor), Narratives of popular memory, S. 1986, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Juroukova, M., A telling manifestation of social activity – In: Krastev, J. (editor), Narratives of popular memory, S. 1986. Documents on regional meetings held in 1985, Sofia, 1986, p.224-225.

<sup>9</sup> Public Archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond "Memories" 1983 – 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Vodenicharov, P. Bulgaria in the 1970's – nationalism, modernization, emancipation. A critical discourse analysis of the totalitarian memory policies– Balkanistic Forum, 1-2-3, 2004, p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> See Elenkov, I. *The Cultural Front. The Bulgarian Culture During the Communist Era – Political Rule, Ideological Grounds, Institutionalized Regimes*, Siela Publishing House, Sofia, 2008, p. 53.

### Appendix:

- Memories, data, autobiographies, reports, speeches
- *The meeting is on Thursday afternoon. Paying visit to the women - members of the club of the fighters against fascism and capitalism*
  - *50 years youth brigade movement. Under the brigade flag- enthusiasts. Documents about the first brigades in the district of Blagoevgrad*
  - *Memory/report about the comitadji Elena Biberkina*
  - *Memories about Vera Nacheva Hristova – the first woman-pharmacist in Gorna Dzhumaja*
  - List of women-active members of the club of active fighters, 1980
  - Photos of the meeting with women - activists, 1980
  - *The veterans recall*
  - *The struggle - the destiny of the Rhodopa women. Shinka Mincheva relates about the bravery of the women of Satovcha in the years offascism*
  - *Veterans relating memories to pioneers*
  - *The martyr of Kremen. Partisan supporter Maria is relating...*
  - *Gun-powder revelations*
  - *The hero is always ready to serve his country*
  - *In the forefront of the struggle. A brave participant in the fights in Zvegor and Tsarevo selo*
  - *Passionate, beautiful and with a restless spirit – the rebel Ekaterina*

Translation: Maya Vukovska

## WOMEN'S HISTORICAL ARCHIVE BOLZANO / BOZEN – ITALY

Renate Telser

The *Women's Historical Archive* is located in Bolzano, the capitol of South Tyrol in the northern part of Italy near the Austrian border. Before 1919 the South Tyrol with its 450.000 inhabitants was part of the Hapsburg Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The Allied powers (Great Britain, France and the United States) promised Italy the small province upon victory in the First World War. Since 1919 the South Tyrol has been a part of Italy. 60 per cent of the inhabitants of South Tyrol are German native speakers, 35 per cent, Italian and 5 per cent Ladin.

### 1. Short her-story of the *Women's Historical Archive* in Bolzano / Bozen

In the late 1990s the idea was born to establish a caf for women, soon followed by the conviction, that such a locale could only be part of a broader structure of multiple associations created for women by women. In the year 2000 this idea led to the planning of an expanded project that after the communal elections was allocated financial resources. The project planners had supported the centre-left coalition on condition that they would – in the case of winning the elections – provide the financial means. I am stressing this point, because it's important to understand that this project – in opposition to other similar projects – was not a grassroots-project, but implemented top down from a political level.

In 2003 under the conditions just mentioned a group of women from different cultural and social backgrounds established the Women's Historical Archive. Since 2005 the archive has its own location. In September 2007 a women's bar, the city administration's *Office for Women's Affairs* and three other women's organizations were all situated together in the so-called *Intercultural Women's Centre*. Electricity, telephone- and internet-costs as well as the rent are provided by this very centre which in turn is financed via communal subsidies and funds generated through running the women's bar (*Frauencaf*).

Except for our secretary who is employed on a part-time contract, all women involved work on an honorary basis without being paid.



Alessandra Spada, board-member of the *Women's Historical Archive* and President of the *Intercultural Women's Centre* – she was the moving spirit behind the implementation of the large-scale project in Bolzano

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Board-members Martha Verdorfer and Thea Pechlaner engaged in debate

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## 2. Material and documents kept in the *Women's Historical Archive*

The *Women's Historical Archive* includes material and documents with a special focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as:

Women's Organisations and Associations

Private Persons

Beyond that we are in the process of compiling a catalogue of documents pertaining to women's history in all South-Tyrolean archives that will be made available to persons conducting research in these specific topics.

## 3. From where do we obtain our documents?

In 2007 an oral-history-project was launched. By the means of a press-campaign, women from all over South-Tyrol born 1940 and earlier were invited to give account of their lives. More than 50 women, all with different social and cultural backgrounds, donated photographic material and gave interviews, thus contributing on a wider scale to the archive's collection of individual women's her-stories. The implementation of this project was important as up to that point the archive contained 'only' material donated



by other women's organizations and therefore it was a first step to conducting actual field work. Due to its success the project is currently being continued. Photographs are important documents when putting together her-story pieces. Although the *Women's Historical Archive* possesses a large collection from women's associations containing material about women and sexuality, abortion, work, war, ...





#### 4. Public Relations

A series of lectures titled „The thread of female memory“ was launched, intending to sensitize the broader public to different topics pertaining to women’s history. Those lectures and debates in German and/or Italian about women’s her-story are very well-attended and successful. Another project was the launching of regular film-screenings pertinent to women’s topics.

#### 5. Concluding remarks

Although the *Historical Women’s Archive* is only just celebrating its fifth anniversary, it has by now obtained a certain level of public presence, though generally public interest



The first poster from the  
association AIED  
(*Associazione italiana  
educazione demografica*) at  
Bozen / Bolzano

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Renate Telser, President of  
the *Women's Historical  
Archive* from 2005–2007,  
attending one of the  
archive's events

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in women's history is only just evolving. Sadly a lot of valuable material – from an archivists' point of view – still goes into the bin.

It ought to be added that the province of South-Tyrol doesn't have a university-faculty of humanities and arts, leading to the problem that there is a lack of scientific background concerning gender politics generally and women's history specifically. Nevertheless we remain optimistic for the future.

Thanks to Kieran Blassnig for the translation



The archives' logo

# STICHWORT – A FEMINIST ARCHIVE AND LIBRARY IN VIENNA

Margit Hauser

The following text introduces STICHWORT. *Archives of the Women's and Lesbians' Movements. Library Documentation Multimedia*,<sup>1</sup> its holdings, its users and structure, then takes a look back on the archive's history and on the history and context of feminist archives and libraries in German-speaking countries, and finally gives an impression of the special challenges connected with the archiving of the women's and lesbian's movements.

## Holdings, Services and Users of STICHWORT

The STICHWORT library, growing since 1981, contains 12,000 titles of feminist literature on feminist theories and politics, mainly in the fields of humanities, social sciences and fiction. There are some aspects that distinguish the collection; the STICHWORT library offers numerous titles which are rarely available elsewhere in Austria, such as early documents of feminist theory from the seventies and eighties, which are considered “classics” today. Most established / institutional libraries did not consider buying those titles at that time, as feminist books were not seen as serious literature. These are the books most frequently asked for by STICHWORT library users. The other specific feature is the large collection of “grey” literature, for instance, research reports, (doctoral) theses, brochures, typescripts and other unpublished material. They are important documents of academic and movement activities and difficult to find anywhere else.

All titles – books, periodicals, reports and brochures – are recorded in a library database. The coding of each article in journals and books is greatly appreciated by the users and, as the library catalogue is also available online, it offers a research instrument for Women's Studies scholars in all German-speaking countries.

STICHWORT considers itself a library for all women as well as an infrastructure for Gender Studies. On one hand STICHWORT is a library with low-level access for all those interested in feminist and gender questions. It offers literature on all relevant

topics as well as a collection of fiction by female authors. On the other hand STICHWORT offers a wide range of books and periodicals on all topics of Women's and Gender Studies. It is the primary reference location for students and scholars interested in Women's and Gender Studies at the *University of Vienna* and at colleges of higher education in and around Vienna as well as in the rest of Austria and Germany via the online database.

At the *University of Vienna* there are eighty to one hundred courses in Women's and Gender Studies offered every term. In the fall of 2007 the first Master's programme in Gender Studies started; outside of the University there are the feminist basic studies and master's programmes as private curricula. Therefore, Women's and Gender Studies, as well as some Queer Studies, are of great importance and attract a large number of students.

The STICHWORT library is an important infrastructure for all those studying and publishing in Women's and Gender Studies. Further users are, for example, artists preparing the theoretical background for art projects, women working in different kinds of feminist organisations, collaborators of equal opportunity commissions and similar institutions, and women who simply love to read and are interested in feminist literature.

The archives of STICHWORT contain, first and foremost, the Archives of the Women's and Lesbians' Movements in Austria since the 1970s with a wide range of documents. The collections of leaflets, posters, audiovisual material, proceedings and self-portrayals of Austrian women's groups, brochures and international journals provide an impression of the manifold history of the Second Wave Women's Movement. About 700 women's groups from all over Austria, the majority being located in Vienna, are documented in STICHWORT. The groups represented provide a wide range of activities and organisational forms, more than 100 of them are presently active.

Further holdings in the archives are 700 international feminist and lesbian magazines, among them about 60 currently operating feminist journals; press cuttings from the mainstream Austrian press containing 160 files and providing insight into mainstream reporting on women's and gender issues from the 1970s up to 2000; a large poster collection, a video collection with documentaries, movies and art films, audiotapes, photographs, banners, and related objects.

Users can get in touch with women's history and take advantage of collected knowledge. The archives are used for present-day information needs, for private interest or for new feminist activities, as background information on gender politics, and for

research by scholars interested in the women's movement as a social movement from a historical, political or other perspective. They are provided with a wide range of documents, which are indexed in detail. Posters, leaflets and even banners are provided for exhibitions in Austrian museums and organisations, for websites and publications. The interest in researching, presenting and publishing the documents of the Second Wave Women's Movement has grown noticeably in the past years.

The third main task is providing information services. Since 1999 STICHWORT has been offering a feminist research service for feminist scholars, journalists, artists, feminist projects, and all those interested in feminist theory, research, and practice. The starting point was the growing need in society for quick and structured information that had been competently processed and prepared. Feminist documentation and information centres are the convenient places to go to answer questions relating to women and gender. STICHWORT has created a unique service in Austria by setting up the *Feminist Information Service*.

The services we provide include compiling bibliographies and dossiers, searching in STICHWORT's holdings and/or in international feminist databases, help with procuring texts and documents from other feminist documentation centres, and information about other organisations for all kinds of information needs. Our website also offers a rich link page with more than 500 links of interest to feminist activists and scholars.

Clients contact us from all over Austria as well as from other European countries, especially Germany and Italy, and also the United States. They are mainly students working on their graduate or postgraduate theses and Women's Studies scholars, but also collaborators in feminist organisations, research institutes, editors, publishers, curators of exhibitions, etc.

Within the women-focused information infrastructure in Austria, STICHWORT distinguishes itself through providing the users with the service of extensive advising; we discuss the topics, help them meet their information needs and handle bibliographic databases and online searches. Furthermore, we are more flexible and often quicker in acquiring new books and can also work together with university seminars. Most of our archive holdings are unique in Austria; the detailed indexing and coding system, which follows feminist principles of library and archive work, allows easy access to all kinds of documents which would otherwise remain hidden under patriarchal terms in other archives.

Finally, STICHWORT provides a cultural programme offering a range of events such as authors' readings, book presentations, lectures and discussions on feminist and queer theory and specialized workshops on web research of feminist topics. In the last eleven years more than 100 events were organised. The intimate atmosphere of the events at STICHWORT enables intense discussions and is appreciated by authors, lecturers, and audiences. In the past few years literary readings have been organised around topics such as lesbian literature, literature of young authors, contemporary Austrian writers and 'crossing the borders'. More than 30 writers from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Slovenia read from their books at STICHWORT, among them Marlene Streeruwitz (Vienna), Kathrin Röggla (Berlin), Liesl Ujvary (Vienna), Nicole Müller (Zürich), Marlene Stenten (Konstanz), Karen-Susan Fessel (Berlin), Petra Ganglbauer (Vienna), Ilse Kilic (Vienna), Suzana Tratnik (Ljubljana), Traude Behrmann (Berlin).

STICHWORT is also a place to explore feminist, lesbian, and queer theory. Book presentations and lectures by researchers from Austria and Germany provide space for discussions. In the past few years there have been lectures by Sabine Hark (Berlin), Claudia Schoppman (Berlin), Hanna Hacker (Vienna), Waltraud Ernst (Vienna), Margit Gittert (Berlin), Elisabeth Holzeithner (Vienna), Stefanie Soine (Berlin), Antke Engel (Hamburg), Corinna Genschel (Berlin).

Depending on the subject, women from diverse disciplines and professions meet at the events such as publishers and booksellers, women in political organisations, artists, experts in new technologies, women in urban planning, etc.

The ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) workshops are an important service of STICHWORT. The workshops for "feminist online research" for Women's Studies students, scholars and library managers have turned out to be a great success. In recent years they have been organised in cooperation with the *Gender Studies Centres* and *Human Resource Development Department* of the universities of Vienna and Graz.

## History and Networks

STICHWORT was founded in 1983 as *Archiv der Neuen Frauenbewegung* (Archives of the Second Wave Women's Movement) in the rooms of the *UniFrauenZentrum* (University Women's Centre), a self-organised communication centre for students. At

that time there was active growth and diversification of feminist movements and the first attempts to organise feminist scholars in Austria. The association, *Women's Studies and Female Living*, which is the institutional framework for the Archive was founded one year earlier in 1982 as one of the first networks of feminist scholars in Austria. The idea behind the archive was to preserve, process and present the diverse documents of the women's movement, internationally and with a special focus on Austria.

In the following years the archive and library holdings were developed. From the beginning a detailed coding system was established from a feminist perspective. At this time, in the early eighties, a women's thesaurus did not exist in German, so a classification system was created by the team, which was used later as a foundation for other women's libraries in Austria and elsewhere.

In 1990 we conducted a quantitative and qualitative research project of archive documents of the Second Wave Women's Movement in Austria, *The Independent Women's Movement in the Mirror of its Media*. It is still the most detailed study on the media of the women's movement in Austria. During this study the first database concept was developed; posters, leaflets, and articles from feminist grassroots magazines were entered. As a result of this project, we developed the first library database and digitalized the whole card catalogue. Later on, videos, banners and photographs were entered in the STICHWORT database. The database has been available online since 2002.<sup>2</sup>

In 1990 we changed our name from *Archiv der Neuen Frauenbewegung / Archives of the Second Wave Women's Movement* to *STICHWORT. Archiv der Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung. Bibliothek Dokumentation Multimedia / Archives of the Women's and the Lesbians' Movements*.

In 1995 STICHWORT moved from a small 50 square-metre apartment near the university to a larger space about half an hour away, which allows us to organise readings and lectures in the library. Since 1997 we have offered an internet access point, internet workshops and a very detailed link page with information for feminist activism and Gender Studies.

When STICHWORT was founded in 1983, it was a pioneer of women oriented information in Austria. Today we are part of a growing infrastructure in specialized libraries. These institutions are organised and cooperate within the *FRIDA*-network.<sup>3</sup> STICHWORT also cooperates with about 40 women's information organisations, archives and libraries in Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg and is a member of the umbrella



organisation *i.d.a.*<sup>4</sup> and its projects. Internationally we are involved virtually in the Know-How network.<sup>5</sup>

Other projects that we worked on in the past or are still involved in include *thesaurA*, *kolloquiA* and, at present, the ZDB-project. STICHWORT initiated and participates in the *i.d.a.* project ZDB for creating better visibility of feminist journals, including the vast amount of grassroots magazines in German-speaking countries. The data of all the *i.d.a.* members' journals are currently recorded in the German ZDB, the world's largest specialized database for serial titles at the Berlin State Library,<sup>6</sup> where *i.d.a.* is registered as its own library network. It is planned to process and present the data in a format surpassing the service of ZDB. STICHWORT participated in two large FRIDA-projects, the development of a German women's thesaurus in 1994–1995 and the book project *kolloquiA* in 1998–1999, which provided the first research fundamentals and training manual for women-specific documentation and information work in Austria.

### Feminist Archives in German-speaking Countries

Women specific information is considered an essential tool to support democratic processes, human rights, and gender sensitive education. Autonomous feminist archives, libraries, and documentation centres developed out of the political activism of the Second Wave Women's Movement and Lesbians' Movements and are still part of those political contexts. The commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of Women's history and today's activism is seen as a political act.

Beginning in the seventies the first feminist/lesbian archives were founded to document the new movement, but also to compile a retrospective documentation of the First Wave Women's Movement. In the eighties and around 1990, after the end of the GDR, there were two more founding waves.

The feminist archives and libraries in German-speaking countries are very diverse in their structure and thematic specification. Most of them are both libraries and archives, and most of them have a regional focus. There are three lesbian-only archives,<sup>7</sup> but the others include lesbian documentation as well due to the fact that feminist and lesbian movements traditionally went together, especially in German-speaking countries, and are deeply interwoven.

Often the archives and libraries are complemented by educational programmes;

they arrange readings, lectures, trainings, workshops, exhibitions, oral history projects, and city tours with a focus on women's history; they organise or take part in events like "Girls Day" and they work on research projects and publications. They are strongly connected to other feminist activities in their cities and regions and cooperate with local women's and gender studies institutions.

They are organised as freestanding associations or foundations. Sometimes they are integrated in the university's student organisations. A few of them are part of institutions as university centres for gender equality or regional archives.

Since 1983 staff members of feminist archives and libraries in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg have been meeting regularly for exchange, training and cooperation; by 2008 forty-three meetings had taken place. There are now 33 members in the *i.d.a.* network, where most of the networking organisations are coordinated.

### **Acquisition as a Communicative and Political Process**

A special challenge feminist archives have to consider is that of document acquisition, which will be presented using STICHWORT as an example. Feminist archives cannot benefit from legal deposit. There are no legal regulations about material acquisition, but the acquisition and compilation of documents is the result of active engagement. The personal involvement of each individual working for the archive, on the archives policy and self-representation in public is a key to collecting the relevant documents. The fact that feminist archives are part of the feminist movement is the basis for their acquisition policy. They have the necessary information about the background and history of the documents, their contexts and discussions. They have the contacts to potential donors and should create an atmosphere of trust upon which those donations are contingent.

The major aspects one has to deal with while documenting a social movement are problems of defining and constructing, problems of acquisition and collection, and problems of dissemination and usage.

To document a movement also means to define "the movement" in congruence with the criteria of documentation. As there is no such thing as formal membership concerning social movements like the women's and lesbians' movements, a feminist archivist has to decide who to include. The main criteria for the archives of Austrian

women's and lesbian groups at STICHWORT are autonomy and political intention, and the existence of tangible material; a group is registered as soon as it produces something which can be documented, such as leaflets, posters, and publications or audiovisual material.

"Autonomy", which means the independence from political parties and male dominated organisations, was crucial for the emergence and identity of the Second Wave of the Women's Movement. In German-speaking countries it was even part of the self-description ("Autonome Frauenbewegung": autonomous women's movement). The question of working independently or within an organisation was one of the main conflicts throughout the seventies and eighties.

Likewise, women's and lesbian movements represent a broad range of sometimes contradictory concepts, strategies, intentions and assumptions. They are not only dedicated to definitive political actions, but include social, cultural or even commercial activities as well. Drawing the line between a feminist group working on a commercial basis with clear roots in the movement on one hand, and a commercial enterprise run by a woman, ideologically oriented or made possible by feminism on the other, is an open question.

Another open and delicate question can be the degree of "privacy" versus "political intention" as a criterion to register a group in the feminist groups' index. One must respect the privacy and self-definition of a group, on one hand, and consider the huge impact of informal networks and so-called private activities to build up a women-based culture related to feminist values, on the other. This is especially true for the lesbian movement. Lesbian sport groups, for example, are important for the lesbian community and networking even though their main intention may be just to have fun together.

Concerning these reflections, STICHWORT's policy is to be more inclusive than exclusive and to represent the wide range of feminist positions and activities. The final criterion for "autonomy" and for "political intention" is how a group defines itself.

The practical policies regarding the acquisition of material have an even greater influence on an archive's constructions of "the movement". The acquisition of documents is a question of information, consciousness, and trust.

Building up collections on a social movement's activities and representatives demands consistent and active information policies in order to promote the existence and necessity of such archives and be acknowledged as an organisation qualified for the job.

The collections of STICHWORT are, to some extent, simply fed by the current process of disseminating information within the feminist movements. Thus, what we automatically get are the circulars and leaflets, at least from the Vienna based groups, and information about all the bigger events. Whereas getting information from smaller local groups elsewhere, or materials that are not widely distributed, such as minutes and proceedings of conferences, internal papers, photographs, recordings from lectures or speeches, requires extra effort and specific acquisition strategies.

For acquisition policy it is important to actively promote the archives' intentions, which can only be realised with the cooperation and contribution of many groups and individual feminists. It requires steady work of raising the consciousness of women's and lesbian groups and individual feminists so that they realise that their activities are worth being documented and preserved.

These efforts also mean constantly staying in contact with groups and individuals, both personally and actively. As experience shows, personal contact is a great asset in building trust and commitment as a necessary precondition for being acknowledged as qualified archivists. Aside from this very personal level of communication, trust is also developed through the public image of the archives as a result of its activities, politics and public statements. Here it is crucial that the archives' political positions do not limit the plurality of the groups being represented in the collections and that the archives constantly reflect on which parts of the movements their policies appeal to and which they may neglect.

For example, though STICHWORT's policy always included a certain commitment to lesbian issues, such as including lesbian topics and guaranteeing "lesbian visibility" within our collections, it was only in 1990 that we decided to rename and refer to the lesbian movements in the institution's name as well. At the same time we started to encourage the participation of lesbians. The fact that team members are involved in the Viennese lesbian community had an undeniable impact on building up our collections on the lesbian movements.

Trust is developed through providing information about the rules and conditions under which an archive's documents are accessible to the public. In the case of STICHWORT, for example, it is important that the archives are only open to women.

Finally, movements' archives are more than a storage location. Feminist archives are not mere historical sites. They also function as information centres and help to build

networks within the movements. They can raise consciousness about the historical dimensions of women's and lesbians' struggles.

Over time we have held readings of documents from the beginning of the new feminist movements in the 1970s and organised small exhibitions with our collections of posters. We participated in the national meetings of feminist organisations, women's summer universities, etc.

We perform and encourage feminist research on the movement using our documentation (mainly by students of feminist university courses) and consider ourselves the link between the objects and subjects of research. We encourage the use of "our" historical documents in current feminist and anti-homophobic activities. For example, some years ago a feminist counter-demonstration against a radical group of anti-abortionists used banners showing a collection of our pro-choice posters from the last three decades to emphasise the long-lasting fight for women's right to choose.

<sup>1</sup> See <[www.stichwort.or.at](http://www.stichwort.or.at)>. STICHWORT is German for: "keyword" – "cue" – propos.

<sup>2</sup> There are currently about 43,000 entries online, including the library and the articles in feminist magazines.

<sup>3</sup> FRIDA – The Austrian Network of Information and Documentation Centres for Women's Studies, see <[www.frida.at](http://www.frida.at)>.

<sup>4</sup> i.d.a. – informing, documenting, preserving – is the umbrella organisation of German-language lesbian / women's archives, libraries and documentation centres; see <[www.ida-dachverband.de](http://www.ida-dachverband.de)>.

<sup>5</sup> The Know How-Conferences on women's information work take place every fourth year and are a continuing network of women's information services, including libraries and archives worldwide; see <[www.knowhowcommunity.org/](http://www.knowhowcommunity.org/)>.

<sup>6</sup> See <[www.zdb-opac.de](http://www.zdb-opac.de)>.

<sup>7</sup> Namely: *Spinnboden*, Berlin, *Lesbenarchiv Frankfurt am Main*, *Lara* at Bielefeld. The *Zurich Lesbian Archive* was forced to close several years ago.

A QUEST FOR JEWISH IDENTITY: PERSONAL MEMORY AND  
COLLECTIVE FORGETTING

Daniela Koleva

After WWII, most Bulgarian Jews emigrated legally to Israel. Those who stayed had to take part in the building of socialism and to integrate into a monolithic “socialist nation”. Thereby they had to “forget” their ethnic identity (“aided” by the state in various ways, like nationalisation of Jewish property and closing down Jewish institutions<sup>1</sup>). Since 1990, a revival of Jewish identity has begun in Bulgaria. The paper explores how the women of three generations from the same family reinvent their Jewish identity in their life stories.

**The project**

In the last days of 2002, I interviewed a medical doctor, her elderly mother and her daughter in the course of a feminist oral history project.<sup>2</sup> The interviews comprised a first part in which the narrator’s life story was elicited with a particular focus on gender roles and power in her family of origin and her own family, on gender issues at the workplace, etc. In a more structured second part, questions were asked about the interviewee’s opinions of gender equality in contemporary Bulgaria and her attitudes to women in politics, to their representations in media and advertising, etc. Where possible, women from different generations of the same family were to be interviewed. Though the interviews concentrated on gender roles, their handing down between generations and their presumed change, the project placed particular emphasis on giving voice to minority women. More than half of all interviewees were of Turkish, Bulgarian-Muslim, Jewish, Armenian or Roma origin.

## The interviewees

The eldest of the three women I interviewed, Adela (aged 85 at the time of the interview), was born into a Jewish family in the northwestern Bulgarian town of Vidin famous for its ethnic diversity and its large Jewish community in the early 20th century. At high school she became a member of the Hashomer Hatzair movement<sup>3</sup>. She earned a university degree in economics but exercised her profession for only a short period before her marriage<sup>4</sup>. At the age of 30, she married a Bulgarian and gave birth to two children. She had a few chances to emigrate to Palestine during and after WWII – as the Hashomer Hatzair movement demanded from its members – but circumstances always precluded emigration: she did not take the chance in 1940 for she was in the middle of her studies at the university. Neither did she go right after the war, when her brother did: she had to take care of her sick old mother. In 1948, when there was an opportunity to emigrate legally, and most Bulgarian Jews took that chance<sup>5</sup>, she had just married and again decided to stay. Her daughter Nadezhda (aged 47) married a Bulgarian as well. She married early in life and had an early divorce. Thereafter, she pursued her career as a medical doctor and raised her daughter Katya almost alone and with Adela's crucial help in the first years after the break-up of her marriage. In the early 1990s, she emigrated to Israel with her daughter and spent four years there – a fact that she hardly ever mentioned in her talk. Katya, my third conversation partner aged 26, not married, had a university education as well and worked at the newly established Jewish museum in Sofia.

## The conversations

I first visited Nadezhda in her apartment one December morning just after she had decorated her Christmas tree. Comfortably sitting in an armchair under a Kandinsky poster, she talked at length about her parents' family, her childhood and profession. She was self-contained, ironic, and eloquent about what she was willing to tell and easily withholding the rest. (One of the reasons was that I did not press her on the issues she avoided.) For about an hour we talked about Nadezhda's life, her family and her profession, mostly about the latter. Not a word was uttered about her Jewish origins. Her 4-year stay in Israel merited only half a sentence of her talk. Toward the end of the interview,

her elder brother came to visit her and the interview ended abruptly and somewhat prematurely. Though I was fascinated by her strong personality, I gave up the idea of a second interview for I didn't know how to deal with what I felt was a negative reaction to the feminist agenda of the interviewing project.

Adela seemed enthusiastic about having somebody to talk to and had prepared for the event: she had put on her white knitted sleeveless jacket (kept for special occasions), she had taken off the cover of her mother's 120-year-old sewing machine, and she had thought her talk over. The latter must have been relatively easy for she had already written her memoirs before under the title *Memories of a Vidiner*. Though in that title she identified herself by her native town, a good deal of her talk with me was focussed on "Jewishness". The greater part of her story was about her childhood and her parents' family. She also told in detail about the Jewish youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, which was essential in her formation "as a person". A good deal of Adela's talk revolved around her dreams to emigrate and her "destiny" to stay in Bulgaria, gradually replacing the theme of "Jewishness".

Katya was present at the interviews with both her mother and her grandmother. Therefore, she was in a position to comment on their stories in her own talk. Her 4-year stay in Israel in the early 1990s and the difficulties she and her mother had to face there formed a considerable part of her narrative. Her talk was the most reflexive one of the three, as regards both Jewish identity and women's situation. Partly, this was due to her professional activities and certainly also to her better knowledge of the hypotheses and the approach of the project. Her talk was a mixture of impressionistically sketched childhood memories, attempts at self-analysis and comments on her mother's and grandmother's stories.

In such a situation, when the stories of members of three generations in the same family are at hand, two questions arise: the question of intergenerational transmission and that of change. My approach to the three stories is inspired by Daniel Bertaux's method of "social genealogies",<sup>6</sup> and by the project he and a group of Russian sociologists carried in the mid-1990s in Russia on the ways families managed (or failed) to preserve and hand over to younger generations their "cultural capital" after the 1917 revolution.<sup>7</sup> However, while Bertaux is interested primarily in the social context where the individual life paths take place, I will focus on the symbolic resources for identity construction and on the problematic continuity of self-identity in times of abrupt change. I will conceive



of the “cultural capital” of the family (partly at least) as their Jewish identity, and this is what I am going to focus on.

### “Jewishness”

In the first half of Adela’s talk, the one concerned with her parents’ family, the theme of the Jewish identity – or Jewishness, as she called it – was central. Her memories of the family evenings with her father telling stories were vivid and she seemed to really enjoy telling them:

And my father... used every occasion to educate us with stories and proverbs. [...] He would tell us these stories and we’d put on the table whatever food we had. [...] He really loved telling us tales. That’s how he taught us integrity and compassion, and also keeping to Jewishness, and taking care of the reputation of the Jews.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to these, she had however also quite bitter memories of the hostile attitude towards the Jews in Vidin, of how the children were afraid to go out on the street at Easter: “There were some people who would never forget that we had killed Christ”, she remarked. At high school, she experienced her Jewish identity both positively – belonging to the Hashomer Hatzair movement, and negatively – suffering the mockery and the threats of many classmates and teachers who would not let her “stand out with anything”. At the same time, she pointed out that the pro-communist students and teachers, whom she called “progressive”, using the term from the communist propaganda vocabulary, used to support her. Thus she ensured an acceptable “employment” for the events that followed (her dream to emigrate and her decision to stay) so that her “destiny” did not appear miserable. After that moment, there was no more mention of Jewishness in her talk. She travelled to Israel to visit with relatives, there were relatives from Israel visiting quite a lot, and constant contacts with them were maintained between visits. But Adela summarized all of these in one sentence only referring to the improvement of her financial situation and to the use she finally made of her profession. Herself a communist, married to a communist, she had been staunch in giving up any form of religious identification. Marrying a Bulgarian and staying in Bulgaria while her kin emigrated, she was not able (or motivated) to sustain her Jewish identity through tradition either.

Jewishness, and the time spent in Israel, formed a conspicuous silence in Nadezhda's story. Katya suggested that this was because that period was very difficult and her mother was reluctant to return to it in her memory. During the years spent in Israel, each of them led her own struggle apart from the other and unable to rely on her help. Both of them did the impossible, as she stated in her talk, at the cost of drifting away from one another:

Because at that time my mother and I were already becoming quite alienated. She was struggling very hard at the time. And she did well, she managed to achieve things people dream about. At the very first attempt she passed the medical exams and started working in the largest hospital of Tel Aviv. [...] She is generally quite a hard-working woman. True, she is very critical, very straightforward, but people seem to have appreciated her, even though they really exploited her. For example, there she had to work 36-hour shifts, so she was constantly at work and she was almost like a zombie. We didn't have anything to say to each other. She didn't have her own circle of friends there, she was very isolated, while I had my circle, we drifted really far apart, really far.<sup>9</sup>

While this may very well be true, it must be noted that Nadezhda's case was also one of the so called 'split mind' typical of the communist everyday: the inappropriateness of any mention of one's feelings, personal attitudes and life strategies – of exhibiting one's private life – in a presentation of one's 'public' personality<sup>10</sup>. The situation of the interview was for Nadezhda a 'public' situation where her private attitudes ought not to be on display. Following Luisa Passerini's advice: "Taking silence into account means watching out for the links between forms of power and forms of silence"<sup>11</sup>, Nadezhda's silence can be interpreted as an echo of the silence imposed by the communist authorities on the multicultural realities of Bulgarian society.

Thus, the family expert on the subject of "Jewishness" turned out to be Katya, the youngest. Nothing of her understanding of "Jewishness" had been handed down by her mother and grandmother. She remembered no mention even of the word "Jew" in her childhood though relatives from abroad used to visit her grandmother's apartment and to talk in a language that was familiar neither to herself, nor to her mother and uncle. She remembered Adela's attempts to teach her that language without explaining what it was and where it came from, and her own resistance to those attempts. It was only when she and her mother settled in Tel Aviv that she started to learn about Jewish history, tradition and religion. During that period, she made great efforts to learn Hebrew and

did it so well that she was the only immigrant who was allowed to take the matriculation exam in Jewish literature and history (instead of maths and biology).

When she came back to Bulgaria in 1995 and enrolled at the university, she discovered that a revival of “Jewishness” had begun sponsored by international Jewish organisations and aided by the restitution of Jewish property: a Jewish school had been established, teaching Hebrew for children and adults had begun, and an interest in Jewish traditions, rituals and history had been stirred among the Jewish community in Sofia. The newly re-discovered “Jewishness” made it possible to construct new identities. People sought to organise their values and their practices in accordance with their cultural belonging rather than in terms of their formal citizenship or political loyalties. Furthermore, the very fact of belonging to the Jewish community offered access to networks for jobs, education, and support from abroad, etc. While her mother was annoyed by all those who “played at being Jews”, Katya found new opportunities for herself. She was needed as a translator and teacher of Hebrew. In spite of her young age, she had become an “expert”! Though in her talk she would not quite accept this qualification, she was confident enough in her knowledge to explain to me her grandmother’s limited perspective and to caution me against taking all she had said at face value:

My grandmother, from a modern perspective, always presents things differently. [...] She had no way to learn about these things. And I think she doesn’t understand them well.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, in her talk Katya expressed her regret about having only *studied* Jewish traditions instead of really *adopting* them from her family. It is not clear whether and to what extent this deficit is felt in terms of personal identity or of professional competence. Maybe she feels that she lacks enough “insider” knowledge that might prove essential for her work. But in her words there also seems to surface a quest for “roots” that can not be motivated by professional ambition only:

In a lot of respects, I have a lot to learn. Tons. But the easiest way to learn about tradition is to follow it. For me this means following it in a real life environment. And I don’t feel the need to do this, I don’t feel this as mine, I never have. While I was in Israel, I followed the Israeli way of life. Yet it didn’t really work because we had a very cold, unpleasant, bleak home. Practically, I had no family there. So, even over there, these things never really came back, they were never established. And I practically know that I am not going to pass them on to my children either. I don’t have the motivation.

Traditions are a great thing and it's good to know them, because you feel you belong, and that's important for you.

Living in an environment of alternative possibilities, Katya has a more complex attitude towards the “cultural capital” of the family: she seems to be aware of and to regret the loss of a part of it that could have enriched her life and her personality. Her professional commitments, the fact that she has learned “Jewishness” from books, seems only to increase her sensitivity to this topic.

The three stories can help reformulate the idea of generation following Mannheim's conception but in a different way: from generations in the family to sociological generations as “communities of remembering”. Adela belongs to the generation that suffered the repressions following the anti-Semitic Law for Defence of the Nation in Bulgaria (1941) and the threat of being deported to the death camps during WWII. Her involvement in the Hashomer Hatzair movement and later in the Communist party made acceptable her choice to stay in Bulgaria while her kin emigrated. Having herself suffered from exclusion for being a Jew in her youth, Adela abandoned Jewish practices and stopped being a *homo ethnicus*. She became a *homo politicus* asserting “progressive”, i.e. communist values above ethnic ones. Thus she virtually deprived her children of the chance to construct an identity as members of a minority group. True, she did not have her husband's support in that, and the larger social environment was not favourable either. Anti-Semitism was not an issue, but the Bulgarian “socialist nation” was constructed as a monolith from a social, ethnic and ideological perspective. If they were to be accepted, Jews from Adela's generation who stayed in communist Bulgaria had to be loyal to the system and its ideology. They were subject to a subtle, indirect coercion to steer away their religious and ethnic traditions, and to suppress elements of their culture for the sake of integration.

Nadezhda did not have any choice of ethnic identity till the age of 40 and after that she did not seem to need one. While Adela strove all her life to be accepted in Bulgarian society, Nadezhda's belonging to it was never problematic. Her Jewish origins were not an issue either. They do not seem to have been essential for her. It was not something to try to forget about but also not something that guided any choices in her life except one – the emigration to Israel. She experienced neither ethnic humiliation nor ethnic pride; she did not take her ethnicity to be problematic. Neither was it salient in the way she conceptualised herself. Nadezhda only used her Jewish origin as a chance

for changing her life at a certain point<sup>13</sup>. In the quest for Jewish identity during the 1990s, people of Nadezhda's generation, who grew up during socialism, came to be referred to as "the lost generation" for they had not kept their Jewish memory. In this case of loss and re-vitalisation of Jewish identity we are confronted with an example of deliberate amnesia driven by the desire and the necessity to become integrated into the majority. When after 1990 re-valorisation and indeed re-invention of Jewish identity has become possible, it has been met with certain resistance because of its all too obvious inventedness (Nadezhda). Nevertheless, there remains the feeling of loss of symbolic resources that could have enriched the narrators' lives and personalities (Katya). Thus the stories demonstrate how different social situations give rise to different degrees of salience of one's ethnicity for their identity and self-perception.

Both Adela and Nadezhda seem to have been confronted in certain periods of their lives with the necessity to reconcile an "official" and a "private" version of their selves<sup>14</sup>, a phenomenon typical of communist everyday reality where official public life and its language differed markedly from the sphere of private life, and encroached on it in a number of ways. This colonisation took different forms and reached different levels of intensity in Adela's case (early decades of communist totalitarianism) and in Nadezhda's case (later decades of communist rule when the social contract had significantly changed). Katya's case points to the narrow-mindedness of the official view of the integration of the minorities into the Bulgarian socialist society based on an over-simplification of the historical context and the resulting reduction of integration exclusively to political and national loyalties.

<sup>1</sup> See: Vassileva, Boyka, *Evreite v Bulgaria 1944-1952*. [Jews in Bulgaria 1944-1952] Sofia: St Kliment Ohridski University Press 1992.

<sup>2</sup> "Voices of Their Own: Oral History of Women from Five Minorities in Bulgaria", Bulgarian Association of University Women – Open Society Fund 2002-2003.

<sup>3</sup> Hashomer Hatzair (Hebrew – "The Young Guard") – socialist Zionist youth movement, founded in Eastern Europe in 1916. Many Jewish youths, affected by the process of modernization that had begun among Eastern European Jewry, sought a means of maintaining their Jewish identity and culture outside the shtetl and Orthodox Jewish life. On the other hand, they were troubled by the growing anti-Semitism, which threatened their very existence. In its early stages the movement was heavily influenced by the Scout Movement and by the socialist movement. Hashomer Hatzair stressed the need for the Jewish people to normalize their lives by changing their economic structure (as merchants) and to become workers and farmers, who would settle in the Land of Israel and work the land as *chalutzim* (pioneers). They dreamt of creating in their new homeland a society based on social justice and equality. On the eve of WWII, the Hashomer Hatzair numbered 70,000 members worldwide. The movement was active in leading resistance in the ghettos and the concentration camps. As the

war ended, members of Hashomer Hatzair were among the first to organize and to take part in the emigration to Palestine.

<sup>4</sup> According to the 1934 census, most Jewish women were housewives. Only 6.25 % of them worked outside their homes. See: Vassileva, op.cit, p. 6. Till 1948-49 this share did not significantly change: housewives represent 33 % of all persons who emigrated to Israel. Given that whole families emigrated and that the share of children was 29.15 % (ibid., p. 123), it seems likely that most married women were housewives. However, Adela did not explicitly mention that she followed this pattern after her marriage.

<sup>5</sup> Between October 1948 and May 1949, 32 106 Bulgarian Jews emigrated to Israel and less than 10 000 stayed in Bulgaria. After that, due to emigration and low birth rate, their number slowly went on diminishing, reaching 6 431 persons in 1956 (Vassileva, op. cit.).

<sup>6</sup> Bertaux, Daniel, *Les récits de vie. Perspective ethnosociologique*. Paris: Nathan 1997; Bertaux, Daniel and Paul Thompson (eds.) *Pathways to Social Class: A Qualitative Approach to Social Mobility*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Semenova, Victoria, Ekaterina Foteeva and Daniel Bertaux (eds.), *Sudby liudei: Rossiia, XX vek* [Destinies of people: Russia, 20<sup>th</sup> century] Moscow: Institute of Sociology 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Krassimira Daskalova (ed.), *Voices of Their Own: Oral History Interviews of Women*. Sofia: Polis Publishers 2004, pp. 17-19. I do not agree with the translator's choice of the word 'Judaism' and prefer 'Jewishness' because Adela is not referring to the religion in this passage but to Jewish identity in a larger and more fluid sense.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> Niethammer, Lutz, "Der Pr gelknabe", in Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato, Dorothee Wierling, *Die Volkseigene Erfahrung: eine Arch ologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR*. Berlin: Rowolt 1991

<sup>11</sup> Passerini, Luisa, "Memories between silence and oblivion", in Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (eds.) *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*. London: Routledge 2003, pp 238-254, p. 249.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> According to a Russian joke that emerged in the 1990s, referring to the massive emigration of Russian Jews to Israel, 'Jewishness was not an ethnicity, but a vehicle'. This seems to describe to some extent Nadezhda's case as well.

<sup>14</sup> See Niethammer, op. cit.; id., *Biographie und Biokratie: Nachdenken zu einem westdeutschen Oral History-Projekt in der DDR f nf Jahre nach der deutschen Vereinigung* (Bericht auf der internationalen Oral History-Konferenz 1995, Sao Paulo) 1995.

## THE MUSLIM ROMA – AN “INCONVENIENT” FOR THE COMMUNIST REGIME MINORITY<sup>1</sup>

Anastasya Pashova

In Bulgaria after the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1944 the Roma<sup>2</sup> became an object of ethnic, religious, and cultural assimilation. The state minority policy during the different periods had different forms and was performed by different means. It vacillated between two extreme positions – “The Roma are also people” and “There are not such people”. The policy of the ruling party – the Bulgarian Working Party (Bulgarian Communist Party - BCP) aimed at their religious and ethnic melting under the slogans of “modernization” and their development as “citizens of the new socialist state”.

As for the different periods of this policy and its documentation this is a subject of another investigation.<sup>3</sup> There is not a sole archive investigation of the interrelations between the state institutions and the Roma –Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

My aim is to find out how the Roma – Muslims as ethnic and religious minority were presented (or absent) in the official institutional history stored in the Central State Archive and the former Central Party Archive<sup>5</sup> ; what was officially preserved to make them a part of the national history; how were they connected with the so called “revival process of the Bulgarian Muslims”<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning my working hypothesis was that because of the lack of own institutions, Gypsies are “absent minority” in the archive documents<sup>7</sup>. But taking into consideration that together with the other minorities they have been subjected to the special Party and State control, I researched the Central State Archive in Sofia, where party documents were stored.

### **Departments and Branches of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (CC of BCP) dealing with minorities**

#### **Department *Mass Activities***

On 17.10.1944 (only one month after 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1944) the Political Bureau took a decision to found the Department *Mass Activities* with 8 commissions in the

Department. The 8<sup>th</sup> one was about the work with minorities, it aimed at supervising the national minorities and developing a special party policy towards them. In the fond of the Department there are 8 archive entities connected with the minorities and only one of them concerns the Gypsies.<sup>8</sup> The accent was put on the work with the Turks, Bulgarian Speaking Muslims (so called Pomaks), the Jews, and the Macedonian emigration.<sup>9</sup> The document concerning the Gypsies is a part of the report of the deputy head of the Department to the CC of BCP about the need of founding of an Gypsy organization. It becomes clear that the Gypsies themselves were not initiators for such organization but the structures of the CC initiated it.

There are data only for the first period of this organization which reveal the attitude of the state towards the Gypsies. This period starts after the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1944 and continues for a very short time. In 1951 the *National Council of the Fatherland Front* required the dismissing of the *Central Initiative Committee* and the Gypsy organization around the country. The dismissing had to happen on a National Gypsy Conference, and the Gypsies had to be included in the organizations of the Fatherland Front.<sup>10</sup>

*The Gypsy Organization for the Struggle against Fascism and Racism and for the Cultural Enhancement of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria* with chairman Shakir Pashov was founded on 06.03.1945 by the initiative of the CC of the BCP. According to the requirements to the *National Council of the Fatherland Front* the organization founded branches in nearly all district and regional centers.<sup>11</sup> In 1946 it started publishing the newspaper “Romano Esi” (Gypsy Voice) with chief editor Shakir Pashov. In 1947 the Gypsy theatre “Roma” was founded<sup>12</sup>

On 02.03.05.1948 the *First National Gypsy Conference* with delegates from all over the country was held.<sup>13</sup> In a letter of the organization to the *Regional Committee of the Fatherland Front* in Gorna Dzhumaya was mentioned that in 1948 the number of the Gypsies in Bulgaria was about 300 000.<sup>14</sup>

The interrelations between the authorities and the Gypsies in this period could be considered as “promotion” of their Gypsy identity in contradiction to the process of Turkish self-determination<sup>15</sup>. At first glance the government acts leave the wrong impression that the totalitarian country “leads a policy of affirming the Gypsies as equal and specific ethnic group in the composition of the Bulgarian nation, recognizing their rights and freedom for self-organizing. They were even given a limited cultural autonomy”.<sup>16</sup>



In fact the aim of the authorities was by creating Gypsy organizations to “keep an eye on the Gypsies” and to restrict the processes of Turkish self-determination.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Minority Commission to the Secretariat of the CC of BCP*

The elections for the Great National Assembly in 1946 brought to power the candidates of the Unite Front and the Communist Party – more than 70% “voted” for them. The election victory of the communists allowed them to initiate many staff and administrative changes. The Department *Mass Activities* was dismissed and immediately after that, on 28.05.1946, a *Minority Commission* to the Secretariat of the CC was founded to take the initiative of working with the national minorities, women’s organizations, the *Union for Child Protection*, the *Union of the Families with Many Children* and so on. The task was: “To follow and support the work of these organizations within the frames of the decisions and the directives of the CC of BCP”.<sup>18</sup>

In August 1946, the official authorities published a “Law of Labor Mobilization of the Idling and Lingerings Ones”<sup>19</sup> aiming at engaging all groups of the population with “useful”, i.e. state labor. Following the law the Act No. 2410 of 25.07.1947 was published:

*“Especially bad impression makes the fact that often healthy men and women are stretching hand for begging when today’s labor growth fostered by the two year production plan and the other initiatives of the government, offer full possibility to every one to implement his/her energy in the industry and agriculture and to manage his/her living with honest and honorable work. This is the reason it is absolutely necessary such people to be sanctioned by the Law for Labor Mobilization, to teach them to work, and to demolish their habit of begging”.* It is not a secret that the people figured out by the law were Gypsies - fortune tellers, bear trainers, and animal trainers. Begging was prohibited by the *Law of the Social Support*: “*Begging all over the country in any form is prohibited. The people who do not follow this order should be compulsory settled down*”.<sup>20</sup>

This law was closely connected with the Gypsies although they were not personally mentioned. The law and the regulations have repressive character and this is the reason why the sanctions of the breakers of the rules were in the hands of the local and Militia authorities and in the hands of the district governors responsible for public affairs.

In a report of 02.08.1952 to the Secretariat of the CC of BCP more than 10 000 Gypsies roamers divided into several groups: *katunari-koshnichari* - making baskets,

comb makers, tinsmiths; katunari-kaldarashi - bribing horses, dealing with magic oaths, begging; and herzari – producing spindles, spoons, troughs and so on - had been mentioned<sup>21</sup>. They had to be compelled to accept jobs in the state industry and agriculture. The Secretariat came out with a decision<sup>22</sup> necessary measures to be appropriated “for the inclusion of the Gypsy population in the production... for the inclusion of the Gypsy kids in the primary schools... measures for removing the illiteracy... granting scholarships for the young Gypsies”. And by the end “The present Gypsy organizations and committees to be dismissed and the whole work with Gypsy population to be done by other public organizations”<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting why all of a sudden the Gypsy organizations and committees in the country become a threat for the regime and in the near future they had to be destroyed. Probably the situation in the country was more complicated. The decision followed the agreement with Turkey in 1950-1951 for expelling part of the Turkish population from Bulgaria. Passports and visas were given to part of the Gypsies who “administratively” were identified as Turks. *“With the policy of forced modernization of the Bulgarian society by collectivization and industrialization and by rising of Valko Chervenkov on the top of the Party and the state the policy to the minority changed – at least temporary. One of the first activities after the change was the expelling a part of the Turkish population during the period 1950/1951. Among the Turkish emigrants there were about 100 Gypsies and this was the reason the Turkish government to close the border. We could not prove that the Gypsies had been forcibly expelled from the country.”*<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of December 1951 the Secretariat of the CC issues an order for cutting off all attempts for emigrating.<sup>25</sup> The policy to the Gypsies was quite contradictory. From one side, to counter the tendencies of Turkish self-determination the state promoted their Gypsy identity and forced them to join the Gypsy organizations, but on the other – in 1950 “administratively” declared them as Turks. *“The state attempted to register the Roma with “false” nationality. The most sinister measure of this kind happened in 1950 when the Department “Registration” of the Ministry of Interior sent to the address offices a letter, requesting the Roma and the Tartars to be registered as Turks. Nearly 130 000 people most probably were concerned. But according to me this letter and the registration as Turks has nothing to do with the policy of changing their names. Quite probably at that time certain circles in the Government had a different plan: to use the forthcoming emigration wave among the Turkish minority to send with them the fresh made “Turks” to Turkey.”*<sup>26</sup> The Gypsies

used the Turkish identity imposed administratively<sup>27</sup> to attempt to emigrate to Turkey. Evidently the phenomenon was wide spread since the local Party authorities undertook repressive measures to restrict it.<sup>28</sup> A report to the District Committee of the BCP from 05.08.1950 stated: *“The mood among the Gypsies in Sandanski and the neighboring villages is bad. Among them is widely spread the enemy agitation about emigration in Turkey. Many delegations visited the Turkish chancellor who promised them that he is going to arrange their deportation. About 90% of the Gypsies in Sandanski and Dzhigurovo have applied for deportation, among them members of their organization and at the same time members of the Party. Even worse, this is happening with the knowledge of the District Committee and they have not taken any measures except that when they want to travel, the Militia did not issue them travel cross-border certificates. Although of the measures there are cases when they come to Simitli, and go again to the Turkish legation in Sofia”*.<sup>29</sup> The very Gypsy organizations have *“enemy elements inside instigating the others and supporting their attempts at any price to arrange their deportation in Turkey. Against the instigators are taken measures on the level of the District Committee of the BCP. I propose: 1. Latest 5 of September the District Committee or the City Committee of BCP to send a comrade in the Gypsy quarter. He will make a meeting and unmask the enemy forces; 2. Latest 5 of September to exclude from the Party the guilty people for the instigation of the Gypsy minority to immigrate to Turkey – Syuleiman Murtev, Goga Abdulov, Mehmed Yuseinov, Demir Mahmudov, Dinka Sulyu, and Alisha from the village of Dzhigurovo; 3. The problem to be thoroughly investigated and if there are any other instigators, they should be excluded from the Party; 4. To check up the other villages where Gypsies live and if there are similar moods, appropriate measures to be taken and explanation work do be done.”*<sup>30</sup>

The Turkish self-determination and the will to emigrate to Turkey of the Muslim Gypsies of the Blagoevgrad region was a mass and well organized phenomenon. Probably it was not an isolated phenomenon because similar processes in other regions of the country where Gypsies-Muslims live, were also mentioned in the documents.<sup>31</sup>

More interesting is the fact that since this event the problem of the religious identity of the Muslims Gypsies became a basic problem in the work of the State and the Party with them. Veiled under the “care” about their education, social, and economic status, it is present in numerous archive documents – instructions, decisions, reports, and so on.<sup>32</sup>

Maybe this explains the fact that the Minority Commission works till 1951 when

the new Department for the Work with the Turkish Population<sup>33</sup> to the CC of BCP was founded.

### **Department *Work with the Turkish Population***

It was created by the decision of the Plenum of the CC of BCP on 23.04.1951 to improve the work of the Party with the Turkish population. By the decision of the Political Bureau of the CC No. 103 of 26.04.1951 a Department to the CC and a Sector to the National Council of the Fatherland Front was founded to work with the Turkish population. With the same decision to the Central Committee of the Dimitrov Communist Youth Union (DCYU) a Sector was founded to work with the Turkish youth. Such departments and sectors were founded in the District Committee of the BCP in Shumen, Rousse, and Haskovo. In the Women's Department of the CC of BCP a sector for the work with the Turkish women was also founded. In the Publishing house of the BCP a Turkish department for printing issues in Turkish language opened.

The task of the department was: political enlighten; education and political schools; reading groups in the Fatherland Front; improvement of the work in the Turkish schools; publishing of Marx-Lenin literature in Turkish language. Except the Turkish population object of education and re-education efforts were the Gypsies and the Pomaks. The common link between the three groups was their confession of Islam but the greater part of the Gypsies and the Pomaks self-determined as Turks, which was a sign of alert for the Party . *“The Department organizes party-political, mass –cultural, and enlightening work with the Turkish and Gypsy population as well as with the Bulgarian Muslims, it gives support to District Committees of the BCP, the DCYU, and the Fatherland Front...; it follows closely the work of the CC of the DCYU among the Turkish population and especially for the improvement of the work with the Turkish women for overcoming the illiteracy, prejudices, and the old habits. It supervises how the Party and Government decisions are fulfilled by the Turkish population.”*<sup>34</sup> This time in the focus of the Party policy were also the Gypsies.

### **Department *Work with the National Minorities***

Since 1957 with a decision of the Political Bureau No. 290 of 24.10.1957 the Department for Work with the Turkish population changed to Department for Work with the National Minorities”.<sup>35</sup> The change demonstrated the new line of the Party towards the Gypsies who were not any more placed in one group with the Turks but

considered as a separate minority. In the archive there are many documents concerning the work with Gypsies because of the two reasons:

The first reason was connected with the “new state policy” dominated by the idea of the so called “cultural revolution” aiming at changing the way of living of the whole population and especially the life of the Gypsies. In connection with this a Program for settling down the Gypsies was accepted as a part of the Decree No. 1216 of the Council of Ministers of 17.10.1957 named “For solving the problem with the Gypsy minority in Bulgaria”,<sup>36</sup> which practically forbade the nomadic life. The Decree was part of the Party Program for compulsory settlement of the Gypsies – nomads. The program rejected the traditional Gypsy way of living – the dynamics and traveling. The nomadic way of living was considered by the authorities as wandering and a form of deviant behavior - the individuals who practice it should be normalized and integrated into the society. Since 1957 the CC of BCP launched a wide scale propaganda for changing the Turko-Arabic names of the Muslim Gypsies and changing their nationality from Gypsy into Bulgarian one.<sup>37</sup>

The quoted Decree prepared the issuing of the Act No.258 of the Council of the Ministers (17.10.1958) “For solving the problems of the Gypsy population in Bulgaria”.<sup>38</sup> The Act forbade “lingering and begging”, all citizens had to “be engaged in socially profitable work and to work according to their strength and possibilities”.

By the Act No. 1216/08.10.58 concrete measures were assigned to solve the problems of the Gypsy-nomads. Both acts had repressive character. In the Act measures were foreseen “for the improvement of the life style and the culture of the Gypsy population; for the regulation, restructuring, and hygienization of the Gypsy quarters.”<sup>39</sup>

### **The beginning of the “revival process”**

The demonstrated care about the Gypsies katunari was accompanied by another “social good”– settled down they had to change their Turko-Arabic names and their ethnic origin – from Gypsy into Bulgarian.<sup>40</sup> In the Party archive there are many documents testifying that this was the most important cause to be done – “to make easier the procedure of change for the working Gypsies who feel themselves Bulgarian and want to change their Mohammedan names with Bulgarian ones.”<sup>41</sup>

On a meeting of the Political Bureau of CC of BCP (31.10.1959) a decision was

accepted “*The Ministry of Justice to submit in a period of one month a proposal for the change of the Regulations for the registers of the civil condition - the Municipality councils to be given a possibility to register the changes in the chapter “ethnic origin” of the workers from the national minorities who would like to register themselves as Bulgarians.*”<sup>42</sup> The decision was taken on the basis of the submitted report of Ivan Gospodinov, responsible for the Department for Work with the National Minorities” in which the “process of assimilation of the Gypsies” was presented as “voluntarily and preferred by them” – “*Many of them have taken Bulgarian names, many of them got married with Bulgarian men and Bulgarian women, feeling like Bulgarians. A part of the Gypsies-Muslims during 1946-47 registered themselves as Turks but taking into consideration the low culture of the Turkish population ... this a barrier to the development of these Gypsies and a part of them put the question to be registered as Gypsies or Bulgarians... Obstacle in this respect is the fact that the change of the civil condition can be done only in court.*”<sup>43</sup> In January 1960 the Act for easing of the procedure for changing of the nationality became a jurisdiction fact<sup>44</sup> During the same year the Party organizations “came to the idea” for the necessity of opening boarding houses for Turkish and Gypsy kids.<sup>45</sup>

In a report to the CC of BCP (21.11. 1961) the head of the Department Propaganda and Agitation and the head of the Department for Work with the National Minorities” once again put the problem for the Turkish self-determination of the Gypsies who registered themselves as Turks. „*Since 1947 as Turks declared more than 130 000 Gypsies. This mass “change” of the nationality of the Gypsies was helped, to a certain degree, by the letter 5-434 (11.05.1950) of the department “Civil status” of the Ministry of Interior which says that every citizen after verification of two witnesses who confess Islam and can speak Turkish language can declare himself Turkish by an application to the Municipality Councils*”<sup>46</sup> In the report these facts were categorized as examples of “not scientific” and “harmful” self-identification. For the first time the question of the change of the names and the nationality of the Gypsies was discussed openly. „*As a result of the cultural revolution among the Gypsies, many of them joined the Bulgarian nation. About 107 000 Gypsies - out of whom 45 000 declared themselves Turkish - not for a long time - accepted Bulgarian names and nationality. In some places the political significance of this movement is underestimated and not enough is done to counter the tendencies of Turkish self-determination.*”<sup>47</sup>

The beginning of the “revival process” was defined as a “cultural revolution” concerning not isolated cases but the masses. As a result of the report, the Political Bureau

of the BCP came with a decision about: measures against the tendencies of Turkish self-determination of the Gypsies, Tatars, and Bulgarian Muslims.<sup>48</sup> The decision underlined the fact that the Party will take special measures for “the quick liquidation of the economic and cultural backwardness of the Turkish and Gypsy population.”<sup>49</sup> The “revival process” is “hidden” under social slogans. Some “negative tendencies” were considered as obstacles to the success of the cultural revolution – *“a considerable part of the Gypsies, Tatars, and Bulgarian Muslims still consider themselves Turks - they confess the Islam religion and have Turko-Arabic names ... More than 130 000 Gypsies and tens of thousands Tatars and Bulgarian Muslims in many regions of the country registered as Turks... In some settlements the Turkish self-identification was objectively supported by studding Turkish language - Gypsy, Tatar, and Bulgarian Muslim kids studded Turkish language together with the Turkish kids in the schools and boarding houses ... Another fact also influences negatively the national and patriotic upbringing of the young Gypsies, Tatars, and Bulgarian Muslims- they go gather together with young Turks in squads, army units, and labor service”*<sup>50</sup>

In order to stop the already mentioned negative tendencies of Turkish self-determination, *“which lead to the assimilation of the Bulgarian Muslims, Gypsies, and Tatars by the Turks” and to strengthen their patriotic upbringing, the Political Bureau of CC of BCP decides ...*”<sup>51</sup>

Assigned were concrete measures for the fulfillment of the party appeal for “a united nation” that directly concerned the Gypsies.

For solving the main task - to end the Turkish self-determination- the Party relied on: the Party committees and organizations; Dimitrov Communist Youth Union, the Trade Unions; social organizations; organs of the Ministries, Municipality Councils, and economic organizations. The Ministry of Law together with the Municipality Councils was given the task “to elaborate instruction for the application of the clause 16 of the Regulations for registering the civil condition, ensuring the right registration of the population according to their nationality”<sup>52</sup>

The decision foresaw “wide scale enlightening work” among the Tatars, Gypsies, and Bulgarian Muslims, who registered as Turks *“... The same should be registered according to their true nationality and national belonging”*.<sup>53</sup>

Foreseen were other measures too: to avoid settling down Gypsies and Bulgarian Muslims in places where compact Turkish population lives; to avoid teaching Turkish language to Gypsy kids; Turkish teachers should not be appointed in schools with pre-

vailing Gypsy kids; Gypsy children should not study with Turkish kids and should not live in boarding houses with them.

The Ministry of Defense and the Main Management of the Labor Troops got directions to provide the division of the concerned ethnic groups in different army units, *“ensuring favorable conditions for the right upbringing of the young Bulgarian Muslims, Gypsies, and Tatars”*<sup>54</sup>

The planned assimilation was connected with concrete practical measures.

The Committee dealing with the problems of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Religious Cults to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>55</sup> was ordered to explain the “true’ ethnic origin of the Bulgarian Muslim, Gypsy, and Tatar to the Islam priests” *“the imams and the muftis should respect the socialist laws; they should not be allowed any reaction propaganda favoring Turkish self-identification especially during the religious rituals; they should not be appointed in the villages with prevailing Gypsy, Tatar, or Bulgarian Muslim population”*<sup>56</sup>

Of particular interest is this part of the document which concerns the Bulgarian Academy of Science: *„To send complex expeditions of historians, ethnographers, philologists, and others for a complete investigation of the ethnic origin and national belonging of the population in the relevant regions in the country. To establish the ethnic origin and the national peculiarities, especially of the Turks, Tatars, and Gypsies living in Bulgaria. To continue the investigation of the historic past of the Bulgarian Muslims in the Rhodopes, the district of Lovech, and other regions aiming at revealing the historical truth about the results of the assimilating policy of the Turkish conquerors. The results of the investigation to be reported to the CC of BCP. A section for investigation the historical past of the Bulgarian Muslims to be founded to the Institute of the Bulgarian History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. A commission developing initiatives for rising the national self-consciousness and communist upbringing of the Bulgarian Muslims to be founded to the Department Propaganda and Agitation” of the CC of BCP. That is why an instructor for work with Bulgarian Muslims was appointed in the Department.*<sup>57</sup>

## **The state violence during the change of the names**

In the period /1960 – 1961/ the violent activities for changing the names and nationality of the Gypsies started.<sup>58</sup> In the Central State Archive (in the file of docu-



ments of the former Central Party Archive) – there are some files proving that the process of the change of the names and the nationality of the Gypsies have not been voluntary and created many problems to the authorities and to the people.<sup>59</sup>

The earliest document is from 23.05.1960 and it is a request of two Gypsies from Omurtag who wrote to the CC of BCP on behalf of their city mates *“Like us there are many in the town of Omurtag who have authorized us and we want to represent them with this request.”*<sup>60</sup> In the request they self define as Turks, speaking Turkish and having Mohammedan faith. They represented themselves as having graduated Turkish schools and as ancestors of parents Turks. “All the time we have been Turks, such are our fathers. We declared that we have graduated Turkish schools. In the City Council of Omurtag we are registered as Turks. We have many other documents”. The applicants self-defined themselves also as industrious young people actively involved in the activities of the BCP, members of the Fatherland Front who actively work for its cause. They complain that *“During the last days there is pressure from the City Council to change our Turkish names to Bulgarian. Should not this happen if only we wish it, by our own demand. We are sure that we will be understood in the right way because we are members of our socialist society and that you are going immediately to order the City Council of Omurtag to change our names only if we agree. We ask to receive an answer to this request”*. There follows the date and the personal signatures of the two applicants.

The next preserved requests are from the period 08.02 - 30.07. 1961.<sup>61</sup> The applications – claims are preserved because they circulated between the Presidium of the National Assembly and the Department for Work with the National Minorities of the CC of BCP. In the archive unit there are 10 such individual and 3 collective requests – from the members of 11<sup>th</sup> Fatherland Front in Nessebar; from the village of Zidarovo, Bourgas region; and from Pazardzhik. Only 4 of the applications are hand written, the rest are printed, probably with the help of a lawyer since they quote clause 15 and 56 from the Register Regulations about the civil situation, published in “Izvestia”, No2 (05.01.1960), where the volunteer character of the change of the names and nationality of the new born children and their parents is especially underlined.<sup>62</sup> The applications repeat the quoted already model but they offer more information about the process of the forced change of the names. In one of the cases the illiteracy of the people was used by the authorities. *“On 15.02.1961 I was called by a comrade of the quarter “Pobeda”, Bourgas. I was proposed to sign a declaration without any explanation, without reading it*

*because I am illiterate. On the 16<sup>th</sup> the same year I was called in the City Council – Bourgas, I had to take with me my passport as if for military check up. After that my passport was taken, they told me about the baptizing putting me in the category of the Gypsy minority...I declared that I do not come from the Gypsy minority and I am pure Turk as my grand grand father was, which can be proved with facts and official documents that I can submit now.*<sup>63</sup>

Much more drastic was the case described by two citizens of the village of Stefan Karadzha, Silstra district, Bulgarian citizens, by nationality Turks. *“At the beginning of this month we were called by the Party secretary of the local Party organization in the village – comrade Tsanjo Jordanov- who told us that if we wish we can change the Muslim names with Bulgarian. After we explained to him that we do not want this because for us the change of the names means baptizing and that we want to keep our old names. He assured us that we should not worry any more about this problem. But soon after that the local authorities took some measures aiming to compel us to change our names. We were deprived from the right to buy bread from the social bakery in the village, to visit and buy from the shop of the cooperative, and in parallel to this we were not allowed to go to work in the cooperative farm until we decide to change our names.*<sup>64</sup>

The threats for being dismissed from work are present in all submitted applications – claims. *“After the launch of the Act for the Change of the Gypsy Names I was invited to change my name choosing another suitable name to which I opposed. I was called by the City Council in the town of Varna and I was told that I must compulsory sign up a declaration that I want to change my name. Except this my wife who was working in the department ‘Chistota’ has also been called and forced to change her name and when she did not agree, she was told that she will be dismissed from work. She continued giving up and she has not been allowed to go to work for three days and for this absence she was not paid. Pressured, I was compelled to submit declaration in the City Council that I agree to change my name and our passports were taken in order new ones to be issued after we choose new names.*<sup>65</sup>

In some of the applications the sufferings of the people are dramatically described. *“Do you know that our women and children are crying day and night ... we understood that this concerns those who do not know where they come from and have no work ... the money to the old people were stopped in order to become Bulgarians forcedly ... the people are crying like children ... And we can not live because we are under turmoil because we do not want to be Bulgarians, and we were thinking what to do ... And we sat down to write collective claim ... We expect every hour and every day the answer.”* There follow the signatures of seven people.<sup>66</sup>

In all applications the injustice towards them was treated as a misunderstanding or mistake on the part of the Municipal authorities, at the same time they supported the Party idea for a change. *"Like an idea it is very good ... wonderful. We, and I personally, do not criticize the legislation but we declare that by now we do not want to change our names as well as our religion, our faith, the habits we have inherited from our ancestors, our grand grand fathers."*<sup>67</sup> They requested to be given back the submitted applications and the problem about their names and religions to not be raised again, promising in the future to serve to the Party.<sup>68</sup> The applications are full with greetings to the high authorities. *"Comrade Zhivkov at the eve of the First of May – the battle holiday of labor and all progressive people, we, the Turkish population living in Nessebar, could not meet the holiday with joyful hearts. Our national prestige was hurt by the local leaders of the town. We are not Gypsies and we do not want to change our birth names. We sent delegation of three people on 14 April 1961 ... and till today we have not any answer."* There follow some slogans and friendly greeting to Todor Zhivkov from "11<sup>th</sup> Fatherland Front region of the Turkish population in Nessebar."<sup>69</sup> These applications were personally delivered to the Presidium of the National Assembly in Sofia, because the dates of registration coincides with their receiving. The collective applications have been sent by delegations that waited in Sofia for answers. Of course they did not get such which later was reported as a weak point with the work with them.<sup>70</sup> The letters of the District Council of the Party in Sliven; the village of Kilifarevo, Veliko Tarnovo district; and Pazardzhik directed to the CC of BCP, Department for Work with the National Minorities demanded detailed proscriptions about the procedure of changing the names of gypsy minorities. *"We are interested how should we react if after the birth of a child the parents want to be registered as a Turkish Gypsy or whatever the parents wish. Second, should we correct the nationality in the registers, and in general how to proceed for the legalization of their true origin?"*<sup>71</sup> The head of Department For Work with the Minorities at that time Ivan Gospodinov answered with general phrases directing them to the letter No. 809/17.06.1958 of the CC of BCP. *"The tendencies of a part of the Gypsies Muslims to self-determine as Turks are wrong. It is wrong to separate Gypsies from the other population in special quarters and villages... There must be constant and persuading work with the Gypsy population about how wrong is to self-determine as Turks. They should voluntary register as Bulgarians and should register their new born children as Bulgarians."*<sup>72</sup> How voluntary was the proces could be seen from a report of the District Council of the BCP in Sliven: *„Comrades, in Nova Zagora there are not*

*dismissed workers from the Gypsy population because they do not accept Bulgarian names. The case with E. Yumerov is the following. He has made an attempt to lie the director of the company 'Komunalni uslugi' that he is not a Gypsy but Turk, and that he can not accept Bulgarian name. The director answers that he does not want the workers to lie him."* In the letter (for the first time in the documents) was mentioned the demolishing of a Gypsy grave yard. *"The grave yard of the Gypsy population is near to the cattle farm of the agricultural secondary school in the town of Nova Zagora. By decision of the session of the City Council the grave yard becomes property of the school but still it is not removed ..."*<sup>73</sup>

The repressive minority policy which began in 1958 with single cases of forced change of the Turko-Arabic names of the Gypsies continued in the beginning of the 1960-es as an open assimilation policy. The Department for Work with the National Minorities was closed and by decision No. 327/26.11.1962 its activities passes to the Department Propaganda and Agitation as a Sector for Work among the National Minorities. Locally this policy was conducted by the same departments but situated in the District committees of the BCP.<sup>74</sup>

### **Information Sociological Centre of the CC of BCP**

Regarding the "revival process" of the Gypsies another data base is connected with the Information – Sociological Centre of the CC of BCP .<sup>75</sup>

On the request of the CC of BCP in 1971 the Centre made a sociological investigation of the Gypsies.<sup>76</sup> Among the other information there is information about the number of the renamed Gypsies in the district centers. In a material from 1973 the Centre reports: *"Available are data about the Turkish self identification especially in the districts with prevailing Turkish population (Razgrad, Targovishte, Shoumen, Varna, etc.). The reasons are different: sometimes the Gypsies are ashamed to call themselves Gypsies; others often meet difficulties in servicing in the trade, transport, the civil offices or simply they are influenced by the surrounding traditions, habits, and life style of the population from Turkish origin."*<sup>77</sup>

Evidently for the period of 12-13 years the State and the Party did not succeed to finish the "revival process" of the Gypsies. In 1976 the Information Sociological Centre of the CC of BCP presented a demography map of the state. In more than a half of the districts with Gypsy population Gypsies inclined to self identify as Turks (they kept

their names and religion).<sup>78</sup> Similar were the data in the later reports.<sup>79</sup> In 1980 the Information Sociological Centre formed a group with the aim to make an investigation titled “Confirming the Socialist Way of Living of the Bulgarian Citizens from Gypsy Origin.”<sup>80</sup> 31% of the investigated claimed that they do not confess any religion, but at the same time a great percentage of them (80.94%) used to attend churches and mosques. The religious rituals were shortened, but the funeral rituals were very conservative and well preserved. *“A great sustainability shows the circumcision kept among the Gypsy population confessing Islam”*<sup>81</sup> The results from the investigation support the theses about decreased religiosity of the Gypsies, which contradicts to 2 basic documents issued 9 years later.<sup>82</sup>

### The results of the “revival process”

Nearly 30 years after the beginning of the “revival process” of the Gypsies in a official documents was pointed that *“about 44-45% of the Bulgarian Gypsies officially consider themselves as Muslims ... but as a whole they are not religious ... It is not right to consider that all Gypsy Muslims self-determine as Turk . Only a part of them have Turkish self-consciousness ... In the new conditions of work (the finished change of the names of the Pomaks in 1972-1974 and of the Turks in 1984) some circumstances characteristic for the Gypsies who self-determine as Turks should be taken into consideration... The Turkish self-consciousness does not have a political character - the influence of the Ankara propaganda - but it has an emotional character - the Gypsies Muslims took with the religion the Arabic names and they want to be registered as Turks but not Gypsies because the term “Gypsy” is a synonym of something offensive and shameful. The running away from the offensive and abusive “Gypsies” could be noticed among the Gypsies Christians, especially among these with high education and culture who pretend to be “Bulgarians” – ashamed to declare their Gypsy origin and seek a way to be registered as Bulgarians”*.

In 1982 every district reported about the Gypsies having new names and passports.<sup>83</sup> The object of the forced policy for change of the names and nationality had been 217 651 people – named as Bulgarian Gypsies with old names. 208 208 people had been forced to change their names which is about 95 % of the Gypsies with Turko-Arabic names. The number of people with changed passports is 100 933.<sup>84</sup> In 1989 the same policy continued *„In Bulgaria exists certain number of Bulgarian population from*

*Gypsy origin. Our Party has always been taking care and attention to this population. During the last years there were number of Party and State documents for the work with the Bulgarian Gypsies. After the decision of the Secretariat of the CC of BCP No. 1360 from October 1978 and after the change of the Turko-Arabic names, a lot of work was done and considerable changes were achieved among this Bulgarian population”.*<sup>85</sup>

In the document which has a character of Party Directive – unambiguously is pointed the aim of the work with the Gypsies – uniting to the Bulgarian people and forming Bulgarian national consciousness. An account of the new conditions and visions “for unification of the Bulgarian people and nation” was taken. Recorded were the mistakes that should be corrected “*With great care we must point out that during the last years the great and complex ”revival process” was directed to the ancestors of the Islamized Bulgarians and practically we stopped working with the Gypsies ... We must take into consideration the fact that many state and Party organizations underestimate the problem of the Bulgarian Gypsies. The decision of the Political Bureau of the CC of BCP for the unification of the Bulgarian nation put afford the problem of working with the Gypsies. This is a complex problem and with every passing year it will become more and more complex, because the number of this population is quickly increasing. Ten years ago the Gypsies were 6% of the population, but now they are more than 7%.*”<sup>86</sup>

I stated in details most of the document because of the following two reasons:

Firstly because of the imposed in the scientific literature idea that “*not the religious marker defined the work with this community; the ethno-cultural specifics in this case (of the Gypsies) most often is connected with the attempts of solving or simply ignoring certain circle of acute social problems.*”<sup>87</sup> The documents from the Party archive prove the opposite thesis.<sup>88</sup>

Second I think that it is not correct the question of the religion identity of so many people in the country to be looked upon and their religious problems to be substituted for social ones.

The change of the names of the Muslim Gypsies in the beginning of the 1960-es is the first step of the Communist regime towards the realization of the idea for “united nation” leading to the religious and ethnic assimilation of the minorities. As could be seen from the documents that this process was not “voluntary and unproblematic” for the Gypsy victims. To the people from “the bottom” of the social hierarchy, the Party and local authorities used all kind (legal and illegal) means – from requests to dismissing and repression.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The period of the communist regime in Bulgaria was from 1944 till 1989.

<sup>2</sup> For the period 09.09.1944 - 1989 I use the term "Gypsies" as an accepted name of the Bulgarian Roma. I take into account that the very term is pejorative (i.e. with offensive attitude) and namely this reflects all stereotypes connected with the negative attitude towards these people during the communist rule. In the analysis I use the term "Gypsies" in a positive meaning. As Muslim Gypsies – I mark all who confess Islam religion taking into consideration the fact that part of them had Turkish self-consciousness. See I. Nunev. Normative aspects of the educational integration of the kids and the students of the Bulgarian citizens with ethno cultural differences in the context of the intercultural education and upbringing., p 9-2 b, Cb. Diversity without borders, C., 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Pashova, An. Policies of the totalitarian state towards the Roma in Bulgaria., B: Public support and social work in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, 2005. The proposed in the article periodicities are conditional but imposed in the scientific literature (Marushiakova, Popov, The gypsies in Bulgaria, C. 1993; Beuksensheuts Minority policy in Bulgaria. The policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party towards the Roma, Jews, Pomaks and Turks 1944 -1989, I., 2000, is based on the real changes of the power relations of the official authorities towards the gypsies.

<sup>4</sup> There exists only one regional investigation /Dejan Kolev, Theodora Krumova, between Scila and Haribda – for the identity of the millet., V. Tarnovo 2005/, in which the minority schools and the archives of the Tarnovo Methropoly are researched.

<sup>5</sup> Primarily my idea was to point all possible data that store documents about the state policy towards the Gypsies but respectively the great amount of materials found in the CHA / F. 1B – party archive /narrowed my analysis to the documents concerning their ethnic and religious identity/.

<sup>6</sup> In the article the term "revival process" is used in its wider context – "as a process of changing the names and group identity of the Bulgarian Muslims". See Gruev, M. Al. Kalyonski. The revival process (the Muslim communities and the communist regime), C., 2008, p. 11. See E. Ivanova, The rejected "accessed" or the process called "revival" (1912 – 1989), C., 2002

<sup>7</sup> In the site of the project [www.histori.swu.bg/aso.htm](http://www.histori.swu.bg/aso.htm) there are only two fonds that concern the gypsies directly / Central State Archive, F. 1304 – Gypsy theatre 'Roma'/1951-1960/, 15 and one primary school in the village of Varbitsa, Shumen region – State Archive – Shumen , F. 268 /1950 -1958/, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Central State Archive, F 1B, op. 1. 25, 71 Report of the Head of Department and Statements from the Jewish commission about the situation of the Jews in Bulgaria and the activity of the Party among them. For the struggle between Jews, communists and cionists; for creation of an organization of the gypsies, 1945 /23p./ ;

<sup>9</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.25, a. e. 68, l.1-5 Report of the Masive department at the Central Committee "Our work among the minorities"

<sup>10</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.27, a. e. 6, l.1-2

<sup>11</sup> District State Archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond 2B, op. 1, a. e. 3, l. 548 – 549; State Archive - Montana f. 611 op. 1, a. e. 55, l.3. Probably there is preserved information about the Gypsy cultural – enlightening associations in the other district State Archives.

<sup>12</sup> CSA, F. 1304 – Gypsy theatre "Roma"/1951-1960/. This is one of the two Gypsy institutions which have fonds in the CSA. The fond contains 15 a. e.

<sup>13</sup> SA – Blagoevgrad, F.109, op.1, a. e. 42, l.1

<sup>14</sup> SA - Blagoevgrad, Fond 109, op.1, a. e. 42, l.1

<sup>15</sup> See Ulrich Beucksesheuts, The minority policy in Bulgaria. The policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party towards Jews, Roma, Pomaks and Turks, S., 2000

<sup>16</sup> Ulrich Beuckhesheuts Ulrich Beucksensheuts, The minority policy in Bulagaria. Policy of the Bulgaria Communist Party towards the Jews, Roma, Pomaks and Turks, S., 2000, p. 22

<sup>17</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1B, op. 25, a. e. 71, p. 7

<sup>18</sup> Central State Archive, F 1B, op. 25 Introduction, V. Pulova, p.1 S.,1975. We can only guess what imposed this change taking into consideration that in several months two big events – the Referendum for

removing the Monarchy 08.09.1945 and the elections for Great National Assembly – 27.10.1946 will happen.

<sup>19</sup> Law for labor mobilization of Idling and Linging, SN/08.101946 in: People's Democracy and Dictatorship", compiled by L. Ognyanov, M. Dimova, M. Lalkov, S., 1992.

<sup>20</sup> District order 2410 since 25 July 1947

<sup>21</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 27, a. e. 20, l.1

<sup>22</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 27, a. e. 20, l.2-3

<sup>23</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 27, a. e. 20, l.3

<sup>24</sup> Growe: Histori, 22 By Ulrich Beucksenscheuts The minority policy in Bulgaria. The policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party towards Jews, Roma, Pomaks, and Turks (1944-1989), S., 2000, p. 4

<sup>25</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1B, op. 27, a. e. 2, l.8

<sup>26</sup> Ulrich Beucksenschuts The minority policy in Bulgaria. The policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party towards Jews, Roma, Pomaks, and Turks (1944-1989), S., 2000, p. 34

<sup>27</sup> „According to the Main Directorate of the statistics and according to article 1, paragraph 3 from the Regulations for work with registers of the population, the city councils can correct the data given by the heads of households and household lists or in the registers of the population if they consider that they are not full or wrong but only on the basis of documents or after inquiry". Central State Archive, F.1B, op.27, a. e. 2, l.5

<sup>28</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 27, a. e. 2, l.1-9

<sup>29</sup> State Archive –Blagoevgrad, F.2B, Op.1, a. e.- 3, l. 548

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.28, a. e. 23, l.1-39. Similar data probable there are in all territorial state archives in the country.

<sup>32</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 27, a. e. 2; a. e. 6, a. e. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1B, op.27.

<sup>34</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.27, Introduction, V.Pulova, p.1 S., 1975

<sup>35</sup> Central State Archive, F.1b, op. 28.

<sup>36</sup> Act No. 1216 of the Council of Ministers dated 17 .10.1957 "For solving the problem with the gypsy minority in Bulgaria"

<sup>37</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 5, a. e. 420, l.1-57 protocol from meeting of Department for Work with the National Minorities of the CC of BCP for supervising the work for propaganda and agitation of the responsible for the work with the national minorities at the District Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, The Fatherland Front, and the Komsomol., 25.03. 1960 .

<sup>38</sup> Act No. 258 of the Council of Ministers dated 17.10.1958 "For managing the problems of the Gypsy population in Bulgaria".

<sup>39</sup> In the Party archive there are preserved the applications of Gypsies who want to settle down, but the local population does not want them – Central State Archive, F. 1B, op. 28, a. e. 1, l. 1-15. The Act is pretext and the residential Gypsies by the Town Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party on the spot to have higher demands for the improvement of the Gypsy quarters – Central State Archive, F. 1b, op. 28, a. e. 1, l. 5-6, Central State Archive, F. 1B, op. 28, a. e. b, l. 10 Central State Archive; The Party provoked the Gypsies to "greet" the Act – report of Shakir Pashov, representative of the cultural committee of the Gypsy population in quarter Emil Markov to the CC of BCP.

<sup>40</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1B, op.28, a. e. 15, l.9

<sup>41</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1B, op 6, a. e. 4034 Protocol of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, l.1

<sup>42</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1B, OP.6, a. e. 4034, l.2

<sup>43</sup> Central State Archive, F. 1 , OP.6, a. e. 4034, L.48

<sup>44</sup> Newspaper „Izvestia", 5.01.1960 Printed are forms applications from the name of the wishing to change their names and nationality to the Chairman of the Municipal People's Councils where they live. State Archive - Montana, F. 2, op. 3, a. e. 66, l. 340

<sup>45</sup> Central State Archive, f.1B, op.29, a. e. 20, l. 2 Report of the Town Committee of the Bulgarian



Communist Party, the Municipal People's Council and Department "Enlightenment and culture" - Kolarovgrad to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party dated 22.12.1960

<sup>46</sup>Central State Archive, F.1B, op.15, a. e. 765, l.2

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., l.3

<sup>48</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.15, a. e. 765, l.8-13

<sup>49</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.15, a. e. 765, l.8

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., l.9

<sup>51</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.15, a. e. 765, l.10

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., l.10

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., l.11

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., l.12

<sup>55</sup> I have listed in details all institutions responsible for the "revival process" because in the archives of the relevant institutions about this period could be found archive documents connected especially with the Gypsies.

<sup>56</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.15, a. e. 765, l.12

<sup>57</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.15, a. e. 765, l.12-13

<sup>58</sup> The attitude of the Gypsies towards the change of the names and their Christianizing have not been object of special investigation except in the context of more general historical investigations. /See M.Gruev, 2003/. V. Pelova /2004/ investigates archive documents for accepting the Christianity by Roma in the eparchy of Vratsa from comparatively early historical period – the first years after the liberation till 1948, analyzing the motives for this act as they are reflected in the correspondence of the Metropolis of Vratsa.

<sup>59</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 28, a. e. 24, Letters of the Presidium of the National Assembly, the City Committee of the BCP in Pazardzhik, and presentation of Turks, Gypsies, and Bulgarian Muslims to CC of BCP connected with the change of their names with Bulgarian (06.02. 1961 – 10.06.1961).

<sup>60</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.28, a. e.15, l.9

<sup>61</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.28, a. e. 23 Letters of the Presidium of the National Assembly, City Committee of the BCP – Pazardzhik, and messages of Gypsies to the CC of BCP connected with the change of their Turkish names with Bulgarian ones.

<sup>62</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op. 28, a. e. 23, l.17. Texts from the Regulations in the application are quoted and written with capital letters.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., l.5-7.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.. l.20-21

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., l.36-37

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., l.17

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., l.18

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., l. 30-31

<sup>70</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.55, a. e.1341, l.9..."Very often their applications and claims are not satisfied and this influences badly the conscience of the applicants"

<sup>71</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.28, a. e. 23, l. 2-3

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., l.5

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., l.1

<sup>74</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond 1B.

<sup>75</sup> Central State Archive, Fond 1b, op 55. The present inventory contains 1368 archive entities. January 2006, Sofia, composed by St. Tsvetanski

<sup>76</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.55, a. e. 1341

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., l.8

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 12

<sup>79</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.55, a. e.1341 and a. e.1344 Some problems of the work with the Gypsy population in this country /1976/

<sup>80</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.55, a. e. 1348 Report of the group to the Department Propaganda and Agitation. Before the report there is Project for empiric sociological investigation. S., 1977 – Central State Archive, F. 1B, op.55, a. e. 1347, the work is made by a team with manager Ph.D. Dimitrov. The full results of the investigation are published in team monograph (the same team) - Central State Archive, F. 1B, op.55, a. e. 1349 in a volume of 225pages. The very report is printed only in 10 copies sent to the Central committee as “top secret”

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., l.19

<sup>82</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op.55, a. e.1350 /l.1-4/ For some peculiarities in idea-upbringing work of the Party organs and organizations, City councils and social organs and organizations with Bulgarian Gypsies self-determining as Turks; Central State Archive, F.1B, op.55, a. e.1351.

<sup>83</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond 2B, op 12, a. e. 41, l. 118, Results of the political work for the change of the Turko-arabic names of the Bulgarian gypsies dated 14 June 1982 /Top secret/ See other documents from the State Archive, Blagoevgrad on the site – roma.swu.bg

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., l.118

<sup>85</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op 55, a. e. 1351, l.1

<sup>86</sup> Central State Archive, F.1B, op 55, a. e. 1351, l.5

<sup>87</sup>Gruev.M. Al. Kalyonski. The revival process (the Muslim societies and the communist regime), S., 2008, p.9

<sup>88</sup> In the investigation are used only a part of the accessible to the author documents. The full text of some of the documents from the State Archive Blagoevgrad, that have not been quoted can be seen on the site – roma.swu.bg

<sup>89</sup> We have many collected stories of people from different regions of the country telling about the “revival process” in a much more dramatic way.

**“BEST OF ALL WOMEN. FEMALE DIMENSIONS IN JUDAISM”  
AN EXHIBITION AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM VIENNA**

**Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz and Wiebke Krohn**

For several years, the curators of the Jewish Museum Vienna have been discussing an exhibition on Jewish women. Due to the reason of various developments in gender studies, the need for such an exhibit intensified. Ironically, Gabriele Kohlbauer who is specialised in issues of minorities in Judaism, was entrusted with the concept. Later, Wiebke Krohn joined the curating team.

As the title already hints, the intention has not been to show an exhibit on Jewish women, but on the relationship between Jewish women and their religion or the influence the Jewish religion had on their lives. This focus is reasonable, because the show had been scheduled for a Jewish museum. Otherwise it could have taken place anywhere.

The initial research work started, with the own collection of the Jewish Museum Vienna, as usual in exhibition planning. This led to a focus on nineteenth and twentieth centuries' history, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the adjunct Judaica monuments. Certainly, recourses to former periods and non-historical aspects were necessary to explain the status quo.

“Best of all women” is a stereotypical quotation from a Torah curtain inscription, referring to the wife of the writer. For the start, a short overview of the contents and the main topics of the exhibition, and a few notes on the work will be given. Let us now imagine a walk through the exhibition. According to the rooms in the Museum the topic was split into eight parts, in other words, the exhibition story was divided into eight chapters.

The first room held a kind of epilogue, containing two allusions to the main ideas. First, a self portrait by Hülene Aylon from the cycle the “Liberation of God” welcomed the visitors. It showed her face overwritten with misogynic quotes from the Torah, hinting on the topic of relationship between Jewish women and their religion. The next allusion was an installation based on an idea and the poem “Kleiderflug” by Elfriede Gerstl that reflects the role of clothes in her life. For us it became an allusion to the flamboyant frequency of textile objects in the exhibition.



*Room 1*

The next room dealt with the central aspect of the exhibition: the religion. It mentioned the three duties of women in Judaism (to kindle the Shabbat lights, to take the tenth part of the dough for the Shabbat bread and to burn it as a kind of sacrifice and to take a bath in the mikvah seven days after the menstruation).<sup>1</sup> Besides of that, it showed several religious customs from traditional outward appearance and pious life to new invented feminist customs like special Haggadoth for Pesach, emphasizing the role of Miriam, sister of Moses, within Exodus.

The next chapter was dedicated to the famous Viennese Salonnières who were Jewish, neglecting very few exceptions. In their homes, bourgeoisie, nobility and artists, men and women met on an equal level for the first time. Petra Wilhelmy described the salon as a dress rehearsal for the emancipation of women, but we wish to add that it also had been a dress rehearsal for modern democracy.<sup>2</sup>

Entering the next room, we had to face the topic of charity. This became a large and pluralistic field for women to step into public life. A multitude of Jewish relief organisations was founded during the nineteenth century. This is due to the special aspect of charity in Judaism. Similar to Christian religion, welfare is an important topic. But in Judaism it is a duty and not optional. Also the role of the beneficiary is different. The donor has to be thankful for the opportunity to fulfil his duty.<sup>3</sup>

While women's activities in welfare organisations mostly had been voluntarily



*Miriam's Area*

and non-profit oriented, the next chapter showed aspects of education, professional training, university studies and first examples of professional life. The development of Jewish women in the professional sphere and their political activities are interwoven.

It is an eye-catching fact that many of the first possibilities to receive a professional training and to earn own money had to do with textile production. The next room turned back on women's religious practice and education to conclude in the last topic, the question if women can be rabbis. The answer is yes, if they neither are orthodox nor Chassidic. The Halakhah, the Jewish religious law does not mention any objections. The last room was dedicated to a mythical female, Lilith, who will be considered later.

To conclude the progression of the story: Starting from the religious life, we followed Jewish women on their way from their private homes into public and professional life.

Our thesis is that the manifold aspects of women's religious practice and education directed to a specific development on that way outside. The opportunities for women to unfold within Judaism provided them with important skills for an own kind of emancipation. We tried to prove this by several biographical examples. This thesis bears some dangers. Let us return to the example of charity. We mentioned the special emphasis of welfare in Judaism, so Jewish religious education can be considered as an explanation for a Jewish woman's commitment in this field. But of course other explanations are imaginable: Maybe she grew up in a bourgeois family who set value on humanity, or in a socialist surrounding that cared for the poor and so on.

The difference between an exhibition on Jewish women in general and our focus on the relationship of Jewish women and their religion turned out to be a first obstacle to be negotiated. Even colleagues from the museum thought that the project could be an opportunity to broach the issue of as many biographies of Jewish women in general or Jewish artists in particular as possible. Every time an exhibition dedicated to the work by a female Jewish artist had been introduced to the Jewish Museum, somebody showed up and proposed us to deal with the topic and then to leave it for all times. The exhibition was in danger to become a reservoir for suspected feministic topics. We had to restrict such tries in order to avoid arbitrariness.

We did not tell whole life stories, but used individual examples to show certain modes of realisation, stressing their kind of activity, but not the person. There might have been others on the same way. Although we tried to employ biographical aspects as a measure and not as an aim, the consideration has been tempting; because of the fascinating individuals we had to deal with. But including one person meant to exclude many others – all of them worth an extra exhibition ...

Please allow a short digression on textiles. Nearly every chapter contained several textile objects. They were shown as documents for religious life, for instance as Synagogue textiles, containing dedications by women or to foster their remembrance. They appeared as a part of collections, traditional bonnets for instance were collected to document Jewish identity, as a kind of self-perception and self-reflection. The textile branch became part of the educational curriculum and a first means to earn own money for women and to become independent. Even the first female Jewish public servant in Austria dealt with textiles, she had been a restaurateur and led a school for embroideries with several

branches. Last but not least, textiles were the main symbols for women's claim of equal rights in religious practice, for example sewing Prayer shawls and wearing these Tallitim while praying like men or even to wear the robes of rabbis.

We were surprised to discover that one female dimension of Judaism is a textile dimension. Then we had the problem of a bad conscience because we had to present this as a fact – while being aware that this could contribute to worst clichés on women in professional life.

But at least all this is a question of the point of view.

When working on the concept of the exhibition we decided to emphasise the different perspectives on women's history, which often have to do with a male or female point of view. There were two examples in the exhibition which reflected very well this double point of view. One is a real person: Bertha Pappenheim alias Anna O.<sup>4</sup> The other is a mythological figure: Lilith

Anna O., a beautiful young girl from a wealthy Viennese Jewish family became famous as a patient of Josef Breuer. After her father's death Anna developed severe physical and mental disorders such as paralysis, temporary blindness and deafness, loss of speech, etc. Her state was diagnosed as "hysteria", the collective term at the time for mental illnesses, especially of female patients. Anna O. played a very passive role although she did inspire the founders of psychoanalysis as Freud and Breuer remarked in their "Studies on hysteria". She even invented the "talking cure" as a method of therapy and she called it "chimney sweeping" when she felt relieved after her sessions with Breuer. But all of a sudden Dr. Breuer, who was married, gave up her case under the suspicion of a dubious doctor-patient relationship and she was sent to a Sanatorium by her family – also a very classical way to get rid of so called hysterical women.

One of the objects in the exhibition illustrating the story of Anna O. was a piece of cake, decorated with felt dolls depicting the classical scene between doctor and patient – in our case Dr. Josef Breuer and Anna O., during a psychoanalytical session. The piece of cake had been part of an installation for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sigmund Freud, which had taken place in the Jewish Museum Berlin in 2006. On a huge birthday cake the visitors could follow all the important events and developments in Freud's life. On our piece, the beautiful young Anna was laying on the sofa with spread legs, an interesting object for Doctor Breuer, the obvious master of the situation.

It seems quite understandable that after her recovery Bertha Pappenheim didn't want to remember her wretched existence as Anna O. Together with her mother, she moved to Frankfurt am Main and there she began her real self-determined life. She engaged in charitable work in Frankfurt and in 1895, she became head of an orphanage for Jewish girls. Confronted with their fate, she began to deal with women's issues and especially was concerned with the situation of poor Jewish women in Galicia, who frequently fell victim to international white slavers. In 1904, she became one of the founders of the *League of Jewish Women*, which initiated in 1907 a home for young girls in Neu-Isenburg. In 1909, 1914, 1923, and 1930, she held important lectures at world congresses on the fight against white slavery and criticized the *a priori* condemnation of prostitutes. In her speeches, frighteningly appropriate to this day, she clearly pointed out the responsibility of the suitors, who through their demand catered to crime and misery. She emphasized the importance to provide poor women with an education to protect them from uncontrollable conditions of dependence. Focal point of this training was the textile trade. In addition, Bertha Pappenheim was also interested in Jewish women's history. In 1910, she translated the "Memoirs of Glckel von Hameln"<sup>5</sup> and in 1930, the women's Bible "Ze'enah u-Re'enah".<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that although Bertha Pappenheim certainly had many traumatized women in her institution, she never accepted psychoanalysis as a method of treating her protégées.

When the identity of Anna O. was revealed by Ernest Jones,<sup>7</sup> a historian of the psychoanalysis in the 1950s of the last century those of her colleagues who had worked with her in Neu-Isenburg and who had survived the war, were very unhappy about this revelation. They feared that the voyeuristic interest in the beautiful hysterical Anna O. would overlap the interest in the social work of Bertha Pappenheim.

Our second example for the dichotomy in women's history is Lilith, a myth.

Born immediately after Adam, Lilith was, most notably, the first of all women. "The Alphabet of Ben Sira", a medieval text (before 1000 CE), explains that Lilith had refused to submit herself to Adam sexually and had, therefore, left him in anger. God had sent three angels to search for her and to convince her to return. However, she refused and was, therefore, condemned to henceforth lead an existence as a child-murdering demon. From her cave she undertakes nightly flights to afflict humans. According to myth, newborns have to fear her in particular. Therefore, rooms of women



in childhood were furnished with protection amulets, so-called *Kimpetsetln* or *Kimpetbrivln* (childhood letters).

Lilith with her nightly visitations is also a danger to men: she steals their sperm to sire further demons. Only in the twentieth century, Lilith's bad reputation improved when feminists began to appreciate her independence. Even a Jewish-feminist magazine bears her name since the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> Yet, Lilith's dark side fascinates in particular and stimulates the most varied phantasies until today ...

Many artists (women as well as men) were and are inspired by Lilith. To sum up one may say that men tend to see rather the dark and dangerous side of Lilith whereas women see her strength and her independence.

Originally, we planned to focus on all aspects of the exhibition by this dichotomy, but it turned out that this was not possible in most cases. Bertha Pappenheim and Lilith are certainly outstanding examples crystallizing the ambivalence of women's history (herstory). Sometimes we could follow only one point of view because there had not been another.

Sometimes we had to fight with lack of sources. We tried different ways of investigation, starting at first with literature on Jewish women. So, our research led us from our own collection and library, that holds several mostly contemporary volumes on Jewish gender history, to other institutions working in the field of Jewish history like the Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main or the Centrum Judaicum Berlin, the Institute for Jewish History in Austria, St. Pölten but also to Jewish Museums in the USA. The second approach was based on women's history in general we went to Viennese public libraries and archives, talked to experts, asked and researched for Jewish women among the known "herstory". We received valued consultancy by the *Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, the Collection of women's estates at the University of Vienna and *Ariadne*, the National library's project on gender history.

## Reception

Let us consider some aspects of reception and questions by the visitors. Mainly the reactions and reviews to the exhibition were positive and its success brought it to the Jewish Museum Frankfurt in December 2007. But of course, other voices could be

heard. Many questions concerning the limited choice of topics reached us. Certainly a title like female dimensions in Judaism is endless. We had to choose.

We were asked why we did not deal with topics like marriage, birth, death, etc. But as we often have changing exhibitions on Jewish religion in general and also the permanent exhibition and many events broach the issue on these cases, we did not want to repeat this.

During guided tours, we often were confronted with prejudices. Visitors forget or do not know about the pluralistic forms of Judaism and take their own experiences with special groups for granted, somebody asked for instance why Jewish women were supposed to wear wigs and hats. A further reason for this could be a general confusion of religious duties and customs. Like mentioned before, women only have three religious duties, but certainly there are many more customs, influenced by different locations, times and even fashions, depending on the cultural or historical developments. For example, the separation of men and women in the synagogue had not been common in the diaspora until the thirteenth century. It has to be supposed that the separation results from a competition in devotion between Jews and Catholics in the Middle Ages. Customs show a great variety.<sup>9</sup>

So even a group of pupils of the (Jewish) Lauder Chabad School in Vienna stated that they did not know most of the exhibited aspects, and totally unknown to them had been the fact that there were and are female rabbis.

We also had to deal with the misunderstanding of the biographical examples. Many people missed their favourite Jewess. One reason for this has been the kind of our presentation. But while dealing with these questions we came to the conclusion that visitors expect to see biographies and individual fates when reading an announcement like our exhibition title. By a viewing pattern, visitors seem to expect the *pars pro toto* when they are confronted with topics of gender studies.

Other questions concerned the mode of exhibitions in general. Why didn't we start with Ancient times, with female prophets, what about complete biographies?

These also are hints on the expectation of Museum visitors, not only to our exhibition and not only to gender topics. Many visitors would like to consume an exhibition and to leave the museum without further questions. They expect to receive overall explanations. The style of our institution is to invite people to think on and to

return for more information – and to adjust their prejudices. “These prejudices are wide-spread. Many people confuse the role of women in Judaism with the one in the Islam. Others think that Jewish women generally are minor to Jewish men in regard to religious law. Jewish feminists face the problem that the general feminist movement has sometimes absorbed anti-Jewish stereotypes. Especially Christian feminists sometimes repeat familiar anti-Jewish charges of earlier Christian theology such as seeing the patriarchy as a Jewish invention linked to the God of the Old Testament, although principally, the Jewish and Christian feminist movements are sharing similar concerns and aims.”<sup>10</sup>

A topic of modern anti-Semitism is the identification of Judaism and femininity as considered for example in the work of Otto Weininger in a very pronounced way. In a more subtle but nevertheless dangerous form the mixture of anti-Semitism and anti-feminism is an actual problem, which is shown by recent discussions of Weininger’s theories. They are taken seriously until today.<sup>11</sup>

By our exhibition, we intended to counter such oddities to contribute to a broader understanding of the variety of women’s interpretations of Judaism and the transformation of the female role in religious life.

<sup>1</sup> Mischna, Nidda, cf. Susannah Heschel, Sind Juden Männer? Können Frauen jüdisch sein? Die gesellschaftliche Definition des männlichen/weiblichen Körpers, in: Sander. L. Gilman, Robert Jütte and Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz eds., *Der schejne Jid*, Wien 1998, 86–96.

<sup>2</sup> Petra Wilhelmy, *Der Berliner Salon im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1989, 464.

<sup>3</sup> Dieter Hecht, Gesegnet seist Du, die Wohltätigkeit und Gerechtigkeit liebt, in: Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz and Wiebke Krohn eds., *Beste aller Frauen. Weibliche Dimensionen im Judentum*, Wien 2007, 65–83.

<sup>4</sup> Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studien über Hysterie*, Wien 1895.

<sup>5</sup> Bertha Pappenheim, *Die Memoiren der Gräfin von Hameln*, Frankfurt am Main 1910.

<sup>6</sup> Bertha Pappenheim, *Ze’enah u-Re’enah*, Frankfurt am Main 1930.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Jones, *Das Leben und Werk Sigmund Freuds*, Bern 1982 (English: 1953–57).

<sup>8</sup> Lilith. Independent, Jewish and frankly feminist, New York 1/1976–1/2008, see <<http://www.lilith.org/index.htm>>.

<sup>9</sup> Wiebke Krohn, Ein Platz für Frauen. Die Synagoge, in: Kohlbauer-Fritz/Krohn, *Beste*, see note 3, 23–35.

<sup>10</sup> Charlotte Kohn Ley ed., *Der feministische “Sündenfall”? Antisemitische Vorurteile in der Frauenbewegung*, Wien 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques LeRider, *Der Fall Otto Weininger. Wurzeln des Antifeminismus und des Antisemitismus*, Wien 1985.

# MUSLIM WOMEN AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN BULGARIA (1940s-1960s): ARCHIVE DOCUMENTATION AND HISTORICAL PROBLEMS

Georgeta Nazarska

This article has two objectives: to comment on the state of the archival documentation left over from several central institutions, responsible for minority and women's problems from the 1940 to the 1960s, and to analyze and generalize the participation of Muslim women<sup>1</sup> in the Bulgarian women's movement during that period.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Characteristics of Archival Documentation

Founded at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and inspired by feminist ideology, the Bulgarian women's movement was actually abolished after 1944. During the transitional period (1944-1949/1951) the majority of Bulgarian women's organizations were forbidden or liquidated themselves. Their place was taken by a women's movement, closely affiliated to the *Otechestven front* (*Fatherland Front*) regime and controlled by the *Balgarska komunisticheska partia* (*Bulgarian Communist Party*). In fact, this was a quasi-feminist movement of a formal, state nature, dominated by an organization- dominated by a state requirement and by the communist ideology.<sup>3</sup>

The so-called Bulgarian women's movement was governed in the 1940-1960s by several organizations. The first one was the *Balgarski naroden zhenski sajuz* (*Bulgarian People's Women's Union*), founded in September 1944. It was at the head of women's associations; and it gradually forced all the existing feminist organizations to merge into itself, created its own regional and district management, maintained regular administration, and published its own newspapers. The *Bulgarian People's Women's Union* was an extremely politicized organization, carrying out various aspects of the minority politics of the *Bulgarian Communist Party*.<sup>4</sup> The second institution was the *Natsionalen komitet/savet na Otechestvenia front* (*National Committee/Council of the Fatherland Front*). Several departments, handling the problems of minorities and women, were established within it: of political and cultural activities, of minorities, and of work with women (*Zhenotdel*

- *Women's Department*, 1949-1951). As per the decision of the *Bulgarian People's Women's Union Board* of 1951, local *Fatherland Front* structures absorbed the women's associations. The third organization was the *Komitet/Dvizhenie na balgarskite zheni* (*Committee/Movement of Bulgarian women*), which was a successor of the *Bulgarian People's Women's Union* from 1950 and functioned in close co-operation with the *Fatherland Front*.

The analysis of the surviving archival collections of the above-mentioned three structures<sup>5</sup> shows, that in these collections official documents (instructresses' reports, minutes of regional conferences, correspondence with local structures, curricula, statistics, etc.) predominate, yet narrative ones, such as memories of participants in the women's movement, are also likely to be found. This documentation is mostly typewritten and in Bulgarian and comprises a huge quantity of files and information. Documentation is diverse, authentic, without signs of "expurgation". Until now, these three archival collections have not been used by researchers of the official minority policy toward minorities and women, their documents not being published in collections or singly.<sup>6</sup> Along with the merits already mentioned, part of the documents should be considered an unreliable historical source. For example, in the local structures' reports numerical balancing acts and statistical exaggerations appeared, and the memories of the female activists were written to a formula. In other documents, inner contradictions are noticed. They usually take the viewpoint of the institution and rarely of the common people, and reflect the perspective of the ethnic majority only, in contrast to the view from inside (the Other's point of view). No documents written in the languages of minorities are found.

The documents' vocabulary is symptomatic of the time, the dominant political rhetoric and the existence of enduring stereotypes of thinking.<sup>7</sup> In the texts, various terms, word groups, and phrases constantly intrude. "Bulgarian Mohammedan women" or "Bulgarian women, who have adopted Mohammedan faith" suggest the official language and the state policy of assimilation, taken toward the Bulgarian Muslims during the period researched. "Pomak women" (Bulgarians who converted into Islam during the country's five-century Ottoman rule) and "*Kadanki*" (diminutive form of "Turkish ladies") were invidious names, revealing enduring social distances and negative stereotypes. The use of words like "front-rankers", "high-producers", "women workers", "propagandists" revealed the propagandistic communist notion of the "super woman" during socialism (a mother, a worker and a socially active woman at the same time).<sup>8</sup> The archival documentation contains more phrases, testifying to the aggression toward the

Other (“taken the veils off”, “de-veiling”), to the arrogance of the majority toward the minority (always marked as “backward” and “upholders of the old” ), to the imposed atheism and communist phraseology (“religious prejudices”, “reactionary customs”), to the transfer of the Soviet model of organization to the women’s movement and to the use of military terminology (“to carry out a mission”, “to observe time limits”, “to conduct a struggle”).

## 2. Historical Problems in the Archival Documentation

Summarizing the archival documentation data, it could be held that the Bulgarian women’s movement during this period formed its attitude toward Muslim women in accordance with several important goals.

The newwomen’s movement, communist by nature, communicated with Muslim women mainly with the purpose of exercising direct ideological and political influence. Founding women’s societies and including the Muslim women in the literacy movement allowed the *Bulgarian People’s Women’s Union* and the *Fatherland Front* to increase the number of the mass organizations, to involve women in the political reconstruction and to create among Muslim women a “core” of women committed to the *Bulgarian Communist Party* and the organizations [new organizations it created]. Besides, in this way the regime reinforced its propaganda against “the imperialist world” and against Turkey and Greece in particular, under the conditions of the Cold War. In this situation, Muslim women were put in a passive position and were rarely employed in the management structures of the women’s movement.

Secondly, the women’s movement served the official assimilation plans toward the minorities (especially toward the Bulgarian Muslims) and aimed at consolidation of power in the unstable border areas.

Muslim women were transformed from a target of influence into an effective subject only upon realization of the other two objectives of the women’s movement – emancipation of women and modernization of their way of life. Practical benefits were drawn from these. Muslim women made themselves familiar with their rights; liberated themselves from men’s control (of their husbands and male relatives), imposed by tradition and religion; gained equality with men under the legal ban on polygamy and the subordination of religious divorces to the civil courts; went out of the “domestic space” (began

working outside the home, visited meetings, attended courses outside their settlements); became engaged in social activity; changed their behaviour and appearance. Through the initiatives of the women's movement for social and cultural modernization of the respective regions, the Muslim women living in them made sure of personal prosperity, broadened their knowledge and improved their skills, were motivated for enhancing their education and training, gained knowledge about issues of health, became acquainted with mass culture, improved their way of life, drew benefits for their families.

As an illustration of the points noted above, different examples found in the archive documentations will be given.

Involving Muslim women in the Bulgarian women's movement became one of the priorities of the *Bulgarian People's Women's Union* right after the autumn of 1944. The Union nominated its paid instructresses and propagandists on central and local levels<sup>9</sup>, who through meetings, lectures, courses, fairs, working-bees and dancing parties managed to form a number of women's associations in the regions with Muslim population. Even though the statistics are not comprehensive, from the archival documents it can be seen, that during the 1950s an exodus of Muslim women from the women's movement was observed: from 45 organizations with 7945 members (1949), their number dropped to 42 with 4100 people (1959). Most significant was their number in northeast Bulgaria, but even there only 13.7 per cent of the women were members of local structures.<sup>10</sup> These facts were interpreted in various ways by the instructresses in their reports. On one hand, they reported increasing activity and "ardent willingness" of the Muslim women for "keeping abreast with their sisters - the Bulgarians".<sup>11</sup> It was noted, that Turkish women had been impressed by the meetings and had been drawing practical benefits from them ("Here I learn a lot of things, meeting is something good."; "Till now men have commanded and we worked. Now we shall lead.").<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, reports acknowledged, that Turkish women were members of the local associations formally and that Bulgarian Muslims were not included. It was emphasized, that although Turkish women would like to act, they stood in a passive position ("Because we are simple people, you have to come and teach us.").<sup>13</sup> In the reports other reasons were sought too – lack of instructresses having a command of the Turkish language, the religious tradition of separating women from men, husbands' resistance.<sup>14</sup>

The movement of emulation (*udarnichestvo* - movement of shock-workers) in the tobacco industry and poultry-farming during the 1950s intended to support the al-

ready specified objectives of the women's movement. Muslim women were influenced by the ideological postulates of the *Communist Party*, relating to the fulfillment of the five-year plan for rapid economic development ahead of schedule. This made their integration (as a main labour force in the Rhodope Mountains) in the economic reform of the regime and later on in the formation of agricultural co-operatives easier.<sup>15</sup> The movement of shock-workers had its emancipation aspect: emulation demanded that men and women work together and they themselves considered the *Trudovo-kooperativni zemedelski stopanstva, TKZS (co-operative farms)* as a "liberation, breaking the shackles of restrictions".<sup>16</sup> The movement to over-fulfil the five-year plan drew Muslim women also into the atheistic activities of the regime. According to their confessions, they were forced to work in the fields even on Friday, the Muslim holy day, when their men were praying in the mosque.<sup>17</sup> Through its modernization objectives, the women's movement managed nevertheless to reduce Muslim women's sense of marginalization. As Fatma Rizova from the village of Bonevo, Dobrich region, put it: "Now we, Turkish women, are equal to Bulgarians; the time has come for our freedom".<sup>18</sup>

Although trips and journeys were not the main means of drawing Muslim women into the Bulgarian women's movement, archival documents show again the trends already noticed. In October 1958, Bulgarian Muslim women from the regions of Plovdiv, Dimitrovgrad, Pleven, Turnovo, Shoumen, Varna and Balchik went on a journey across the country. It was suggested by the *National Committee of Fatherland Front*, and all local administrative, *Communist Party* and *Fatherland Front* structures were committed to it. The route: Sofia – Plovdiv – Dimitrovgrad – Kazanlak – Shipka – Turnovo – Shoumen – Varna – Pleven – Sofia passed through the national "*realms of memory*" (villages, monuments and museums) and had been chosen with a view to the task, set in July 1958 by the *Political Bureau* of the *Bulgarian Communist Party*: that the national consciousness of the Bulgarian Muslims should be "purified" (meaning transformed into Bulgarian). At the same time, the route propagandized the regime's achievements and aimed at ideological influence over the participants by way of visiting symbolic places of the communist industrialization – the *Maritsa* textile mills in Plovdiv, the chemical plant in Dimitrovgrad, the "*Georgi Dimitrov*" reservoir, the shiprepairing and shipbuilding yard in Varna, the soda plants in Devnya, the *Golden Sands* resort, *co-operative farms*, etc. A third purpose of the journey was to illustrate the new issues and the drive towards modernization – Bulgarian Muslim women visited *kindergartens* (which



they had resisted in the past ), nurseries and maternity hospitals; went to the opera and the theatre; called at zoos and the so-called *obraztsovi domove* (model houses).<sup>19</sup>

At the end of the 1950s, when the assimilation trends of the *Communist Party* toward Bulgarian Muslims became apparent, the women's movement included them specifically in its courses for propagandists. In 1961 in the courses in Gotse Delchev, Velingrad, Chepelare and Smolyan "Bulgarian Mohammedan women" from the respective regions and from Lovech, Kardzhali and Pazardzhik were registered. These were mainly young women (up to 20), politically orientated: 64 per cent were members of the *Dimitrovski sajuz na narodnata mladezh*, *Komsomol* (*Dimitrov's Communist Youth League*), 10 per cent of the *Bulgarian Communist Party*, 18 per cent of the *Fatherland Front* management, 40 per cent of the local *Women's Departments*.<sup>20</sup> They had low education (38.2 per cent with fourth grade and 20.6 per cent with seventh grade<sup>21</sup>) and earned their living in the *co-operative farms*.

Programs of studies, including lectures, visiting sites, meetings, trips, discussions of films, learning dances, catered for several goals: "clarifying [their] national identity", "breaking off religious influence and faith fanaticism", professional orientation and enhancement of everyday culture.<sup>22</sup> Understandably, lectures covered topics like "Georgi Dimitrov – brave fighter against fascism and war", "Technical achievements in the USSR", "*Fatherland Front* activity among women", "What should our clothing be like?", "Scientific and reactionary nature of religion", etc. Activists met with antifascists, trips were made to the Batak church<sup>23</sup>, Bulgarian national dances (*horos*) were studied.<sup>24</sup>

Instructresses' reports summarize the feedback from the Muslim women. Gradually, they overcame their fear and prejudices, showed strong interest in health (and not political) issues, adopted new hygiene habits. Reports claim, that most of them were turning into "bearers of new things" – they made garments for themselves and their families, learned to use electrical appliances (washing machine, iron, radio and tape-recorder), undertook the beginning of their "de-veiling" ("they took the veils off, whereas they were veiled in the first days"), decided to continue their education, gave expression to their particular emancipation ("liberating women from the sense of oppression and dependence on men") and even shared a desire to exchange their names for Bulgarian ones.

Following the positive experience from the literacy courses and cooking classes (during the 1940 and 1950s)<sup>25</sup>, the *Committee of Bulgaria Women* organized courses for

enhancing the culture of daily life (1960-61). That was done as an implementation of the decision of the *Political Bureau* of the *Bulgarian Communist Party* on the modernization of the daily life of the Bulgarian village. Intriguingly, instead of extending over peasant women as a whole, the regime's attention and that of the women's movement was focused mainly on Muslim women (Turkish, Bulgarian and Roma). From the archival documentation (abundant in volume, but containing extremely inaccurate and unclear data) it can be seen, that those registered in the courses were mainly Turkish and Roma women and only from certain regions with a sizeable Muslim population (Varna, Razgrad and Bourgas). Attendance of Bulgarian Muslim women was very low.<sup>26</sup> Reports mention some other problems too: lax attendance; withholding of support, especially in Turkish villages, for finding rooms, arranging catering and accommodation; shortage of goods (fabrics and provisions); lack of knowledge of Turkish by the managers. Nevertheless, courses followed the objectives of the women's movement and achieved results in several respects. Through them Muslim women gained practical skills in tailoring and cooking, changed their attitude in the family ("spouses felt the change in the cultural manners of their female comrades"), left off their traditional garments in favour of the modern ones (*salwars* and veils were retailored to pillows and dresses). Not least, courses drew female attenders into the women's movement and the amateur art activities.<sup>27</sup>

### 3. Voices of Their Own

As already mention, all the three archival sections of the archive represent the majority's point of view, without showing the alternative perspective. The latter is visible in the reports of some instructresses, Turkish by origin, describing their tours in villages and attendance at women's meetings. In these documentary proofs the words of various Muslim women were quoted. Their analysis below should be accompanied by an explicit notice of their problematic authenticity. These are not merely memories or impressions<sup>28</sup>, but words given by the instructresses in the official reports. Significant parts of them, if not the whole of them, were prepared in advance, following speeches to a formula, most of them probably being edited afterwards or written by the instructresses themselves.

Nevertheless, these scanty quotations reveal once again the dependence of Muslim women on the women's movement. Its ideological and political propaganda against

the old regime (termed “capitalists” and “fascists”) and for the economic reconstruction is clearly seen in the following speeches: “Under the governance of the *Bulgarian Communist Party* we were liberated from the capitalist tyranny.” (Sidia Hasanova, village of Rodopsko) or “Now we see a big enhancement of life. No more poverty, as it used to be ...” (Takize Mehmedova, village of Kostino).<sup>29</sup> Signs of propaganda for the modern educational institutions can also be noticed: “For literacy of the backward Mohammedan people no care had been taken ...but today the *Fatherland Front* organizes complimentary boarding schools for workers’ children, courses for adults, etc.” (Emine Karaasanova, village of Borikovo). Muslim women were forced to conform with the official atheistic paradigm: “We already have ... four *Bayrams*. Now is the first *Bayram* – 1<sup>st</sup> of May [Labour day], the second *Bayram* is the Liberation day [September 9<sup>th</sup>, day of the communist coup d’etat], and also our two *Bayrams* [ *eker/Ramazan Bayram* and *Kurban Bayram* ]” (Turkish lady from the village of Podkova).<sup>30</sup>

Indicatively, however, in the most of the speeches, the stress laid on the modernization of life and emancipation is replaced by the motif of national equality: “the [Communist] Party provides the same care for everyone in our country, without making a distinction between nationalities ...We do work and shall work side by side with our female comrades, the Bulgarian women.” (Emirdat Mehmedova, *National Council of Fatherland Front*), “Right after 9<sup>th</sup> of September, Turkish women have been given rights equal to the Bulgarians’... Today Turkish women ...with every day that passes, enhance their culture.” (Fatme Mustafova, village of Zvezdel, Kardzhali region).<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

Based on what has been set forth so far, there are several general conclusions that can be made.

After the Second World War the problems of Bulgarian women and minorities changed from being marginal into a priority for the Bulgarian state and the *Communist Party* policies. This corresponded to the new realities of the Cold War, to the regime’s necessity to consolidate their power and to the characteristics of the dominant communist ideology. As a result, the above-mentioned two social groups became a target to be influenced for a number of mass (state) organizations. Particularly important were the structures of the women’s movement (*Bulgarian People’s Women’s Union* and *Committee of*

*Bulgarian Women*) and of the *Fatherland Front*. Their documentation, the subject of the present publication, is entirely preserved, in good physical condition and legible and contains precious and authentic information. Although virtually unutilized till now by researchers, and put in the position of being “hidden” in descriptions/indexes of archival collections, this documentation reveals some of the main methods for drawing Muslim women into the politics of the new regime, namely – ideological and political influence, anti-religious propaganda, measures to modernize everyday life and to emancipate women.

<sup>1</sup> In this text “Muslim women” means Turkish women (predominantly of Sunni denomination), Bulgarian Muslim women, and Roma women.

<sup>2</sup> I do not intend to study all the problems of Bulgarian minority women or of the Bulgarian women’s movement. That task would need much more sources.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Krassimira Trifonova, *Harakter I organizatsionno razvitie na Bulgarskia naroden zhenski sajud* [Character and Organisational Development of the Bulgarian People’s Women’s Union, 1944-50], in: *Izvestia na Instituta po istoria na Bulgarskata komunisticheska partia* [Proceedings of the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Communist Party], vol. 47 (1982), 283-310; Iliyana Marcheva, *Zhenskoto dvizhenie v Bulgaria I negovata sadba prez perioda septemvri 1944 - juni 1945* [The Women’s Movement in Bulgaria and its Fate from September 1944 to June 1945], in: *Minalo* [Past], 1 (1995), 63-66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> The above mentioned archival collections are preserved at the Central State Archive, Sofia, and have the following numbers: f. 7 (Bulgarian People’s Women’s Union), f. 28 (National Committee/Council of the Fatherland Front) and f. 417 (Committee/Movement of Bulgarian women).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ulrich Buchsensschutz, *Minderheiten Politik in Bulgarien. Die Politik der Bulgarischen Kommunistischen Partei (BKP) gegen ber den Juden, Roma, Pomaken und T rken, 1944-1989* [Minority Policy in Bulgaria. The Policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) vis-a-vis Jews, Roma, Pomaks and Turks, 1944-1989], Berlin 1997; Mihail Gruev, *Mezhdu petolachkata I polumesetsa. Balgarite musulmani i politicheskiat rezhim (1944-1959)* [Between the Red Star and the Crescent. The Moslem Bulgarians and the Political Regime, 1944-1959], Sofia 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Petar Vodenicharov, *Ezik, pol, vlast. Diskursen analiz na balgarskata modernizatsia* [Language, Gender, Power. Discursive Analysis of Bulgarian Modernization, 1930s-1960s], Blagoevgrad 1999; idem, *Sotsiolingvistika* [Sociolinguistics], Sofia 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Anna Luleva, *Zhenskiat vapors v soetsialisticheska Balgaria – ideologia, politika, realnost* [The Women’s Question in Socialist Bulgaria – Ideology, Politics, Reality]. in: *Sotsializmat. Realnost I iluzii. Etnologichni aspekti na vsekidnevната kultura* [Socialism. Reality and Illusions. Ethnologic Aspects of Everyday Culture, Sofia 2003, 169-170; Iliyana Marcheva, *Mazhkite momicheta v kragovrata na promenite: balgarkata prez vtorata polovina na 20 vek* [Masculine Ladies in the Circle of Changes: Bulgarian Woman during the Second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century], in: *Granitsi na grazhdanstvoto: Evropejskite zheni mezhdu traditsiata I modernostta* [Limits of Citizenship. European Women between Tradition and Modernity], Sofia 2001, 323-328; Ulf Brunnbauer, *Sotsialisticheskite semejstva v Balgaria: mezhdu ideologia I praktika* [The Family in Socialist Bulgaria: between Ideology and Practice. A Research.], in: *Balgarska etnologia* [Bulgarian Ethnology], 2 (2001), 40-65.

<sup>9</sup> Central State Archive, Sofia, f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 25, l. 69; a.e. 27, l. 10; a.e. 14, l. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 27, l. 118; f. 28, op. 45, l. 234-236, 244, 249, 260, 316.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 28, op. 16, a.e. 45, l. 89-92.

- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., f. 7, op.1, a.e. 43, l. 136, 142.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 44, l. 59.
- <sup>14</sup> Central State Archive, Sofia, f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 43, l. 96-103; a.e. 44, l. 8.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 16, a.e. 44, l. 16; a.e. 43, l. 54-65; a.e. 45, l. 26-28.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 16, a.e. 48, l. 3 gr.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 14, l. 66-67.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 16, a.e. 44, l. 89.
- <sup>19</sup> Central State Archive, Sofia, f. 28, op. 15, a.e. 27, l. 57, 59-62.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 18, a.e. 52, l. 99.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., l. 100.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., a.e. 41, l. 4, 7; a.e. 49, l. 23.
- <sup>23</sup> An important realm of national memory. There many Bulgarians were massacred by the Ottomans during the suppression of the April Uprising in 1876.
- <sup>24</sup> Central State Archive, f. 28, op. 18, a.e. 52, l. 1-4, 66-70, 73-76.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 18, a.e. 52, l. 1-14, 37-38.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 26, l. 153; a.e.27, l. 118; a.e. 14, l. 66; a.e. 43, l. 96-97.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 16, a.e. 47, l. 10, 34, 71, 76-77, 78, 81, 84-87, 88-90, 91-93, 98, 113-117, 139-149, 174-177, 178-182.
- <sup>28</sup> This is the main difference between the archival materials and the oral sources. Cf. Krassimira Daskalova ed., *Voices of Their Own. Oral History Interviews of Women*, Sofia 2004.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 1, a.e. 44, l. 119-120.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., f. 7, op. 1, a.e. 43, l. 138.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., f. 28, op. 1, a.e. 44, l. 117-118, 122.

## WOMEN IN STATE POLITICS

### DIMENSIONS OF THE WOMEN'S VOICES. FOLLOWING ON THE DOCUMENTARY TRACKS OF THE FIRST WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS IN BULGARIA (1937–1939)

Nurie Muratova and Kristina Popova

The struggle for women's voting rights in Bulgaria began at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> c. Winning full civil rights for women was the main objective of the Bulgarian Women's Union established in 1901. The Union published the weekly *Woman's Voice*. In 1910, the *Equality* society was founded<sup>1</sup>. After decades of hard working on the part of the Bulgarian Women's Union, of active supporters of the social-democratic ideas, and of many intellectuals; and after entering a lot of petitions and protest letters, it was in the very beginning of 1937 when women were eventually granted the right to vote in the local elections.<sup>2</sup> This right however did not apply to all women, but to the married ones only who had turned 21 and had children, including widows and women whose children had deceased. The right to vote was refused to the unmarried women, those who had illegally stepped into matrimony or had no children; as well as to other groups of population: soldiers; university students and to citizens who had not lived for less at least two years on a permanent basis in a given district. A year later, in the beginning of 1938, the range of the women granted the right to vote extended but only for the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

After the 1937 elections, following the Law of electing deputies to the National Assembly, new electoral lists were made out; in these were included also the married women with no children, who had completed 21 years of age by October, 1 1937<sup>3</sup>, and the students. This extension, however, was not considered in force anymore for the local by-elections in 1939, when the last added two categories – the married women with no children and the university students – were again removed from the electoral lists. In an

ordinance issued on 16.02.1939 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health, it was stated that “in this connection, a remark has been passed that individuals included in the electoral lists falling in the categories of married women who at the present are not mothers or have never been mothers, and of university students are not eligible to vote, according to Article 5, Par. I, respectively Article 6, Letter D of the Law of electing deputies to the National Assembly.”<sup>4</sup> The practice of including and excluding whole groups of women from the electoral lists only two years after the end of the long-fought struggle for suffrage came to prove how fragile this achievement actually was. Women’s suffrage remained restricted also in regards to their right to be elected in the authorities (lack of passive suffrage), and their participation in the very organization of parliamentary elections and elections for local governments. Women were not permitted to partake in electoral committees, which, by law, were formed by representative of the teachers’ and headmasters’ circles, but still only men were allowed as members of those committees. Although the number of the female teachers had already significantly increased by that time, they were barred from participating in the electoral process.<sup>5</sup>

Regardless of the restrictions, only a small percentage of women were in fact not granted the right to vote. Exercising this right was occurring in the specific conditions resulting from the dissolution of the political parties in Bulgaria and the interrupted democratic political life. After the 1934 coup, the National Assembly was dismissed, and so were the political parties. The elections for regional government in 1937 and the parliamentary elections in 1938 were the first to be held in conditions of non-party authoritarian regime.

The Bulgarian Women’s Union laid special emphasis on women possessing equal rights to participate in the city councils. Back in November 1936, several months before the Decree of Electing Members of the City Councils was published and when it had already been made known that women would be granted suffrage, the leaders of the Bulgarian Women’s Union appealed to the Minister on Internal Affairs and Public Health for a full access to the regional institutions for women. In their plea, they pointed out that women had contributed a great deal to the charitable and social affairs, which had become of major importance for every modern district in the country. It was also reminded that Bulgaria was still among the few countries which had not yet involved the women in the country’s political process.<sup>6</sup>

The publishing of the Decree in the beginning of 1937 brought a certain social

reaction, which was directed not only against the restrictions concerning the municipal councilor candidates<sup>7</sup>, but also against the narrowing of the groups of women having the right to vote. The critical comments were particularly sharp as regarded the exclusion of those women who had no children. In a statement addressed to the ministers, a group of 26 women, mostly confirmed leftists, said that they were much bewildered by this “confusion of merely physiological phenomena with women’s political and civil rights”. They insisted on eliminating all age, gender, and property qualifications, they further insisted on granting equal electoral rights for everybody who had completed 21 years of age, and on partaking of women in the city councils and electoral committees.

<sup>8</sup> Another letter, addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs and Public Health, signed by “a group of students”, said, “And as regards women’s suffrage, this appears to be the most ridiculous law of all. Is it possible that you too are willing to punish those childless women who have already been punished enough by Mother Nature!”<sup>9</sup> The opinion was supported also by ex-members of the Bulgarian Agrarian Popular Union, the Worker’s Party and the Democratic Party, which said, “By granting the right to vote to women a very noble initiative has been initiated, but by separating the mothers from the non-mothers the initiative faces the possibility of evoking reactionary forces.”<sup>10</sup>

Binding women’s suffrage in Bulgaria to family duties was far from being a unique practice in European legislation at that time.<sup>11</sup> In Bulgaria, binding the women’s suffrage to women’s family role posed the question of society’s attitude toward the civil rights of those women who proved themselves as front-rankers in many spheres – unmarried teachers, headmasters of schools and orphanages, social homes, and many other women being experts in their fields.<sup>12</sup> For example, according to the 1930’s data on the high-school teachers’ marital status, the percentage of the female teachers as well as the one of the unmarried such was quite high (50%).<sup>13</sup>

**Male and female teachers at the secondary school for boys, girls, and the mixed ones in Bulgaria during the 1929/1930 school year.**

	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Unmarried</b>
Male teachers	660	132
Female teachers	532	266
Total	1192	398



According to some preserved documents giving an account of the pre-election process of preparation during the years 1937 and 1938, not only the women's suffrage, but the whole electoral procedure too was correlated to the law-maker's logics of thinking in relation to the husband being the head of the family community. During these very first elections with women having the right to vote, in some rural areas, for example, women were not given the electoral cards, the reason being that the households were listed in the electoral lists and every household was registered in the husband's name, so it was only the husband who received such cards in return for signature<sup>14</sup>. There were also separate lists containing only the wives' names but then again the cards were given to their husbands only.<sup>15</sup> This actually was happening despite the fact that, as we can see from the electoral lists of women (which contain also data about their age and education), in the late 1930's the bigger part of women were already literate.<sup>16</sup> The representatives of the younger generations of women were those who were in their bigger part educated, while many women over the age of 45 were still illiterate.<sup>17</sup>

So, despite the fact that a big percentage of women in Bulgaria were granted the right to vote, relating their civil rights to their family status as well as considering them not eligible for participating in elections, gave rise to constant discussions in the first years of women's participation in elections: the elections for city councils in 1937, the general elections in 1938 for the 24<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and in 1939/1940 for the 25<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, and the partial local elections in 1939.<sup>18</sup>

### 1. Documentary "asymmetry"

When the Fatherland Front seized the power in Bulgaria in September 1944, absolute equality of rights of men and women was proclaimed. This equality of rights referred also to suffrage. In 1945, before the 26<sup>th</sup> National Assembly elections took place, the electoral lists "contained already the names of all citizens of a given town or village, Bulgarian subjects, of both sexes, regardless of their nationality, religion, who have completed 21 years of age by May, 1, 1945."<sup>19</sup> It was now possible for women to run for deputies to the National Assembly. This initiative was vigorously acclaimed by the Fatherland Front during the period of political mobilization and election campaigns for 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary National Assembly in 1945 and for Grand National Assembly in 1946.

Thus, the elections for 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary National Assembly in November, 1945 set a brand new beginning for women's engagement in politics. In November, 1945, the

first 14 women were elected to the National Assembly, and on December, 20 the Bulgarian Agrarian Popular Union deputy Dr. Vjara Zlaterareva was the first woman to deliver a speech in the Bulgarian Parliament. In 1946, the first three women from the opposition were elected to the Grand National Assembly; as representatives of the opposition they participated actively in the parliamentary debates.<sup>20</sup> In 1947, the opposition at the National Assembly was suppressed, and its leaders and members as well as the female representatives – sent to camps and prisons. The establishment of the Soviet political model turned the National Assembly into the instrument of the Communist Party and deprived the deputies from their individuality.

Considering all the above, we can say that the 1937 – 1947 decade stands out to be a time of authentic women voices in the history of the Bulgarian parliamentary system. However, all those historical moments – granting the women the right to vote at the local elections in 1937 and 1939, and at the Parliamentary elections in 1938, 1939, and 1940, electing the first women to the National Assembly in December, 1945, and their participation in the parliamentary debates were ignored as topics of historical importance. The anniversaries of those events have never prompted urges to initiate a research or a gathering of records and memoirs. Only few valuable reference books on women's movement were published.<sup>21</sup> No organized collecting of documents revealing details on those elections has ever been carried out. No reference books on women's first participation in elections, distinguished female functionaries and deputies from that period are available. Records of some of the representatives of the Fatherland Front (Tsola Dragoicheva, Mara Kinkel, Dr. Vjara Zlatareva and others) are kept in state archive fonds. The hardest to find are records of the first female deputies to the National Assembly who were members of Opposition (1946 – 1947) and who, for many long years, had been subject to stigmatizing as political enemies by the government.<sup>22</sup>

The active work of all participating women can be considered an important aspect of the early period of women's involvement in parliamentary matters. In the records of that period, the National Assembly was still perceived mostly as “men's territory”, the women's access to which can hardly be traced throughout the history of the NA.

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first attempts to involve women in social life as voters is seen as a motive to start tracing back those events as represented in the women's press (the *Woman's Voice* newspaper) as well as in the state institutions' documents which are kept in the Central State Archive and the Regional Archive in the town of Blagoevgrad.

## 2. Bulgarian female citizens or wives of Bulgarian male citizens? Political programs and campaigns in 1937–1938

When women were for the first time allowed to participate in the regional and the parliamentary elections, various possible outcomes were expected. It was uncertain whether they would vote in the first place since for them voting was not obligatory, as it was for men. On the one hand, the government was doing its best to encourage women to vote. On the other hand, however, it was highly possible that women would not be able to make an independent choice on their own, but would rather vote as their husbands.<sup>23</sup>

In the pre-election analyses, kept in the fond of the Department of Regions and Social Care at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health, entitled “The Electoral System of the Regions”, some attention was paid also to the upcoming participation of women in the elections. The analysts were trying to foresee the possible surprising outcomes of the women’s electoral participation; they further expressed their fears of the consequences that might result from adding women’s votes to those of their husbands’: *“Allowing some hundred thousand women to vote along with their husbands (although it is not obligatory for them) is a rather daring step with yet unknown outcomes, we must confess, for neither are those women mature enough politically, nor are their moods stable enough to be predicted. Yet, my firm opinion is that in the coming elections women will vote just like their husbands and relatives, so at least this time women’s participation will not make much difference.”*<sup>24</sup>

The government published also campaign materials which aimed at informing the citizens about their duties. One of the twenty items referred to the women: *“You too, female citizen, do not abdicate your right as a voter, which had been refused to you till now by the previous rulers. Exercising this right today will mean discarding the chaos and making ready for the better days, for you and your children, to come, for you will strengthen your family through providing better living conditions for the community and for the state as a whole.”*<sup>25</sup>

The candidates running for municipal councilors appealed to the women *“to prove that the mothers completely deserve the right to vote that has been granted to them, so they must give their vote and try not to fall under the influence of the Workers’ Party.”*<sup>26</sup>

On the occasion of the elections for regional governments in 1937, were released posters that said: *“Mothers, voters! The new economic regions bring happiness and future to your children!”*<sup>27</sup>

During the 1938 pre-election campaign period, the government would appeal

also to women's family roles and duties. Their role as mothers and wives was already reconsidered in the neo-traditional sense as being their responsibility as citizens to provide for the prosperity of the fatherland and history. Motherhood and children had become an intrinsic part of the election propaganda. Some campaigning materials even reproached those women who, though being exemplary mothers, showed no interest in the elections:

*"Bulgarian women!*

*While the wives of the state destroyers and of convinced negationists are closing ranks and getting ready to vote for those boosted into candidacy by the Moscow radio, the wives of the truthful Bulgarian sons, the praiseworthy Bulgarian mothers, show not enough interest in the elections.*

*Bulgarian mothers!*

*The future of your children, the future of your fatherland is now in your own hands. Prove yourselves worthy of the great mission that history has allotted to you!..."*<sup>28</sup>

While the governmental propaganda was calling for women's vote by intensifying at the same time the expectations that women were expected to vote just like their husbands, the Bulgarian Women's Union's propaganda was going in an opposite direction. The Union too was encouraging women to vote, but did not stand behind one or another candidate; it claimed it would rather back up the uncorrupted choice that every woman should be able to make. Some candidates running for the positions of municipal councilors appealed in a similar manner to the women's free choice by adding that women had rendered great services to social affairs so far: "...*The Bulgarian woman, with its wits, intelligence and interest in social issues, has long proved herself to be equal to man in her ability to ponder over all problems of social character, especially when it comes down to problems regarding children's education, hygiene and health, and public services.*"<sup>29</sup>

The left political forces represented by the Workers' Party adopted a policy of boycotting the elections and appealed to the mothers to vote not with voting-papers but with the respective party slogans instead.<sup>30</sup> The *left wing of the* Bulgarian Agrarian Popular Union *Vrabcha* also called for voting with bad voting-papers.<sup>31</sup> Most of the slogans found in the ballot-boxes petitioned for the restoration of the Turnovo Constitution, with some specific political and social demands in addition. In some areas (the Asenovgrad region, for ex.) they would even put tobacco leaves instead of voting-papers in the envelopes as a symbolic gesture of protest.<sup>32</sup> Actually, the left-wing forces didn't

took active part in this moment in the debate on restricting the women's suffrage; they would rather call for sabotaging the elections in pursuit of certain political aims.

In many periodicals of that time were published also caricatures<sup>33</sup> illustrating various issues brought up in the public debate that tackled women's role in the election processes, such as: the expectations that women would vote not of their own will but on the will of their husbands, the relation between women's vanity and their reluctance to declare their age in the electoral lists, the Bulgarian Women's Union's disappointment in the restricting provisions of the law, the suffrage granted on the grounds of maternity, etc.

In the fond of the Department of Regions and Social Care there were well preserved also letters, which gave some idea of how unprepared the society in the rural areas actually was. They contained also reports of some curious reactions provoked by the first women's participation in the election. For example, a group of peasants expressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs their discontent of the law granting suffrage to women, most probably under the influence of the agrarian propaganda. During the discussions on women's involvement in politics, they complained about the unbearable situation of women in rural areas as compared to the life of the elite ladies in towns, without showing, however, any understanding of the very essence of the law. In the letter to the Minister<sup>34</sup>, they said: "... you work out laws to suit your interests only, so that your ladies can be deputies and such, but our mud-covered and filthy women, who, when there're loads of work in the field to be done, can barely manage to wash themselves out and make the bread, so let alone be deputies." <sup>35</sup>

As a whole, the pre-election campaign in towns was more women-orientated in comparison to that in rural areas.<sup>36</sup> The police reports also come to show that women were not considered voters who would take a political stand for themselves, so their political inclinations were not subject to comment. "...Women haven't got the faintest clue about elections. Anyways, most of them most probably won't even vote, and those who will vote, will be totally under the influence of their husbands and relatives."<sup>37</sup> The interest in women's voting preferences on the part of the authorities, however, gradually started to grow. The fact that in some places the electoral districts were separate for women and men made it easier for a survey on women's voting to be carried out. As a result, after the 1938 elections for National Assembly, they started collecting official data on men's and women's voting.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. “No one of us should give her vote for a candidate who won’t later stick to the above stated demands!” The gender-specific political program of the Bulgarian Women’s Union

Within the circles of the Bulgarian Women’s Union (BWU), winning the right to vote in the second half of the late 1930’s was perceived as a major event, which was the main topic of discussion at the 31<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Union, which took place in the town of Samokov in the beginning of 1937.<sup>39</sup> The discussions tended to cover not only the necessity of full civil rights to be eventually granted to women, but also the responsibilities these rights would bring along. The foremost objective was for women to get orientated among all those political programs in a time of non-party system. The majority-vote elections in March, 1938 were the first to be held in conditions of non-party administration, and the voters were not familiar with this system. The Union’s chair-lady, the lawyer Dimitrana Ivanova, pointed out that women had to quickly find their way among the complicated “conglomerate of programs”.<sup>40</sup>

As was previously mentioned, already in November, 1936, the leaders of the BWU sent a letter to the government, in which they expressed their ideas about women’s potential contribution to the work of the city councils.<sup>41</sup> The letter outlined the BWU’s ideas about municipal activities. The municipality was resembled to a huge household, the closest public institution to everybody, including women being one half of the population.<sup>42</sup>

They departed from the idea that since all men and women had equal duties before the communal law, they should have also equal rights, as it should be in family. What is more, mostly women were involved in many social activities, such as education, health care, and others. Women were typically seen as providers of care for hygiene, family’s prosperity, the means of living, as well as for education, charity, and social care for the children. The BWU based its arguments on the premises of women’s experience in organizing various activities in the social clubs and unions.<sup>43</sup>

Women’s non-participation in social life would be equivalent to a situation in which the mother is missing in a family, and to the authors of the letter it meant the society to be left an orphan, referring to the famous sayings that “A child without a father is half an orphan, but without a mother is a complete orphan”, and that “A house does not stand on the ground but on the woman’s shoulders.” The community seen as one

big family could simply not do without the woman being a mother and a housewife.<sup>44</sup>

Further in the letter they underlined that Bulgaria had left to be among the last countries which had not yet succeeded in persuading women to get involved in social life. Such statements reflected the Union's endeavors to come up with acceptable for that time arguments in favor of women's participation, which would sound convincing enough, but yet moderate and not too feministic to the then government. These ideas are further evident in the propaganda materials having for their target audience the wives of municipal councilor candidates from all over the country.<sup>45</sup>

After the 1937 elections for regional governments, the BWU worked out in details women's demands in connection to the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Shortly before the 1938 parliamentary elections, the BWU came out with a "Statement to all Bulgarian women – voters from the towns and the countryside", in which women were encouraged to "put themselves under the obligation" to vote and to use their own judgment when assessing the candidates running for deputies. In the statement were announced ten requirements the candidates should be up to in order to qualify for the position intended, and a special emphasis was laid on women having equal rights with men, and a guaranteed right to work. It was insisted that, "... no one of us should give her vote for a candidate who won't later stick to the above stated demands!"<sup>46</sup>

The BWU organized also a number of public meetings around the country, at which the Union's leaders explained in details women's participation in the coming elections. The *Woman's Voice* newspaper was informing its readers about cases of women's partaking in other countries' parliaments and their contribution to the struggle against prostitution and child labor exploitation, and also for the rights of the illegitimate children.<sup>47</sup> It was in this very spirit that Dimitrana Ivanova delivered her speech on Radio Sofia.<sup>48</sup>

#### **4. "Not many women go to vote" - some documentary traces found in a regional archive**

The elections for regional governments were scheduled by regions: on March 7, 1937 in the regions of Pleven and Stara Zagora, on Mart 14, 1937 – in the regions of Plovdiv and Shumen, on March 21, 1937 – in the regions of Bourgas and Vratsa, and on March 28, 1937 – in the Sofia region.<sup>49</sup> In some places additional ballots in June were held.

On women's preparation and participation in the 1938 – 1939 elections on the

territory of the town of Gorna Dzhumaja (now Blagoevgrad) and the region some random data has been preserved; it bears evidence of the activities of the women's societies as well as of documents kept in the municipal funds. In the town, which at that time had about 10 000 inhabitants, there was a women's society called *Macedonia* that was bringing together between 80 and 120 women. The society started an orphanage and intended to open a maternity hospital and a professional school for girls.<sup>50</sup> Leaders at that time were Mara Patroneva, Sijka Ingilizova, Kostanza Mehandzhijaska, Mara Nikolova.<sup>51</sup> The society could not manage to send its representative to the Congress in Samokov, but authorized the Union's chairwoman Dimitrana Ivanova to represent the *Macedonia* society. Dimitrana Ivanova took part in the electoral preparations in Gorna Dzhumaja as she had included the town in her pre-election tour around the country. According to information that appeared in *Woman's Voice*, on March 23, 24, and 24, she personally attended meetings in Gorna Dzhumaja, Radomir and Sveti Vrach.<sup>52</sup>

Facts on women's participations in the elections are to be found not only in a scarce number of documents the *Macedonia* society left behind, but also in the elections archive. These show for the most part what the institutions's attitude toward women's suffrage was, and by considering the election results we can say what percentage of women had actually exercised this right of theirs. From the documents it becomes clear how unprepared both the state and regional institutions were and how their inadequacy hindered women's participation in the elections.

A considerable part of the archives reveals moments from the organization pre-election period: the making of electoral lists, the opening of additional polling stations and ensuring the availability of electoral cards. However, there were no electoral cards provided for the women in the village of Ilienti, the Sveti Vrach region, so they were given instead slips of paper valid for a single vote. In the nearby village of Mikrevo there received 340 electoral cards, 250 of which were intended for the male population, and 90 (in the form of slips of paper) – for the female population.<sup>53</sup>

On February 8, 1937, was issued a local Ordinance №2036 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health on opening special polling places for women only, which said: "Special polling stations to be open for female voters' use only, which will bear the letter B. In these, only women, included in the electoral lists, will give their vote." With an additional provision annexed to the Decree of electing members of the city councils from 12.02.1937 (*State Gazette*, issue 31 from 12.02.1937), the letter of



the polling stations were changed from B to W (for “women”).<sup>54</sup> As a result, in some places “women’s” polling stations were opened, and in some villages the stations were mixed. For example, in the Nevrokop Municipality, were made lists containing only women’s names, but no electoral cards were yet available (February 11, 1937)<sup>55</sup> . Eight polling stations were open in the towns and four mixed ones in the villages of the district.

In the Gorna Dzhumaja Municipality were open six additional polling stations only for the female voters in the town – 1W – 221 female voters; 2W – 347; 3W – 450; 4W – 452, 5W – 321, 6W - 365, for the reason that “the number of female voters in the villages within the Municipality is not that big, and the number of those in town is considerably large in the separate stations.”<sup>56</sup> So, actually, in towns, women and men voted separately, and in the countryside – in mixed stations. This practice was applied also in the Muslim villages, which could be seen in the Bulgarian-Mohammendans neighborhood of the village of Osenovo, where a mixed polling station was opened in the local school.<sup>57</sup> But mixing voters in those stations inevitably led to limiting women’s voting because of the specific regulation of their religion, evidence of which is seen in the following table from 14.03. 1937 showing the voting results in the Plovdiv region:<sup>58</sup>

Distrcit	Men		Women	
	Registered voters	Voted	Registered voters	Voted
Asenovgrad	23133	21605	20319	8983
Devin	5149	2455	4702	664
Zlatograd	5498	1668	5367	48
Karlovo	20163	15914	18533	4250
Novrokop	13702	9021	12150	3189
Pazardzhik	30953	24635	26250	4501
Panagjurishte	10107	9047	9059	3467
Peshtera	15154	12913	13609	5951
Plovdiv		54156		17236
Razlog	9532	6 441	8195	2015
Smoljan	9258	6143	8939	1516
Total		163 999		51820

### Results by populated areas, 14. 03. 1937 <sup>59</sup>

Populated area	Men	Women
Asenovgrad <sup>60</sup>	4408	2683
Bratsigovo	882	627
Zlatograd	110	41
Kalofer	960	385
Karlovo	2902	914
Klisura	403	336
Nevrokop	2160	869
Pazardzhik	4493	1761
Panagjurishte	2322	1275
Peshtera	2034	1137
Plovdiv	22205	10598
Smoljan	647	142
Sopot	1322	751
Brestrovitsa	549	1
Manole	1001	26
Ustina	318	0
Tsalanitsa	1201	3
Tsaratselovo	1057	35
Plovdiv	22205	10598
Nevrokop district <sup>61</sup>		
Gajtaninovo	643	224
Dolen	310	9
Dabnitsa	827	57
Zhostovo	277	104
Kovatchevitsa	321	223
Koprivlen	906	647
Kornitsa	873	81
Nevrokop	2160	869
Obidim	381	24
Ognjanovo	753	492
Osikovo	623	178
Satovcha	466	271
Slashten	481	10
Razlog district <sup>62</sup>		
Dobrinishte	998	331
Bachevo	300	286
Yakoruda	1132	115
Belitsa	872	203
Babjak	588	0
Bansko	905	206
Razlog	1646	874

Smoljan district <sup>63</sup>		
Smoljan	647	142
Rajkovo	366	217
Ustovo	905	288
Levochevo	150	156
Momchilovo	340	234
Slavejno	433	69
Madan	396	3
Rudozem	1016	9
Arda	980	78
Zlatograd distric <sup>64</sup>		
Zlatograd	110	41
Dobromir	194	0
Kirilovo	785	4
Kirkovo	579	3
Gorna Dzhumaja district	8789	2555

Results from the Razlog district:

	Registered voters	Voted
Men	9532	6441
Women	8195	2015
Total	17727	8456

The statistical data shows that electoral activity among women in different towns and villages vary quite a lot. There were places where not a single woman voted, and others where women voted on a mass scale. For example, in the Belitsa Municipality (in the Sveti Vrach district)<sup>65</sup>, in the fourth polling station, out of 65 women, 42 gave their vote, and in the first polling station, not one of 62 registered women voted. A year later, during the parliamentary elections in the very same village, 330 out of 460 women voted.

What is particularly interesting is the fact that a very tiny percentage of Muslim women had voted. In some villages, like Babjak, Madan , Rudozem, where the population is either entirely Muslim or mixed, not one, or just very few women voted. These facts are further confirmed by some of the electoral lists of women which were preserved.<sup>66</sup> These lists are of particular interest because along with women's names, their age, education and occupation were also entered. The electoral lists of men and women in Yakoruda for the year 1937<sup>67</sup> show that only three women had professions – one

was a teacher, and two – knitters, and all the rest were housewives. Out of 1087 women 270 were educated (only one was a college graduate, two had undergone vocational training, and eight had graduated from secondary schools). Among the Muslim women, illiteracy was still a commonplace – there were only three educated women.<sup>68</sup>

In the 1937 local elections in Yakoruda, of 1132 women with the right to vote only 115 actually voted<sup>69</sup>, and a year later, of 1221 women 499 (of whom only one was Muslim) voted in the parliamentary elections.<sup>70</sup>

In Dabnitsa Municipality: of 898 women 73 voted. Here are the results from the villages within the municipality: Dabnitsa: of 166 women 17 voted, Blatska: 126 – 28, Hvostjane: 129 – none; Debren: 80 – 9; Ablanitsa: 297 – 19.<sup>71</sup>

These figures did not come as a surprise to the authorities, which considered the Muslim population in these areas easily manipulated, and looked at the women in particular as totally unreliable voters. They were expected either not to vote at all (because anyway it was not obligatory for them), or to conform their vote with the one of their husbands. For that reason, there is not a trace to be found of women-orientated propaganda materials in the documents of that time. The attention was instead turned to the men, and different methods for exerting complete influence on the entire community were brought into play. This is confirmed by the pre-election analyses of the situation in the Mohammedan and mixed-religion villages in the region. About the village of Ribnovo, where the entire population was Muslim, the district constable wrote that “Bulgarian Muslims are not interested in politics”, and about the village of Dolno Drjanovo that they were “completely pro-government orientated. The population there is Bulgarian-Mohammedan and other people have ordered them how to vote, I was told.” And about the village of Oreshe, he wrote the following, “The atmosphere among the Bulgarian Mohammedans is quite predictable”.<sup>72</sup> The authorities would influence the whole community by “brainwashing the imams first.”<sup>73</sup> Quite similar definitions were given also to the Bulgarian Mohammedans in Satovcha – “these people can hardly be influenced from the outside; the only authority they know is the one of their trusted fellowmen, for Bulgarian Mohammedans are used to promising things, but when caught in a tight corner, they can easily fail to keep their promise.”<sup>74</sup> “... Under the present political circumstances, we may think of forcing them to do what is necessary.”<sup>75</sup>

During the 1939 by-elections for city council members in the region there were still to be found villages, both Christian and Muslim, where not a single woman gave

her vote (for ex., in the village of Gradevo – of 122 registered female voters not one voted).<sup>76</sup>

The fluctuating voting activity in the rural areas was a distinctive feature also of the 1940 elections for 25<sup>th</sup> Ordinary National Assembly<sup>77</sup> - for example, in six of the villages in the Nevrokop region not a single woman gave her vote – in Ljaski, Lazhnitsa, Banichan, Borovo, Gostun and Bukovo.

The poor participation of women (and especially of Muslim women) in the elections can be explained not only with reasons of religious origin and the absence of political engagement whatsoever, but also with the remoteness of some polling stations. The local authorities had to admit that in the remote areas “...not many women go to vote...”<sup>78</sup> and would appeal to their more active participation in the election process. In 1929, the Gorna Dzhumaja district constable recommended, “The campaigners should visit all male and female voters – the face-to-face propaganda has proven to give the best results.”<sup>79</sup>



In January, 1939, in the village of Dabnitsa (in the Nevrokop region), the mayor Ivan Donev informed, “At the last meetings I laid particular stress on women’s participation in the elections and its importance. Obviously I was listened to, because the number of women who voted is almost the same as the number of men. And in Debren, Blatska, and Hvostjane the women voted even outnumbered the men.”<sup>80</sup>

The research interest in the first elections with women’s participation in one particular district, Gorna Dzhumaja, has been prompted by the large inconsistency in women’s electoral activity in the late 1930’s. On the other hand, statistical data shows inconsistency in women’s voting in different populated areas within one and the same region, and between regions, too: from a minimal percentage in some villages (mostly with Muslim population)<sup>81</sup> to nearly 80% in some populated areas. However, on the

whole women's participation in these first for them elections was considerable, and there was not a region where no women whatsoever took part in the election process.

## 5. "...Her Majesty returned the greetings by taking a bow...": the 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary National Assembly's opening day

After the four-year interruption of the Bulgarian parliamentary life, the opening day of the 24<sup>th</sup> ONA was grandly celebrated. On May 22, Sunday, 1938, after all the present and ex ministers and chairmen, as well as diplomats had already gathered, in 10:45 outside the building of the National Assembly, there arrived in convertibles Queen (Tsaritsa) Joanna, Royal Princess Evdokia, and Royal Prince Kiril.<sup>82</sup> "On Her Majesty's and Their Royal Highness' arrival, all the deputies and spectators rose to their feet and started applauding them and shouting "Hurray!" Her Majesty returned the greetings by taking a bow."<sup>83</sup>

The suffrage that had been granted to women was also commemorated in the Speech from the throne: "In order for the people to get themselves more involved [in the election process], the Bulgarian woman was also granted a much deserved right to vote."<sup>84</sup>

Many deputies gave expression to their joy by the fact that quite recently, in June 1937, the Queen had given birth to a heir to the throne. The tribute paid to her presence at the festivities and her contribution to the Bulgarian people by being the mother of the crown prince, came once again to support the views of the importance of women's duties and roles as mothers.

The Bulgarian Women's Union however insisted that the authorities should take more unambiguous measures as regards the women's role in politics. The Union's delegation appeared at the National Assembly demanding that an additional paragraph on the further extension of women's rights to be included in the official reply to the Speech of the throne, which aimed at pinpointing this mandate's objectives.<sup>85</sup>

In order to protect the Women's Union from accusations of being politically biased when participating in elections, at their 32<sup>nd</sup> Congress in Rousse in September 1938, the BWU underlined the importance of the Union "to remain an entirely feminist organization with an all-embracing social program, but never politically narrow-minded, so that it can hold the position of the leader of Bulgarian women."<sup>86</sup>

With a view to the forthcoming partial local elections in 1939, the BWU made a



request to the Minister of Internal Affairs to immediately grant the women the right to be elected into city councils.<sup>87</sup>

As a whole, the BWU gave expression to its satisfaction of women's first electoral activities. Having in mind the fact that voting for women was not obligatory at all, it is remarkable that of 1 563 188 registered voters 434 733 actually participated in the 1937 local elections. The number of the female voters in the 1938 parliamentary elections almost doubled and went beyond 764 550 (those figures do not fully represent the actual number of people who voted in all districts).<sup>88</sup> Reaching the 50% electoral activity was considered a huge success for women's movement. Despite the considerable differences between the regions, still it can be said that the younger generations of women got adequately incorporated in the election process.

## Conclusion

The first participation of women in elections ever (1938 – 1939) was considered a great happening in the history of the women's movement in Bulgaria: the event was given a much colder reception by the rulers, who, however, came to realize with time the

great electoral potential women had, and eventually started sending direct messages to them. Along with this, much work had been done on encouraging women to vote and on making the society realize the importance of women's vote. By and large, the authorities viewed the female voters in the conventional way, that is in their role as wives and mothers – a view which evolved from the traditional gender division, which would place the woman “outside public space and spheres of power, and strengthen its position within the private space (as a housewife) the borders of which were stretched out by including social and educational services and also other spheres of symbolic production, such as literature and art.”<sup>89</sup>

In the beginning, just a small circle of women were excited by the suffrage being granted to them, and would do anything to motivate the rest of the women to vote, for they could not put up with the restrictions that applied to the voting rights and that separated women into eligible and not eligible to vote.

On a larger scale, the idea of women's participation in the elections and their increasing interest in politics was gathering strength among more and more women under the influence of various factors – political, family, cultural.

The major goal of the BWU was to show that women had their own political ambitions and to teach women how to vote independently. The Women's Union laid particular stress not on women's family roles that much, but rather on the competence they had acquired through being housewives and mothers, and on their organizational experience from the years of participation in different societies and unions. References to motherhood and family experience were part of the governmental propaganda materials, the latter are far from being identical with the BWU's propaganda messages.

With the dissolution of the BWU in 1944 and its replacement with the Bulgarian Popular Women's Union, which was subservient to the Fatherland Front, the typical female ideological content of the suffragist movement was completely lost. What resulted from the achieved equality of rights was far from what had been expected – no radical change in the innate political asymmetry occurred. Women's equal rights were seen as a mechanical condition provided by the law. The first female deputies who were Fatherland Front members associated themselves with the common political ideas of the Front. In their work, they did not stand out as bearers of feminist ideas among the other parliamentary groups in the National Assembly. The names of the female deputies were soon forgotten with the exception of few women – active members of FF – who



passionately embraced the visions of the new male national leaders. In the conditions of proclaimed equality of rights, with no opportunity for open discussions present, both traditional and neo-traditional attitudes toward women's partaking in politics were thriving; women were already defined as "...mothers of heroes, comrades of fighters..."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information on women's struggle for civil rights, see Krasimira Daskalova, *Ot syankata na istoriyata - From the shadow of history*, Sofia; also Daskalova, Kr. Nazarska, Zh. Zhensko dvizhenie i feminizmi v Bulgariya (sredata na XIX - sredata na XX vek) – Women's movement and feminism in Bulgaria (1850's – 1950's), Sofia, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Decree on electing city council members, 716, from 20.01.1937 and 2036 from 8.02.1937 issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health with reference to the establishment of special sections intended for female electors.

<sup>3</sup> Or are "married, divorced or widows with no children".

<sup>4</sup> To the district constables in the Kingdom, Sofia

<sup>5</sup> "The district constables are obliged to make sure that all the headmasters have circulated the lists of all male teachers, and within 10 days before the elections, as it is by the law (Art. 61), it will be decided by drawing lots which of them will be chairmen of the electoral committees." See To the district constables in the Kingdom, Central Archive – Sofia, fond 206k, inv. 1, file 107, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> The letter of the the BWU was addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs and Public Health, with a copy to the Prime-Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ecclesiastic Matters, and to all the members of the Council of Ministers. The letter was signed by all the leaders of THE THE BWU: D. Ivanova, Dr. V. Plocheva, R. Petrova, T. Rahseva, E. Chakalova, D. Kjuchukova, N. Varbenova, P. Preslavska, St. Andreeva. Central State Archive fond .371k, inventory 5, file 917, page 3.

<sup>7</sup> They were supposed to hold some special qualifications – educational, property, etc.), to be permanent residents of a given district, and so on.

<sup>8</sup> Central State Archive, fond 371k, Inv. 5, file 167, p. 39

<sup>9</sup> Central State Archive, fond 371k, Inv. 5, file 167, p. 49

<sup>10</sup> Central State Archive, fond 371k, Inv. 5, file 167, p. 78

<sup>11</sup> In Portugal, for example, where Salazar's authoritarian regime was established, the ruling class also laid a particular emphasis on women's role as mothers. In 1933, those educated women who were heads of their families and were the ones to pay the bills, were granted both active and passive suffrage, and during the 1935 elections women were elected in the National Assembly and the Senate for the first time. In reality, however, a big percentage of the women in the country were still refused the right to vote. See Alcina Martins, *Frauen in der Geschichte der Wohlfahrtspflege in Portugal*, in: Sabine Hering, Berteke Waaldig (Hrsg.), *Die Geschichte der sozialen Arbeit in Europa (1900–1960). Wichtige Pionierinnen und ihr Einfluss auf die Entwicklung internationaler Organisationen*, Verlag Leske+Budrich, Opladen 2002, S. 173-183.

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed information on the deeds of female university graduates, see Georgeta Nazarska, *The University Education and the Bulgarian Women 1879 – 1944*, Sofia, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Educational Committee on the general condition of the educational process at public schools and teacher's training colleges during the 1929/1930 school year, *School Review*, Year XXX, Oct. 1931, issue 8.

<sup>14</sup> For ex., "Jordan B. Argilov and Elena", "Iliya Radulov and Elena", etc. There were separate cases when electoral cards were given in return to the wife's signature. Documents keeping records of the elections in the years 1937 and 1937 in the village of Raduil, Samokov District have been used. State Archive – Sofia, fond 206k, inv. 1, file 105, p. 92 – 108

<sup>15</sup> See also, State Archive-Sofia: , fond 206k, inv. 1, file106, p.47-49: lists of women who received electoral cards.

<sup>16</sup> State Archive – Sofia, fond206k, inv.1, file106, p.22: lists of female voters from January, 21 1937.

<sup>17</sup> Literacy tended to grow among women living both in towns and in the country. For those living in the country, literacy grew from 0,2 % in 1880 to 52,5% in 1934, and for the townswomen, from 3,5 in 1880 to 81% in 1934. In: Milena Angelova, “Obraztsovo selo”Modernizatsionniyat proekt za seloto v Balgariya (1937-1944 g.) (M. Angelova, Model Village. The Modernization Project for the Village in Bulgaria (1937 – 1944). Blagovgrad, 2008, p. 44.)

<sup>18</sup> These elections were held in order to fill in 1/3 of the places of the city council personnel.

<sup>19</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 60, inv. 1, file 16, p.39.

<sup>20</sup> See Kristina Popova, Bez esnafski hlench. Parvite zheni v balgarskiya parlament - narodnite predstavitelki v 26 ONS i VNS i debatite po sotsialnata politika na novata vlast - dek. 1945-april 1947 g. (No Philistine Howling. The first women in the Bulgarian Parliament – the female deputies in 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary and Grand National Assembly and the debates on the new government’s social policy (December 1945 – April 1947) – In: Terrorism, Intellectualism, Balkan Troubles, Blagovgrad, 2005, p. 146 – 164.)

<sup>21</sup> See for ex. Women’s Movement in Bulgaria from Liberation to Our Days. Documentary Catalogue. Council of Ministers, Sofia, 1981; Women’s Movement in Gabrovo District 1869 – 1950, Documentary Catalogue, Directorate of District State Archive Gabrovo, News, Issue 7, Gabrovo, 1982 – a concise synopsis, Women’s Movement in Yambol District 1899 – 1968. Documentary Catalogue, Directorate of District State Archive – Yambol, 1981.

<sup>22</sup> This was the case with the deputy from the *Nikola Petkov* Bulgarian Agrarian Popular Union Elisaveta Popantonova (1907 – 1990), of whom no systematic records are available. A bit more different is the case with the deputy Svetla Daskalova (1921 – 2008), who, after having undergone a period of repression, was later affiliated to the reformed BAPU and held the position of Minister of Justice for many years.

<sup>23</sup> See caricatures in the printed media from that period: “The female voter: *It’s easy for them to tell that we can vote for whoever we want to, but what they don’t know is what a heavy fist my man’s got!*” In: Daskalova, Kr. , Nazarska, G. Women’s Movement and Feminism in Bulgaria (1850’s – 1950’s) , Sofia, 2006, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file174a, p. 3. The author of the analysis is Ivan Kolarov.

<sup>25</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file167, p. 26

<sup>26</sup> Central State Archive, fond 371k, Inv. 5, file167, p. 5

<sup>27</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file167, p. 30

<sup>28</sup> State Archive-Sofia, fond 206k, inv. 1, file106, p. 209-210

<sup>29</sup> Central State Archive: fond371k, Inv. 5, file167, p. 5: An appeal to female voters by the municipal councilor candidate in Stara Zagora Anton Popov.

<sup>30</sup> In a letter to the Sofia governor, the district constable of Gorna Dzhumaja wrote the following: “According to confirmed information, the Workers’ Party has given instructions for the formation of women’s constitutional committees on the territory of the whole country to start. These will have for their objective to bring together not only the masses of women, but also the young people. The women have already embarked on their propaganda mission – they arrange public meetings on behalf of women’s and charitable societies, visit other women at their homes and try to persuade them into voting. On the election day, it is expected for members of those constitutional committees to be present in a close proximity to the polling stations with the intention to exert influence on the ill-informed voters and make them vote with slogans instead of voting-papers. I expect you to order for all the members of the constitutional committees, women’s committees, technical teams, and all other kinds of fractions, which may be formed locally for the purpose of sabotaging the elections, and also for those people who will be going around the polling sections on the election day with the intention to bother and mislead the voters, to be tracked down, detained and prosecuted.” State Archive – Blagoevgrad, FOND143k, inv.1, file 20, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Central State Archive, FOND 371k, Inv. 5, file 169, p. 25

<sup>32</sup> Central State Archive, fond 371k, Inv. 5, file 169, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Daskalova K., Nazarska Zh., Women's Movement and Feminism in Bulgaria (1850's – 1950's) ,Sofia, 2006, p. 32 – 33.

<sup>34</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 33

<sup>35</sup> The letter was signed "by the village of Tsepenichare, near the town". State Archive – Sofia, fond371k, Inv. 5, file167, p. 12

<sup>36</sup> State Archive\_ Blagoevgrad, FOND255k, inv.1, file 20, p. 36: data on the regional elections in the village of Ilienti in the Svetivrach region, etc.

<sup>37</sup> State Archive\_ Blagoevgrad, fond 63k, inv. 1, file 158, p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> See for ex., State Archive – Sofia, FOND 503k, inv.1, file 90, p. 46-59: reports on voting for individual candidates.

<sup>39</sup> D. Ivanova – Our Congress in Samokov and Women's Suffrage, Zhenski glas, (Woman's Voice, issues 1 and 2, year 35, 1937-1938).

<sup>40</sup> D. Ivanova – Important Problems in Connection to the Parliamentary Elections, Woman's Voice, issues 4 and 5, year 35, 1937-1938.

<sup>41</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file917, p. 3

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Those "relational" (Karen Offen) views on the political qualities of women, based on the idea of a "distinctive contribution" of women to society were wide spread in the suffrage movement. See Birgitta Bader - Zaar, Women in Austrian Politics, 1890-1934, in: David Good, Margareth Grandner, Mary Jo Maynes (Eds), Austrian Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives, Berghahn Books, Providence Oxford, 1996, p.59-91.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 63k, Inv. 3, file, 4, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> A statement to all Bulgarian women – voters from towns and countryside, Woman's Voice, issue 7, year 35, 1937 - 1938

<sup>47</sup> Zhenski glas (Woman's Voice), issue 7, year 35, 1937 - 1938

<sup>48</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 12, 13 (25 May, 1938), year 36, 1938 – 1939.

<sup>49</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file167, p. 2

<sup>50</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 13, 14 (1 May, 1939), year 37, 1938 – 1939.

<sup>51</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 1, 2 (November 1938), year 37, 1938 – 1939.

<sup>52</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 8, 9 (20 March, 1938), year 37, 1938 – 1939.

<sup>53</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 255k, inv. 1, file 20, p. 36.

<sup>54</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file179, p. 58

<sup>55</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file179, p. 6

<sup>56</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 125k, Inv.1, file10, p. 242.

<sup>57</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond125k, Inv.1, file10, p. 242.

<sup>58</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 2

<sup>59</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 7

<sup>60</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 7

<sup>61</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 14-15

<sup>62</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 23

<sup>63</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 24

<sup>64</sup> Central State Archive, fond371k, Inv. 5, file180, p. 26

<sup>65</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 255k, inv.1, file 20, p. 28

<sup>66</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 135k, Inv.1, file35, p. 98

<sup>67</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 135k, Inv.1, file35, p. 98

<sup>68</sup> Emine Kadr. Dedova, 56, housewife, secondary education, ; Emine Ref. Tsrnkova, 33, housewife, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Rabie Kozinarova, 29, housewife, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 135k, Inv.1, file35, p. 99-106.

<sup>69</sup> Central State Archive, fond 371k, inv. 5, file 180, p. 23, State Archive - Blagovgrad, fond 135k, Inv.1, file37, p. 145.

<sup>70</sup> Fatme Kadr. Tsikova, 26, housewife, unlettered. State Archive - Blagovgrad,, fond 135k, Inv.1, file35, p. 78.

<sup>71</sup> State Archive - Blagovgrad,, fond 178k, Inv. 1, file, 46, p. 110.

<sup>72</sup> State Archive - Blagovgrad, fond 84k, Inv.1, file 19, p. 5-6.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> State Archive - Blagoevgrad, fond 84k, Inv.1, file 19, p. 21.

<sup>75</sup> State Archive - Blagoevgrad, fond 84k, Inv.1, file 19, p. 30.

<sup>76</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 63k, Inv. 1, file, 68, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 84k, Inv.1, file 19, p. 125-126.

<sup>78</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 63k, Inv. 1, file, 68, p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 63k, Inv. 1, file, 68, p. 26.

<sup>80</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond 84k, Inv.1, file 19, p. 86.

<sup>81</sup> After September 9, 1944, the Fatherland Front government took some serious steps toward encouraging the Mohammedan population to vote. Instructions were given for electoral stations intended for women only to be opened with the intention to make it easier for the Muslim women. The instructions read as follows, "...In the places where the population is mainly of Muslim denomination, it is highly recommended to the district magistrates to make sure that in those polling stations, the chairs and the members of each electoral committee will be women too; this should be done in order to assist the Mohammedan women in their vote, for we know that Mohammedan women will not feel completely at ease if mostly men are employed in the electoral committees." See State Archive – Blagoevgrad, fond60, inv.1, file16, p.19.

<sup>82</sup> Shorthand official reports of the proceedings during the First Extraordinary Session of the 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary National Assembly, dated May 22, 1938, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.3.

<sup>84</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 12, 13 (25 May, 1938), year 36, 1938-1939

<sup>85</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 14, 15 (20 June, 1938), year 36, 1938-1939

<sup>86</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 1, 2, year 36, 1938-1939

<sup>87</sup> Woman's Voice, issues 9, 10, year 36, 1938-1939

<sup>88</sup> Woman's Voice, issue 11, year 36, 1938-1939

<sup>89</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Male Domination*, Sofia, 2002, p. 114.

<sup>90</sup> From the narrator's text in Newsreel 231/1948, dedicated on women's role in the conditions of people's democracy.

Translation: Maya Vukovska

DOCUMENTING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN ROMANIA.  
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FEMALE SUFFRAGE IN ROMANIA -  
A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Roxana Cheschebek

**First Demands for Women's Political Rights (1890s-1919)**

Until World War 1, the 1866 Romanian Constitution and the 1864 Romanian Civil Code, important legal acts that introduced for the first time in Romania a modern citizenship legislation, denied women political rights and deprived married women of rights to choose their nationality, of property and civil capacity. The first demands for women's political rights, supported by feminists and a few left-wing politicians, emerged in the period closely connected to the idea of a gender-inclusive project of modernization.

The first feminist demands for women's political rights appeared at the end of 1890s, in the publications supporting one of the earliest Romanian feminist organizations *Liga Femeilor* (Women's League, 1894-1899). Such demands were supported by prominent Romanian feminists such as Sofia Nadejde or Adela Xenopol, in the period between 1895 and 1896, in feminist publications such as *Dochia* and *Buletinul Ligii Femeilor. Sectiunea Iasi* (*The Bulletin of Women's League. The Iasi Section*) that can be found in the collections of the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest. They argued for women's political rights especially in the name of women's ascension in careers and their economic emancipation. Without dismissing the necessity of winning political rights for all women, these feminists saw granting educated women political rights as an irrefutable priority. Using the correspondence between (political) education and involvement with politics, an idea already accepted by the public, Romanian women's rights activists insisted on the existence of considerable progress in Romanian women's intellectual potential which demanded women's equality in rights to men<sup>1</sup>.

But in that period, Romanian feminist ideas were already met with an obstinate resistance from a great part of the intellectual and political establishment. Relevant in this sense are the documents that detail on the parliamentary debates aroused by the

few proposals made between 1878 and 1884 by left-wing politicians (socialists and liberals), proposals requiring full or partial political rights for certain categories of women such as the widowed propertied women or the unmarried women<sup>2</sup>. Each time the majority in the Parliament rejected these proposals. Also, although the social democrats were the first Romanian politicians to inscribe in 1894 in their party program the achievement of political rights for women<sup>3</sup>, in practice they seemed less convinced that granting political rights to women was an appropriate measure at that time.

After the dissolution of *Liga Femeilor* in 1899, the feminist activism for political rights was resumed by another feminist organization founded in 1910 by Eugenia de Reuss Ianculescu, a former *Liga Femeilor* member. *Societatea pentru Drepturile Femeilor* (Women's Emancipation Society), later renamed *Liga Drepturilor si Datoriilor Femeilor din Romania* (The League for Women's Rights and Duties, LDDFR –1910-1938/1939), was the first long-lived Romanian feminist organization and championed the achievement of female suffrage as one of its most important programmatic goals. The archival collection of this organization seems to have been lost after 1989. Yet most of the information on the structure and its suffragist activities can be found especially in the reports sent by LDDFR to and published by the publication of the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance, *Jus Suffragii*, and in the LDDFR's own publication *Drepturile Femeii* (*Women's Rights*, 1913-1915). For the post-World War I period some more information can be found in the documents of the correspondence between Eugenia de Reuss Ianculescu and two prominent contemporary feminists, Alexandrina Cantacuzino and Elena Meissner, in their personal archival collections.

One report published in 1914 by *Jus Suffragii*, shows that shortly after its founding, in 1913 LDDFR commenced its suffragist campaigns with the hope of achieving at least women's vote and eligibility in local councils<sup>4</sup>. In that year the organization wrote its first memoir demanding full civil and political rights for women, a memoir handed for presentation in the Parliament by two liberal politicians<sup>5</sup>. At that time, although the only political party who advocated the principle of equality in political rights between men and women was the social-democratic party<sup>6</sup>, the liberal party was the one that dominated the Romanian political scene. This party also stood for the modification of the electoral laws in the sense of broadening the mass of electors and elected and LDDFR tried, most of the time unsuccessfully, to rally its support in favor of its political demands.

In 1914 the parliamentary discussions on electoral reform offered another important occasion for feminists to demand the female suffrage. Although *Liga Femeilor* dissolved in 1899, its former members sent to the parliament a petition in the name of the League. The petition was published in the publication led by a former League member (Adela Xenopol) and issued in Iasi and Bucuresti, between 1912 and 1916: *Viitorul Romancelor (Romanian Women's Future)*<sup>7</sup>. In the petition the feminists demanded inclusion in parliamentary debates of women's rights to vote in the Chamber of Deputies, or at least in the Senate, since, they argued, like men, many women held public functions and contributed to the economic welfare of the country. Feminists warned politicians that granting women full political rights was not only a democratic measure but also one in the interest of the Romanian nation since once the universal male suffrage would be granted "many elements with a non-Romanian mentality will benefit from the vote". Therefore, Romanian women's exercise of political suffrage would only benefit the parliament in providing more support to the achievement of "national interests". These arguments, playing on the xenophobic and anti-Semitic feelings, aroused by contemporary political discussions concerning broadening of the male suffrage, triggered, the integration of women's political rights into a nationalist conceptualization of the overall political progress of Romania. The use of this argumentation signaled also the beginning of a discursive shift in Romanian feminist discourses that would manifest itself especially after 1918, when the majority of feminists supported women's emancipation in strong relation to nation-state building projects. From this period on, the utilization of the nationalist discourse in the vindication of female suffrage became legitimated as a strategic means to integrate ideas of women's emancipation into mainstream political discourses.

In 1916, after two years of neutrality, Romania entered the First World War joining the Allied forces. The offensive of the Central Powers' armies on the Romanian territory as well as the threatening specter of the Bolshevism being spread by the disintegrating Russian military forces in Romania after the 1917 Russian revolution, moved King Ferdinand to promise the peasants fighting the war extensive land and electoral reforms. Shortly after the king's declaration urging the political establishment to reconsider the democratization of the electoral system, in June 1917, the women's rights activists from Iassy established *Asociatia pentru Emanciparea Civila si Politica a Femeilor Romane* (The Association for the Civic and Political Emancipation of Romanian Woman,

AECPPFR, 1917-1938/1939). Most of the documents relating to the foundation and suffragist activities of this organization are held in the personal archival collection of the president of AECPPFR between 1918 and 1938/1939, Elena Meissner, at The National Central Historical Archives Bucharest. More information can be found in the official publication of the organization, *Ziarul Nostru (Our Newspaper)* issued in Galati and Constanta between 1926 and 1937.

In the year of its foundation, AECPPFR sent the parliament a petition requiring women's civil and political rights. Compared to the previous petitions, this was a rather moderate one and demanded the extension of political rights (at local level) to women and the improvement of women's civil rights. The petition and the discussions around it were registered and kept in the collection of documents of senate debates of the period.<sup>8</sup>.

The petition did not receive any decisive response from the politicians. Nevertheless, AECPPFR continued its campaign for women's rights. According to its statutes and program published in the period, the organization believed that after the war the building of the new Romanian nation-state would bring important political and social changes and women's political rights needed to achieve more public visibility to be legitimated as part of these future changes<sup>9</sup>.

In 1918, important political transformations were foreseen by feminists to accompany the creation of "Greater Romania" which resulted from the new territorial arrangements certified by the international treaties concluded at the end of World War 1. To the "Old Kingdom" of Romania were added new territories previously belonging to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and Russian Empire (Transylvania, Banat, Bessarabia and Bukovina) to form the body of the new Romanian state. For this reason, at the end of the war, not only the Romanian feminists from the "Old Kingdom", but also the women's representatives from the Romanian National Councils of Transylvania and Banat, who proposed the unification of these provinces with the Kingdom of Romania, insisted on the necessity of women's political rights. Transylvanian women's demands and Transylvanian politicians' openness towards women's rights triggered the recognition of the equality between men and women in political rights in the most important political act concluded in this province. The Alba-Iulia proclamation of the union between Transylvania and the kingdom of Romania from November 1918 stated in its third article that, for the achievement of a fully democratic regime in all domains of the public



life, the political vote in the new state had to be universal, equal, secret, regional, proportional and exercised by individuals of both sexes, aged 21, for the representation at the local or parliamentary level<sup>10</sup>.

However, after the incorporation of Transylvania and Banat into Romania, the Romanian political establishment did not respect this provision of the Alba-Iulia proclamation and women were not granted the political suffrage. The report sent by LDDFR to *Jus Suffragii* and a speech held by the president of AECPFR emphasized this situation and that, in the new province of Bessarabia, where women achieved political rights after the Russian revolution, the unconditional union of this former Russian province with the “Old Kingdom” of Romania created a situation in which women, under the Romanian legislation, might lose these rights<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, a decree-law on the modification of the electoral reform from November 1918 introduced the universal male suffrage and disregarded women’s political rights in the new nation-state<sup>12</sup>.

### **Granting Women Local Political Rights (1919). Activities for Expanding the Political Suffrage**

In 1919 a special decree of the government stated the possibility of women’s inclusion in intermarry communal and district commissions. This possibility was restricted to a certain category of women - of women already involved with charity and social work activities - and was conditioned by women’s nomination, and not election, on local councils’ lists<sup>13</sup>. The decree was applied during the following two years (until 1922) but only a few governments nominated one or two women to the councils. And after a liberal government came to power women’s nomination to these councils ceased<sup>14</sup>. In 1922, another amendment was passed by the parliament and was included in the draft of the new constitution (issued the next year, in 1923). However, the amendment did not stipulate the granting of local political rights to women but the necessity to have the decision to grant these rights ratified by a two-third vote of the new Parliament. As the letters sent by AECPFR feminists to politicians, and whose drafts were kept in the archival collection of Elena Meissner, pointed out the achievement of local political rights for women was not only delayed but also left under the threat of not being accomplished at all<sup>15</sup>.

Romanian political establishment’s reluctance to inscribe women’s political rights

in the new constitution<sup>16</sup> inspired the organization of the first large feminist manifestation in Bucharest. A few weeks before the final ratification of the constitution, on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1923, the newly-established umbrella women's organization *Consiliul Național al Femeilor Române* (The National Council of Romanian Women, CNFR, 1921- 1940) called for an important suffragist meeting to protest against the stipulations of the constitution and try to influence the vote of the parliament. The documents covering this important event are kept in the personal archival collection of Alexandrina Cantacuzino, an extremely important leader of the Romanian feminist movement that started her feminist activism in this period and who quickly became one of the most important and controversial leaders of the Romanian women's movement. Alexandrina Cantacuzino's archival collection is the biggest collection of documents related to feminist activism and women's movement development in Romania. Cantacuzino held leadership functions in three important Romanian women's organizations and two important international organizations: Vice-President of *Consiliul Național al Femeilor* (from 1921) and its only President (from 1930); co-founder and first President of the Little Entente of Women (LEW) (1923–1929); Vice-President of the International Council of Women (ICW) (1925-1936) and convener of the ICW Art Committee (from 1936); President of the Romanian feminist organizations *Solidaritatea* (Solidarity) (from 1925) and of the *Gruparea Femeilor Române* (GFR, Association of Romanian Women) (from 1929). Due to her impressive number of activities for the betterment of women's situation and to her personal interest in keeping the record of all relevant organizational documents, newspaper articles and correspondence, Cantacuzino's archival collection numbers hundreds of folders containing important information about the feminist activities in inter-war Romania. The documents have been organized on years, themes and names of organizations by Cantacuzino herself and thus are extremely helpful in guiding researchers.

Coming back to the history of the achievement of female suffrage in Romania, the report sent by Cantacuzino for publication in *Bulletin. International Council of Women*, the official publication of ICW, shows the importance of the joined protest of the Romanian women's organizations. Yet, again, the protest remained without result. The 1923 Constitution, although it stipulated that the parliament had the obligation to issue in the future a special law to set the conditions under which women would be able to vote, in practice it excluded women from the exercise of political rights.

The 1925 discussions on the modification of the administrative laws gave another

boost to the Romanian feminists' activism for the achievement of women's rights to be elected and elect in the local councils. In that year *Solidaritatea* (Solidarity), a new Romanian feminist organization, was created to promote women's civil and political rights under the leadership of Alexandrina Cantacuzino. The older feminist organizations, LDDFR and AECPFR, resumed their suffragist activities as well. On the occasion of the parliamentary elections of 1925, CNFR also organized numerous public meetings and launched a manifest-program that demanded the parliament to reconsider women's civil and political rights in the general interest of the country. Besides expressing the aspirations of Romanian women's movement, the manifest program offered a detailed examination of all laws from all domains which touched on women's condition and suggested how each law could be modified to incorporate women's rights<sup>17</sup>.

These lobbying activities and campaigns undertaken by feminists contributed to the incorporation of more favorable stipulations for women's political rights at the local level in the administrative law<sup>18</sup>. According to art. 10 of the new administrative law from June 1925, the municipal councils of the towns which were district centers had to compulsory include women councilors, while the other municipal councils had the option to do so<sup>19</sup>.

Women's inclusion, but not election in local councils raised again the protests of feminists from all Romanian feminist organizations who decried the provisional character of women's political rights at local level<sup>20</sup>. However, while not satisfied with the formulation of women's rights in the administrative law, all of these organizations considered their achievement as a springboard in obtaining full political rights for women and women's deeper involvement in public activities<sup>21</sup>.

According to a report sent by LDDFR to *Jus Suffragii*, in March 1926, when the electoral law was discussed in the parliament, the deputies from the National and Peasantist Parties proposed an amendment to the electoral law that would have granted women's suffrage. According to this proposition, the vote had to be conferred to women "in homage for their work to the benefit of faith and nation" and also as a legitimization of Romania's position "among civilized nations". In their interventions in the Parliament, the politicians supporting this amendment countered suspicions that women would support with their votes the leftist parties by arguing that women were more conservative than men. They also pointed to the idea that it was unfair not to grant political rights to women since in Bessarabia women had these rights after 1917<sup>22</sup>. The

amendment was supported in the parliament by the entire opposition (104 deputies) and a third of the majority coalition. However its vote was delayed and in the end the amendment did not pass the parliamentary vote because of liberal politicians' opposition<sup>23</sup>.

In 1929 when discussions on the elaboration of a new administrative law started, Romanian women's organizations began again to hope that their demands could be finally achieved. As their reports to the Berlin Congress of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship point out, once again motions, petitions, delegations were sent by the three Romanian women's organizations with a suffragist agenda (LDDFR, AECPR and *Solidaritatea*) to the government to demand women's political rights<sup>24</sup>.

However, the provisions regarding women's participation in the local councils included in the draft of the new administrative law issued in 1929 disappointed yet again. The draft stated that only unmarried women having at least 4 secondary classes or women leading enterprises could be eligible for the political vote and election at the local level. Feminists considered these criteria too high, discriminatory and undemocratic. On April 28, 1929, an impressive meeting of Romanian women's organizations (the press announced that delegates of 150 women's societies came to Bucharest) followed feminist organizations' individual protests<sup>25</sup>. At the meeting, feminists demanded in their speeches new provisions for women's political local rights following as much as possible the criteria applied for the universal male suffrage. Their proposals were registered by important daily newspapers of the time who considered the event of great importance and covered it generously on their front pages. The articles were carefully collected by Alexandrina Cantacuzino and can be found in her archival collection. These proposals generally summarized the demands expressed in the former feminist protests: change in the educational criteria for the vote (eligible women had to have at least four primary classes), and the extension of these rights to other categories of women (married women, women victimized or decorated in the war, women working in social and cultural institutions and women paying taxes)<sup>26</sup>.

On August 3, 1929, the new administrative law declared women's local political rights and its provisions answered many of Romanian feminists' demands. The right to vote and be elected in local councils was granted to women who were at least 21, with primary, secondary education or vocational training, working as bureaucrats or leading cultural and charity societies, for war widows and women who received war decorations<sup>27</sup>.

## Women's Political Activities. Steps towards the Achievement of Female Suffrage (1930-1948)

At the end of 1930, new parliamentary discussions on the modification of electoral laws began. In the following years, Gruparea Femeilor Romane (The Association of Romanian Women, GFR, created in 1929) led by Alexandrina Cantacuzino and other organizations that in the period fell under her influence such as Solidaritatea and CNFR, issued a series of motions and petitions demanding full political rights for women holding local political rights<sup>28</sup>. All these demands were formulated as part of requests for important modifications in parliamentary structures which would counteract the effects of what these organizations saw as a poorly understood and managed democracy. In this period, the influential leader and ideologue of these organizations, Alexandrina Cantacuzino demanded the "correction" of the universal suffrage in an undemocratic manner meant to diminish political parties' power over the political will of citizens. Cantacuzino argued that one of the proofs that Romanian democracy was not functioning was that women were excluded from universal suffrage while illiterate men had the right to express their political options. This failure of democracy in Romania had to be corrected by changing the terms of universal suffrage's application and granting educated women full political rights<sup>29</sup>. Two motions issued by GFR and CNFR with GFR in 1930 and 1932 asked the extension of political suffrage to all women who had local political rights thus giving these women the possibility to elect and be elected to the Deputies Chamber. At the same time, the motion demanded a change in the electoral system and parliamentary structures, a change that would have allowed more political power to a technocratic intellectual elite in order to balance the influence of political parties in the leadership of the country. This change in parliamentary structures would have also allowed certain categories of women to enter the Senate as "representatives of feminine works"<sup>30</sup>. None of these demands was answered positively.

On February 20, 1938, a new constitution incorporating corporatist principles was issued under the newly established monarchical dictatorship of Carol II. Articles 61 and 63 stipulated that women over 30 had the right to vote for the Deputies Chamber (but not to be elected to the legislative body) and that the women over 40 could vote and be nominated to the Senate. These stipulations were, however, not to be put in practice at that point because the constitution also stated that the conditions and proce-

dures of suffrage for both Senate and Deputies Chamber were to be further developed in a future electoral law<sup>31</sup>. The inclusion in the new constitution of this restrictive and incomplete version of women's political rights was received with great joy and celebrated with fast by CNFR and the organizations under Alexandrina Cantacuzino's influence. Although the provisions of these articles had been anticipated and even criticized in 1936, in 1938 they were presented as a "victory" won by these women's organizations due to their organizations' militancy against corrupted politics and repeated calls for morality in the building of a better and fairer society<sup>32</sup>. At the same time, the introduction of the siege situation, together with the establishment of the monarchical dictatorship and the ban on political protests, made any suffragist activity of protest against these constitutional provisions useless<sup>33</sup>.

The anxiously expected new electoral law (issued in 1939) brought no changes in the criteria set for women's exercise of political rights. Women continued to be barred from participation in the Chamber of Deputies. However, the election in that year of the first Romanian woman senator, Maria M. Pop, an experienced women's rights activist in AECPFR, was promoted by feminists as a great victory for their long-fought cause<sup>34</sup>.

Only in 1946, after the Second World War, did the communist government of Dr. Petru Groza issue two decrees rectifying the 1939 electoral law stipulating women's rights to be elected and elect in the Deputies Chamber under the same conditions as men<sup>35</sup>. The 1948 communist Constitution also confirmed women's equality with men in voting rights, access to state functions and salary. But, by that time, women's freedom to exercise their political rights was very much restrained by the establishment of the one-party political system. As Alexandrina Cantacuzino lamented in one of her speeches, after so many years of struggle the achievement of women's political rights proved to be a bitter victory<sup>36</sup>.

The documents relating to the achievement of female suffrage in Romania can be found both in Romania and abroad. The majority of them are held in impressive personal collections of feminist leaders such as Elena Meissner or Alexandrina Cantacuzino at The National Central Historical Archives Bucharest. The official newspapers of Romanian feminist organizations are held at the Library of the Romanian Academy and can be consulted to have a clear picture of the long battle fought by Romanian women for the achievement of their political rights. More information can be found in the official publications of international women's organizations such as ICW or IWSA that

are kept in various important libraries such as British Library or that of the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement in Amsterdam. Without these publications, unfortunately no Romanian researcher can gather important information on one of the biggest Romanian suffragist organizations that was LDDFR.

<sup>1</sup> See for example Adela Xenopol, "Drepturile Femeii" ("Woman's Rights") in Dochia, I, no. 3 (July 1896): 32-34 in Mihailescu, Emanciparea femeii romane, op.cit, p. 297; Adela Xenopol, "Un drept uzurpat femeii" ("A Right Taken from Women") in Dochia, I, no. 6 (October 1896): 74-75 in Mihailescu, Emanciparea femeii romane, 300-302; Popescu Eliza, "Raportul Ligii noastre cu al uniunilor femeiesti din celelalte tari civilizate. Conferinta d-rei Eliza Popescu citita la intrunirea Ligii [Femeilor Romane din Iasi]" ("The Report of Our League Together with that of Women's Unions from the Other Civilized Countries. The Lecture Held by Mrs. Eliza Popescu at the Meeting of the League [of Romanian Women from Iassy]") in Supliment la "Buletinul Ligii Femeilor" (Supplement at the "Bulletin of Women's League"), 1898 in Mihailescu, Emanciparea femeii romane, 330-333.

<sup>2</sup> See Paraschiva Cincea, Miscarea pentru emanciparea femeii in Romania (The Movement for Woman's Emancipation in Romania), Bucuresti: Editura Politica, 1976, 53-55. In 1895, an article signed by Sofia Valdman, "De ce atitia dusmani contra Ligii?" ("Why So Many Enemies Against the League?" in Buletinul Ligii Femeilor, no. 2 (1895): 5) countered accusations that *Liga Femeilor* supported the socialist doctrine by arguing that the liberals also supported universal suffrage.

<sup>3</sup> See [Motiunea celui de al II-lea Congress al Partidului Social-Democrat al Muncitorilor din Romania din aprilie 1894 referitoare la drepturile femeii] ([Motion of the Second Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Workers from Romania Regarding Women's rights, April 1894]) in Munca, V, no. 9 (April 24, 1894) in Stefana Mihailescu, Emanciparea femeii romane, 270. See also [Conferinta despre emanciparea femeii tinuta de C.V. Ficsinescu la 29 martie 1898 in Aula Universitatii din Iasi] ([The Lecture on Woman's Emancipation Presented by C.V. Ficsinescu on March 29 1898 at the Hall of Iassy University]) published in Lumea Noua, IV, no. 1122, 1123, 1124 (15, 16, 17 April, 1898) in Mihailescu, Emanciparea femeii romane, 316-323. In this public lecture, the social-democrat C.V. Ficsinescu admitted that his colleagues were more interested in winning the male universal suffrage than in extending it to women.

<sup>4</sup> LDDFR report to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) in Jus Suffragii (May 1, 1914): 114

<sup>5</sup> See LDDFR report to IWSA in Jus Suffragii (May 1, 1914): 114 and LDDFR report to IWSA in The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Report of the Ninth Congress. Rome, Italy, May 12th to 19th 1923, 208

<sup>6</sup> See Cincea, Miscare pentru emanciparea femeii, 84-86 and the chapter on Romania of The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Woman Suffrage in Practice. Second Impression with Corrections and Additions, 1913, 144-145

<sup>7</sup> See "O petitie la camera" ("A Petition to the Chamber") in Viitorul Romanelor, III, no. 4 (April 1914): 49-50

<sup>8</sup> [Petitia femeilor romane din 16 iunie 1917 catre Senatul Romaniei] ([The Petition of Romanian Women from June 16 1917 to the Romanian Senate]) in "Dezbaterile Senatului, sesiunea ordinara 1916-1917, sedinta din 16 iunie 1917" ("Senate Debates, Ordinary Session, 1917-1917, the meeting from June 16, 1917"), 203-204 in Mihailescu, Emanciparea femeii romane, 498-499.

<sup>9</sup> See Asociatia pentru emanciparea civila si politica a femeii romane. Statutele si programul. (The Association for Romanian Women's Civil and Political Emancipation. Statutes and Program) Iasi: Tipografia "Dacia", 1918).

<sup>10</sup> See "Rezolutiunea Adunarii Nationale de la Alba Iulia din 18 Noiembrie/1 Decembrie 1918" ("The Resolution of the National Assembly at Alba Iulia from November 18/December 1, 1918") in the archival

collection Consiliu Dirigent (The Leading Council), dosar 76/1918, f. 3 in Arhivele Nationale Istorice Centrale Bucuresti (The National Central Historical Archives Bucharest, ANICB).

<sup>11</sup> See information on the Romanian women's movement in Jus Suffragii (July 1920): 163, LDDFR's report to IWSA in The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Report of Eight Congress, Geneva, Switzerland, June 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,1920, 191 and "Cuvint de pregatire femeilor romane in legatura cu noua lege pentru unificare administrativa" ("Words for the Preparation of Romanian Women in Regards to the New Law of Administrative Unification"), September 1925 in ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XI 32, f. 8-12

<sup>12</sup> See Constantin Hamangiu, Codul general al Romaniei (The General Code of Romania), vol VIII (1856-1919), Bucuresti, 1140-1154

<sup>13</sup> See LDDFR's report to IWSA in The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Report of Eight Congress, Geneva, Switzerland, June 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,1920, 192; AECPPFR's report in Jus Suffragii (July 1920): 163; Botez, Problema feminismului, 59.

<sup>14</sup> See "Miscarea feminista in Tara" ("The Feminist Movement in the Country"), manuscript of the letter sent to the prime minister found in Arhivele Nationale Istorice Centrale Bucuresti, Fond Constantin si Elena Meissner – Elena Meissner (The National Central Historical Archives Bucharest, the personal archival collection of Constantin and Elena Meissner – Elena Meissner Collection, ANICB, CEM-EM), dosar XI 31, f. 18.

<sup>15</sup> See letter sent to all important personalities (most probably Parliament members) of the time by the Central Committee of AECPPFR (Asociatiilor feministe din Moldova (The feminist associations from Moldavia) in ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XI 31, f. 16-17, and "Miscarea feminista in Tara" ("The Feminist Movement in the Country"), manuscript of the letter sent to the prime minister (in ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XI 31, f. 18).

<sup>16</sup> The debates on women's political rights in the parliamentary commission in charge with elaborating the constitution show important confrontations, especially among liberal politicians, over the impact women's vote would have on Romanian politics and women's preparation to exercise political rights. The opponents of women's political rights made up the majority and supported their views by pointing to the weakening of the family, to the biological and intellectual inferiority of women, to their "reactionary" or "revolutionary" character that would disturb the political life, and to the impossibility to measure what consequences this act would have on the political life. Very few politicians favored the idea of full political and civil rights for women and the majority of them were more inclined to grant full civil rights but to postpone the granting of full political rights (see Eufrosina Popescu, "Dezbaterea problemei emanciparii femeii in parlament si in afara lui (1922-1923)" (The Debates on the Question of Women's Emancipation in and Outside the Parliament (1922-1923)) in Revista de Istorie (History Review), 28, no. 12 (1975): 1888-1890).

<sup>17</sup> Manuscript, in French, without date (probably from 1925), "Nouvelle de Roumanie" in Arhivele Nationale Istorice Centrale Bucuresti, Fond familial Cantacuzino - Alexandrina Cantacuzino (The National Central Historical Archives Bucharest, the personal archival collection of Cantacuzino family – Alexandrina Cantacuzino collection, ANICB, C-AC) dosar 138, f. 72.

<sup>18</sup> See "Congres feministe a Iassy (Roumanie)" in Jus Suffragii (July 1932): 128.

<sup>19</sup> The administrative law was stipulating that women could participate in the local government as following: 7 women councilors in the urban centers with a population exceeding 250.000 inhabitants

5 women councilors in the urban centers with a population exceeding 100.000 inhabitants

3 women councilors in the urban centers with a population exceeding 50.000 inhabitants

2 women councilors in the other urban centers (see "Cuvint de pregatire femeilor romane in legatura cu noua lege pentru unificare administrativa" ("Words for the Preparation of Romanian Women for the New Law of Administrative Centralization"), September 1925 in ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XI 32, f. 8-12; XI 22/ vol.I, f. 14-18, AECPPFR report in The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, Report of the Tenth Congress. La Sorbonne, Paris, France, May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1926, 267 and LDDFR report to IAW in Jus Suffragii (May-June 1926): 123).

<sup>20</sup> The art. 8 of the new Constitution stated that: "The members of district and municipal councils are elected by Romanian citizens, etc....Among the members to be included in these commissions women can be



chosen.” For feminist protests at this law see Eugenia de Reuss – Ianculescu’s speech at the CNFR meeting from February 1926 in article: “Intrunirea Consiliului national al femeilor” (“The Meeting of the National Council of Women”) in *Universul*, February 17, 1926 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 427, f. 143), manuscript of a speech at the AECPR Congress, Galati, April 21, 1929 in ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XI 22, vol.1, f. 79-86 and manuscript, “Rapport de l’association des Femmes Roumaines ‘Solidaritatea’”, 1927 (?) in ANICB, C-AC dosar 85, f. 76-77.

<sup>21</sup> See Zoe Ramniceanu and other feminists’ interventions at the meeting held by CNFR in February 1926 (article: “Intrunirea Consiliului national al femeilor” (“The Meeting of the National Council of Women”) in *Universul*, February 17, 1926 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 427, f. 143).

<sup>22</sup> See quote from the speech of Nicolaie Lupu (the leader of the Peasantist Party) in “Roumanie” by Ecaterina Tilinschi in *Jus Suffragii* (May-June 1926): 123.

<sup>23</sup> See news from the Romanian women’s movement signed by Ecaterine Tilinschi, general secretary of LDDFR in *Jus Suffragii* (May-June 1926): 122.

<sup>24</sup> See reports of LDDFR, AECPR and Solidaritatea in The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, *Report of the Eleventh Congress. Berlin, June 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1929*, 427-434.

<sup>25</sup> See G. Slavian, “Femeia si dreptul de vot. Adunarea de eri dela Fundatia Carol” (“The Woman and the Right to Vote. Yesterday’s Meeting at Carol Foundation”) in *Ultima ora*, April 30, 1929 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 126, f. 7-8).

<sup>26</sup> “Cum vor femeile sa voteze” (“How Women Want to Vote”) in *Ultima ora*, April 30, 1929 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 126, f. 6); article: a.r.s., “Intrunirea feminista dela fundatia Carol. Cuvintarile. Motiunea. S-a cerut largirea dreptului de vot catre masele largi ale femeilor dela tara” (“The Feminist Meeting at the Carol Foundation. The Speeches. The Motion. It Was Asked the Enlargement of the Right to Vote to the Big Masses of Women from the Countryside”) in ?, April 30, 1929 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 126, f. 12); “Drepturi de vot pentru toate femeile. Intrunirea feminista dela Fundati Carol I” (“Women’s Rights for All Women. The Feminist Meeting at Carol I Foundation”) in *Dimineata*, May 1, 1929 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 126, f. 11); “Discutii in jurul reformei administrative. Intrunirea feminista dela fundatia ‘Carol I’ ” (“Discussions Around the Administrative Reform. The Feminist Meeting at the ‘Carol I’ Foundation”) in *Universul*, May 1, 1929 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 126, f. 10).

<sup>27</sup> See AECPR’s report in The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, *Report of the Twelfth Congress. Istanbul, April 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 1935*, 173. Although the law was criticized for its shortcomings, feminists received the achievement of administrative rights for women with high expectations.

<sup>28</sup> See *Expunere facuta de D-na Alexandrina Gr. Cantacuzino, prezidenta Gruparii Femeilor Romane asupra reformei legii electorale si a reformei senatului*. Citita de D-na Maria G-ral Anastasiu, secretara generala a gruparii la intrunirea publica dela Fundatia Carol I in ziua de 7 Decembrie 1930 (Lecture of Mrs. Alexandrina Gr. Cantacuzino, Prezident of Romanian Women’s Association, on the Reform of the Electoral Law and the Reformation of the Senate. Read by Mrs. Maria General Anastasiu, General Secretary of the Association at the Public Meeting Held at Carol I Foundation on December 7, 1930), (Bucuresti: Tipografia “ASTRA”, 1930) found in ANICB, C-AC, dosar 59, f. 232-234.

<sup>29</sup> See Alexandrina Cantacuzino’s speech held at a GFR meeting on December 7, 1930 in ANICB, C-AC dosar 59, f. 92-109.

<sup>30</sup> See manuscript without date (probably from December 1930): “Gruparea Femeilor Romane sub prezidentia D-nei Alexandrina Cantacuzino. Motiune” (“The Association of Romanian Women under the Presidency of Mrs. Alexandrina Cantacuzino. Motion”) in regards to the constitutional reform and the reformation of the Senate (in ANICB, C-AC dosar 59, f. 247-248). See also *Expunere facuta de D-na Alexandrina Gr. Cantacuzino, prezidenta Gruparii Femeilor Romane asupra reformei legii electorale si a reformei senatului*. Citita de D-na Maria G-ral Anastasiu, secretara generala a gruparii la intrunirea publica dela Fundatia Carol I in ziua de 7 Decembrie 1930 (Lecture of Mrs. Alexandrina Gr. Cantacuzino, Prezident of Romanian Women’s Association, on the Reform of the Electoral Law and the Reformation of the Senate. Read by Mrs. Maria General Anastasiu, General Secretary of the Association at the Public Meeting Held at Carol I Foundation on December 7, 1930), (Bucuresti: Tipografia “ASTRA”, 1930) found in ANICB, C-AC, dosar 59, f. 232-234; See

“Amendament propus de catre Gruparea femeilor si Consiliul National al Femeilor romane” (“Amendment Proposed by the Association of Romanian Women and the National Council of Romanian Women”), March 16, 1932 (ANICB, C-AC dosar 138, f. 45) and “Miscarea feminista si ultimele intruniri publice pentru dobindirea drepturilor noastre” (“The Feminist Movement and the Last Public Meetings for the Achievement of Our Rights”) in Ziarul Nostru, IV, no. 4/63 (April 1932): 2.

<sup>31</sup> See “Roumania”, news sent by AECFPR (E.Meissner, in French) to IAW in Jus Suffragii (May 1938): 63 and Angela Baci, Rolul Constitutiei din 1923 in consolidarea unitatii nationale. Evolutia problemei constitutionale in Romania interbelica (The Role of the 1923 Constitution in the Consolidation of the National Unity. The Evolution of the Constitutional Question in the Interwar Romania), Bucuresti: Editura Stiintifica si Enciclopedica, 1988, 187 and Constitutiunea Regelui Carol II (The Constitution of King Carol II), Bucuresti, 1938, 20-21

<sup>32</sup> See for example manuscript: “Cuvintare tinuta de d-na Alexandrina Cantacuzino la sedinta festiva de la Casa Femeii, pentru sarbatorirea obtinerii drepturilor politice. 6 Martie 1938” (“The Speech Held by Mrs. Alexandrina Cantacuzino at the Festive Meeting at Woman’s House Celebrating the Achievement of Political Rights. 6 March 1938”) in ANICB, C-AC dosar 251, f. 19-21 or manuscript: “Pergament – Act de slavire si de vesnica amintire” (“Parchment – Document of Celebration and Eternal Remembrance”) in ANICB, C-AC, dosar 251, f. 3

<sup>33</sup> See for example letter from C.Botez to E. Meissner from February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1938 (in ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XII 32, f. 28-29) in which Botez agreed with Meissner’s decision to stop writing letters of protest against the restrictions imposed on women’s suffrage since the letters were useless. In the same letter Botez expressed her hopes that the restrictions on political activities imposed by the new regime would lead to the improvement of the situation in political life and state institutions by removing the political demagogues and favoring the work of those committed to the betterment of country’s situation.

<sup>34</sup> See telegram from C. Botez to E. Meissner (June 24, 1939) in which Meissner was invited to the celebration of the first woman parliamentary member (ANICB, CEM-EM, dosar XI 29, vol.1) and the note from the section “Roumania” of Jus Suffragii in which it was announced that Maria M. Pop won a seat in the Romanian Senate in the category for agriculture and at the first meeting of the Senate she was appointed as Senate Secretary (Jus Suffragii (October 1939): 5).

<sup>35</sup> Baci, Rolul Constitutiei din 1923, 202.

<sup>36</sup> “Motiune votata la Congresul Gruparii Femeilor Romane tinut la Brasov in zilele de 12, 13, 14 Noiembrie 1938” (“Motion Voted at the Congress of Romanian Women’s Association Held at Brasov on November 12, 13, 14, 1938”) in ANICB, C-AC dosar 254, f. 7.

## THE JOHANNA DOHNAL ARCHIVE

Maria Steiner

Johanna Dohnal was born in 1939 and was an activist within the *Austrian Socialist Party*, especially the socialist women's movement from the late 1960s on. 1972 to 1979 she was Women's Secretary of the city of Vienna, from 1973 to 1979 member of the Viennese federal state parliament and member of the Viennese city council. In 1979, Johanna Dohnal was appointed by Chancellor



**The first Minister for Women's Affairs in Austria, Johanna Dohnal in 1991**

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Bruno Kreisky as a State Secretary for general women's issues. In 1991, she became the first Minister for Women's Affairs in Austria. This helped in supporting institutional women's policy, as the ministry was assigned some budgetary rights and a veto right in federal government decisions. When Johanna Dohnal left office as Federal Minister for Women's Affairs in 1995, the unpublished material of the former State Secretary for Women's Issues and the Office of the Federal Minister for Women's Affairs was transferred to the Bruno Kreisky Archive Foundation, where a separate Johanna Dohnal Archive was established. Later on papers from Dohnal's successors as Ministers of Women's Affairs in Austria Helga Konrad and Barbara Prammer were included as well as secondary source literature on women's history in Austria, along with files of the Department for Women's Affairs of the *Renner-Institute* and photographs deriving from the former social-democratic journal "Die Frau" ("The Woman").

The archive consists of 300 boxes containing material from the late 1970s until 1999, documenting the history of Austrian gender- and equality politics. This makes it a most significant source for research on institutionalized women's policy and on the autonomous feminist movement. This collection is not only relevant for gender aspects



**300 boxes of the Johanna Dohnal Archive**

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in Austrian history, but the holdings are also significant for the research of to the international policies, due to Johanna Dohnal's multi-focus engagement for women's policy (foreign aid for the "third world", UN women's conferences). As minister in charge of all women's affairs, Johanna Dohnal has also acted on an international level in the fight for the acceptance of women's rights as universal human rights. Johanna Dohnal made active intervention in all women's matters her primary aim. Her work was focused on actively strengthening women's rights: the right to education, employment, social security, physical inviolability, self-determination, equal treatment and political participation.

These topics are also the basis of the structure of the archives forming 32 categories, speeches being a central part of the collection. More than 900 manuscripts were indexed and are now accessible via an electronic database. 60 boxes of correspondence with institutions as well as individuals provide insight into the development of political and legal decision making processes (like the abolition of §144 regarding abortion legislature) and the impact of these processes on individual living conditions (like improved access to education). In general, the original order of the documents has been sustained to

facilitate a better understanding of the development of various political initiatives in their historical context. Equal opportunity programs, foreign aid to developing countries, health policies, reproductive choice, taxation, peace keeping activities, education policies, welfare policies as well as the prevention of violence against women, relations with independent women's movements and groups, disabled women and women's conferences of the UN. New documents are added according to the guidelines of the archive, like literary and political estates by women who have been involved in the political decision making-process.

1,000 photographs were organised and indexed, 400 books and more than 600 brochures ('grey literature'), posters and leaflets build a corpus of sources which are generally not collected in public archives. The collection is complemented by the inclusion of audio-visual sources: 100 audio and 200 video tapes containing radio and TV appearances as well as oral history interviews with activists of Austrian feminist movements provide a rich overview of the recent women's history. Newspaper clippings facilitate and complete the archive.



Women's demonstration in front of the government in Vienna May 1983, with the banner  
"No woman leaves the government"

The opening hours of the Johanna Dohnal Archive are Monday to Friday (9.00 to 14.00) on appointment. The collection is accessible for all people interested in issues of women's history and women's policy. Originals of course must not be removed from the archive. Records may be copied and photographed for a fee. The regulations concerning the confidentiality of the sender's correspondent and the copyright ought to be respected. Requested photographs will be scanned to protect the original. Most inquiries are handled via phone or e-mail to assure quick response. Mainly journalists and students visit and use the archive. On average, 20 scientists per year use the archives for a longer period (for example only recently, in the course of a study on gene technology and reproduction medicine). We are also providing support for teachers in women's history based on our assorted documents and our cooperation with other women's collections and libraries.

In future, we shall try to digitalize some of the files and plan to include them into a website. Thereby we want to provide information on historical events and present time history in order to address a broader, non-professional audience. In the near future, it will also be necessary to renew the media, as it is to be assumed that some tapes will be inaccessible very soon. Photographs and posters have to be included in a data base in order to facilitate easier retrieval.

The main problem of the *Johanna Dohnal Archive* is a financial one. It is often difficult but sometimes right out impossible to get funding for purely archival activities. The *Johanna Dohnal Archive* shares premises and staff with the *Kreisky Archive Foundation*, which is a major economic advantage and, in fact, basically makes its existence possible. This cooperation provides both archives with a cumulative effort to share their staff's skills, knowledge and their organizational infrastructure as well as a flexible approach to fund-raising.

## GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE BULGARIAN GUERILLA FIGHTERS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE “UNIONS OF THE FIGHTERS AGAINST FASCISM”. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSES

Petar Vodenicharov and Milena Angelova

Many of the autobiographies and declarations of the 'Fighters against Fascism' written in the period of 1946 -1956 and kept in the archive of The Union of the Fighters against Fascism in Blagoevgrad speak of unusual biographical change: semilit-erate or illiterate peasants who supported guerilla fighters (so called partisans) quite by chance, a month or two before the communists took power on 9 September 1944, managed for a very short time to rise to high social positions – officers in the Police and Army, managers of the agricultural and industrial state enterprises:

*“I was born on the 2nd of February 1912 in the town of Bansko. I come from a pure peasant family. I have an elementary education. I started worked when e I was a child to support my family. Up to the age of seventeen I was a shepherd helping my father with the sheep. After this, I became a forest worker, then I was a worker in the chair-barrel factory ‘Sunrise’. From 1938 to 1944, I was a worker in this cooperative. Entering the cooperative I entered a progressive background, all of the cooperative workers were people of progressive understanding... In April 1944 I received an order to join the military unit in the town of Nevrocop. But instead of serving as a soldier I became a partisan guerilla fighter... Today I am a director of the agricultural cooperative (TKZS) in the town.”* (State archive, Blagoevgrad:, F.172, Op.1., a.e.7, L.73)

Georgi Tsintsev of the village of Yakoruda, a formerly cowherd, became a chief accountant of state nterprise. On 20 April 1944 he joined the partisan detachment “Nikola Parapunov” and this turned out to be a prerequisite for his successful career.

Many of the questionnaire–declarations, required for joining the “Union of the Fighters against Fascism”, reveal similar unusual upward mobility: Atanas Tumbev of the town of Razlog had not finished his basic education. Before 1944 he had been an unqualified worker but after 1944 he got a high position in the Police. In his declaration, the column “Other participants in the struggle against fascism” was filled in with an anti-fascist propaganda cliché “as a child I grew up with the idea of the struggle

against fascism". There are many cases the applicants not to point to any contributions to the antifascist fight.

Such biographical trajectories could be interpreted as examples of joining the Resistance not because of anti-fascist convictions but because of political conformism. By the spring of 1944 the outcome of the war was obvious, and communists were expected to take control in Bulgaria.

How typical are such biographies? Most of the members of the Union of Fighters of Fascism in the town of Razlog had taken part only in the communist take-over on 9 September 1944 - 397 persons; supporters of the partisans were 195 persons, partisan guerilla fighters (1941-1944) – 186; concentration camp detainees – 18; political emigrants -2.

The statistical analysis of the Bulgarian guerilla fighter movement reveals that more than half of the fighters joined it in 1944. For instance, in the Second Resistance zone of the South- East Bulgaria 54.5 % of the partisans have joined the guerrilla detachments in 1944, only 4.5% partisans had joined the detachments in 1942, and 1.7% in 1941 (Dochev 2004). The social-demographic study of the movement made by D. Dochev (Dochev 2004) outlines the typical social profile of the partisans. According to the communist ideology the core of the anti-fascist struggle, which was considered also to be a class struggle (a "fight against fascism and capitalism"), should have consisted of the most conscious and educated part of the nation – the industrial working class and the progressive intellectuals (so called intelligentsia). But 85.71 % of the Bulgarian fighters were born in villages. This proportion was too high even for a country like Bulgaria in which 78.6% of the population were classified as peasants in 1934. Although a considerable number of the partisans worked in the towns mainly as unskilled workers, most of them (77%) had joined the partisan movement from their villages with the support of their relatives and friends. According to the statistics 52.58 % of the partisan fighters were workers but only 13.7% - industrial workers; among the workers the highest was the deal of the artisans working in the towns and villages – 34.1%. The deal of the intelligentsia was 17. 6% but only 5.02 % of them were employed, the rest were still students in the colleges.

We compared the social profiles of the male and female fighters. The deal of the women in the guerilla was 7, 8 %. The average age of the male partisans was 24 years and 10 months, the average age of the female partisans was 21 years and 3 months. 45.4



% of the male partisans were married with children; only 21% of the female partisans were married. 10.9 % of the male partisans graduated high school; 17.07 % of the female partisans graduated high school. The deal of the industrial workers and intelligentsia among the female partisans was higher than the deal among the male ones.

The statistics outlines the typical biography of the male and female fighters, future members of the “Union of the Fighters against Fascism”. The male anti-fascist most probably was poor peasant or common worker married with children with primary or junior secondary education. The female anti-fascist most probably was industrial worker or belonged to intelligentsia, single, with high or college education.

Comparing the social profiles of the male and female partisans we could conclude that the anti-fascist conviction and class consciousness were more likely to be reasons for joining the Resistance for women than for men. Donko Dochev suggested that “emotional reasons attract girls and young women to the armed struggle – romanticism, idealism, the inspiring example of the girl–anti-fascists of neighboring countries” (Dochev 2004, 34 ). In their memoirs, female partisans considered the anti-fascist struggle as a liberating alternative to the oppressive patriarchy and nationalism of the Bulgarian state.

Most of the male partisans were men of traditional patriarchal values, not of modern emancipatory ideals. Many of them lacked any experience with modern institutions even with school or army. Some of them joined the partisan units to escape military service. Consider the following report of the “Union of the Fighters against Fascism” in the village of Yakoruda (29.09.1948):

*“The secretary of the Union reported that Yakim Mandzhukov did not behave honestly with the daughter of our comrade. As Ivan Shteryanov testified, he had promised to marry her when they visited the town of Razlog and slept together in the hotel... B. Popov first took the floor and insisted that Ivan Shterjaniov should be dismissed from the Party, his partisan badge to be taken off, he was morally spoiled. ... Decision: to be dismissed and his partisan badge to be taken off”.* (State archive, Blagoevgrad:, F.172, Op.1, a. e. 7, L.124)

It is worth remembering that immediately after the coup d'état on 9 September 1944 former partisans initiated legislation that provided them with many privileges, a process which increased over the years (Vodenicharov 2004). It is reasonable to suspect, therefore, that political conformism and the desire of being favored by the men of power were among the motives of many male anti-fascists. There is a striking difference between the biographical trajectories of male and female members of the “Union of the

Fighters against Fascism". A steep upward social mobility without educational qualifications or professional experience was most typical for male members of the Union. For the women anti-fascists, even the most prominent ones, there was a limited sphere of social realization in what was perceived as social motherhood - the sphere of education, social care, art and propaganda. For instance Slavka Nakova was a well educated woman. After graduating Razlog high school, she studied in a professional high school in Sofia. She became a member of the "Young Worker's Union" in 1937. In 1941 she contacted and supported partisans. In 1943 she was imprisoned and sentenced to death. Following the coup of 9 September 1944 Nakova became a leader of the "Pupil's Pioneer Organization" in her native town Razlog. The female antifascist were misrepresented in the "Union of the Fighters against Fascism" of Razlog ; their deal was about 0.5%. (State archive, Blagoevgrad:, F.172, Op.1, a. e. 7, l.126).

According to the Austrian anthropologist Karl Kaser (2003), one of the greatest obstacles to the modernization of society in the Balkans was the lack of experience in the institutionalization of social relations. During the entire Ottoman period, the only functioning institution for the members of the Christian church was the Orthodox church. Consequently, the resolution of many of the social problems were left to the relatives and friends.

"In such societies there is not eternal hostility but there are institutions providing for eternal friendship... In the institutional societies the institutionalization of the conflicts opens a space for friendships which are not based on kinship - friendship between genders and friendships based on practical or emotional exchange" (Kaser 2003, 28).

In patriarchal kinship societies the strongest form of friendship is through kinship. Conflicts are usually resolved in extended kinship networks. Typical examples of kinship societies could be found in the West Balkans. Apart from the institutional (West-European) and kinship societies (West Balkans) there is another Mediterranean type of society - 'the patron -clients society' (clientelistic suite), which is formed in the space outside of the main institutions of the society but is based not only on kinship but mainly on friendship. The suite includes a patron and his more or less loyal clients.

The kinship and clientelistic societies favor the unfolding of parallel organizations, a concentration on private matters, and denying or undermining the social ones. Such societies polarize individuals, groups, genders, generations, friends, and enemies.

State institutions are staffed with relatives and friends, with the number of state employees growing disproportionately. As a popular saying of the communist era stated “Without personal connections you can not be born or die”.

In societies of the male patron-clients *suites*, public relations between the sexes are dominated by machismo. The power of the communist macho-men was legitimized not by material or intellectual achievements but by a self-affirming heroic discourse. What gave power to macho men was neither inherited nor achieved but it was the access to ‘a party patron-clients networks’ which allowed them to use the friendship intimacy to by-pass official laws, institutions, and competitions. Men in communist society were deprived of the ownership of property and free economic or intellectual initiative. They, therefore, were compelled to rely mainly on the favors of friends and to value especially their closeness to a party patron. Communist party patrons, headed by “Baj Tosho” ‘elder brother/ good man Tosho’ (the popular name of the communist party and state leader, Todor Zhivkov), formed power networks based on friendship which doubled the official institutions.

The presence of female antifascists would have spoiled the intimacy of the male ‘*suites*’. Excluded from the male power networks, women had more limited opportunities for professional and social upward mobility. Women gained public respect not as professionals but as mothers, especially as mothers of heroes or “social mothers” (teachers, social workers, propaganda workers). The public domination of men did not mean domination in the private sphere as well. The male domination in the family is brought to an end when the husbands recognize their mothers in their wives. As oral autobiographies revealed, powerful patrons often behaved quite childish within their families. The “mother of heroes” metaphor dominated the public discourse - “mother party, motherland, the mother working class” (Vodenicharov 1996).

The unacknowledged intimacy of the male fighters in the “*suites*” not only kept women out of the power networks but also resulted in a considerable amount of homophobia as a defense reaction. This could help to explain the repressive policy towards homosexuals in the communist state. Homosexuality was considered a crime until 1968 and homosexuals were subject to violence and blackmailing, and often forced to collaborate with State Security (Gruev 2006: 97).

Could we consider the “Union of the Fighters against Fascism” as a clientelistic organization parallel to the official institutions, that consisted of “*suite*” of privileged

males using the anti-fascist discourse to boast each other in order to legitimize their social power. Consider the following certificates:

*'Certificate of 10.06.1949*

*The Union of the Fighters against Fascism, the town of Bansko, is issuing this certificate to testify that Dimitar Slavev has taken part in the Resistance before 09.09.1944 as a supporter of the partisans ... The certificate is issued to be used for entering the University as a privileged comrade'. (State archive, Blagoevgrad, F.172, Op.1, a.e. 7, L.242)*

There are 320 such certificates in the archive of the Razlog Union. In order to legitimize the ever expanding privileges accorded to the party patrons and clients, the Union launched a large scale public campaign to celebrate the heroism of its members. A letter of the Union of Razlog from 16 April 1949 retranslated the instruction of the Central Committee of the Union concerning "*the necessity for a rapid collection of materials relating to the Resistance in order to publish it and to make popular the anti-fascist struggle in Bulgaria*". It required the organization of local commissions "*with the participation of teachers, cultural workers, and energetic youngsters*". The commissions had to organize the collecting of written memoirs of the participants in the Resistance. The instruction stipulated that if the activists in the Resistance were not capable of writing their memoir, "active comrades were to be provided in order to write down (or rather invent) their stories". Before publication the collected memoirs had to undergo a literary intervention. The stories of the participants were to be rewritten in more artistic and exaggerated language to emphasize the strong commitment to the Resistance movement. For instance the journalist Mircho Yurukov prepared for publication the memoirs of Ivan Iliev, representative of the left wing of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. Yurukov substituted the sentence "Iliev and his friends decided to steal the crown and the scepter of the bishop, and for this action were dismissed as teachers" with the following one "He disagreed with the Exarchate and was dismissed as teacher". (State Archive-Blagoevgrad, 742)

While the newspaper of the Union 'People's fight' featured the mythic heroism of its members the archive of the Union speaks about clientelistic passions. In response to the complaint of six members of the Union in Belitsa for not being appointed to suitable jobs, an investigation was ordered. The latter concluded with the following report:

"The members complain that people indifferent to our struggle were appointed

to jobs just because they were very close to some powerful people. The following has been discovered:

Ivan Koshov wanted to be appointed as a forest guard, but he found out that the salary was not sufficient and refused the post. Later he was appointed as a supervisor but he could not get along with the work.

Kostadin Madolev worked in the municipality but because the salary was small he quit that job. He wanted to be a forest guard but because he did not have the qualifications for the job he was not accepted.

Stojan Topuzov wanted to be a policeman but because of his lack of qualifications he was not accepted. He had an elementary education and somebody else was appointed who was not so active in the struggle but was qualified.

Toma Shalamanov was a senior policeman in Belitsa but he misappropriated confiscated textiles. ...

Usain Kashev was a postman, he used to distribute the "*Worker's Mission*" newspaper. He did his job in such a way that the Party committee in Belitsa had to pay 180 000 leva and for this reason he was dismissed.

Georgi Aleksov wanted to be appointed as a forest guard, but he did not get the job because the Party committee did not agree with the appointment. The District Party committee announced that Georgi Aleksov had refused to go to the front". (State archive, Blagoevgrad:, F.172, Op.1., a.e.7, L.89)

In 1934 the modernization of the Bulgarian society led to many initiatives for strengthening the expertise and transparency of the state institutions. The municipal reform of the government of August 1934 centralized the appointments in the Bulgarian state institutions. The party-political system was rejected as corrupt and prone to clientelism. The aim of the "Law of Village and Town Municipalities" was to establish a professional administration with suitably qualified personnel. The official propaganda praised male military heroism, discipline, education, and loyalty to the state institutions. (Manolova 1992, 53) The take over of 9 September 1944 led to the de-institutionalization and the de-professionalization of the Bulgarian society. The Decree of 2 November 1944 for "Appointment and Dismissing of the Personnel in the Ministry of Interior" rejected the former requirements for educational qualifications for state employees. Another decree abolished the requirement for compulsory educational qualifications for civil servants in the municipalities (Ludzhev 2005).

Professionalism and educational qualifications, which had become part of the masculine ethos in the 1930-es, were swallowed up by the ethos of the male heroism that prevailed in the communist state. The strength of the anti-fascist male heroism was exaggerated to bolster the eternal friendship and the exploitation of society by the male “clientelistic suites”. All forms of illegal male heroism outside of the official institutions were praised by the communist propaganda – the paramilitary organizations of “hayduti” (rebels against the Ottoman empire), “chetnici” (rebels for the liberation of Macedonia), “septemvriyci” (peasant rebels against the bourgeois state). All of them were considered as predecessors of the “glorious partisan fighters”. A mythical folklore vision of a charismatic society of heroes and followers replaced the modern vision of an institutional-based society. With the end of the communist regime in 1989 the privileged male suites throw off the heroic anti-fascist and anti –capitalist mask and the brutal male suites of the so called “mutri” ‘mugs’ became the main actors of the transition to capitalism.

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## WOMEN AND FAMILY, WOMEN AND SOCIETY

### NEGOTIATING MARRIAGE CONTRACTS. LEGAL RECORDS AS SOURCE MATERIALS FOR GENDER HISTORY

Margareth Lanzinger

My paper focuses on several central points concerning pre-nuptial negotiations, the results of which were finalized in marriage contracts. Contracts represent an intermediary legal form, which is – or must be – oriented in a legal framework, but which also serves to reconcile norms and practice, norms and real-life situations, norms and personal preferences. A number of factors can result in specific constellations which necessitate various forms of agreement or modifications: socio-economic situation, social rank, the question of whether the marriage in question is a first marriage or a remarriage, a large age difference between bride and groom, and many other things. Not at least, the subject matter that was to be negotiated in the context of marriage and the various forms of agreements were based on gender-related concepts. One aim of my research is the intertwining of the history of law and gender history.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage contracts are legal records. In Austria, a part of them is collected within registers that is a kind of minute books written down by the officials of the manorial court districts. They contain all forms of contracts – marriage contracts, sales and transfers of property, widow contracts, settlements, financial transactions, notes of debt, receipts, negotiations, lists of assets, inventories, wills and a number of other documents.<sup>2</sup> This material is a particularly rich source from a gender-history perspective: it reveals the various roles and scope of action for women as well as gender-specific inequalities.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Regional contexts**

The selected region under observation is the County of Tyrol, a part of the Habsburg monarchy. I focussed my research on the market town named Innichen/San Candido

(South Tyrol) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Innichen was a small market town characterized by a mixed economy based on agriculture, merchants, retail traders, craftsmen.<sup>4</sup> The absence of pre-industrial and industrial activities in the whole region around Innichen enabled the continuity of an agrarian-handicraft-commercial social structure until the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and as a consequence, the continuation of a rather corporative system.

The manorial system in early modern Tyrol was quite different from the one in most of the Austrian territories. There was practically no personal dependency of the peasantry upon the landlord. The Tyrolean peasantry was personally ‘free’. Manorial marriage consent (*grundherrschaftlicher Ehekonsens*) was unknown, and therefore the laws did not require written marriage contracts. As a consequence, there is a huge amount of marriage contracts in the archives of Lower Austria, for example, but not in the archives of Tyrol. In my research area it was up to the bridal couples or their families to decide whether to go to the court and to stipulate a marriage contract or not.

### Legal contexts

The most important legal basis in the context of marriage contracts in Tyrol consists in the separate property of husband and wife.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, the property of the deceased spouse belonged to the children, in case of their existence, or to the closest relatives from his or her own family – and not to the surviving widow or to the widower. It is a system of property transmission orientated by kinship lines and centred on the family of origin, not on the couple. Taking into consideration the predominance of men’s property it becomes clear that the situation of widows, especially of widows without children, can be very difficult.<sup>6</sup> The legal basis for this was Tyrol’s 16<sup>th</sup>-century *Landesordnung*, the first written law code of the County of Tyrol.<sup>7</sup> A certain positive result of this system can be seen in the fact, that women could not be made liable with their assets for the debts of their husbands. In case women in Innichen wanted to pay off their husbands’ debts, a renunciation to this right had to be uttered in court.

Concerning the inheritance practise, for the ‘principle’, the standard was impartible inheritance (*Anerbenrecht*) with primogeniture: It provides for the eldest son to receive the principal share of the property, the house or farmstead, with the farmland, the meadows and the garden belonging to it as an economic entity. Daughters do only inherit if there is no son, or if the sons have no interest in the family estate. One has to



emphasize that there is no automatic correspondence between norms and the practice and one has to take into consideration that the range of family situations and strategies is much wider than the one covered by law.<sup>8</sup> This way the framework outlined here briefly offers general guidelines, which cannot be simply ignored. At the same time, however, they are changeable through regulations or arguments laid down in wills or just in contracts.

### **Marriage contracts**

Usually, marriage contracts were drafted a few days before the wedding. The contracting persons, their advisors or guardians are specified by name, profession, and marital status. – The age of the bridal couple is not specified, one has to look for it within parish registers.<sup>9</sup> Marriage contracts contain agreements mainly on two topics: the marriage portion and the widowhood. Although marriage contracts normally were pre-marital agreements, their effects have to be considered as long-term ones, which survived duration of marriage: The contracts included provisions for the widows respectively widowers and for children (also of different marriages). They were referred to in contacts of the transfer of landed property and also further settlements and agreements were based on the original marriage contract. A marriage contract can be seen as a document within a network of legal evidences.

### **Marriage portion (*Heiratsgut*) and morning gift (*Morgengabe*)**

The basic form of the marriage portion in Innichen was as follows: The bride's father or the brother promises the groom, after the marriage has taken place, to contribute a certain sum in cash as the bride's marriage portion. The groom promises to invest and insure this wealth in his house as a sort of mortgage (*frpf ndlich*). The marriage portion was intended to remain in the woman's possession but it was administrated by the husband during the marriage. After the husband's death it served as a basis for her material existence. In this sense, the marriage portion (*Heiratsgut*) was able to assume a loan-like character for the family of the groom.<sup>10</sup>

An important difference (from the bride's perspective) was whether the disbursement of her marriage portion was done independently of her expected paternal

and maternal inheritances, or was – as was more often the case – included in a future distribution as an already distributed portion ( *conto* or *Kollationierung*).

In the last two decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century various changes took place: At this time, fathers are much less present within marriage contracts than before. In many cases the bride's father did not guarantee anymore the marriage portion to the groom, but the bride brought her wealth by herself into the marriage. Generally, parents or relatives and advisers were increasingly disappearing before the court. The compulsory guardianship for women (*Geschlechtsvormundschaft*) was abolished in 1786 with the new law code of Joseph II. (*Josephinisches Gesetzbuch, JGB*). This was, of course, a very important improvement: Therewith, women were enabled to act in their own name before the court and in respect of legal transactions. However, the phenomenon that the bridal couple became more visible and more powerful within the marriage contracts was not only the effect of a new legislation but it refers also to a process of social change which was going on at the turn of the century. Christopher H. Johnson called it “the dethronement of the father”.<sup>11</sup>

The new law code also offered the possibility for women to terminate the administration and usufruct right of their wealth assigned to the husbands and to manage it by their own. In order to prevent this, the marriage contracts from that time on usually contained an appropriate regulation: The administration of the woman's wealth by the husband was explicitly ensured for the duration of the marriage and very often it was also extended explicitly to all of her existing *and* future wealth accrued during the marriage: In a marriage contract written down in 1790, the husband was entitled for example to “reserve the existing and future wealth during the marriage, according to the old Tyrolean law code, for usufruct”.<sup>12</sup> However, the “old Tyrolean law code” was already abrogated with the new law code from 1786, but it continued to be the frame of reference.

Only in a few cases in my sample, the groom gave to the bride a morning gift which, in contrast to the marriage portion was a gift.

What is interesting in this regard is that in the early modern period the contribution of a marriage portion and the giving of a morning gift were not tied to gender roles – marriage portion only from women, morning gift only from men – but were rather dependent on constellations of property ownership. Andre Gatterer, the servant of a local court official (the *Pfleger*), for example married into a widow's household. His bride, Marie Hueberin, “wants to give the groom as a morning gift and as a donation

199 guilders (*Gulden*) from her wealth as his irrevocable property”.<sup>13</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the Austrian Civil Code (*Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, ABGB*) of 1811 this flexibility disappeared and was replaced by a clear definition: marriage portion from women – as compensation for the economic “burden of married status” –, morning gift from men.

### Provisions for the period after marriage

Marriage contracts also defined the way in which the possible widow or widower was to be provided for. Marriage contracts are of great importance in this context: many of the contracts concluded in the court of Innichen lay the main attention on regulations for the case of widowhood. If the groom brought his house or his farm into the marriage (as in the majority of cases, although by no means always), this property did not, upon his death, go to the widow, but – normally – to the eldest son or another child. If no children were present, the closest relatives of the deceased owner would accept ownership, a nephew or niece, for example – here, once again, men came before women, and the older before the younger. The house, then, could land in the hands of “strangers”. This necessitated that decisions and agreements be made, which – particularly in the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – were not formulated in inheritance contracts, but in marriage contracts.

Very often, a widow was entitled to a so-called *Herberg* – a sort of lodging –, which meant the right to continue living in the house of the deceased husband and have her basic needs provided for. The standard was that the widow did not have to pay anything for the room she had at her disposal nor did she have to contribute any wood. This was especially important in my research area: Innichen is a market town at nearly 1,200 meters’ elevation, where the winters were long and cold. Points of negotiation in contracts included the room to which the widow was entitled – usually the room that lay above or next to the kitchen. The best room was the one above the so-called *Stube*, the main room where the family spent most of its time. The *Stube* was often the only heated room in the house, and the room directly above it was a bit warmer than the others. In some cases, well-situated widows were able to secure this room for themselves. The extent of the negotiated things was also orientated by symbolic capital – as for

example young age. Further provisions included use of the tools and utensils necessary in the household and kitchen.

If a marriage took place at an advanced age and/or if the groom was significantly older than the bride, children from the marriage would be highly unlikely, while the *Herberg* would be a relatively certain, and the widow could then make very detailed claims for the *Herberg* concerning the dimensions of the vegetable garden, that she could use, the amount of fresh milk, she was allowed daily, a certain place for a table, a chair and a spinning wheel in the room, where she would stay.<sup>14</sup> The widow would usually lose all these rights and benefits in case of remarriage.<sup>15</sup>

The specification of this *Herberg* is one of the first and – still in the 1760s – often the only point in marriage contracts. But there were alternatives to the widow's moving immediately to the *Herberg*.<sup>16</sup> Particularly the presence of children from the marriage in question the widow was entitled to govern the wealth of her deceased husband – usually together with their children's guardians. The widow did not become owner of the property, but neither was she required to retire to the *Herberg* – at least for a certain time period. The most common time limitation of the right of governing the household and of usufruct was specified in terms of a certain age of the children.<sup>17</sup> This point was marked by the ages of 16, 18, 20 or 24 years, which usually all children had to have reached – but sometimes only the designated heir. Usufruct of the husband's wealth carried with it the – often explicit and sometimes closely detailed – obligation to provide for the maintenance and education of the children, which would otherwise have been the obligation of the husband respectively father. The widow, then, was obligated by the marriage contract to, for example to: “obtain for the children the necessary nourishment and clothing, see to it that they learned to read, write and do arithmetic, and that the boys learned a trade, and the girls sewing, so that they would be capable of earning their bread.”<sup>18</sup>

In my sample – 113 marriage and connected contracts from Innichen –, there is only one marriage contract stipulating the *Herberg* as perspective for the husband as widower – even though approximately a quarter of the grooms of my sample do not dispose of real property. In-marrying husband usually get at least part of their bride's property, sometimes in two stages, for instance one half at the wedding and the other half one year later, or the couple agrees upon a joint ownership, or the husband is entitled to assume ownership at the latest after the death of his wife. – The ‘marital

order' in this society obviously provides that the husband should hold the owner status, at least as a widower.

### The usufruct right

As I mentioned before, one sort of usufruct to be governed by contract was that which the widowed woman was to receive from the wealth of her deceased husband in the case of the presence of young children from the marriage in question, very often with a limited duration. Usufruct also came in a variety of variants: in terms of a male 'counterpart' to the *Herberg* and in terms of a reciprocal and/or lifelong usufruct.

In marriage contracts with the stipulated *Herberg* for the widowed wife, usually there was granted the lifelong usufruct of the woman's wealth to the widowed husband – sometimes, however, also with a limitation: "The bride desires to dedicate her wealth consisting of 180 guilders in the case that at her death, no children be present, to the lifelong usufruct of the future husband; should, however, children be present, he shall be entitled to usufruct only until such time when all children have turned 20."<sup>19</sup> Or in another case "the bride dedicates to the groom the usufruct of the contributed marriage portion during the marriage; should the bride pass away earlier, the groom is to retain usufruct from half of her wealth, as long as he does not remarry."<sup>20</sup> This was a somewhat unusual sort of contract, since limitations of this kind made on the part of the wife with regard to the husband were rare. In this case, the bride also demanded a three per cent interest on an expected inheritance of 200 guilders. The bride had their origin in a village 40 kilometres away from Innichen belonging to another court district – maybe this was a local custom there. Another explanation for this kind of reservation could be that she came from a rather wealthy family.

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a considerable number of marriage contracts concede a lifelong right of usufruct to the widower *and* to the widow regardless of whether or not children are present. For example: "Both spouses will to each other, in the event that one should pass away, lifelong usufruct of the full wealth left behind, with the exception of clothing, table cloths and bedclothes, whether or not this marriage produces children."<sup>21</sup> If there was a limitation in favour of children, this limitation affected both of them in the same way. For example: "Fourthly and lastly, both spouses would like to promise each other lifelong usufruct of their

respective wealth in such a way that it should cease only if children be present, and should in this case last only until all children have reached the age of 18.”<sup>22</sup>

One gets the impression that at the turn from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century important changes took place affecting the balance of power within marriage: there is a shift toward more equal and reciprocal agreements between the spouses connected with a growing emphasis on the married couple instead of the kinship lines. The lifelong usufruct can be seen as an evidence for this change: the lifelong usufruct strengthens the position of the widow and at the same time it blocks the access to the inheritance for children or relatives. However, it is not a one-dimensional linear process leading to a stronger position of women, of wives and of widows – as I pointed out, there are ambivalences too concerning the law *and* practice.

At the same time, there are, for example, agreements underlining the relevance of kinship lines again: according to the *Intestat-Ordnung* of 1786, parents became the heirs of their children who died as minors and without leaving children of their own – in contrast to the previous period, when the inheritance remained in the respective family line and did not go to both parents. A respective contract clause appears for the first time in 1800. It states that the future husband and wife agree not to claim any rights to inherit their minor children, so that in such a case “Kerschbaum property should return to the Kerschbaum heirs and Hofer property to the Hofer heirs”<sup>23</sup> – thus continuing the practice of bequeathing wealth according to maternal and paternal family lines.

### **The network of documents – two examples**

Marriage contracts are documents within a wider network of legal evidences. I would like to give just two examples of this kind of connectedness. In both cases, women as heiresses are in the centre of attention.

The household is a place where different agreements and sequences of action take place under different circumstances, and in varying constellations of persons and power. Women had an opportunity to inherit when there was no son in the family, or when the only son was so handicapped by poor health that he could not be considered as an heir or when the son/s renounced the inheritance.<sup>24</sup> It should be stated – and this can be regarded as a consistent principle – that the degree of the closeness of kinship was the central and decisive criterion for determining heirs and heiresses. This counted more

than gender. The daughter of a family indisputably took precedence over any male second-degree relative in inheritance practice, over the son of the father's elder brother, for example, and anyone else from the closer paternal and maternal relatives. If the eldest daughter was already married elsewhere, or if there were other reasons for it, a younger daughter could also inherit – as in the case of Margareth Hoferin.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1800, Margareth Hoferin was “declared a future proprietress” by her father Christian Hofer – to take effect following his death. House, goods and chattel, with the exception of a few animals, were transferred to her in this declaration. She and her future husband Michael Kerschbaumer<sup>25</sup> were to share in working the farm during the father's lifetime. Following his death, they were obligated to provide the mother and the sister Anna, as long as she remained single, each with a certain room in the house, to supply them with wood and to grant them the use of the necessary household utensils. As financial support, the inheriting daughter additionally received a sum amounting to 700 guilders<sup>26</sup> as a so-called “preliminary” (*Voraus*).<sup>27</sup>

In the marriage contract that immediately followed this declaration, the specific points included the provision that the bride and her father would introduce the groom into the household and supply him with accommodations and clothing in return for his relevant work. Father and daughter willed that he should not be “driven away” from the house during his lifetime. He would also be allowed to marry again in this house, should the heiress die young – however, only children from this first marriage would be entitled to an inheritance. Should the wife die without surviving children, the property contract would be transferred to the husband under similar conditions.<sup>28</sup> They were married on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1800.<sup>29</sup>

The father Christian Hofer died in March 1801 at the age of 78.<sup>30</sup> He was survived by a widow, who was his second wife, and three daughters from his first marriage. The time had come to calculate all the existing plus items and the minus items that were due – what was left were assets amounting to 1,409 guilders,<sup>31</sup> which were to be divided equally among the three sisters. According to the Intestacy Decree of 1786, however, the widow was entitled to an equal portion of the benefits with more than three children. Further calculations were thus required.

Subsequently, Margareth Hoferin was in fact declared a proprietress by the act of an “appointment of property”. – She was the middle one of the three sisters, born in 1764. The elder sister Maria Hoferin (born 1762) had already married the glove maker

Joseph Thalmann in 1796, who had entered into a paternal inheritance for his part. The still unmarried sister Anna (born 1766) from the first contract – the declaration of property – had meanwhile also married. She was married to one of the more propertied farmers of the market, Johann Lercher, who was also an heir.<sup>32</sup>

The second example: The weaver Nikolaus Oberhofer died in January 1800 at the age of 64. He was survived by a widow, but no children. Because of the dominant separation of property, his assets therefore reverted to his family, specifically to his brother Johann. Although this brother was already dead as well, he was survived by three children. He had also been a weaver in Lana, a town about 150 km away.<sup>33</sup> His son Joseph was 16 and just learning the weaving profession at his uncle's house in Innichen, the son Johann was eight years old and attended the school in Innichen, and the daughter Anna was 15 and also at her uncle's house – “learning farm work”.<sup>34</sup>

According to the marriage contract, the widow was only entitled to the benefit of a *Herberg* with the use of a room and the household utensils,<sup>35</sup> but according to the will she was entitled to the benefit of the entire assets.<sup>36</sup> With this, however, she was also to take care of the three children and future heirs – the guardian of the nephews and the niece insisted on this – until they were old enough to care for themselves. Following the inventory, a “usufruct contract” was accordingly drawn up for the widow. With a term of notice of six months, she could transfer the assets to the heirs every three or six years. In early 1803 – the first occasion provided for – the time had come: the widow, now 68 years old, terminated the usufruct of the assets, no longer wanted to be responsible for the household, but instead to receive “the capital benefit” – in other words, interest.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, a correspondence was conducted from February to May between the guardian of the children in Lana and the authorized representative in Innichen, the innkeeper Joseph Fuchs, with the result that the niece Anna was to come into the inheritance. Because she was a minor, Joseph Fuchs was designated as curator, who henceforth concluded the subsequent contracts “in the name of his proprietress”.<sup>38</sup> A marriage and purchase contract was written at the same time: Anna Oberhoferin ceded to her bridegroom, the weaver Alois G tl, half of the property transferred to her. Following the death of the widow, her two brothers were to receive 166 guilders and 40 kreutzer each.<sup>39</sup>

In this case, the starting point is represented by a married couple without children. As a rule, an heir or an heiress was usually fixed among the closest relatives. Here again,



the closeness of the degree of kinship was decisive: nephews and nieces not otherwise provided for were thus first taken into consideration, always in the order of their gender and age. For nephews and nieces designated heirs and heiresses, it was generally customary to go to live in the house of the bequeather years before the official inheritance and help with the work there. On the one hand, this can be seen as preparation for conducting the household later and dealing with its social and economic spheres, but on the other hand they also added their labour power, were a support for the bequeathing aunts and uncles in their old age. – In this sense, one could speak of a reciprocal arrangement. In the case outlined here, a reference should also be made to the close link between migration, kinship, work and inheritance – which is also relevant in a number of other cases as well.<sup>40</sup>

As I have already indicated, if the heiress married, a broad range of possible arrangements with the husband or son-in-law opened up. The degree of the integration of contracts in the property of the women covered the entire possible spectrum: the property could remain in the hands of the woman it could be ceded in part or in its entirety to the husband or transferred directly from the parent generation to the son-in-law. In response, the women insured themselves accordingly in such cases – for the rest of their lives and for the children of this marriage – in contract provisions: in case of widowhood, childlessness or the husband's remarriage. The status of an heiress could thus assume very different forms on the basis of the legal, contractual construction.

The implications that these different constructions had for everyday life, for the interrelationships and the gradations of power between the sexes cannot be determined from the material treated. It may be assumed that an heiress – even if she conceded her inheritance wholly or partially to her husband, or if it had been transferred directly to the son-in-law – was still in a different position, had a different self-understanding, in comparison with a woman who married into a family.<sup>41</sup> It appears that concessions took place primarily, but not exclusively, in professions requiring intensive use of production means: in crafts in the areas, for instance, that required a larger workshop with elaborate equipment or separate auxiliary buildings (dyers, tanners, locksmiths), in agriculture in the case of larger farms. It is principally noticeable that the complexity and extent of marriage contracts – whether transfer, concession, purchase or marriage contracts – clearly rose when an heiress–son-in-law constellation was involved. There was obviously a greater need for regulation and insurance here than in the opposite case.

## Conclusion

The goal of my paper was, on the one hand, to present marriage contracts as source materials for Gender History pointing out the most important topics of contractual practice and, on the other hand, to sketch the implications of a system of marriage-related property law according to a few specific aspects and according to its logic and dynamic. The analysis of marriage contracts reveals what men, women and their families did feel a need to agree upon. The various agreements give an impression of certain contexts of choices and decision, and the scope of action. There is a wide range of possibilities for acting, of 'agency' which can modify and mitigate certain inequalities between the spouses.

The settlements in the marriage contracts basically had to guarantee the means, the bride or the groom brought into the marriage. They provided the widow for her needs after her husband's death and they regulated the access to the wealth of the deceased spouse. Concerning the inheritance of real property and means, in Tyrol, the law and the practice traditionally gave preference to the descendants. However, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there is to observe a certain shift towards more equal and reciprocal agreements, regarding especially the arrangement of usufruct. Yet, at the same time, one can find stipulations which point to the opposite direction. Anyhow, it seems that certain agreements mark the beginning of a slight change which was finalised only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in terms of legal improvements in favour of the surviving spouse.

Not at least, one has to state, that the local and regional availability of marriage contracts in the archives is closely connected with the specific legal and administrative context.

<sup>1</sup> There is in preparation a volume on marriage contracts within the L'HOMME-*Archiv*-series: Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Ellinor Forster, Gertrude Langer-Ostrawsky and Margareth Lanzinger, *Aushandeln von Ehe. Heiratsverträge, europäische Rechtsräume und soziale Kontexte im Vergleich*, Köln/Weimar/Wien, forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wilfried Beimrohr, *Mit Brief und Siegel. Die Gerichte Tirols und ihr literarisches Schriftgut im Tiroler Landesarchiv*, Innsbruck 1994. The oldest *Verfachbuch* in Tyrol dates from the late 1460s. Franz Huter ed., *Das älteste Tiroler Verfachbuch. Landgericht Meran 1468–1471. Aus dem Nachlass von Karl Moeser*, Innsbruck 1990. It was first replaced by the land ownership register at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. for example, also: Nevill Colclough, *Invisible Patrimonies: Capitoli Matrimoniali in Ancien Régime* Ascoli, in: Hannes Grandits and Patrick Heady eds., *Distinct Inheritances. Property, Family and Community in a Changing Europe*, Münster 2003, 145–158.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Margareth Lanzinger, *Das gesicherte Erbe, Heirat in lokalen und familialen Kontexten, Innichen 1700–1900*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2003.

<sup>5</sup> The separation of marital property was the customary property regime also in Carinthia and in Vorarlberg; in the eastern part of today's Austria, however, prevailed matrimonial community of property. For a comparative perspective cf. Gertrude Langer-Ostrawsky and Margareth Lanzinger, *Begünstigt – benachteiligt? Frauen und Männer im Ehegüterrecht. Ein Vergleich auf der Grundlage von Heiratskontrakten aus zwei Herrschaften der Habsburger Monarchie im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Grethe Jacobsen et al. eds., *Less favored – more favored. Proceedings from a Conference on Gender in European Legal History, 12<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, September 2004, Copenhagen 2005 ([http://www.kb.dk/da/publikationer/online/fund\\_og\\_forskning/less\\_more/](http://www.kb.dk/da/publikationer/online/fund_og_forskning/less_more/)).

<sup>6</sup> If the family estate comes from her family, or if part of the property belongs to her because she and her husband purchased it together, then she has a claim to the property even if there are no children.

<sup>7</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of the modern state touched off a standardization of the law in the states and provinces. These *Landesordnungen*, a compilation of written or unwritten customs as well as regulations influenced by the Roman law, in some parts of Austria were only partly approved by the sovereigns (but they did have an influence on the practice of law); in Tyrol, the *Landesordnung* became established the central legal reference. The last version dates back to 1573, it was in force until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, *Mariages sauvages contre mariages-souche: la guerre des cadets*, in: Martine Segalen and Georges Ravis-Gordani eds., *Au miroir des cadets, l'ordre des familles*, Paris 1993, 183–196; ead., *The Stem Family, Demography and Inheritance: the Social Frontiers of Auto-Regulation*, in: Richard L. Rudolph ed., *The European Peasant Family and Society. Historical Studies*, Liverpool 1995, 86–113, 89f; Michaela Hohkamp, *Wer will erben? Überlegungen zur Erbpraxis in geschlechtsspezifischer Perspektive in der Herrschaft Triberg von 1654–1806*, in: Jan Peters ed., *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell. Vergleichende Betrachtungen zur Funktionsweise frühneuzeitlicher Agrargesellschaften*, München 1995, 327–341, 330ff; Jürgen Schlumbohm, *Lebensläufe, Familien, Höfe. Die Bauern und Heuerleute des Osnabrückischen Kirchspiels Belm in proto-industrieller Zeit, 1650–1860*, Göttingen 1994, 400ff.

<sup>9</sup> There is – in tendency – a noticeable difference between marriage contracts of younger couples at more or less the same age, and couples unequal in age. In the first case, there are some prevalent general outlines. The most detailed measures, however, are taken with marriages of older widowers with adult sons or other relatives already designed as heirs. The perspective for the usually younger bride is to live in a house belonging to her stepson or some other relative of the husband after her husband's death at the latest.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also Angiolina Arru, "Schenken heißt nicht verlieren". Kredite, Schenkungen und die Vorteile der Gegenseitigkeit in Rom im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert, in: *L'HOMME. Z.F.G.*, 9, 2 (1998), 232–251.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher H. Johnson, "Das Geschwister-Archipel": Bruder-Schwester-Liebe und Klassenformation im Frankreich des 19. Jahrhunderts, in: *L'HOMME. Z.F.G.*, 13, 1 (2002), 50–67, 50f.

<sup>12</sup> Tiroler Landesarchiv (TLA) Innsbruck, Verfachbuch Innichen (VBI) 1790, fol. 690.

<sup>13</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1790, fol. 680.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. for example the marriage contract between the widower Thomas Mayr, a grocer, 71 years old, and the widow Elisabeth Götlin, 48 years old: TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1785, fol. 1'–3'. He married a third time in 1790!

<sup>15</sup> A frequently discussed question, the different rates of remarriage, shows the same picture for Innichen as it is known from other places in west and central Europe: the remarriage rate of men is between twice and three times as high as the remarriage rate of women. First, it appears to be more difficult for the latter to remarry, because they have to weigh up their actual situation with the provision which the second husband could offer. The decision whether to get married again or not has to be estimated as the result of carefully considering the pros and cons in a complex situation – taking into account the unequal distribution of property between the sexes. Mere demographic calculations have turned out to be just as little appropriate an approach for this problem as merely economically motivated explanations – as has been pointed out, for example, by Barbara Todd. Amy Louise Erickson also emphasizes women's concern for security in their widowhood. Amy Louise Erickson, *Common law versus common practice: the use of marriage settlements in early modern England*, in: *Economic History Review*, 43 (1990), 21–39, 36. Cf. also Barbara J. Todd, *Demographic Determinism and Female Agency: the Remarrying Widow Reconsidered ... again*, in: *Continuity and Change*, 9 (1994), 421–450.

<sup>16</sup> Household lists of Innichen (1829 to 1849) show that the life circumstances of widows cover a wide

range: some can be found in charge of their own households, some are part of their children's households, some form a kind of separate household within their successor's house, and some prefer to, or have to, live as lodgers in the house of someone else. Stiftsarchiv (STA) Innichen, Familienbuch 1829 – Einwohner vom Markte Innichen und auf dem Innichberge.

<sup>17</sup> In the case of a second marriage of the widow, her second husband could sometimes also buy the estate – if he was financially able –, negotiating with the children's guardians, or take it on lease until the destined heir would have reached his or her majority.

<sup>18</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1784, fol. 708–708'.

<sup>19</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1786, fol. 257.

<sup>20</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1789, fol. 398'.

<sup>21</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1791, fol. 43.

<sup>22</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1795, fol. 354.

<sup>23</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1800, fol. 29.

<sup>24</sup> This was not an option in the Haute Provence, for example. According to Alain Collomp, daughters could not inherit if there was a son. Alain Collomp, *From Stem Family to Nuclear Family: Changes in the Coresident Domestic Group in Haute Provence between the End of the Eighteenth and the Middle of the Nineteenth Centuries*, in: *Continuity and Change*, 3, 1 (1988), 65–81, 68. Even though this was not a frequent phenomenon in terms of quantity, it did occur sometimes in Innichen. The fact that this possibility even existed is an important fact per se from the perspective of gender relations. Each of these examples documents flexibility and the potential scope of options for acting, which also included inheritance of this kind by daughters.

<sup>25</sup> In addition to being a farmer, he was also a carpenter and a carter.

<sup>26</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1800, fol. 25–27', *Besitzerkl rung* (declaration of property).

<sup>27</sup> The legal framework for this was a so-called "property advantage" or "man's advantage" granted to the children taking over the property. A "preliminary" was not counted as part of the later inheritance.

<sup>28</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1800, fol. 27'–30', *Heirats-Contract* (marriage contract). An endowment is subsequently documented for Michael Kerschbaumer from his mother Elisabeth *berbacherin*, also a "preliminary" amounting to 200 guilders, as well as a receipt for a cash payment from his brother Joseph, which included his portion of the paternal inheritance and amounted to 396 guilders; cf. *ibid.*, fol. 69'–70, *Schenkung* (donation); and fol. 597–598, *Quittung* (receipt).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. STA Innichen, *Familienbuch angefangen vom Jahre 1700* (family reconstitution), k104.

<sup>30</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1801, fol. 822–831', *Abhandlung* (treatment in court in case of death). He had himself acquired the property through his first wife and his father-in-law; the relevant contracts were concluded on 13 January 1757, on 28 May 1757 and on 15 May 1758.

<sup>31</sup> First, appraisal values, assets and liabilities were listed. The widow testified that she had brought 250 guilders into the household with her – she was to supply proof of this at some point later.

<sup>32</sup> She died in 1806, leaving two sons, of which the elder later took over the property; the younger son died half a year after his mother. Michael Kerschbaumer married for a second time in 1807; cf. STA Innichen, *Familienbuch angefangen vom Jahre 1700*, h26, t40, l18, k104, k109, k127.

<sup>33</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1800, fol. 386–400'. *Verm genserng nzung* (amendment to the estate).

<sup>34</sup> At the time that the will was written, on 8 June 1796, only two of his brother's children were in the house. The protocol of the will is part of the previously cited *Verm genserng nzung*, fol. 386–387', see note 33.

<sup>35</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1783, fol. 382'–384, *Contract*. Margareth M *llerin* had brought 450 guilders to the marriage, which is a relatively substantial amount.

<sup>36</sup> When different documents contain contradictory regulations the court officials at first had to support contracts as bilateral agreements. Besides this, it seems that the court officials tended to decide in favour of the surviving spouse.

<sup>37</sup> It is also hard to judge if a more of economic and legal responsibilities were taken as a grant for agency or as a burden; cf. Philipp Sarasin, *Subjekte, Diskurs, K rper. berlegungen zu einer diskursanalytischen*

Kulturgeschichte, in: Wolfgang Hardtwig and Hans-Ulrich Wehler eds., *Kulturgeschichte heute*, Göttingen 1996, 131–164, 138.

<sup>38</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1803, fol. 627–632', *bergabe, Vermögensstellung und weiterer Contract* (property transfer, register of assets and further contract). This is reported at the beginning of the *relatio*.

<sup>39</sup> TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1803, fol. 622–626, *Heirats- und Kaufkontrakt* (marriage and purchase contract). Should Anna Oberhoferin die first and without children, the widower would have to pay 100 guilders each to the two brothers; if only one brother were still alive, then 200 to him.

<sup>40</sup> On this, cf. also a similar case of inheritance on the part of a niece, daughter of a brother who had settled in a different community, Lanzinger, *Erbe*, see note 4, 282.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. also examples given by Maria Gren, indicating these kinds of discrepancies between legal forms and perceptions as expressed in will, for instance. Maria Gren, *A Partnership between Unequals. The Changing Meaning of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Sweden*, in: Christophe Duhamelle and Jürgen Schlumbohm eds., *Eheschließung im Europa des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. Muster und Strategien*, Göttingen 2003, 267–290, 282ff. An argument for the primacy of documented files in the context of property transfer in comparison with formal law, cf. also Angiolina Arru, Laura di Michele and Maria Stella, *Introduzione*, in: ead. eds., *Proprietarie. Avere, non avere, ereditare, industriarsi*, Napoli 2001, 5–15, 6.

**“THERE WERE NOT ANY DIVORCES AT ALL”  
THE SEMI- TRUTH ABOUT THE DIVORCES IN THE NEVROKOP  
EPARCHY<sup>1</sup> (1894–1912)**

**Anastasya Pashova**

The research on the divorces at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria is too scant.<sup>2</sup> The authors quote mainly investigations from the beginning of the century based more on folklore and ethnography sources than on documental sources.<sup>3</sup>

For instance Peter Stoyanov in his book “Seriously about the divorce” wrote “*When we speak that today “the wave of divorces” is flooding us, we should remember what was once upon a time*”. And what was really once upon a time – at least regarding the divorces – knows even the reader who has never touched statistical guide books. “*But to understand why divorce was absent from the every day life of our grand fathers we must go back and consider their family life. Family had its own mechanism.*”<sup>4</sup> And a little bit later: “*The family relations of the bride and the groom and the divorces (as far as there were any in the context of the big patriarchal family – the commune) were arranged habitually by the folk customs... This means that the family relations have not been a private matter but a collective deed.*”<sup>5</sup>

In the same book Peter Stoyanov accepted the “the lack of divorces” a priory.<sup>6</sup>

I cited the author’s thesis in details because his statements support the popular prejudices about the family life and sexual moral in the past. It was not “the folk customs” but the East Orthodox Church which arranged the family relations and divorces of the Christian population. They have been strictly regulated by the Exarchy Statute. The statistics of the church register showed that the divorces at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not exceptional and they have not been “a collective matter”.<sup>7</sup>

Another basic resource of information for divorces used by different authors till today is the investigation of Stephan Bobchev<sup>8</sup> based on his observations and life stories of different people from different places visited by the author. In his book “Folk family law in our proverbs” (in the part about divorce)” Stephan Bobchev wrote “*Rare, very rare there were any divorces as it becomes clear from the Collection of Bulgarian habitual law.*” He quoted numerous field researches which, according to him, had showed in a categorical

way that divorce was an exclusively rare phenomenon. *“In Elensko divorce is a rare phenomenon and for tens of years such cases can be numbered on the fingers. In the region of Kazanluk people look on the divorce with bad eye. In Koprivshitsa the old teacher Hr. Poulekov answered: here divorce is neither voluntarily nor a violent one.”* The author quotes the investigations of K. Shapkarev, N.Popov and D.Marinov that *“Divorces had been absolutely rare, so rare that nobody remembered about them”*. Bobchev analyzed the reasons because of which the church and the habitual law had been giving divorce. In the conclusion of his book Stephan Bobchev made a stipulation which none of the later researchers noticed *“In fact, in the recent time people speak about many divorce cases submitted to our religious courts. But we lack any statistical data to know the number of the divorced couples and the relation between the divorces in the towns and the villages. We are inclined a priori to make the conclusion that in the village, nevertheless of the debauchery after the wars, marriages were more preserved, and that there the divorces were less than in the towns. But the conclusions we make are based on data collected in passed years following our own observations or according to information of authentic sources.”*<sup>9</sup>

The opinion of Stephan Bobchev (stated more than 100 years ago) provoked my archive research on divorce as documented in the church registers from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. I used the preserved documents from the fond of the Nevrokop Eparchy stored in the State Archive – Blagoevgrad.<sup>10</sup>

My research aims are:

- To evaluate critically the long lasting opinion that at the beginning of the century divorce was a very rare phenomenon and mainly a town phenomenon.
- To analyze the relation between the norms prescribed by the church and the real practice of the divorce verdicts.
- To reveal how the church by its regulations for marriage and reasons for divorce managed to impose to a certain degree moral model of marriage and sexual moral acceptable for the Christian society.<sup>11</sup>
- To present a statistic analysis of the social status of the persons who submitted divorce cases (as an active party) to the court – their gender, education, job, age, number of marriages, period of marriage, and number of children.
- To analyze the decaying of the marriages at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Nevrokop Eparchy and to outline the tendencies in the divorce practice at that time.

- To reveal the rights of women in the Christian society as regulated by the Echsarch Church Statute (1871–1945).

### The oldest register of divorce proceeding in the Nevrokop Eparchy

In the period 1871–1945 the family law belongs to the church. During the whole period the norms about wedding, marriage, and divorce were regulated by the Statute of the Echsarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.<sup>12</sup> In the period 1984 – 1912 the Pirin Macedonia was still part of the Ottoman Empire. The heritage problems between husbands and wives were submitted to the Islam Mufti Court. The problems concerning family and moral affairs were to the competence of the Orthodox Church. Only the Church could have divided the marriage bonds; to decide whether the parties have the right of a following marriage, and where the children to stay.

Why the year 1894 was chosen as a start of my research?

In 1894 the Turkish government issues a Berat (a law) for opening of an independent Nevrokop Eparchy and from the same year the registering of divorce cases started. I started my research with the oldest document in the State Archive, Blagoevgrad concerning the divorces and the weddings in the Eparchy.<sup>13</sup> At the same time the registering of the marriages started.

Nevertheless it was titled as a *Book for the Marriages in the Methropoly*, it registered the divorce and wedding brake off proceedings. The register has 156 pages. The first registered case was on 22 May 1894. It was registered a month after coming to power of bishop Illarion. 665 divorce proceedings were registered, the last one in 1909 – i.e. for the period of 16 years 665 Christians from Nevrokop Eparchy applied for divorce.

The object of my statistical analysis will be 640 of these cases since the rest 25, nevertheless registered in 1894, were from 1893 as it is explicitly mentioned.

The register book is old, quite fractured, hand written, and often difficult to read. It was written at least by four people. There is not information about the people who did the writing till 1905 when deacon Ikonomov took the responsibility for the book.<sup>14</sup>

The data in the register are distributed in seven parts: № of the case in order of submission; Date of the registration of the divorce submission; By whom the case was submitted and where did he/she come from; Against whom is the submission, where



was he/she comes from; What was the result of the divorce proceeding; When did it end; Remarks.

The names of the divorce parties and their places of birth are filled up. Missing are the data about their job, professional status, education, and the motives for submitting the case. In 5 of the proceedings the divorce parties were Gypsy Christians, three of them from the town of Nevrokop. The register included divorce parties from more than 40 villages, a part of which at present are not in the boundaries of Bulgaria but at that time they belonged to the Nevrokop Eparchy. Included are the three main towns in the Eparchy – Nevrokop (Gotse Delchev), Mehomia (Razlog), and Gorna Dzhumaya (Blagoevgrad), as well as big villages, that later became towns – Bansko, Yakoruda, and Belitsa.

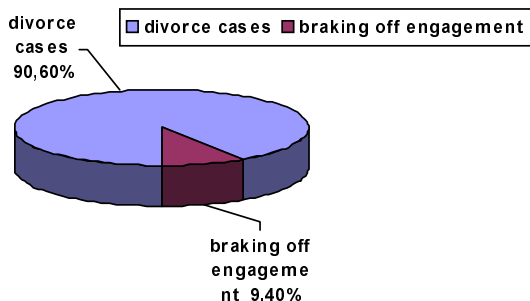
### Analysis of the Register data

The divorce parties were registered with their personal, father, and family names. There was not a single case in which a woman to take the family name of her husband, which shows that the practice wives to take the family names of their husband after the marriage is a later phenomenon.

All cases were personally submitted and only in two of the cases it was noted that the father of the wife was the one who submitted the case.

486 of the marriages were endogamous, 134 of the marriages were exogamous but the spouse was from a neighboring village or town, 20 of the marriages were exogamous with a spouse from a distant place. These data confirm the long lasting tendency of territorial endogamy in the choice of marriage partner.<sup>15</sup>

The table presents the divorce cases and the braking off engagement for the period 1894-1909.

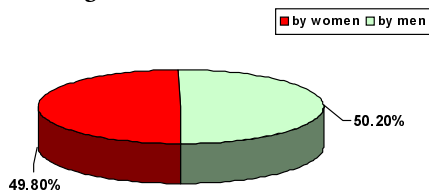


Year	Total number of acts	Divorce	Braking off engagement	Submitted by women	Submitted by men	Village	Town
1894	74	71	3	40	34	64	10
1895	43	36	7	17	26	40	3
1896	50	37	13	22	28	45	5
1897	37	29	8	19	18	35	2
1898	31	28	3	16	15	29	2
1899	31	29	2	16	15	28	3
1900	31	28	3	16	15	27	4
1901	40	37	3	27	13	37	3
1902	32	27	5	19	13	29	3
1903	31	32	-	20	11	31	-
1904	49	42	7	27	22	46	3
1905	36	36	-	16	20	29	7
1906	37	36	1	13	24	30	7
1907	36	35	1	22	14	33	3
1908	39	36	3	11	28	36	3
1909	43	42	1	18	25	41	2
Total	640	580	60	319	321	580	60

The divorce cases were about 10 times more than the requests for braking off engagement. The braking off engagement was regulated by the Echsarch statute by clause 185. Of totally 640 submissions, 580 were divorce cases, i.e. 90.6%, 60 were breaking off engagement – i.e. 9.4%.

It is interesting that in the 60 registered cases for braking off engagement for the period 1894 – 1909 there was not a single decision for breaking off engagement after the year 1905.

**Relation – men and women submitting divorce case**



Of 640 cases, 49.8% were submitted by women and 50.2% by men. At first glance women were as active party as men. It is another question to what degree they had submitted the case because of despair (abandoned or expelled) or because of other reasons like quarrels and wrangle. At the same time the tradition – “The woman is who lives in the house of the man.” should not be neglected.

- What happened with the wives who left the house of their husbands and especially with the wives who had children from the marriage?

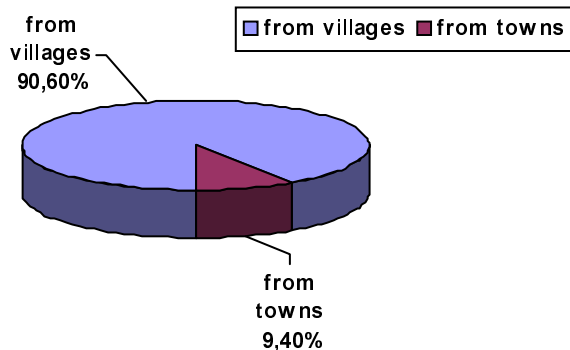
- What possibilities did they have to live and support themselves after the breaking of the marriage?

- Even when permitted to marry for a second time, what were their lives as free women having no home and job?

Having in mind that girls did not inherit their father’s property (according to the habitual law) but were supplied only with a dowry; they could hardly submit a divorce case without the consent and support of their parents. Even more, most of the women submitted divorce cases came from villages. In the closed village culture the attitude towards these women was very offensive, they were considered as “whores”. The reason for submitting a case could not be the childlessness of the wife or the husband. According to the Echsarch Statute the childlessness could not be a reason for getting a divorce. Obviously these women did not have many possibilities – to marry for a second time, to go back to their parents, or to go to monastery.

The very high percentage of divorce cases submitted by women raises the question about the real status of woman in the so cold patriarchal family and in the enlarged family.<sup>16</sup>

**Relation between the cases submitted by the town and the village applicants**



Of totally 640 submitted cases, 580 were submitted by village people and only 60 by town people. We should not draw a quick conclusions that family was more stable in the town than the in village since most of the population of the Eparchy was a village one – there were only three towns (Nevrokop, Mehomia, and Gorna Dzhumaya). The number of the population in the towns was not much different from the population of the bigger villages in the region. The correct research requires the relation between the numbers of divorces in the villages and in the towns to be counted according to the numbers of the married couples. Opposing the town to the village is a very conditional one for an agricultural region in the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. The myth about “the solid village moral” based on “lack of divorces” in the villages, are based on such invented contradictions neglecting the leading role of the church which defined the moral and sexual norms of the Christian society up to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

The next three tables present only the settlements with less or most concentration of divorce cases.<sup>18</sup> The Gorna Dzhumaya district was the district with the smallest number of submitted cases:

Settlement	Number of recorded divorce cases for the period 1894 – 1909
Gorna Dzumaya	7
Padezh	2
Zheleznitsa	2
Ossenovo	2

#### Razlog district

	1894-1909
Mehomia	25 divorce cases
Bansko	22
Yakorouda	15
Belitsa	15
G.Draglishte	9
Bachevo	8

The Nevrokop district was the district with the highest number of divorce cases:

	1894-1909
Nevrokop	24 divorce cases
Kremen	33
Libyahovo	22
Kovachevitsa	21
Teshovo	21
Obidim	19
Screbatno	16
Fotovisha	13
Dolen	12
Gaitaninovo	12

How could we explain the higher number of divorces in some of the districts?

I suppose that it is due to the specific of the region – Nevrocop was situated on a crossroad, and to the occupation of men – traveling across the Empire construction workers, artisans, tradesmen. The dynamic way of living was most typical for the villages of Kovachevitsa, Teshovo, Kremen, Libyahovo famous with their construction workers and tradesmen. These were the villages with the highest percentage of divorce cases in which the husbands had left their wives and did not take care of them.

For sure there were other reasons for which we can only guess. This is what Vassil Kanchov wrote passing in 1891 Bansko village. *“In Bansko there are some nuns who live in one big beautiful house. I wanted to visit at least one of them without preliminary notice, but my friend did not approve my will. He told me that if even the nuns would invite us, we should not go there because they had bad reputation. This amazed me much more. The very same day I asked some people from Bansko about the nun’s house and they confirmed the words of my friend. Before presenting to the world these serious accusations I had the opportunity to persuade myself that they were true. In Bansko too many scandals between men and women were due to the weakness of men who step across the entrance gates of this house which was meant for hermit’s life. Strong attention should be paid to this sad event in Bansko, because the village gathered its bad fruits”*.<sup>19</sup> In Bansko for the period 1894 – 1909 there were registered 22 divorce cases.

Another important archive document I used was “The Book Number Three about the Final Divorce Cases from the Meetings of the Eparchy Mixed Council at the Nevrokop Bulgarian Methropoly” since January 1905.<sup>20</sup> Comparing the two archive documents (the Register was held till 1909, the Protocol book started in 1905), we can see how many marriages the church have saved for the period 1894 – 1909.

#### Final divorce cases in Nevrokop Eparchy 1905 – 1912

1894-1904	Data from the Register			Data from the Protocol book			Reconciled
	Submitted cases - 449			Received final divorce - 280			
	total	women	men	total	women	men	169– 37.6 %
1905	36	16	20	39	24	15	
1906	36	13	23	26	11	15	10 – 27%
1907	35	21	14	15	12	3	20 – 57%
1908	36	10	26	16	9	7	20 – 55%
1909	42	18	24	31	10	21	11 – 26%

Of 449 divorce and wedding brake off cases submitted till 1905 final divorce got only 280 applicants. The first case from the Third book begins with Protocol no. 281 from 14 January 1905; probably in the lost two books the final protocols of these 280 cases were registered. For the period 1894 – 1904 the church saved 169 marriages or 37.6% of all submitted cases. The data for the next years are: 1906 – 27%, 1907 – 57%, 1908 – 55%, and 1909 – 26%. And this is quite normal having in mind the attitude of the church towards divorce “The indivisibility of the marriage bond as an ideal; the permission of divorce should be done only as means of avoiding the worse”<sup>21</sup>. The very procedure of the divorce case according to the Echsarch statute foresaw several meetings of the Eparchy councils for collecting additional information – request for witnesses,

medical tests etc. If the accusations were not proved, the Eparchy council did not allow divorce. Apart of this the Eparchy statute foresaw meetings for reconciling the parties.

Exclusion of the rule is only the year 1905 when 36 submissions were registered of which 39 divorces were finalized. Probably some of the submissions were not registered because of the change of the writers.<sup>22</sup>

### **The procedure for submitting divorce case**

The whole procedure was regulated by the Echsarch statute.<sup>23</sup> The submission and the claims were filled out according to an approved pattern with full information about the person who was submitting the case and information about the person the case was against: name, job, place of living, age, religion, literacy, number of marriages, date of marriage, and children from the marriage. Stated were also the circumstances of submitting the divorce case; jurisdiction grounds; witnesses were indicated. But the court proceeding did not allow attorney. The church court had not the right to solve the property quarrels of the parties. They were solved by the civil courts. Foreseen was a procedure for objection to the submission of a divorce case. The payment was also regulated. The registering of a divorce case came after paying the fee of 1 lev. To submit braking off engagement case one should present a document (act, but not certificate) that the engagement was done in the presence of a priest and two witnesses. To submit divorce case one should present an act of church marriage.

What kind of information gives the protocol book of "The Finalized Divorce Cases from the Meetings of the Eparchy Mixed Council in the Nevrokop Bulgarian Methropoly"?

- The number of the protocol and the date when the meeting of the Eparchy council was held.
- The composition of the council – chairperson and members;
- Number and date of submission of the case;
- Who submitted the case – the names of the applicant, age, job, literacy, number of marriages, birth place, religion, ethnos, and citizenship;
- The same data about the person the case was submitted against;
- How long the parties were married and do they have children;
- Grounds for divorce decision – according to which clause of the Echsarch statute

The very decisions consisted of three parts – “The marriage chains between ...to be dissolved”; “A second marriage to be allowed or not”; “To whom the children should be given after the divorce”.

What fees the parties should pay for getting a divorce letter was also marked in the Protocol book. The fees depend on the guiltiness of the parties. The highest was the fee of 5 Turkish liras and the smallest was the fee of half a lira. The fee of 5 liras was very high for the standard of living at that time.<sup>24</sup> There were also free cases. Usually children were given to the mother; if the children were too small they were given to the mother even in the cases when she was the guilty party. There were some exceptions when the children were given to the guilty father, if he was rich enough to raise them. Then the court usually obliged him to give some sum of money to his previous wife.

The data about the final divorce proceedings for the period 1905-1912 can be summarized in the following table according to the sex of the applicants.

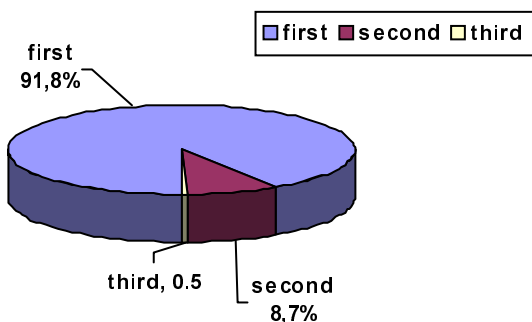
**Relation women – men**

Year	Total number of cases	Cases submitted by women	Cases submitted by men
1905	39	24	15
1906	26	11	15
1907	15	12	3
1908	16	9	7
1909	31	10	21
1910	39	15	24
1911	26	16	10
1912	26	13	13
Total	218	110	108

Of all 218 final divorce cases 110 were submitted by women and 108 submitted by men. Considering the percentage of the reconciled cases, women who submitted the cases were probably the more irreconcilable party in the court proceedings.



### Relation of divorces of first, second, and third marriage



The highest percentage of the divorce proceedings were the cases of the first marriage couples– 91.8% and this is quite normal since the deal of the first marriage couples was the highest. The second and the third marriages were quite unstable, they last for a short term; easily break out, especially when there were not any children to be raised together.

### Relation literate – illiterate women and men

Considering the literacy – of all 110 cases submitted by women, literate were only 2 women or 1,8%. Considering the complexity of the court procedure (submitting applications, written proves, and so on) impressive is the high number of women submitting cases - more than 50%. Men were much more literate than women. Of 108 cases – 38% of the male applicants were literate, which privileged them to women, men had an easier access to court procedures regulated by the Echsarch statute. Women were not able to defend themselves by written documents, since they were not permitted to hire attorney, they could have relied only on the conclusions of the medical authorities.<sup>25</sup>

### Social status of husbands and wives

All wives were are Eastern Orthodox, described as house wives, all of them Ottoman residents, 98% were Bulgarians by ethnic origin, and 2% - Gypsies. All husbands were Orthodox and Ottoman residents, 97% were Bulgarians, and 3% - Gypsies. Considering their professions:

- Construction workers – 5 persons -13.8%;
- Workers – 38 persons -35.1%;
- Artisans – 13 persons -12.4%;
- Farmers – 37 persons - 34.2%;
- Shepherds – 5 persons - 4.6 %.

Most of the husbands had dynamic profession and I suppose that the greater part of the divorces were given according to the clause 1 (when the husband was absent for more than 4 years). It is not clear what does it mean “worker” but obviously it was different from farmer. From all listed professions only the profession of farmer supposes a permanent settlement. All other professions suppose dynamics and traveling. Especially the profession of construction worker explains the highest rate of divorces in the villages Kovachitsa and Teshovo. These divorces usually came later; they were submitted by women, very often with children. According to this clause there were cases submitted by men, probably settled in another place with another family. The profession of shepherd was also connected with a seasonal migration.

#### **The age of getting married for women and for men (1905–1909)<sup>26</sup>**

• 15 years	- 5 marriages	- 1 marriage
• 16 years	- 8 marriages	-
• 17 years	- 2 marriages	- 6 marriages
• 18 years	- 8 marriages	- 4 marriages
• 19 years	- 6 marriages	- 2 marriages
• 20 years	- 7 marriages	- 6 marriages
• 21 years	- 7 marriages	- 7 marriages
• 22 years	- 6 marriages	- 16 marriages
• 23 years	- 5 marriages	- 1 marriage
• 24 years	- 4 marriages	- 3 marriages
• 25 years	-	- 1 marriage
• 26 years	- 1 marriage	- 1 marriage
• 27 years	- 1 marriage	- 2 marriages
• 28 years	- 2 marriages	- 1 marriage
• 30 years	- 1 marriage	- 1 marriage
• 36 years	- 1 marriage	- 1 marriage

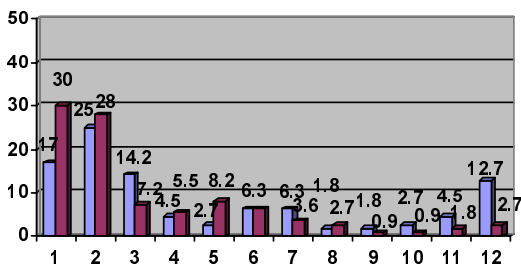
There are a considerable number of church marriages at the age of 15 and 16, nevertheless the clause 186 of the Echsarch statute regulated the age of getting married "The man should be at least 19 years old and the woman should be at least 17 years old". The Holy Synod could allow marriage at an earlier age only in special cases. In these cases a special written permission from a priest was requested and a special fee had to be paid.

In 11 cases a special written permission from a priest was provided and a special fee was paid.<sup>27</sup>

Most of the divorce cases are submitted during the first two years of the marriage – 23.8% of the male applicants and 27% of the female applicants. Twice lower is the divorce rate during the third year of the marriage – 10.8%. A considerable part of the divorces came on the 12th year of marriage. Usually these are divorces submitted by women, abandoned by their husbands - they had been waiting longer than the regulated by the Echsarch statute period of 4 years.

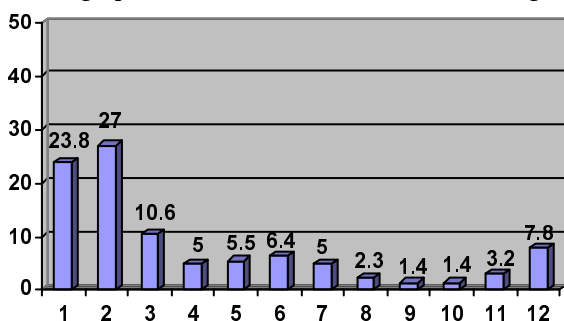
**Duration of the marriages by years and sex (as initiators of the divorce - 1905 -1912)**

	Total	1 year	2 years.	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years
Women	110	19	28	15	5	3	7	7	2	2	3	5	14
	%	17	25	14	4,5	2,7	6,3	6,3	1,8	1,8	2,7	4,5	12,7
Men	108	33	31	8	6	9	7	4	3	1	1	2	3
	%	30	28	7,2	5,5	8,2	6,3	3,6	2,7	0,9	0,9	1,8	2,7
Total	218	52	59	23	11	12	14	11	5	3	3	7	17
	%	23,8	27	10,6	5	5,5	6,4	5	2,3	1,4	1,4	3,2	7,8



**Duration of the marriages for women-men in %**

### Summarized graphics about the duration of the marriages by years in %



A long term tendency of divorcing during the first three years of mutual life could be outlined equal men and women.

### The children in the marriages before the divorce – church law regulations

Year	Total number of proceedings	Families without children	Families with children	Cases submitted by women			Cases submitted by men		
				Totally	Have not	Have	Totally	Have not	Have
1905	39	25	14	24	13	11	15	12	3
1906	26	17	9	11	5	6	15	12	3
1907	15	8	7	12	5	7	3	3	-
1908	16	10	6	9	6	3	7	4	3
1909	31	24	7	10	7	3	21	17	4
1910	39	26	13	15	10	5	24	16	8
1911	26	19	7	16	13	3	10	6	4
1912	26	20	6	13	11	2	13	9	4
Общо	218	149	69	110	70	40	108	79	29

By clause 191 of the Echsarch statute the law situation of the children after the divorce of the parents was regulated. “The children of the divorced parties belong to the innocent part but till the age of 5 they are always stay with the mother except in the cases she does not want them or she lives a sinful life.” There were 3 such cases when children were given to the father because the mothers had abandoned their children and

lived with another man, which was considered as adultery by the paragraph 187-2 of the Echsarch statute.

“For rising of children the father takes care as well as the mother when she is rich. The amount of the money for the maintenance is defined by the general court”.

The law evidently aimed at two things – to punish the guilty part by taking off the children and from the other side– to defend the interest of the children, protecting them against the eventual bad behavior of the parent, guilty for the divorce.

The measures that the religious court could take finished with the end of the divorce proceeding. Further monitoring of the care of the children belonged to the civil court. The parent, deprived from his/her children, has the right to see them periodically as the religious court has defined.

### **Reasons for the final divorces as regulated by the Eparch statute**

The clause 187 in chapter 2 “Reasons for dissolving of lawful marriages” of the Echsarch statute<sup>28</sup> stated the following reasons for dissolving the marriage bond in a legitimate way:

- 1. When the husband is absent for 4 years with unknown residence or with a known one but does not pay anything to cover the everyday needs of his wife;
- 2. When one of the parties breaks the sacredness of marriage by adultery;
- 3. a) When one of the parties addicts to drinking and as a consequence spills the property and destroys the house;  
b) When one of the parties is violent, has inhuman behavior, torches, and beats his spouse;  
c) When one of the parties is threatening with murder the life of the other;
- 4. When the husband is claimed and proved not natural in becoming closer with his wife;
- 5. When one of the parties narrows the religious freedom of his/her Orthodox spouse and forces him to take his/her religion.
- 6. When one of the parties, because of corporal defect, proved medically, is not able to fulfill his family obligations.
- 7. When one of the parties becomes mad, suffers of epilepsy, idiotism, or gets

syphilis after the marriage, the marriage could be dissolved only in utmost case when all healing measures have been undertaken.

- 8. When one of the parties is sentenced to heavy and shameful punishment for bribery, swindle, or murder.

- 9. When one of the parties accuses his partner in the court for adultery that can not be proved.

- 10. When the wife, without serious reasons, fall away from her partner, or pushes him out for three years and nevertheless of the advice of the religious authority, does not agree to live with him.<sup>29</sup>

The following table indicates the share of the final divorces by sex and reasons of divorce for the period 1905 -1912.

Reasons	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
Year	w. – 110 proc	M. 108 proc	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.	w.	M.
1905	8	1	4	4	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	6	3
1906	6	2	2	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	2
1907	8	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
1908	2	-	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	3
1909	4	4	1	8	2	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	5
1910	7	2	-	5	5	6	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	4	-	1	-	-	1	2
1911	3	1	1	1	9	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	1
1912	2	2	3	2	6	6	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Totally	40	12	12	28	29	29	2	-	-	2	3	5	6	13	-	1	3	-	16	18
%	36,3	11,1	10,9	25,9	26,4	26,9	1,8	-	-	1,9	1,8	4,6	5,5	12	-	1	2,7	-	14,5	16,7

The women have submitted 110 divorce cases.

- The highest was the percentage of the submitted cases according to clause 1 – “When the husband is absent for 4 years with unknown residence or with a known one, but he does not send money to cover the everyday needs of his wife”
- On the second place the cases according to clause 3 - “Hard drinking, inhuman attitude, or attempted murder”

- On the third place the cases according to clause 10 – “When the wife, without serious reasons, fall away from her husband”

- In 10.9% of the cases the reason was the adultery of the husband.

The husbands have submitted 108 divorce cases.

- The highest was the percentage of the submitted cases according to clause 3 “Hard drinking, inhuman attitude, or attempted murder”. Wives were usually blamed of “scandals, quarrels, and mutual hatred”.

- On the second place the cases according to clause 2 – the adultery of the wives. Obviously the husbands were more sensitive to the disloyalty of their wives.

- On the third place the cases of wives deserting the homes of their husbands.

The following table represents the generalized data for wives and husbands:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
218	52	40	58	2	2	7	19	1	3	34
%	23,9	18,3	26,6	1	1	3,2	8,7	0,5	1,5	15,6

- The most important reason – reason 3: hard drinking, scandals, beating – 26.6%

- On the second place – reason 1: the husband leaves the wife – 23.9%

- On the third – reason 2: adultery of the parties – 18.3%

- On the forth – reason 10: the wife leaves the husband – 15.6%

What were the reasons for the rest of the divorces?

- 19 cases (8.7%) were according to reason 7: “When one of the parties becomes mad, suffers of epilepsy, idiotism, or gets syphilis after the marriage”. Such cases were submitted by men and women.

- 8 cases (3.6%) according to reason 6: “When one of the parties, because of corporal defect, proved medically, is not able to fulfill his family obligations”. Five of these cases were submitted by men and only 3 by women. Obviously they were connected with the impossibility of the wife to bear a child, which is “a great shame and problem” in the patriarchal society.

- 3 cases (1.5%) according to reason 9: “When one of the parties accuses his partner in the court for adultery that can not be proved”.

- 2 cases (0.9 %) according to reason 4: “When the husband is claimed and proved not natural in becoming closer with the wife”. The cases were submitted by women.

- 2 cases (0.9%) according to reason 5: “When one of the spouses narrows the religious freedom of the partner and forces him/her to convert to his/her religion”. The cases were submitted by men whose wives were Protestants.
- 1 case according to reason 8: “When one of the parties is sentenced to heavy and shameful punishment for bribery, swindle, or murder” submitted by a woman.

### **Most common formulae used to justified the decisions of the Eparchy Council**

On clause 1 the conclusions were quite similar:

- “After the report on the proceeding and listening to the explanations of Nikolina, the Council, taking into consideration the absence of her husband, who left her without any care ... according to clause” 187-.1.
- “ Taking into consideration the great hatred of Georgi against Theodora...in his absence her father in law kicked her out, and now she lives in one empty house without food and heating ...and based on clause 1 /5 years marriage and one child at the age of 5 – a boy, which remains with the father/.
- “Based on the absence of Peter for 12 years, without any care about his wife and that he is living illegally with another woman in Bulgaria... according to clause 1 and 2.

On clause 2 – adultery, the decisions were more detailed. If the woman was the guilty side, she was not allowed a new marriage.

- “Kostadin and Elena lived separately for 4 years, and Elena, still not divorced, married another man which is adultery according to clause 2.
- “Based on the great hatred between the two spouses and according to clause 2 (the wife submitted the divorce case after 12 years of family life and having one child 9 years old)”. The child remained with her but the court judged her to pay – 2 Turkish lyras, the husband - a half of it.
- “Taking into consideration the proved loose living of Sofia ... based on clause 2 (the case was submitted by the husband after 8 years of family life without children).
- “Taking into consideration the proved illegitimate living of Grigor with another woman and based on clause 2 (the case was submitted by the husband after 14 years of family life and 2 children – 13 and 8 years old, who remained with the father. The husband paid 2 lyras and his wife got the divorce letter free).



- Taking into consideration the loose living of Katherina with another man and based on clause 2 (the case was submitted by the wife after 12 years of family life and 3 children – 12, 10, and 8 years old. The boy was given to the father but the girls to the mother).

Especially interesting are the decisions connected with the clause 3.

- “After the report on the proceedings and listening to the accusations of the parties, taking into consideration the three years separate living of the parties with a great hatred of Georgi to Mitra ... and according to clause 2

- “Due to weak mindedness and disobedience of the wife based on clause 3 and 10.

- “Taking into consideration the great hatred of Georgi to Hrissa, hard drinking, disobedience, and not taking care of the child in law.

- “Taking into consideration the great hatred between the two young parties and based on clause 3.

- “Taking into consideration the great insults that undergoes Maria ... according to clause 3...

More detailed are the proceedings in which one of the parties could not do his/her duties.

- “Taking into consideration the illness of Petra and their 5 years separate living and the impossibility of Petra to be house wife according to clause 7 and 3...

- “Taking into consideration the madness of Nevenka which continued for 7 years and after all efforts of Nikola she did not improve on the ground of clause 7...

- “Taking into consideration that Ivan has not any love towards Anastasia because she is mad, she is really mad and both spouses will not be able to continue their family life and on ground of clause 7...

- Taking into consideration the disability of Angelinka as house wife, her indolence, she is undutiful and could not stand anything to her husband ... according to clause 10...”

## Conclusions

The analysis of the statistic data from the church registers in Nevrokop Eparchy for the period 1894 – 1912 revealed that the divorce was not absent from “the every-

day life of our grand fathers". It was not "the folk habit" which arranged the family life of the spouses – Christians. It was the church which had the competence to manage all the problems concerning the moral questions of family life - wedding, marriage and divorce.

The research raises new questions requiring further archive research, since I used only data from one Eparchy – that of Nevrokop.

Half of the divorce cases were initiated by women. How could this statistics be interpreted in the traditional terms of the Patriarchy representing women as passive part of the family life?

Most of the divorces come within the first three years of marriages. How could this statistic be interpreted in the frame of the idyllic picture of the high morality of the enlarged families on the Balkans?

<sup>1</sup> In the researched period the Nevrokop eparchy was in the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. In 1894 the Turkish government issues a Berat for opening of the Nevrokop Eparchy and from the same year registering of the divorces started.

<sup>2</sup> Exception is the investigation of Nedyalko Dimov who gives statistics of the divorces in the Haskovo municipality on the basis of preserved protocols from the meetings of the Eparchy council. "Protocol book of the Bulgarian church municipality in Haskovo. /1870 – 1896/", P., 2002

<sup>3</sup> Roumen Daskalov in his book "The Bulgarian Society 1878 – 1939", 2 volume, 2005, quoting Dimiter Mishtaikov "Basic course in demography", 114-117/ writes about much later years of the period in interest: "The divorce rate which is dependant on the legislation had been very low. In 1933 – 1936 there have been annually 2 to 9 divorces out of 10 000 marriages. In the towns the rate of the divorces was higher (on the average 5.8) than in the villages / p.16. Much before R. Daskalov, Ivan Snegarov, 1926 in his investigation "The marital law of the Ohrid Archbishopric in the 13<sup>th</sup> century" revealed the vision of the Archbishopric about the divorces as necessary healing means for the family ailments coming from abnormal marriages. The attention was drawn to the reasons by which the parties could get divorce but also they were considered as exceptions. Two years later Prokopi Kiranov and Mihail Genovski in their book "Marriage and divorce" (1928) revealed the relations between the cannon and common law regarding the divorces (page 461) explicitly mentioning their exclusiveness.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Stoyanov , "Seriously about the divorce", Plovdiv, 1988 , p. 6

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 63

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 74-76 „*The lack of divorces at that time was not because of the slavery situation of woman, so she could not break her marriage chains, which had turned into an unenviable destiny. The inconvenience to join the rare tribe of "the divorced" was not also a basic reason but its consequence. The basic, the main reason about the sustainability of the Bulgarian marriages from that time was hidden in the quite different, from our point of view, conditions of living... The sexual moral had been stern enough in order to prevent from temptations "willingly or not willingly". Woman did not afford to look at the eyes of man"... "The divorces were present at that time but very rarely... Such cases have been exceptions and the whole village was trying to help as much as possible".*

<sup>7</sup> All divorce submissions had been registered and personal and they have passed a precisely regulated procedure, stated in the Echsarch Statute.

<sup>8</sup> Stephan Bobchev, "The folk marriage law in our jurisdiction proverbs", 1923, p. 66

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 73

<sup>10</sup> Archive documents from the State Archive, Blagoevgrad, Fond 198 K – Nevrokop Eparchy; Fond 198k, op.1, a.e.1. Book about the marriage proceedings in the Methropoly 1894 -1909. It is titled “Note book about the divorces” but actually it is a register of the marriage and wedding proceedings; Fond 198k, op.1, a.e. 5 “Book three about the final divorce proceedings from the meetings of the Eparchy mixed council in the Nevrokop Bulgarian Methropoly since January 1905”; The Echsarch statue was approved by Act of 13 January 1895, added with the Law for joining part 6 to the Echsarch statue, approved by Act No. 46 since 21 March 1897. In chapter two “Reasons for breaking of lawful marriages” in clause 187, which stated 10 reasons to break lawful marriages). Dr. P.Kiranov, Mih. P. Genovski “Marriage and divorce according to Echsarch statue and other our law situations – comments”, Sofia 1928; Archive documents from the Fond of the Methropoly are connected with the procedure for application for divorce and marriage proceedings.

<sup>11</sup> The church imposed and controlled the sexual moral of the members of the parish. See Levin, Iv. Sex and society of the Orthodox Christians, Sofia, 1991

<sup>12</sup> The Bulgarian Echsarchy was founded by Sultan’s ferman in Tsarigrad (Istanbul) on 27 February 1870. In 1821 the Echsarch Statute was accepted to regulate the structure and the management of the church, as well as the marriage and divorce cases. The statute of the Echsarch was changed in 1883/State Newspaper of 26 February 1883/. At the same time additions were accepted about the marriages in which the reasons for separating a marriage couple were more liberal. The statute of the Echsarch was eligible from 1883 till 13 January 1895, when a new project of the National Assembly was accepted. The part concerning divorces was accepted in 1897.

<sup>13</sup> Book about the marriage proceedings in the Methropoly 1894-1909, Fond 198k, op.1, a.e.1

<sup>14</sup> Up to page 32 the register has one script – pale, nearly not understandable, with one structure. From page 32 it has another structure and another script. From page 42 – third script – clear, distinct with ink. Since 1905 the deacon Ikonov took the responsibility of the note book.

<sup>15</sup> This tendency is outlined by other authors: Maria Todorova, “The Balkan family”/Historical demography of the Bulgarian society during the Ottoman period/, Sofia, 2002, p. 55; Georgi Georgiev, “The liberation and ethno-cultural development of the Bulgarian people, 1877 – 1900”, S., 1979, p. 51

<sup>16</sup> The divorce registers do not give any information about the type of the family– nuclear, enlarged, or commune.

<sup>17</sup> See Iv. Levin. Sex and society of the Orthodox Christians, S., 1991. “independently how large is the coverage of the allowed sexual behavior in a certain society, its boundaries are continuously broken.... The deviation helps the society to define the boundary of acceptable behavior.”(p. 26).These norms the Church assigned by the allowed for divorce reasons stated in the Echsarch Statute and thus controlled the moral behavior of its members.

<sup>18</sup> Not all of the villages are included, but only these in which there is concentration of divorces. The number of people and family couples in the settlements is not indicated because for the region there is not such information or the published one is not precise. See Pashova, Short historical-demographic analysis about the Roma in Blagoevgrad district – the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX centuries according to written resources and archive. In: Diversity without borders, Blagoevgrad, 2008. The first national official counting for the region is from 1920 ...

<sup>19</sup> Kanchov, Vassil., Collected works, volume 1, Travel in the valley of river Struma, Mesta and Bregalnitsa, Bitolski, Prespa and Ohridsko, Sofia, 1970, p. 295 - 297

<sup>20</sup> State archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond 198 K, op. 1, a.e. 5

<sup>21</sup> See Boyadzhiev, Vassil, *Studies on our personal marriage law*, Collection of popular proverbs 1891, book 5, p. 187 – 203; 1898, book 8, 194 – 215; 1894, book 10, p. 236 -267; Ivan Snegarov. *The marriage law of the Ohrid archbishoprics during the 18<sup>th</sup> century* In: “Spiritual culture”, S, July 1926, book 28 and 29; Stephan Bobchev, *Popular marriage law in our jurisdiction proverbs*, S, 1923, Print of the “Annual publication of the Sofia University, Faculty of Law”, volume 18<sup>th</sup>, dr. Kiranov, Mich. P. Genovski *Marriage and divorce (according to the Echsarch statute and other law issues – comment)* S, Printing house Saglasie, 1928.

<sup>22</sup> The new writer deacon Ikonov had continued writing the Register and the Protocol book which could be seen clearly from the script.

<sup>23</sup> State Archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond 198K, op. 1, a.e. 13; See Dr. Kiranov, Pr., Mih. P. Genovski *Marriage and divorce (according to the Eparchy statute and other law positions – comment)*, S., Printing house Saglasie, 1928, p. 47 – from the application to the book.

<sup>24</sup> These divorce fees have been a part of the budget of the relevant Eparchy in parallel with the fees for weddings and baptizing certificates. For example in the report of the cashier of the Nevrokop eparchy religious council for the income and outcome expenditures of the budget 1915 there are incomes in lyras – 6,360 , from the baptizing certificates - 615, from wedding certificates – 510 and from divorce letters – 167.70.(State Archive – Blagoevgrad, Fond 198k, op. 1, a.e.13, p. 1 ). In the Fond of the Methropolis for earlier period are missing such reports.

<sup>25</sup> SA – Vidin, F, 10K, op. 1, a.e. 39; 40; 42; 761 – 767. After the processing of the archive materials of the Nevrokop Eparchy, I decided that the region is with a special statute (within the frames of the Ottoman empire, other institutions and so on) and in this way the statistic results are not valid for Bulgaria. This is why I made a statistical analysis of the divorces for the same period in SA –Vidin. The received results are similar but this is object of another comparative research.

<sup>26</sup> Only one sample is taken out for 5 years, because the problem about the marriage age is peripheral for the present investigation. I analyzed 65 cases, 2 of them were connected with a second marriage, and were not included in the analysis. For the 63 marriages the average marriage age was 18.2 years.

<sup>27</sup> In the Echsarch statute is described the procedure which should be followed to get a permission for marriage at earlier age. I analyzed 61 cases, 8 of which of second and third marriage and I did not include them in the table. The table is about 53 cases. The average marriage age of the male applicants is 21.8 years.

<sup>28</sup> Verified by the act of 1 January 1895 and supplemented with the law for adding part sixth of the Echsarch statute, approved by act No. 46 dated 21 March 1897 and changed and supplemented by the law dated 7 February 1900.

<sup>29</sup> Clause188 regulates the permission for getting the right of second marriage. “If the religious authority claims the person guilty in one of the crimes, indicated in c. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 do not permit a second marriage for two to five years. In this case the sentenced party corrects his/her behavior he/she had to assure the religious authorities when requesting new marriage”. In clause 189 are solved the property relations between the parties after the divorce. “When the guilty party is the wife, she loses the right to seek from her husband the dowry, the pre-marriage and post-marriage gifts and whatever material compensation and if the man is guilty for the divorce, the woman has the right to require in court her belongings and everything what she received before and after the marriage as well as the funds for her maintenance till the end of her life or till when she marries again. The amount of these funds was fixed by the general courts”.

## POLITICS OF ARCHIVING

### MEMORY PRESCRIPTIONS: ARCHIVAL POLICIES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Mariana Piskova

#### 1. Archiving

The problem of how documents of women and minorities have been archived in Bulgaria could be understood only in the context of the system of the Bulgarian State Archives.

As a structural part of the National Archive system the State Archives were until quite recently among the main officially recognized and accessible archives in Bulgaria.<sup>1</sup> This system has been introduced after the Second World War following the Soviet model of full centralization of the management and the acceptance of the documents into the State Archives.

##### *1.1. Prescriptions of the Archival Legislation*

The Decree<sup>2</sup> of 1951 establishing the Bulgarian Archives outlined the macroframe of that institutions and persons whose valuable records should shape the State Archival Fonds. Within the large range of sources for accessioning, the holdings of the State Archives are as the central and local bodies of governance as the most remote and small enterprises, primary schools, societies etc. The institutions of women and minorities also fall among them by inference. Only the religious institutions of various confessions (their central and local bodies, monasteries, churches, mosques, catholic churches, synagogues etc.)<sup>3</sup> were explicitly mentioned. The records of the religious institutions from 1947 were declared public property and became therefore subject of acquisition by the State Archives.<sup>4</sup> According to the national or religious importance of these institutions their records have been transferred to the central or local archives. Hence the

Central State Archives keeps and gives access to the fonds of the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Holy Synod of Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Chief Office of the Mufti, the Central Consistory of the Jews, the fonds of monasteries, etc. The State Archives in the country acquired for permanent preservation the records of the relevant regionally important institutions: the regional offices of the Mufti in Haskovo, the Jewish community in Ruse, the Catholic bishopric in Ruse, the Greek community in Varna etc.

Besides the establishment another source of accretion the content of the archives, including these of women and minorities, were the personal archives. The significance of a person was the valid criterion when deciding should his/her personal fonds be included in the state archives or not. The policy of searching eminent persons started with the founding of the Bulgarian archives and is still valid. It is laid in all legislation and methodical guidelines and does not depend on the historical moment the person belonged to. For instance, according to the decree of 1951 the State Archival Fonds acquires the records of:

*“Statesmen and public figures, figures of art and literature, science, technique, distinguished representatives of social labor for the period after 1944 (Art. 2 A -zh); members of the monarchic families, people of their circle, of the regencies, representatives of the fascism, the reaction and the contra-revolution, of political and public figures, and some persons engaged in the state government (Art. 2 B-k, ); representatives of science, technique, art and literature for the period before 09.09.1944 (Art. 2 B-l)”.*

The Law of the National Archival Fonds (2007) gives again place only to the records of nationally and regionally important figures. Therefore the personal fonds of women and minorities which are to enter the Bulgarian Archives will be acquired like those already having accessioned as a result of the same policy and according to the same criteria concerning the role of the fonds' creator in the public, political, economic, cultural, scientific life.

The recent archival legislation remains within the classic legislation frame concerning also the archival fonds of institutions. The new law foresees acquisition of records

“identified to be permanently kept, created by the activity of the public and municipal institutions and other juridical and physical persons, independently on the time, the carrier and the way of creation, the place of preservation and the form of property; <sup>5</sup> When women and minorities' institutions appear among them, according to the mentioned criteria they will take place into the stocks of the Archives.

### *1.2. Archives' network. Partition of the records in conformity with the profile of the Archives*

The infrastructure built throughout the years reveals tendency to partial decentralization and admits to safeguarding the existing before 1951 Archives (these of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, National Library) as well as the setting up of independent Archives at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defense etc.

Central and Territorial Archives are approved as key elements of the archival system, where the records were divided according to the principles of national and regional importance and of chronology. The current model of the archival system comprises the Central State Archives in Sofia, the State Military Historical Archives in Veliko Tarnovo and the territorial State Archives which correspond to the administrative division of the country into regions (27). Barely through the new legislation changes in 1993 and 2007 the parallel existence of private and other archival collections has been foreseen that are to be included in the respective Registry of the National Archival Fonds (NAF).

The acquisition, preservation, and repartition of the records about women and minorities on the network of Bulgarian Archives, the shaping of their archival complexes is fulfilled according to the generally valid principles and rules of building and functioning the archival system. Therefore they enter one or another Archive service in conformity with the nation-wide or local importance of their creators: institutions or persons. They are organized within the Archives in archival fonds – institutional and personal ones, and rarely in collections and partial accessions. Varieties of the personal fonds are the family fonds.

Except the classic cases in which the name of the concrete archive fond (personal or institutional) speaks about the concentration of documents concerning women and/or minority (female monastery, fonds of the Primary Turkish School, the fonds of Lyuba Kutincheva) some documents about women and minorities could be found scattered in all other archival fonds. Their searching requires long investigations and coordination of the efforts of the teams of archivists and researchers involved in larger projects and studies. Certainly to reveal the details of the state politics concerning women and minorities, as well as the public perceptions, echoes, and reaction of the individuals towards this politics one should cover the entire archive massif of the documents.<sup>6</sup>

At this stage we will limit our research only on the classic cases to outline the Bulgarian archive policy towards them. The formation of archival fonds (fonds' creat-

ing) is a natural historical process where the role of the archivist is identified as safeguarding the *status quo* of the documental inter-relations within each fond which has entered the Archives. The vocation of the archivist is to safeguard the wholeness of the archival fonds and therefore not to allow its dismembering or the preservation of various parts of it in different Archives.

The intervention of the archivists or the manifestation of the archive policies are relative to the distribution of the fonds between the Central Archives (the records of the nationally important institutions and persons) and the territorial Archives (where we will find fonds of local, regional importance).

### *1.3 Institutional fonds*

The next intervention of the Archives is when they identify the institutions that archives fonds should accession from. The fonds' creators are ranked in categories according to their importance and the quantity of the documents covering their activity. As early as in 1960-es three institutional categories were defined and described in 3 'guiding lists' in the first methodic guidance on selective acquisition of records by the State Archives.

1. The first one comprises institutions, organizations, and enterprises whose records must be unconditionally considered to accession the State Archives;

2. The second one referred to institutions, organizations, and enterprises of standard type. It was on the decision of the Archives which documents to be considered important for the district<sup>7</sup> life and to be related to the transferring agency of the first category.

3. The third referred to institutions, organizations, and enterprises of secondary character. Documents from these institutions were not accepted by the Archives. In the past decades there were several centrally organized campaigns for collecting and archiving memories and personal fonds: "1300 years from the foundation of the Bulgarian state", "People's memory is relating" (celebrating 40 years of the Socialist revolution in Bulgaria). Documents concerning the life of common people were exception in the archives since the legislation recommended "distinguished figures".

This category ranking of the fonds' creators was approved by the Code of Methodics<sup>8</sup> adopted in 1982 which generalized the rules for working with archival records valid so far in the Bulgarian Archives. According to it the first category is for all fonds' creators



whose documents enter as a whole the Archives (these are the Central Archives fonds' creators). Second category is for the fonds' creators which are of standard type and for that reason only part of their records reveal their specific activity. The Code foresees to identify firstly some of them (3 or 5) whose records enter as a whole the Archives and for the rest of this group to select individual kinds of records. Third category is the records of institutions which have auxiliary character whose records as a rule don't enter the Archives for preservation. But the 27 territorial archives however foresee to accession entirely (not selectively) the records of greater number of institutions from the second category as well as to accept records also from the third category of institutions<sup>9</sup>.

#### *1.4. Personal fonds*

The institutional fonds enter the State Archives regularly in conformity with the law provisions. The regulated and approved ways of acquiring personal fonds by the State Archives (according to the private property of the citizens on personal records) are: donation; legacy, and sale by the creators or the proprietors having acquired them somehow<sup>10</sup>". In the case of personal fonds' accession the law prescriptions at a greater degree are to be "assisted" by the archivists and they are more dependent on the personal qualities of the archivist, of his skill to search the persons possessing valuable records and to persuade them to transfer their records to the State Archives. It is self-evident that the prescription of the law is not sufficient.

Besides the case of the personal fonds the competition between related institutions is too great and in spite of the archival legislation the transfer of personal fonds to museums and libraries has never stopped. Certainly here the will and the right of the donators to choose the place of custody of their personal records are not contested.

The personal contribution to the socio-political, cultural, or economic life is a key criterion for the acceptance of personal fonds by the Bulgarian Archives since their establishment in the 1950-es. According to the archival legislation, the efforts of the first archivists were directed to eminent, important figures. Initially this activity of the Archives was in arrear in comparison with the acquisition of institutional fonds. The difficulties that the first archivists faced these early years were not only a matter of finances but also lack of experience and presence of severe competition with the related cultural institutions that continued acquiring personal records. Factors of psychological character that inevitably appeared at moments of political regime changing had an influence

too. The distrust towards the archival institution which was subordinated to the Ministry of Interior was expected and understandable among the significant figures of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom and its relatives whose records had to be transferred to the Archives for permanent preservation.<sup>11</sup>

In 1954, aiming at discovering more opportunities for active searching sources for personal funds' accession a *part-time staff* was appointed and the Archives included in their planning activities on personal funds' acquisition and processing<sup>12</sup>. The task of the *part-time staff* was initially to search the addresses of the old families and their heirs.<sup>13</sup> Almost two decades later, in the 1970-es, a 'pulsating unit' of experts from the Central Archives was created to elaborate methodic guidance for personal records' acquisition and processing<sup>14</sup>

The first publications about the necessity of categorization of the persons whose documents were to be accepted in the state archives appeared.<sup>15</sup> Following the Soviet methodical model, three categories were proposed: 1. most eminent representatives in the field of literature, art, science, humanities, economics whose records are to be accepted; 2. secondary rank figures whose records have historical and scientific/ scholar importance but the State Archives have to acquire part of them after selection; 3. persons who have friendly, official, and parental relations with most eminent contemporaries.

In the 1980-es the archival policy related to the personal funds was assigned to an experimental group of 6 experts from different units, and in 1991 to the special unit "Acquisition and scientific processing of personal funds" at the General Department of Archives<sup>16</sup>. All these structural, organizational, theoretic, and methodical steps were the foundation of the achieved regularity in personal funds' acquisition and in the bridging over the initial arrear. But as a whole the quantity of the personal funds is 10 times less than the institutional ones (in 2007 within the funds stocks there were 5 271 personal and 58 689 institutional funds). This proportion is valid for all territorial State Archives as well as for the documental complex of the records created after 1944 in the Central State Archives where 418 personal and 1 085 establishment funds are kept. The single exception of this proportion we could find in the Central State Archives concerning the documental complex of the older period: from 1878 to 1944 the number of the personal funds overwhelm the establishment ones twice (1254 personal funds against 781 institutional ones)

### *1.5. Methodology prescriptions and rules for archival records' acquisition*

The acquisition by the State Archives of records from establishments and individuals is led in conformity with the preliminary assigned yearly plan for each Archives service. The methodology prescriptions require certain periodicity and regularity in the acceptance of documents in the State Archives. According to the law regulations valid to 2007 the documents of national importance should enter the archives 10 years after they have been created, those of local importance – 5 years after their creation. Therefore the chronological frame of the records about women and minorities in the State Archives cover more than a century: from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the 1990s. The initial dates of the records in the personal and institutional fonds of women and minorities are different but they appeared mainly after 1878. The most recent records are from the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and some territorial Archives have such records from 2003. Concerning the future receipts of records of women and minorities we should expect some remoteness in the time because of the rule 20 years the records to be preserved in the institutions that created them.<sup>17</sup> Hence the researchers on women and minorities should wait for a large period to access to the archival sources.

The composition of the accepted records in the State Archives is defined by an appraisal procedure. The methodology rules from early 1980-ies prescribe to observe the three basic principles to carry out the appraisal: Historicism, Universalism, and Complexity; Class and Party Approach. The selection of valuable records is ruled by the application of the criteria system associated with the contents of the records, the importance of the institution where they were created, the level of information, the author etc.

The application of these criteria however does not affect the leading strategy of the archivists to keep the internal relations between the records, to preserve the complex character of the archival fonds and of the records that had built them, and to prevent the dismembering of the fonds among various Archives services.

The methodology guidance, the legal framework, and the practice assure a planned and regular accessioning of the State Archives with records. Along with this during the last decades there were several campaigns for gathering and archiving memoirs and personal fonds: on the occasion of the 1300 anniversary of the Bulgarian state personal fonds of eminent economic and culture figures, sportsmen etc. and documents of the 'family memory' were gathered (initiative of the Archives and of the *Trud* newspaper). On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the socialist revolution the memory cam-

paign People's Memory is Relating emphasised the need of massive gathering of memoirs about certain events. The jubilee occasions like the 50th anniversary of the Spanish war and 40th anniversary of the youth-brigade movement incited the acquisition of personal fonds.

Among these archives gathered following the mentioned prescriptions we could hardly find records concerning common people because the legal framework and the methodology guidance categorically foresaw to look for eminent figures of the socio-political life, culture figures, artists, innovators, shock-workers, heroes of the socialist labour, intellectuals<sup>18</sup>.

So the women and the minorities and the prevailing personal fonds are represented in the Bulgarian State Archives only if their fond creator's were prominent in the socio-political, cultural and economic life. Namely, being in the category of the remarkable persons, they unconditionally obtain the possibility to be accepted by the Archives. Therefore we could say that there was an internal equality between the remarkable persons (no internal category ranking or marginalizing according what ever principle). The number of the personal fonds of women corresponds to their place in politics, science, social hierarchy.

#### *1.6. Quantitative parameters*

##### *a) Archival fonds of women*

##### *Personal fonds of women*

A considerable number of personal fonds of women is kept in the Archives' system: 665 from all the 5 271 personal fonds, 99 of them are family fonds. Their geographical distribution shows that the greater number belongs to the Central State Archives: 242, 153 of them being of women active in the years before the 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1944, and only 89 belong to women of the contemporary period, including the socialist one. There are only sporadic cases when regional Archives stressed on the acquisition of personal fonds of women (Stara Zagora) and families (Gabrovo). The total number of women's fonds in the territorial State Archives is 423, the records from the period after 1944 prevail: 358 and only 65 are the fonds of women who lived in the previous period.

##### *- institutional fonds of women*

A significant number of institutions' fonds is kept (282) that reflect the life and activity of women communities: schools for girls, girls' monasteries, charity and educa-

tional societies. The less part of them (103) are from the olden period and 179 date from the period after 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1944 to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.

Archival fonds of women	1878-1944	1944 – 1990 <sup>cs</sup>	Total
Personal fonds	218	447	665
Institutional fonds	103	179	282
Total	321	626	947

#### b) Archival fonds of minorities

Considering the minorities only fonds of cultural – religious and educational organizations were preserved. Most of them were minority schools, mainly Turkish ones, because of the special policy of Bulgarian government to the Muslim minorities. The total number of archival fonds of the minorities is 584 and 505 of them are institutional fonds, 79 are the private fonds of the minority representatives. From the institutional fonds 283 belong to the olden period and 222 are from the period after the 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1944. Among the personal fonds of the minorities, these belonging to the persons of the modern period prevail - 46; for the olden period there are only 33. There is a considerable number of fonds concerning the life of Jews. There is also a small number of fonds concerning the life of the Armenian, Romanian, and only 2 fonds of the Roma minority. For the rest of the fonds the existence of women and minorities depends on the way the archives were described and catalogued.

Archival fonds of minorities	1878-1944	1944 – 1990 <sup>cs</sup>	Total
Personal	33	46	79
Institution	283	222	505
Total	316	268	584

#### c) Archival fonds of women and minorities from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> category

The fonds of women and minorities accepted by the Bulgarian Archives' system are mostly of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> category – 741 institutions of women and minorities; and 460 personal fonds of women and minorities which are kept by the 27 territorial State Archives in the country because of their local significance.

The Central State Archives gave place to 46 archival fonds of institutions of women and minorities and 284 personal fonds (242 of them belonging to women and 42 to minorities representatives) all being first category.

National Archives/ Territorial Archives	Institutional fonds	Personal fonds	Total
Central State Archives	46 archival fonds of women and minorities	284 archival fonds (among them 242 of women 42 of minorities)	330 institutional and personal fonds
27 Territorial State Archives	741 archival fonds of women and minorities	460 personal fonds of women and minorities	1 201 institutional and private fonds
Total	787 institutional fonds	744 personal fonds	1 531 institutional and personal fonds

## 2. The Access - Inventories, Guides, Thematic Catalogues etc.

The description and the cataloguing of the documents and the compiling of guides is a precondition for the users' access to the records. That is why the principles for the elaboration of these inventories and catalogues, as well as their thematic characteristics and contents, are the key to the corpora themselves of the records. The available records on women and minorities are covered by the same inventories and guides according to the general guidance relative to them. All State Archives dispose of guides and this allows us to have an idea about all fonds created by women organisations, minority institutions, and by women and persons from the minority groups. All documents having entered the State Archives had been described in the inventories<sup>19</sup> and using them one could approach archive units containing documents about women and minorities. The catalogues (except the systematic ones) are elaborated on the occasion of celebrating different anniversaries and jubilees and reflect the Communist Party official decisions regarding the finding aids. In regards of the cataloguing, the fonds are distributed in tree categories according to the variety of information they contain. Each published catalogue of documents has also a personal name index. To elaborate the indexes, information had to be gathered about the life and activities of distinguished persons:

figures of politics, revolutionary movement, science, technique, art etc. Other catalogues were made on request of different institutions, on topics given by the General Department of Archives or on the Archives' own initiative. Archival policy of cataloguing women and minority documents could be featured by the published thematic catalogues, namely the print-book catalogues that are devoted to women and minorities.

### **Catalogues about Women.**

On the occasion of the International Woman's Year a catalogue was published concerning the Women Movement in Bulgaria from 1878 to the 1980-ies. 1402 descriptions of documents from all over the country had been included in it. Undoubtedly its compiling required a thematic revealing to be made in all State Archives throughout the country that resulted in several catalogues on Women's Movement there. Only four of them were published along with one about the famous Bulgarian poetess Dora Gab. All the regional catalogues on the Women's Movement are from the period 1981-1982. Ten thematic reviews of women's fonds have been published – 1 about the nun sisterhood and the rest about the women societies and the women communist movement. The earliest publication was from 1969, most of the publications were elaborated after 1989.

### **Minorities**

There were not any thematic catalogues concerning minorities. 6 thematic and fonds reviews were published - 2 of them relative to Turkish, Tatar and other Muslim organizations, 1 on the process of converting into Islam, and 1 about the Jewish collection of the Institute of the Balkan Studies.

### **Publishing of Documents**

The publication of the documents is the way to make archives enter into scientific circulation and to become publicly known. To reach this objective, every issue of the Journal of State Archives foresees such a publication. These publications are from the period 1968 – 2003. Only some of them are associated with women, wives and mothers

of prominent communist leaders (Zaimova, grand-mother Parashkeva, Elena Vaptsarova, Mila Geo Mileva) and the others – mainly with the women movement. It seems that despite of the significant number of archival fonds of women and minorities, the catalogues and published documents are comparatively less.

Generally speaking in spite of the considerable number of archival fonds of women and minorities, the catalogues and published documents about them are comparatively too small.

## **In conclusion**

The prescriptions to the archival documents of women and minorities are part of the common archival policy, of the general rules and therefore their results are adequate and comparative to the rest of the archival fonds and complexes of records from the stocks of the National Archival Fonds.

Concerning the private fonds, the general policy towards all records is oriented to the gathering, preservation, and popularizing of the legacy of the 'eminent figures' and it led to the reiteration of the preferences towards a limited circle of activists, their families and relatives etc. and limited the discovery of new fields connected to less known or forgotten personalities, including women and minority representatives. The problem namely is that the Bulgarian archival system is characterized by a weak flexibility but the social memory is a dynamic dialogue (a play) between the memory and the oblivion.

As for the institutional fonds of women and minorities, their presence in the Bulgarian archives represents the place they occupied in the social, political, economic, and cultural life. Hence it is not by chance that the archival fonds of women and minorities' institutions with regional significance prevail in the Archives stocks of the territorial Archives (741 institutions with regional significance) and only 46 fonds with national significance are kept in the Central State Archives.

The documents' traces of non privileged social groups (women, minorities), which Bulgarian Archives hold, are to be deeper researched. The improvement of the access to the documents is forthcoming that our project is achieving at a certain degree. The first step was made by our web- site containing data about all archives fonds of women and minorities in the Central State Archives, the 27 regional State Archives, and part of the fonds of the Manuscript and Documents Centre of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Na-



tional Library. Along with this by a joint project with the Archives State Agency, university students create data base of archival finding aids where catalogues and inventories of women and minorities enter. They shall be accessed in the Internet space in the second half of the 2009.

<sup>1</sup> In parallel but independently on the State Archives the network of one central and local party archives functioned with a restrictive access (1946-1992) A small part of the records covering the political governance of the party and state authorities in Bulgaria from 1944 to 1989 got there. The so called administration archives with permanent stocks of records had a relatively autonomous status and were not under the authority of the Archives directorate but followed its methodical guidance. Among them, Bulgarian national film archives, the archives of the Bulgarian national television and radio, the archives of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library etc. the access to these records is relatively more restricted than to these in the State Archives and is given according internal administrative rules.

<sup>2</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the National Assembly on the creation of State Archival Fonds, dated 10.10. 1951 .

<sup>3</sup> Art..2 Б (e) of the decree.

<sup>4</sup> According to Art. 78 of the Constitution from 1947 the Church was proclaimed separated from the State.

<sup>5</sup> Law on the National Archival Fonds, State gazette/ Д.В./, issue 37 from 13.07.2007

<sup>6</sup> In that case one should research the records not only of the Council of Ministers but of the different ministries and also of the former party archives, the fonds of the Ministry of Interior that reveal the state and party policy towards the minorities, the 'revival process' etc.

<sup>7</sup> At the moment of the categories ranking the administrative and territorial partition of the country was by districts

<sup>8</sup> Code of Methodics, S., GDA at CM, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 27-28

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> M. Todorakova, K. Anchova. About the past way and the present day of the Central State Archives, S., 2006, GDA, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Peykov, Iv. The Search of records and the Acquisition of old documental materials and personal fonds, Archival review, 1955, issue 1, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Published the first 'Methodical guidance on acquisition and scientific processing of fonds, collections and separate records of personal provenance', S., 1978.

<sup>15</sup> See Barzakova, N. Appraisal of the value of records of personal origine. In: National conference on the problems of appraisal of records.. 24 Oct. 1974.; Hakova, E. Appraisal of records of personal origine, Archival Review, 19.

<sup>16</sup> M. Todorakova, K. Anchova, Idem, p.. 39-40.

<sup>17</sup> The term of records preservation in the establishments is prolonged to 20 years by the new law adopted in 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Code of Methodics, p.17.

<sup>19</sup> Exception of this rule are the rather little part of unprocessed fonds.

## WOMEN IN MACEDONIA THROUGHOUT DOCUMENTATION

Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska

My research in the frame of the project 'Women and Minority Documentation and Digital Presentation - from Fragmented Data to Integration in the Information Society' consists of 2 stages:

I. Report on the possibilities for researching women and minority documentation in the Republic of Macedonia;

II. Researching the development of the women's rights in Macedonia, focused on the aspects related to women and politics, by using different types of documentation: electronic photo archive of the *Macedonian Women's Lobby* (a coordinating body of the women organizations and individuals in the country, researched as an example of a women's documentation source) and other documents about women (party programs, legislation, NGO-analyses, and so on).

I. To review the possibilities for researching the women and minority archive documentation, available in the Republic of Macedonia, we should take into consideration both the state and the non-government sector. The system of the organized collecting, filing and presenting the archive material by the official institutions in Macedonia was introduced after the establishment of the State Archive in Skopje (1929-1941). The modern organized and institutionalized archival activity in Macedonia began after the establishment of the State Archive of the People's Republic of Macedonia in 1951 (SARM<sup>1</sup> after 1990).<sup>2</sup> The Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences organized a separate archive and the government institutions, both at central and local level, had their own archives. Archiving is obligatory for all organizations, institutions or enterprises in the country.

Today, the preservation and usage of the archive materials are regulated by the *Law of the Archive Records*<sup>3</sup> and the prescriptive and subordinate acts. Using the modern ways of automatic data processing and digitalization, SARM imports data from the archive fonds on the ADP-bases,<sup>4</sup> scans the prepared scientific-informative tools, and transmits them on the ADP-bases, in order to make the accessibility to information easier. Having the same goal, the process of digitalization in SARM<sup>5</sup> is also in progress.

The classification scheme covers the archive fonds and collections of the state units, social and political organizations, political parties, religious organizations, and other organizations (arranged by the type and range of institutions and in alphabetical order of the fond-founder). The personal and family fonds, arranged by the surnames of the fond-founders, are especially important. The same principle of researching concerns the collections and the copied archive material of a foreign provenience. In the published guides of the archive fonds and collections in SARM, the directions for searching are accorded to the current organization of the archive material in general.

Separate catalogues for women and minorities have not been issued, the data for these target groups should be searched through all the fonds and collections. The fonds of educational organizations, as well as the fonds of religious organizations, of political parties, of social and political organizations, and of humanitarian organizations contain important information. We could find fond-founders from these target groups in the personal and family fonds too.

Concerning the publishing of documents in Macedonia, related to women, there are a few collections of women's documents<sup>6</sup>, some collections of field materials of women's oral history, as well as published memoirs of women<sup>7</sup> about important historical events and persons, some monographic works about famous women or the women's movement in general<sup>8</sup>, etc.

Researching women and minority is also possible outside the state archive institutions. We found libraries, documentary departments, or archives in the national scientific institutes useful for our purpose, as they possess documents, field work materials, and publications based on team or individual research.

The specialized libraries and databases of various non-government organizations, societies, and institutions (for example *Macedonian Women's Lobby*,<sup>9</sup> *Union of the Organizations of Women of Macedonia*,<sup>10</sup> *"Euro-Balkan" Institute*<sup>11</sup>, etc.) are especially important when searching women and minority documentation. Also, almost all relevant organizations have web addresses on the Internet and there have been attempts to establish databases by similar projects.<sup>12</sup>

However, there are not still centralized archives for researching women's documentation in the Republic of Macedonia, so the existing documents are scattered in different fonds and different sources of information should be used.

II. This article about women and politics is based on various documentation (docu-

ments, published materials, press, electronic photo documentation) provided from different sources (archives, official administrative sites, NGO's, and private collections). During my research I used the available information and materials from the State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia, Macedonian Women's Lobby, Ministry of Labour and Social Politics (Department for Improving Gender Equality), Committee of Equal Opportunities of Men and Women of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia and Club of Women Deputies, Union of Organizations of Women in Macedonia, Institute of National History and individuals.

The focus of my interest was the women's rights movement in Macedonia, and I used different types of sources and women's documents, especially those concerning women and politics. The topic women and politics is about the necessity for women to have the right to choose among different political options in order to improve the society directly. In the present societies women have a double role as voters and politicians. Regarding the fact that the social, economic, health, and other aspects of living are closely related to the political decisions, organized efforts had been directed to increasing women's participation in the political life and related to the development of the democratic parliamentary system in Macedonia.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning the documentation and institutionalization of the women's activities, we find several very important historical mile-stones that marked the development of the Macedonian women's rights movement:

1) 1944 *The Declaration of ANLAM<sup>14</sup> concerning the Basic Rights of the Citizens of Democratic Macedonia*"

2) 1991 *Constitution of the Independent Republic of Macedonia*

3) 1994 *Electoral Programme of the Democratic Party*

4) 1997 *Department of Gender Equality*

5) 2000 *Macedonian Women's Lobby*

6) 2006 *Law of the Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*

7) 2007 *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2007-2012)*.

1. Concerning the first and basic normative documents that regulated women's rights, we have to underline *The Declaration of ANLAM concerning the Basic Rights of the Citizens of Democratic Macedonia* (02.08.1944). According to the Declaration: 'All citizens of the Federal Macedonian State are equal to law, regardless of their nationality, gender, race, and religion' (Article 1). At the same time, the participation in the political life and

the right to vote in the Macedonian state had been regulated by Article 7: 'Every man or woman, above the age of 18, has the right to vote and to be voted for in any elections, provided that he/she have not been prosecuted for any criminal act...'.<sup>15</sup>

During the period of its existence as a federal state in Yugoslavia, Macedonia was going through almost the same phases of the Yugoslavian political system in general.<sup>16</sup> Considering the period before 1990, women had neither real political power nor authority. Nevertheless, we have to take into consideration that not only women, but all individuals in the socialist state, having mono-political parliamentary system, had no real political role, Communistic/Socialistic Party being as the centre of power and the main and only decision making body.

Practicing a multi-parliamentary democracy in Macedonia began since its independence, after the decomposition of the Yugoslav Federation when the new historical changes influenced each aspect of the society. A period of intensified civil organizing on different levels began as a result of individual initiatives and ideas of the citizens. This process led to the establishment of various organizations, institutions, and political parties. Thus, the women's movement was marked by an intensive development.

2. The Macedonian Constitution from 1991 declared equality regardless of sex: 'The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are equal concerning their freedom and right, regardless of their sex, their race, the colour of their skin, their national and social origin, their political and confessional beliefs, as well as their financial and social position' (Article 9).<sup>17</sup> As a successor of the former Yugoslavian state, Macedonia had appropriated the *Convention for Elimination of All Types of Discrimination against Women*. Still, there was a lot to be done. Realizing the significance of the free voting and all other gains from the multi-political democracy, the efforts were directed towards strengthening the position of the women in the political life. In parallel with this process, in order to set a basis for changing the laws and regulations in the domestic legislation, some important international documents related to the international women's movement had been accepted.

3. To fulfil the women's rights, it is important to review the political party programs, too. The Democratic Party was the first political party that considered the women's rights. Established in 1993, the women's rights were not yet part of its programme, but in 1994 they became part of its electoral programme for the parliamentary elections. In a specific chapter titled *About Women and Their Rights*, the main characteristics of the

women's situation in Macedonia have been revealed for the first time: a patriarchal type of society with formal gender equality in the previous system. Outlining the main problems, the Programme spoke of further directions towards the realization of the women's rights, proposing the so called 'positive discrimination' and legal 'privileges' that would contribute for the gender equality in the society. The proposed methods for achieving the goals were: economic improvement of women's position; establishing a Ministry of Women (following the examples of Austria, Germany, and other countries) or women department within the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics; treating women as free people with the right to choose their own partners, jobs, and the right to make decisions concerning maternity; establishing centres for legal, financial, psychological, medical, and other kinds of help (again, the example of Austria – the so called *Women's House*, shelters for women-victims and poor women). The contemporary situation was criticized and the necessary measures in different social areas were proposed. The deficit of women at leading political positions was emphasized. What seems to be particularly important was the idea that the basic impulse for future changes should be undertaken by women<sup>18</sup>.

In fact, the *Electoral Programme of the Democratic Party* could be considered a foundation stone for future actions in the field. Unfortunately, this reform oriented party did not enter the Parliament and the appeals for women's rights remained unaccomplished. Later, after the local elections in 1996, the Party joined the Liberal Party and was transformed into the Liberal-Democratic Party. But, although the Democratic Party disappeared from the political scene, its Programme remained as an exclusive document of the beginnings of the modern women's movement in the Republic of Macedonia. Nevertheless the same course concerning the women's rights was reflected in the new party *Proposal for Programme Declaration* at its foundation assembly (19.04.1997 in Skopje). Under the title 'Women – Equal Factor in the Development of the Society', the women's rights had been declared. Although the text is much shorter than in the previous programme, it still contains the same explanations, principles, and goals. At the beginning a very important declaration was written: 'The social position of women is a significant indicator of the general level of development of democracy and civilization of society'<sup>19</sup>. The party called for amending the legislation concerning all aspects of women's life, improving the medical care network, improving the institutions taking care of children, and organizing centres for abused women.<sup>20</sup>

Other parties had also accepted women's issues into their programmes (Liberal Party, Party for Democratic Prosperity). Later, almost all significant political parties in Macedonia did the same. For example, the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia established the Women's Clubs in 1999<sup>21</sup> and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unification established the Women's Union in 2000.<sup>22</sup> Today's most common models of women's organizations within the parties are clubs, unions or forums,<sup>23</sup> working by commissions, conferences, women's group networks, etc. But the instruments for proclaiming the women's rights demands are within the political programmes.

4. The establishment of the Department of Genders Equality in 1997, as a part of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia within the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics, was the next very important step of the women's movement aiming at building institutional mechanisms. The next step was the establishment of the First National Plan for Gender Equality, following the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. The document was accepted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in 1999. It aimed at defining the politics and measures promoting and protecting the women's rights in every sphere of the social life.<sup>24</sup>

5. In the process of the consciousness rising of the Macedonian women, although independently each of another, the establishment of the Macedonian Women's Lobby on 01.03. 2000<sup>25</sup> was an indicator of a new stage in the women's organizing, uniting both the state and non-government sectors in a political corpus for a stronger and more efficient joint activity. It was a coalition of women of different profiles and different backgrounds (national, confessional, and political): NGO-s, political parties, the Government, media, the Parliament, Trade Unions, the Local Government, and women-experts in various areas. It was an organization connecting different women's groups and associations, aimed at a more efficient representation of the women's interests in the public sphere, within institutions, and the decision making bodies by pressuring, lobbying, and advocating within institutions. The Macedonian Women's Lobby was a significant step towards the real participation of women in the political and social life. To achieve gender equality, efforts were made to improve the legislation and its implementation; creating and developing an implementation strategy of national gender machinery; and initiating and organizing campaigns and activities for the protection of the women's rights in different fields. The strategy of the Macedonian Women's Lobby aimed

at the women's political and economic strengthening, raising the emancipation level, building gender machinery, lobbying, and attracting the public interest to gender question.

It is very important to stress that all the actions at national level were based on co-ordinated activities of every structural unit of the Lobby by creating joint strategies, but also on individual level, by realizing projects, campaigns, and other activities. The local lobby groups, as an integral part of the Macedonian Women's Lobby, aimed to promote the activities at a local level by pressuring, lobbying, and advocating within the local governance, are equally important.

An example of the active political role of women, regardless of their political, ethnic or religious proveniences, was their gathering for the promotion of peace activities during the war in Macedonia in 2001 ('Thousands of Conversations' during the Spring, 'Appeal to the International Community' in March, Press Conference against the signing of the so called Ohrid Agreement on the termination of the war in August 2001).

The obtained results from the united activities of the Lobby raised the awareness about the importance of the participation of women in the political and public life, especially the awareness of the women voters in rural areas. The results of the united activities of the women from different spheres of society were much more successful.<sup>26</sup> The interaction between the political parties and the legislation activities led to the increased number of women in the political life that to the adoption of regulations on behalf of the women's rights. At the same time, the laws which benefited women assured an equal participation of women in the society.

The electoral laws requiring quotas of 30% participation for both genders affected positively the social role of women in relation to politics by increasing the number of women in the decision making structures and within the parties. For example, it increased the number of women in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. There were parliamentary elections in 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006. After the elections in 2006, the number of women raised to 36 (30%) women in the Parliament. The number of women elected at local level increased too. Before the year 2000, the number of women-counselors was 5.5%, and mayors 0%. In the local elections in 2000 the number of the women-counselors rose to 8.4% and to 2.4% for women-mayors; in 2005, 22.7% women-counselors and 3.5% women-mayors had been elected.<sup>27</sup>

The direct participation of women in politics meant an active role of the women in the decision making bodies. It increased the number of women-participants in the



governing bodies on a national and local level - a female vice-president of the Parliament (2002-2004), presidents of parliamentary working bodies, female leaders of political parties, etc.

At first, numerous international documents of the United Nations Organization, the European Union, the European Council, and other international institutions had been enacted.<sup>28</sup> The domestic regulation concerning the gender equality had been also designed. Women's rights regarding their participation in the political life, were especially regulated by several very important laws. *The Law of the Political Parties*<sup>29</sup> obliges the parties to follow the principle of gender equality regarding the positions within the parties. *The Law of the Electing Representatives in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*<sup>30</sup> regulated the established quotas of 30% participation for both genders within the proposed list of candidates. *The Law of Local Elections*<sup>31</sup> established quotas of 30% participation of both genders in the first half of the list and 30% participation of both genders in the second half of the list for local elections.

6. One of the most significant achievements in the field of women's rights was the *Law of Equal Opportunities of Men and Women* enacted in 2006.<sup>32</sup> Comparing it with all the preceding documents we could find historical proofs for the achievements of the women's movement in Macedonia - some declarations and solutions of women's issues are close to the proclamations of the 1994 Democratic Party's Programme which gave an initial force in this process. Regarding the articles concerning the gender equality within the political parties, the Law obliges them to form women's structures, to elaborate annual programmes for men's and women's equal opportunities, and to submit them to the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics. There were articles regulating all issues that were of importance for achieving gender equality, such as the terminology, measures, and sanctions.

7. *The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012*,<sup>33</sup> coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics and OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe), is also an important document concerning the future activity in maintaining and implementing the *Law of Equal Gender Opportunities* in the Macedonian society. As for the future activities, this was a step towards acceptance and implementation of the already obtained achievements regulating women's rights in Macedonia in the society and legislation.

Today, institutional mechanisms guaranteeing equal gender opportunities at

national and local level have been established. As a part of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, and within the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics, a Department of Gender Equality is still functioning.<sup>34</sup> Coordinators for gender equal opportunities were also appointed in the other ministries. At local level, within the *Local Authority Units* (LAU), *Committees for Equal Gender Opportunities in the Council of the LAU* with a Coordinator for *Women's and Men's Equal Opportunities of Local Authority* are also functioning. Furthermore, within the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia there is a *Committee for Equal Gender Opportunities*.<sup>35</sup> In the Macedonian Parliament, the women are also organized in the Women's Parliamentary Club<sup>36</sup>.

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From a historical point of view, all these documents are part of the women's history movement in Macedonia. If we agree that researching women question throughout various materials and institutions of different spheres of life, represents, at the same time, a model of how women function within the society, the research highlights the traces the women had left in the various spheres of the social life. Because of the lack of the centralized institutional women's archive, the research of the women's documentation in the Republic of Macedonia requires search of documentation in different archive sources.

Since so many aspects and themes are related to women there is a need of special thematically organised women archive. To easy the access to the documents the modern technology should be introduced.

<sup>1</sup> *The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia*

<sup>2</sup> Виолета Герасимовска, Архив на Македонија [Archive of Macedonia], Скопје, 1996, ; Иван Алексов, Државен архив на Република Македонија: 1951-2006 [The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia: 1951-2006], Скопје, 2006, 15-26.

<sup>3</sup> In: Службен весник на Социјалистичка Република Македонија [Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia], 36/90.

<sup>4</sup> Automatic data processing.

<sup>5</sup> The web (<http://www.arhiv.gov.mk>) enables searching in the part of publishing production. The category "e-archive" is empty.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Вера Весковиќ-Вангели and Марија Јовановиќ, *Зборник на документи за учеството на жените од Македонија во народно-ослободителната војна и револуција 1941-1945* [Collection of Documents about the Participation of Women from Macedonia in the National-Liberation War and Revolution 1941-1945], Скопје, 1976.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Лидија Стојановиќ-Лафазановска, Ермис Лафазановски, *Егзодусот на Македонците од Грција. Женски нарации за II светска војна и нивниот егзодус* [The

Exodus of Macedonians from Greece. Women's Narrations about World War II and Their Exodus], Скопје, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Вера Весковиќ-Вангели, Осми март и прогресивното женско движење на Македонија [The Eighth of March and the Progressive Women's Movement in Macedonia 1939-1945], Скопје, 1985; Idem, Жената во системот на антагонизмот на традицијата [Woman in the System of the Antagonism of Tradition], Велес, 1999 etc.

<sup>9</sup> Македонско женско лоби [Macedonian Women's Lobby], at: <http://www.mzl.org.mk>

<sup>10</sup> Сојуз на организации на жени на Македонија [Union of the Organizations of Women of Macedonia], at: <http://www.sozm.org.mk>

<sup>11</sup> An information and documentation unit has been working since 2001 on a daily monitoring of several newspapers in Macedonia, creating a database of articles related to women/gender issues (at: <http://www.cuba.org.mk/eng/arhiva.asp>).

<sup>12</sup> See also: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка, Проекти на граѓанските организации во Македонија: 2002-2003 [Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation, Projects of the Civil Organizations in Macedonia: 2002-2003], Скопје, 2004, 81-91.

<sup>13</sup> Надежда Цветковска, Политичките партии во парламентарните изборни борби во Вардарскиот дел на Македонија 1919-1929 [Political Parties in the Parliamentary Electoral Contests in the Vardar Part of Macedonia 1919-1929], Скопје, 2004, 24-26; Idem, Граѓанските партии во Вардарскиот дел на Македонија (1935-1941) [Civil Parties in the Vardar Part of Macedonia (1935-1941)], Скопје, 1996, 9-149. See also, Манол Пандевски, Политичките партии и организации во Македонија (1908-1912) [Political Parties and Organizations in Macedonia (1908-1912)], Скопје, 1987.

<sup>14</sup> *The Antifascist National Liberation Assembly of Macedonia* was held in the monastery of St. Prohor Pchinski (1944).

<sup>15</sup> SARM, 1.157.1.16/121-123. See also, Зборник на документи од Антифаши-стичкото собрание на народното ослободување на Македонија АСНОМ [Collection of Documents Concerning the Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia ANLAM], Скопје, 1964, 239-240.

<sup>16</sup> Marija Pandevska, The Member of Parliament: Between Personal Prestige and Public Expectations. Phases in the Development of the Macedonian Parliamentary System, Skopje, 2007, 12-31.

<sup>17</sup> Собрание на Република Македонија [Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia], at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/default.asp?ItemID=2E7B3DD8C5FBCA47A7DC6593841EBDD7>

<sup>18</sup> Програма на Демократската партија. Демократска партија. Изборна програма '94 [Programme of the Democratic Party. Democratic Party. Electoral Programme '94], Скопје, 1994, 111-114 (private collection).

<sup>19</sup> Програмска декларација. Предлог. Либерално демократска партија [Programme Declaration. Proposal. Liberal Democratic Party], Скопје, 19.04.1997, 22 (private collection).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 22-23.

<sup>21</sup> Социјалдемократски сојуз на Македонија. Клубови на жени [Socialdemocratic Union of Macedonia, Women's Clubs], at: <http://www.sdsm.org.mk>

<sup>22</sup> ВМРО-ДПМНЕ, Унија на жени [VMRO-DPMNE, Women's Union], at: <http://www.vrmro-dpmne.org.mk/mk/zapis.asp?id=2661>

<sup>23</sup> Демократска обнова на Македонија. Форум на жени [Democratic Renewal of Macedonia. Women's Forum], at: <http://www.dom.org.mk>

<sup>24</sup> Елена Грозданова and Јована Тренчевска, Оценка на состојбата и темелните прашања кои се уредуваат со Законот за еднакви можности на жените и мажите [Evaluation of the Situation and the Basic Issues Regulated by the Law on Equal Rights of Women and Men], Скопје, 2006, 6.

<sup>25</sup> The focal points of Gender Task Force-Stability Pact for SEE were: Liljana Popovska (co-ordinator), Savka Todorovska (NGO focal point) and Elena Grozdanova (Government focal point).

<sup>26</sup> *Macedonian Women's Lobby* was awarded by the *Macedonian Center of International Cooperation* (MCIC) with the "Award for Highest Achievement in Civil Society and Democracy" in July 2003. This award is for the promotion and protection of human rights, especially of women's rights, as a contribution to the democracy and civic society.

*Macedonian Women's Lobby* is an equal member of the *European Women's Lobby* since 2006.

<sup>27</sup> **Македонско женско лоби. Активности** [Macedonian Women's Lobby. Activities], at: <http://www.mzl.org.mk/aktivnosti.asp> See also, Ibid, at: <http://www.mzl.org.mk/proekti.asp>

<sup>28</sup> **Грозданова/Тренчевска, Оценка**, see note 25, 3-6. See also, **Заштита на жените од насилство. Препорака Пре(2002)5 на Комитетот на министри до државите членки за заштита од насилство усвоена на 30 април 2002 и Објаснувачки меморандум** [Prevention of Violence against Women. Recommendation Pre(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to the Member States for the Prevention of Violence adopted on April 30, 2002 and Explanation Memorandum], Скопје, ноември 2004; **Демократизација, спречување на конфликти и градење на мирот: перспективите и улогата на жената МЕГ-5(2003)04. Резолуција. Улогата на жените и мажите во спречувањето на конфликти, градењето на мирот и пост-конфликтните демократски процеси-полова перспектива** [Democratization, Preventing Conflicts and Peace Building: Perspectives and the Role of Women MEG-5(2003)04. Resolution. The Role of Women and Men in Preventing Conflicts, Peace Building and Post-Conflict Democratic Processes – Gender Perspective], Скопје, ноември 2004.

<sup>29</sup> In: **Службен весник на Република Македонија** [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia], 76/2004.

<sup>30</sup> In: **Службен весник на Република Македонија** [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia], 42/2002, 46/2004.

<sup>31</sup> In: **Службен весник на Република Македонија** [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia], 46/96, 12/2003, 35/2004, 52/2004, 60/2004.

<sup>32</sup> In: **Службен весник на Република Македонија** [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia], 66/06.

<sup>33</sup> **Национален план за акција за родова рамноправност 2007-2012** [National Plan for Action for Gender Equality], Скопје, јули 2007.

<sup>34</sup> **Министерството за труд и социјална политика, Сектор за еднакви можности** [Ministry of Labor and Social Politics, Sector for Equal Opportunities], at: <http://mtsp.gov.mk/default.asp?ItemID=3794ACD1286780458A56E3A6A074821D>.

<sup>35</sup> **Собрание на Република Македонија. Комисија за еднакви можности на жените и мажите** [Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Committee for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men], at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=988772D659F5CF448B41939158D69EC9>

<sup>36</sup> **Собрание на Република Македонија. Клуб на пратенички** [Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Club of Women Deputies], at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=1E5CC2E6B937104396BBBD37928383D9> For its documents see, Ibid, at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=9C370FCE2282B24995726AD076E6F6D5>

## DIGITAL WOMEN ARCHIVES AND PRESENTATIONS

### NEW FRAMES. *MUSIEUM* – DISPLAYING GENDER

Regina Wonisch

As well as archives, museums and exhibitions are popular media engaged in collecting and imparting knowledge. They preserve the cultural heritage, but their main function is to show it to the public. Therefore the question of their cultural narrative and imagery is of socio-political importance. The self-imposed mission of museums in presenting their treasures to the public is generally based on the claim that they are committed to the whole of the population, that their display has to be neutral, objective and universally valid. The selection of topics and objects is, however, always governed by diverse social, political and scientific interests. Under this assumption, museum presentations have been made a subject of discussion of the relationship between women and men, of elite and marginalized social classes or of one's own culture vis- -vis foreign cultures. From the 1970s onwards, the feminist movement and other social movements have postulated an adequate presentation of their demands and have looked for symbolic representation forms of their own. What we are concerned with is not only a question of presence and absence, of inclusion or exclusion, but above all of the way in which something is presented at the museum. Even if certain social groups and topics do not directly form the subject of an exhibition there are still statements made about them in a number of ways. In order to recognize these museum strategies it is necessary to focus on what is exhibited there. The effects achieved need not be intentional. In exhibition analysis it is particularly important to examine unintended statements, as they symptomatically contain dominant discourses.<sup>1</sup>

Highly diverse forms have been developed to pay increased attention to what so far has not been remembered or not been represented at museums and exhibitions. In 2002, a project was initiated by the *Women's Section* (Frauenbüro) of the City of Vienna under the heading of "Frauen sichtbar machen" – to make women visible.<sup>2</sup> The project target was to focus on cultural, scientific and political achievements of women, which

would often merit more attention. Therefore the historian Elke Krasny and the media specialist Nike Glaser Wieninger were asked to analyze museums in Vienna from this angle. Acting from outside the institution “museum“, they could scrutinize the institutions with a distanced but sharpened glance. The two experts selected four museums for their research: the *Vienna Museum* (Wien Museum), the *Jewish Museum* (Jüdisches Museum Wien), the *Technical Museum* (Technisches Museum Wien) and the *Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art* (österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde). In these museums they looked for objects which might tell stories about women and men, having lain dormant so far, but waking under a feminist eye. These objects, connected to the newly told stories, were put together under the label of “muSIEum. Displaying Gender“ in the framework of a multimedia internet project.<sup>3</sup>

The term *muSIEum* combines the German word for museum with the female pronoun (SIE = she). In this way the title visualizes the aims of the project: the claim that female history should be made more visible in museum presentations, and the demand to focus the display on the way in which female history has already been included in the visual programme of the museum.

The special feature of *muSIEum* is its accessibility via the internet: the display is on the screen. This is a different approach to the institution Museum – via a new medium: objects existing in reality are taken from different institutions and placed into the virtual sphere where they are visualized in a new context. There are a lot of virtual museums on the web. The particular approach of this project, as far as contents are concerned, consists in the feminist perspective on the objects and in the reflection on the work of the museum in general. The formal structure of the project differs from that of other websites in that the information is linked in a different way.

### **Innovative Structure of the website**

Arranged graphically around a central icon depicting an eye, thirteen keywords are used as headings: work, education, autonomy, family, money, communication, war, fashion, public space, privacy, representation, shopping, and stars. Under these topics, which are relevant for the everyday life of today, the objects are placed in relation to each other. Since the topics are arranged in a circle, each one is accorded the same emphasis, without being subjected to a hierarchical structure. Thus, the user does not have to

follow a prescribed path but may start on her/his virtual way by selecting any topic. In non-virtual exhibitions the course to follow is usually suggested more explicitly to the visitor; still, the circular approach is similar to the reception of traditional exhibition displays, because these are not read like the lines of a text but regarded as pictures.

Since the individual objects on the screen may appear in several thematic areas, more than one theme may be opened, that is all those containing the relevant object. Thus it is made clear that an object can be assigned to more than one category, since it always has several dimensions of meaning. A traditional exhibition, where the objects are usually shown in one specific context only, cannot visualize this more complex connotative scope.

Clicking on the central eye opens a thematic area at random, without pre-selection. Clicking again opens another one. Clicking on a symbol for a keyword brings up a circle of other symbols around the original concept: "work / Arbeit", for example, will be surrounded by pictures of washerwomen, a female sutler, a treadmill, female hawkers, a fruit market, women carrying salt, special bowls in which soup was served to women in childbed, a hook for hanging up kettles at the fireplace (W scherm deln, Marketenderin, Tretrad, fliegende H ndlerinnen, Obstmarkt, Salztr gerinnen, W chnerinnenschale, Godenschale, Kesselhaken). The selection of the objects makes it clear that here gainful employment and reproduction work, fields of work atypical and typical for women, are grouped together. The clicking on the central keyword "work / Arbeit" yields information about gender-specific questions regarding the topic of work. Are there still occupations typical for women or for men? What is the career situation for women and for men? Is reproduction work being divided cooperatively between women and men? What are the changes in the labour market and in coping with housework which have been effected during the recent decades?

Clicking on an "Object Symbol", reveals the object on the right-hand side, accompanied by a more extensive description. The texts describing the objects comprise not only the usual technical data but refer also to use and function of the artefacts and the relations between them, so that the exhibits become anchored in the new thematic structure of the website. A second navigation level is offered by the zone of association in the right-hand box, which enables the user to sort the objects according to other keywords.

The symbol of the eye surrounded by the different icons serves as a kind of instruction for the user of the website: she/he is asked to look closely in order to discover

new issues and new stories. And it is ultimately in the eye of the beholder that the individual pieces of information must be assembled to form a narrative.

What is central is not only the history of women and men, but generally a view of the objects themselves that differentiates between them and leads to a new awareness of them and of the way in which they may be read. Thus their hidden core may be revealed, which has not lent itself to discussion as yet. How is the visitor guided around? What kind of information is offered to her/him? A new vision opens out of historic sediments: of the genesis of stereotypes determining gender roles, of historic and current man / woman relationships. And what rises to the surface may contribute to a new understanding of the specific constellations of society, power, politics, gender, body and language.

### **Women as subjects**

Which objects have been selected? "Our approach to the museum objects and the virtual themes under which they have been arranged, is a feminist and gender-specific view", say Elke Krasny and Nike Glaser Wieninger: "This means that we ask for the differences in the lives of women and of men. Our selection was made on location in the museums in front of the real exhibits. Some were attractive enough to fascinate at first sight, others unfolded only after closer scrutiny. We have brought them here and implanted them into this new environment, removing them from their first home, the museum."<sup>4</sup> Although they underline the gender-specific view when trying to categorize the selected objects, it is obvious that many of them refer to women or to concepts of womanhood. In addition, there are objects created by women (for instance, paintings) and seemingly gender-neutral objects.

One of the exhibits representing a woman is, for example, a portrait of Maria Theresa. Whereas the Wien Museum makes do with a brief caption, the legend on the website informs us that Maria Theresa took over the reign of her father emperor Charles VI, after the sudden death of the latter in 1740. In 1713 Charles VI had passed the so called Pragmatic Sanction, a law which defined rules for the Habsburg succession: If there was no direct male heir, the daughters of the emperor should succeed. Nevertheless, several European sovereigns protested against the reign of Maria Theresa as soon as she had ascended the throne. She had to defend her claims fighting several protracted wars. In 1745 her husband, Francis Stephen, Duke of Lorraine, was elected and crowned



Roman Emperor, while Maria Theresa attended the coronation ceremony as a private person and not in a public function.

Portraits of noblewomen are found in large numbers in museums and galleries. The mode in which they are presented shows no difference. It is only through the information supplied together with the portrait that the difficult situation of Maria Theresa, on account of her being a member of the female sex, is underlined.

The painting of washerwomen (Johann Michael Kupfer, “Ball auf der Hngstatt” [Ball at the Drying Loft], 1893), happily dancing on the site where they hang up their washing, is another example where the impression made on the observer by the picture is modified by additional information on the website. The text explains that a number of new occupations for females came into being with the gradual development of an economy based on the division of labour, which split up into work outside the home as opposed to household work: Women now worked as governesses, maids, cooks and laundresses, most of them young and unmarried. And the work in this ‘services sector’ was usually underpaid, though strenuous and exhausting. In addition, many of the maid servants became prey to sexual assault by their masters. However, in Viennese folklore and operettas these occupations were often glorified or idealized, as in this painting.

Sometimes it requires a closer look at a painting to discern female figures, as in the picture which shows a treadmill (“Tretrad in den Salinen”, *Keltenmuseum Hallein* [Celts’ Museum Hallein], reproduction at the *Technical Museum Vienna*): Here they are depicted working on a treadmill in a salt mine. Work in mines is usually associated with men, since there are hardly any sources telling about the hard work performed by women. Neither does the Technical Museum elaborate on this issue, since the description of the exhibit focuses on the technical achievement of the treadmill without mentioning the working women.

A picture of the 1848 Revolution in the Wien Museum (Anton Ziegler, “Die Barrikade auf dem Michaelerplatz in der Nacht vom 26. auf den 27. Mai 1848” [The Barricade at the Michaelerplatz on the Night of the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1848], similarly, reveals its female protagonists only after close study: They did take part actively in the Revolution – there is one carrying a bayonet, another one warming herself at the watch fire, a third one drinking and cheering. “Nichtswrdige Weiber” (miserable hags) is the epithet they earned from their contemporaries; as yet, they had no political voice

and were debarred from the politically relevant public sphere. This discrepancy between the active role which women from all classes of society played in fighting for civic rights, and the disregard shown them by the 'bourgeois' revolutionaries is pinpointed only in the internet text, not at the museum. Without reference to the historic context the painting might convey a totally false impression of the importance of women in the revolutionary scene.

Another criterion of selecting an object was the fact that it was made by a woman. An example is the portrait of Count Josef Johann Fries, painted by Angelika Kauffmann. The descriptions and catalogue texts of the *Wien Museum* often supply only a little information about the subject depicted, whereas information about the artists is more abundant. With the oil painting of Count Fries the opposite is the case – just accidentally? The Count is described as a distinguished nobleman, patron of the arts, depicted against a sculpture in the background. No information is given about the painter Angelika Kauffmann. This may now be found on the *muSIEum*-website: the career of a woman artist in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, who was a founding member of the *London Royal Academy* and whom Johann Gottfried Herder, leading philosopher of the Enlightenment, had praised as one of the most accomplished and cultured women of Europe.

What was decisive for selecting these objects was the fact that *women* were depicted as historic persons or engaged in their functions (female workers, washerwomen, political activists). This corresponds to the claim to make women visible as subjects.<sup>5</sup> Outside the individual context, relations to the male protagonists will be lost; they are outlined only in the text of the internet presentation. The comprehensive explanations given depart from the specific experiences of women, relating them to the often different experiences and living conditions of the men. Thus the gender perspective is maintained in the texts of the website but not in the exhibits. Besides, by showing the exhibits outside their museum environment, the information about how many objects in the museums refer to experiences made by women or to their historic achievements is lost. Nor are users informed about the context which forms the background to the exhibits.

There are no objects showing men only. However, it would have been interesting also to choose objects representing patriarchal society. Areas dominated by men – such as politics, science, economy – are usually not seen under the gender perspective. Thus, exhibitions arranged from the feminist angle, highlighting achievements of women only, without a relation to man as a reference point, contribute to the shifting of the gender

aspect towards purely female issues. Thus *woman*, again, is seen as *the other* who requires a special form of presentation.<sup>6</sup>

## Female Myths and Allegories

Historic female personages have only rarely been found worthy of depicting – well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is reflected in the museum inventories. On the other hand, the exhibition halls abound with goddesses, mythical female figures and allegories. Representations of this type are also found on the website: the Donauweibchen (a nymph making her home in the river Danube), a Turkish war fury, a statue of Venus. These objects are part of the cultural heritage – the question however, is how the museums handle this heritage.

Many folk legends tell of mythical female spirits living in the water and seducing members of the male population like mermaids and sirens. Old Viennese folk tales feature the Donauweibchen, the water nymph mentioned before, who may act as a good spirit friendly to people but also bring sorrow and death to young fishermen. This mythical figure of the Donauweibchen was sculptured by Hans Gasser: the statue in the *Wien Museum* is a smaller version of the figure of the Donauweibchen fountain erected in the *Wiener Stadtpark* – the Viennese City Park – in 1862. The description of the museum exhibit tells the legend of the nymph, but it does not refer to the (male) projections entailed in the myth: secrecy, seduction, danger and perdition emanate from the female. Men seem to be defenceless vis- -vis transcendental magic and eroticism. Clichés similar to those attached to mythological figures are allocated to the so-called *femmes fatales* – concepts and narrations supporting certain gender stereotypes. To critically reflect on these instead of merely reproducing them would have been an undertaking worthwhile in this context. The same holds true for the presentation of the Turkish War Fury at the *Wien Museum*. To personify war and the enemy by a Fury (a term originally denoting a Roman goddess of revenge), though wars are primarily fought by men, is also the formation of a myth which should be critically challenged on the website. The enemy, brute force and destruction are being warded off by projecting the negative aspects on to *the other*, the woman. In this connection it would be interesting to pose a question going beyond the tangible objects, namely, which areas (of society) are represented by allegory.

## Sexualized and Gender-neutral Objects

Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, will probably be familiar to most museum visitors. Thus, it seems strange, looking at a Venus statue of 1839, to find a label on the pedestal with the lapidary inscription “Kunsteisenguss“ (iron casting). This Venus is exhibited – next to Apollo – in the *Technical Museum*, Heavy Industry Section. She serves only as an object demonstrating the type of industrial production named. A street lamp-post would have had the same effect. Of course, the figure of Venus is far more pleasing to the eye – a well-known effect which often makes women become *objects* in advertising. Sex sells – also in the museum?

Another topic visualized in the *Technical Museum* is the production of polyvinyl chloride (PVC): This material is used for making plastic sheets, pipes, tubes, cables, artificial leather or floor coverings – objects not really exciting to look at. Therefore visitors are entertained with the display of 14 Barbie dolls, simply labelled “PVC“. The history of this epitome of American post-war civilization, loved and hated at the same time, is revealed only in *muSIEum*. As early as 1976, when the US celebrated their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Barbie had become the embodiment of “culture made in USA“, being packed into a time capsule together with a Coca-Cola bottle and a figure of Mickey Mouse as national cultural heritage worthy of preservation. In 1997 the two sociologists Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer published a book dealing with gender aspects – in particular, the role of girls and women in society – under the title of “Let’s kill Barbie! Wie aus Mädchen tolle Frauen werden” (Let’s Kill Barbie! How Girlies Become Crazy Women).

Thus the angle from which an object is observed is important with reference to the light it may cast on women versus men. Looking at Barbie or Venus purely as an artefact made of plastic or cast iron makes them appear gender-neutral. However, the message inherent in an object may not always be channelled into one precise statement. The myth of Barbie, the sexualized image of woman, with her success story as a cult object, will raise manifold associations. The museum curators were certainly aware of this. But they used the exhibits only as eye-catchers, leaving the observer to her/his own associations. Exhibiting 14 Barbie dolls instead of one may obliquely point to mass production, but it also increases the power of attraction. In this case, however, it would be hard to trace a critical approach breaking the fascination exerted by the exhibition.

The opposite case is also possible: A kettle hook manufactured by a blacksmith’s

assistant in the 18<sup>th</sup> century at first sight seems to be gender-neutral. It served to alter the distance between kettle and fire, thus regulating the temperature while cooking. The kettle hook, however, is not only a serviceable household gadget. Upon second glance, one notices decorations and inscriptions revealing that it was also a gift of love with symbolic connotations: two birds building a nest, bluebells and rosebuds. The story, however, is told only after closer scrutiny. This shows that the decision of what is to be included in the inventory description is also very important. Without reference to decorations and inscriptions the hook would never have been traced in the database under the aspect of a love-token.

The stories an object may convey thus depend not only on the context in which the object is presented, but also on the information collected about it. This is not all: To permit the selection of an exhibit suitable for a given topic of an exhibition, out of thousands and thousands of items in the museum inventory, as many as possible of the connotations implicit in the term denoting the object have to be registered. The scope of information to be conveyed by an object will also be determined by the labels under which it has been included in the collection: whether these lend themselves to disseminate further knowledge beyond a straight-forward description. Part of the information can be compiled at a later date; other parts will have to be recorded immediately upon receipt of the object. For example, the importance an item had for its owner can only be documented in this way. And it is with this dimension of importance for a particular person that gender aspects may come into the picture.

## **To Make Objects Talk**

The tradition and preservation of cultural heritage is a complex process, from collection via documentation to presentation. The decision about which objects are counted as worthy of being preserved, already points in the direction of how the genders will be represented. What is sustainable, what is referred to the museum, what is placed in the exhibition room, what is stored in the depository? Social imbalance is reflected not only in museum collections – the museum itself is involved in this process. Existing differences are cemented not only by the way in which museums organize their collections, by the way in which objects are documented and classified according to certain categories. They are also reinforced by the curator's work.<sup>7</sup>

The information filed in connection with a specific object is important: If it is only related to material and production mode, then it will usually be in a 'male context' (craft trades). If there are indications as to its use, to the personal importance for the owner, then both genders may become apparent. The context of the description is always an interpretation. Here the course is already set for the stories that can later be told about the object. Apart from the different situation of tradition and criteria for collection, it depends on what kind of questions can be asked about seemingly neutral objects in order to make them speak.<sup>8</sup>

In any case, it is obvious that it was necessary to collect more information than that offered by the museum, in order to tell stories about women and men. It is only in these stories that the gender-specific importance of the objects takes shape. This narrative framing of the object gives it a new reference environment, a contextualisation in the true sense of the word.

Thus it is the point of view under which the object is regarded which determines whether it can transmit information about women or men. And it is the contextualization on which the possibility of whether the object will tell something about women and men depends. There are no female objects, male objects or gender-neutral objects per se. The angle of vision is decisive as well as the way in which the curator makes his exhibits speak.

## **Network versus Museum**

But why should three-dimensional objects be transformed to become part of a two-dimensional digital presentation? Virtual space makes it possible to combine objects which are physically unable to come together, not even in temporary exhibitions. Here unusual and manifold relations can be created. The objects will lose their attractiveness, but they gain in information value.

The users can systematically cross the virtual rooms, digress during their perambulations, and lose their way with relish before returning to the keyword scale and to a new orientation. The individual themes may be easily walked through, since lingering before works of art and reading their descriptions can be done sitting comfortably in a chair. It is only this specific form of reception which allows the addition of highly comprehensive information to accompany the objects. You can go back to the

text as often as you wish, you are not bound to conform to opening times, you can print the texts etc. Since the perusal of the exhibition does not have to follow a linear pathway, an individual pattern of association can be followed, turning the pages of a virtual catalogue, skipping from one object to another. Theoretical information is supplied by supplementary texts, describing the mechanisms of the authority to dispose of museum presentation, or by audio files. The world-wide-web does not seem to have any limits as to linking information.

However, only one object can be conjured up at a time, even though several have been grouped together under the different theme headings. This is not the same effect as looking at a display, because here variegated information is evoked simultaneously, revealing the core message of the object under observation.

In the museum, the contextual environment of individual objects is created not by the text, but by other objects, show-cases, pictures, media etc. Exhibitions are characterized by a combination of multiform media – objects, texts, pictures – capable of dynamic and productive interplay. They react upon each other in their own specific way, with individual aspects coming to the foreground, strengthening each other or reducing one another in their effectiveness. In this manner, shifts of significance or changing viewpoints can be suggested, but associations may also arise unintentionally. This context, however, has been eliminated from the *muSIEum*-website: the object is not shown in the museum environment. Thus the project does not compare to the *medium* of an exhibition. Nevertheless, the website may be called a successful project as long as its aim is to further the critical evaluation of individual museum objects. In principle, the website demonstrates very impressively that the perception of an object and the emphasis placed on it are influenced by the context in which it is exhibited.

Passing through the internet “Rooms of Knowledge“ must not be seen as a competitor to visiting museums, since it rather stimulates curiosity and the wish to pay a real visit to the museum, to look at the objects on site and to compare descriptions. Coaching the visitor in a more profound reception of exhibitions is, however, not the aim of the project. For this, the website would have to pay more attention to the specific prerequisites for spotlighting museum presentations. Questions of this kind are taken up by some curators in theoretical texts and audio-statements, but it would have been more interesting to combine theoretical reflection directly with the presentation of the objects.

## Implementing the Website at the Museum

A view from outside is necessary for such a project, in order to gain the distance necessary for an objective analysis. But what is just as important is the participation in the project of the museums themselves. This seems not to have been the case here. The project managers, in spite of repeated efforts, failed to have the website installed for on-site surfing by visitors at a museum computer screen. Obviously the *Women's Section* (Frauenbüro) of the City of Vienna has also withheld its support for incorporating the project into the museum environment. The advantage the internet project would offer to the museums would be that of a medium lending itself to comprehensive textual information – not suitable for presentation in the exhibition rooms themselves. The website thus could be a useful complement offering in-depth information to visitors via computer screen. Many museums make use of this medium already. In addition, the website could draw attention to permanent exhibitions under a new viewpoint, with emphasis not only on information but also on reflection of the contents. After having explored the website, the visitor might find a novel approach to her/his assessment of the exhibits permanently displayed in the showroom. And this would be a truly innovative aspect of the traditional museum scenery which in many cases relies heavily on the event character of exhibitions.

In this way, a ground-breaking element would be introduced into the conventional museum landscape. The fact that objects from several Viennese museums have been included in the web presentation is a further plea for virtual use on site by the relevant institutions. The interest awakened in the observer for a gender-specific view might induce her/him to visit the other museums under the same premise. On the other hand, an introduction to the project via museum screen might induce the visitor to launch another virtual search at home, looking for further information about the exhibits she/he has just seen and about their histories.

To ensure the attractiveness of the website, it would of course have to be updated continuously – which at present does not seem to be the case. Therefore, *muSIEum* will remain a pilot project – but worthy of further development.

Translated by Elfriede Pokorny



<sup>1</sup> Roswitha Muttenthaler and Regina Wonisch, *Gesten des Zeigens. Zur Repräsentation von Gender und Race in Ausstellungen* [Gestures of Showing. On the Representation of Gender and Race in Exhibitions], Bielefeld 2007, 16ff.

<sup>2</sup> MA 57 – Frauenförderung und Koordinierung von Frauenangelegenheiten ed., *muSIEum. displaying:gender*, Wien 2003.

<sup>3</sup> <<http://www.musieum.at>>, accessed: April 1, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> On the project cf. <<http://www.musieum.at>>, accessed: April 1, 2008

<sup>5</sup> Gerlinde Hauer et al., *Das inszenierte Geschlecht. Feministische Strategien im Museum* [The Staged Sex. Feminist Strategies in the Museum], Wien/Kln/Weimar 1997, 18ff.

<sup>6</sup> Muttenthaler/Wonisch, *Gesten*, see note 1, 20f.

<sup>7</sup> Elke Krasny and Nike Glaser Wieninger, *Museum Macht Geschlecht* [Museum Power Gender], in: MA 57, *muSIEum*, see note 2, 59–67, 61.

<sup>8</sup> Roswitha Muttenthaler and Regina Wonisch, *Zum Schauen geben. Ausstellen von Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte in Museen* [To Give to Look at. Exhibiting of Women's and Gender History], in: MA 57, *muSIEum*, see note 2, 9–58, 17ff.

# ARIADNE – A KNOWLEDGE PORTAL AND VIRTUAL LIBRARY FOR LITERATURE AND INFORMATION SOURCES IN WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

Lydia Jammerneegg

In 1992 *Ariadne*,<sup>1</sup> a centre for information and documentation specializing in women-related issues, was introduced at the *Austrian National Library*. *Ariadne* collects, evaluates and administers the *Austrian National Library's* holdings in the field of women's, gender- and feminist research. This work is aimed at supporting the publicity for and the access to these specific stocks within the *Austrian National Library*.

In the following chapters I will outline the history, the contexts and the working fields of *Ariadne* and in particular I will concentrate on the project on historical women's movements. In this article I refer not only to my own professional activity but also to the published work of, as well as to interviews with, the originators and present co-workers of *Ariadne*, Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger. Information on the initiation, working concepts, fields of interest as well as on accessibility, etc is provided for in their articles in collected editions and journals on library and information science as well as in their website. Specifically I will present the *Ariadne* project on the historical women's movements and the corresponding setting up of a digital collection<sup>2</sup> as well as the current FWF-Project (founded by the *Austrian Science Fund*).

## 1. History of *Ariadne*

In which context and according to which conditions was the introduction of a *co-operation centre for women-related information and documentation* [Kooperationsstelle frauenspezifischer Information und Dokumentation]<sup>3</sup> – such was the original title of *Ariadne* – made possible at the *Austrian National Library*?

In Austria, research on feminist, women, and gender issues developed from the late 1970s and became established at the universities. Alongside the institutionalization of research on women's issues, the production of knowledge both within the universities and from non-academic sources has increased substantially. The range of theoretical approaches and positions on the categories woman / gender has become quite diversified and a rising number of publications reflect this development.<sup>4</sup>

As a consequence, institutionalized scientific libraries and archives faced new challenges. The demand for relevant scientific literature as well as for its proper administration increased. Collection building and stock exploitation in the institutionalized libraries did not heed this development at first and so autonomous institutions accommodated the interdisciplinary scientific focus that was being established at the universities and within other institutions of research. Not until the 1990s did institutional libraries begin to focus on women's, feminist- and gender research. *Ariadne* originated within this context.<sup>5</sup>

In 1986 / 87 Christa Wille and Andrea Fennesz performed a feasibility analysis on the constitution of a centre for documentation and information on women-related literature. The framework, the information demand and the general profile criteria for such a facility were examined.<sup>6</sup> The idea of incorporating such a facility into a traditional institution such as the *Austrian National Library* was supported mainly by the department of the Ministry of Science responsible at that time.<sup>7</sup>

*Ariadne* was finally founded in 1992 as an organisational unit at the *Austrian National Library* and started to work with a team of two women, Helga Hofmann-Weinberger and Christa Bittermann-Wille. They incorporated *Ariadne* into the library's rules of procedure and book processing with feminist concepts and indexing rules. There was a need for new methodical approaches, since literature on women's and feminist research was initially only published as articles in anthologies, journals, congress editions, exhibition catalogues or as so-called grey literature (see chapter 2.3). Since the established librarian directives are oriented towards indexing only monographs this kind of literature was totally ignored.<sup>8</sup> The disregarding of the categories woman / gender was enforced by the classical librarian indexing instruments, and the criticism of such traditions was one of the reasons that women's libraries, archives and documentation centres were established.

Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger have utilized the technical development in the fields of information and documentation ever since *Adriane* was introduced. They have been pioneers in databases application, have their own website and are involved in digitization projects. The innovations of information technology have enabled them to achieve a level of publicity that would not have been possible in the pre-www-age.<sup>9</sup>

The tasks have increased substantially during the years. This has not at all been reflected when it comes to the human resources of *Ariadne*. The personnel status has

stagnated since the introduction. From 2006 till 2008, the original team of two is being supported by me as co-worker who is financed by the *Austrian Science Fund (FWF)*.

## 2. Focus of *Ariadne's* work

*Ariadne* is working in the fields of women's and gender specific collection, information, documentation and digitization at the *Austrian National Library*. All documents presented in the database and at the website are part of the library collection of the *Austrian National Library*.

New acquisitions and purchases are regularly integrated in the database. For documents of the historical holdings of the *Austrian National Library* that are hard to disclose, selective strategies and concepts must be developed so that they can be displayed and given access to.

### 2.1 Collection

*Ariadne* identifies and procures literature relevant to women's and gender studies as well as feminist research: International reference works (bibliographies and encyclopaedias), literature, biographies, theory (especially Anglo-Saxon and European), research reports, periodicals (journals, congress editions, yearbooks, etc). On the one hand the editions that are delivered to the *Austrian National Library* (according to Austrian publishing law this supply is mandatory) are examined and on the other hand selected purchases are made. Moreover *Ariadne* suggests acquiring second-hand books to close the gaps in the historical holdings of the *Austrian National Library*.

### 2.2 Information

*Ariadne* operates as a service facility, that provides information in house or by mail in addition to supplying comprehensive information on the website. The services rendered range from support in difficult information finding, introduction to the application of specialized databases, reference to relevant women's collections in the *Austrian National Library* as well as selective forwarding to other women's information- and documentation centres.

*Ariadne* has been accessible on the www with its own website<sup>10</sup> since 1995. It is a principle of *Ariadne* to provide the users with the complete information at hand also by means of the web. Therefore the number of pages produced by *Ariadne* has increased to

several thousands during the years. The website includes: Guides to help bibliographical research, the Newsletter (which provides an annotated selection of new acquisitions in the field of feminist, women and gender research), links to the women's network (databases, online-journals, institutions, events), projects, the database and so on.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.3 Documentation

Since 1992 *Ariadne* has been building up a bibliographic database on feminist research and on women's and gender studies, which contains non-independent literature adopted from the library's collection. *Ariadne* indexes articles from periodicals, articles from collected works (collections of essays, anniversary publications, congress editions, etc.) and primary chapters from monographs. The *Austrian National Library's* women-related holdings are catalogued with a focus on: *Austriaca* (literature by and about Austrians or Austria), international feminist and gender literature (particularly in the field of the human studies) and grey literature (literature published independently by publishing houses and / or available only through informal channels).<sup>12</sup>

The database records formal entries as well as subject key words. Subject heading that takes into account feminist and gender specific indexing with its special vocabulary that reflects and supports the current research literature, is a major matter of concern. For the feminist keywords the Austrian Women's "thesaurA"<sup>13</sup> is used. For general keywords the German "Subject Headings Authority" (SWD) is applied. A major task is the indexing and accessibility of non-independent literature that appears 'hidden' as contributions in collection editions and journals by using special subject heading. Traditional librarian instruments could not achieve this (see also chapter 1). The database partly offers abstracts as well. Items from about 1990 onwards are accessible. Since 1996 the database has been on the www and it includes more than 55.000 records at the moment.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.4 Digitization

During the last years *Ariadne* started to digitize the library's women-related historical holdings and to present them in full text on their website. The digitization – or 'retro digitization'<sup>15</sup> – and the digital filing is carried out on printed material (monographs, collection editions, journals, grey literature) as well as pictures and posters from the library- and archive holdings of the *Austrian National Library*. The printed material is scanned and saved as digital picture files. Increasingly, text recognition programmes (for example the "Optical Character Recognition / OCR" software) have

been applied to provide access to the complete text versions in addition to the picture files. *Ariadne* has started digitizing the historical holdings as historical material in numerous cases is no longer subject to copyright.

A further criterion for digitization is the poor quality of documents that are in physically bad shape. As soon as documents are digitized, physical documents, books or journals are no longer being retrieved for users for reasons of conservation and preservation. The conservation- and long-term archiving function is particularly called for when it comes to journals and brochures that were printed on paper of lesser quality and that are in part in very bad condition.<sup>16</sup>

An institution like the *Austrian National Library* with its huge historical holdings harbours endless possibilities regarding digitization projects. However the resources are limited. Further criteria concerning the choice of collections to be digitized must be defined. *Ariadne* has decided to digitize according to subject content and so to gradually digitize the historical collections on the chosen subjects in so-called topical digitization projects. This strategy supports the accessibility of documents that so far have been hard to find. Under the link “Ariadne-Projects”<sup>17</sup> the following headings can be found:

- a) “Women in Motion [Frauen in Bewegung]” Discussions and documents of the historical Austrian women’s movement 1848 to 1918;
- b) “Works of Women [Frauen-Werke]”. Fiction by Austrian female authors in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century;
- c) “Cherchez la femme”. Women-related encyclopaedic editions before 1918.

### **3. “Women in Motion”. Project on historical women’s movements. Digital collection and documentation**

In this chapter I will concentrate on “Women in Motion”, which is the most elaborate and comprehensive of the *Ariadne* projects. This project is aimed at the collections of the historical women’s movements of the *Austrian National Library* and how the historical presence of women within the archive’s and library’s collections can be uncovered and made visible retrospectively.

#### *3. 1 “Women in Motion”<sup>18</sup> 1848 to 1918*

In this online documentation and digital collection the history of the women’s movements in the Habsburg Monarchy in the period 1848 to 1918 is displayed by

texts, pictures and digitization.<sup>19</sup> Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger began to investigate, evaluate and file the relevant sources found in the holdings of the *Austrian National Library* and make the digitized full-text documents available online on their website. The period chosen for the inclusion of documents and sources extends from 1848 to 1918. The starting point of the module coincides with the foundation of the *First Viennese Democratic Women's Association* [Erster Wiener Demokratischer Frauenverein],<sup>20</sup> its termination with the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and the end of the Habsburg Monarchy. The geographical limits corresponded to the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This includes authors and publications from all the former lands of the Habsburg Empire as far as they are archived in the book collection of the *Austrian National Library*.

Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger want to provide an overview of the Austrian and the Habsburg Empire's historical women's movements and its social and cultural contexts as well as to create an online digital full-text archive for the various documents that offers a new segment in women-related information work – digitization.<sup>21</sup> The web presentation consists of two major fields:

- a. The documentation of historical data
- b. The online presentation of digitized sources

*a: The documentation of historical data*

The structure of the online documentation follows the topics of the historiography on women's movements. Events, individuals, women's associations, women's educational institutions and women's journals are presented. A chronological timeline shows historical events connected to the Austrian and to the international women's movements for each year. Concerning individuals biographical details (mostly texts from different bibliographies and articles in journals), references to primary and secondary literature, images (which are part of the collections of the *Austrian National Library*) and links or references to estates can be found. The project offers data on around 300 individuals and 230 associations. Content-indexes of the articles of historical women's journals are included.<sup>22</sup> The work began with the content analysis and subject indexing of historical women's journals.<sup>23</sup> The historical women's journals supplied the context as well as extensive and detailed information. They helped identify by name further activists of women's movements. Furthermore certain events and activities could be placed in connection to the different women's associations. Making this data and information

available and visible as a result of investigation and evaluation is, in Austrian context, of substantial importance as there is not any central archive on the historical women's movement.<sup>24</sup>

The links to persons (between persons and associations as well as between persons or associations and women's journals), are of great relevance in the web presentation. These links make up a network that displays the connections and co-operations within the women's movements as well as among individual protagonists and different associations. This network is visualized by the web presentation.

#### *b: The digital collection*

The webpage of the project gives access to the digitized documents (see also chapter 2.4), which are indexed thematically, alphabetically and chronologically. Moreover the full texts are accessible by the respective author or by the publishing association. In 2002 *Ariadne* first of all started digitizing women's journals and other periodicals (statutes, annual reports or the proceedings of women's organizations and anniversary publications), later on, monographs, collected works and photographs of the historical holdings of the *Austrian National Library* were added.

The online presentation of digitized documents is done in collaboration with the "Austrian Literature Online" (ALO) project at the *University of Innsbruck*.<sup>25</sup> 2002, when *Ariadne* started with digitization, there was no such project at the *Austrian National Library*. The digitized documents are stored on the ALO operated server of the *University of Innsbruck*. The cooperation partner is the content provider that offers the possibility of hosting the online documents as a special collection on their server. This collection at the moment includes around 250 monographs and several thousand issues of periodicals mainly in German.<sup>26</sup>

#### *3.2 "Women in Motion". 1918 to 1938*

The enlargement and further development of the digital collection and documentation which was created by *Ariadne* is carried out in collaboration with the *Department of Contemporary History* of the *University of Vienna* within the research project "Women's Movements – 'Women in Motion': Digital Archive and Historiography. Habsburg Monarchy and Austria 1848 to 1938". This project is funded by the *Austrian Science Fund* (FWF).<sup>27</sup> Helga Hofmann-Weinberger is the project leader who, in coordination with the cooperation partner Johanna Gehmacher, guides the project. As



scientific workers Natascha Vittorelli is dealing with the historiographic part of the project, while I am responsible for the documentary.

I will concentrate on the documentary part in this paper. That means that I will in the following section treat those aspects of the documentation work that have not already been discussed in the last chapter. I will explain the modifications and innovations for the period 1918 to 1938.

The existing digital archive and documentation will be extended chronologically. The project ensures continuation of the pioneering work initiated by *Ariadne* by extending the archive up to 1938. Geographically the project is limited to the territory of the Republic of Austria.

A new web presentation will be installed and will be generated from a database. A concept for the future form and content of the new web presentation was conceived within the documentation sciences part of the project. As both the database and the web presentation will be hosted by the *Austrian National Library*, the adaptation of a database that has been implemented in the *Austrian National Library* for some years already has been assigned. That means that the database will be designed to administer the data so that the simultaneous handling of master files on persons, corporations, bibliographic quotations, archival material and image sources will be possible. A major characteristic of the website will be the links between these data files. Hereby the sustainable utilization, the future development and the long term accessibility of the data will be secured. For the users this will lead to improved and elaborated searching facilities.

On biographical details of individuals the project evaluates and records all forms of names, different information on life data, professions and activities, functions and memberships in women's associations and organizations. A biography for each person will be written, as far as relevant information can be found. The documentation of women's associations and organizations is organized in a similar way. The careful attention to such details makes it possible to present a dense network of relations and interconnections between the protagonists and the associations (see also chapter 3.1) on a national, sometimes also a trans-national level. Data and information on around 300 individuals and associations / organisations will be documented.

The future webpage will present stock descriptions of the history of women's movements found in relevant holdings in collections, libraries and archives all over Austria.

The relevant holdings are being or will be investigated and documented in the project. In order to widen the centre-focused view, the documentation on the historical women's movements of Austria does not focus only on the capital – Vienna, but equally on the periphery – the Austrian provinces. In rare cases complete archival holdings exist which are documented, otherwise files are located that give evidence of the existence and activities of associations or organizations – as the foundation, by-laws, names of board members, anniversaries and so on. Holdings scattered over a number of libraries, collections and archives in Austria will be concentrated virtually in one site to constitute a centre for documentation and reference.

The collaboration of documentation officers / librarians and historians will result in the elaboration of criteria for the documentation. The question of how the concept 'women's movement' is and can be defined is elaborated within the historiographic part during the term of the project. At the same time, for the documentary part it is necessary to proceed according to certain given criteria. While the latter thrive on questions about terms and terminology, the former need clear-cut answers. This makes up one of the challenges of interdisciplinary co-operation. A working definition of 'women's movement' was developed in the project team. On basis of this definition it is decided which persons, associations / organizations, and publications are included in the online documentation and on the other hand this definition determines the limitations. The selection criteria for entry are rather extensively conceptualized. Individuals, organizations and publications that can be labelled as 'emancipatory' for women's interests<sup>28</sup> or that self-identify with the term 'women's movement'<sup>29</sup> are included. Changing political and personal positioning and belongings of individuals or organizations are documented. Limitation is exercised against exclusive pan-German, patriotic and national socialist persons, organizations and publications. The project emphasizes the transparency of the decision process and its criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Therefore the work procedures are documented and will be placed online.

As far as copyright permits, the digitization of printed material will be advanced for the years from 1918 to 1938. As said before, with regard to copyright restrictions only documents belonging to the *Austrian National Library* will be digitized and published online in a full text version. As to the sources and documents of other libraries and archives, stock descriptions will be made available online. The period before 1938 is quite difficult due to the effective copyright up to 70 years after the decease of the

originator. Therefore many documents from this period can not yet be digitized. Other than the material originating in the period before 1918, authors' works from the more recent period will most likely only get digitized to a very limited extent. The digitization will be done during the next months within the scope of the digitization workflow of the *Austrian National Library*.

#### 4. Perspectives

In the concluding comments I will describe both the goals of the archive as well as the potential of "Women in Motion".

The two parts of the project will create a central web portal for the documentation and digital filing as well as a source of information on the history of women's movements in Austria and, with restrictions, for the Habsburg Monarchy. With a time span from 1848 to 1938 the two parts provide a quite comprehensive overview of the Austrian and Habsburg Monarchy's women's movements. The foundation of a historical digital women's collection has significance in Austria, where an accessible archive of women's history<sup>30</sup> does not yet exist. "Women in Motion" responds to the current lack of a comparable institution in Austria by setting up this online documentation and digital collection.

As only the period 1918 to 1938 will be implemented into a database, both parts of the project cannot (yet) be made available in a common web presentation so there will be two separate areas. Certainly a subsumption of both project periods in one single database, thus having one presentation site, would be desirable. Whether this can be carried out cannot be stated at the moment. Another important task would be the evaluation and integration of the non-German speaking parts of the Habsburg monarchy, covering their activists, associations and publications (a task that has already in part been attended to). Digitization of women's journals in Slavic languages of the *Austrian National Library's* collection is planned.

So far it has become evident that the current website of "Women in Motion" has met with great approval with regard to both diversity and quality of the information provided. The site is frequently used and has been broadly adopted.<sup>31</sup> The site supports scientists and other professionals in their work in this field and is applied in education, research and cultural transmission.

<sup>1</sup> *Ariadne's* thread symbolizes a "secure guide for the selective pursuit for information within the maze of publications that serves the research on women's, gender and feminist issues" ["sicherer Leitfaden für eine gezielte Suche im Publikations-Labyrinth der Frauen-, feministischen und Geschlechterforschung"]; Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger, *Ariadne – ein Ort für Frauen und ihre Informationsbedürfnisse. Die Servicestelle für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung an der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, in: *L'HOMME. Z. F. G.*, 19, 1 (2008), 143–147.

<sup>2</sup> In the context of feminist, women and gender research, digitization projects are still quite novel.

<sup>3</sup> Helga Hofmann-Weinberger and Christa Wille, *Wer holt den Faden aus dem Labyrinth frauenspezifischen Wissens? ARIADNE – Kooperationsstelle frauenspezifischer Information und Dokumentation an der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, in: *Altes Buch und Neue Medien. Vorträge und Kommissionssitzungen. Der österreichische Bibliothekartag 1992. Eisenstadt, 29. September bis 3. Oktober 1992* [Who Fetches the Thread out of the Labyrinth of Female Knowledge?], Wien 1993, 171–180, 171.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Edith Saurer, *Frauengeschichte in Österreich. Eine fast kritische Bestandsaufnahme* [Women's History in Austria. An Almost Critical Inventory], in: *L'HOMME. Z. F. G.*, 4, 2 (1993), 37–63, 45ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger, *Von der 'Palatina' zur Virtual Library – Frauenspuren, Frauenberuf, Fraueninformation* [From the 'Palatina' to the Virtual Library – Women's Traces, Women's Profession, Women's Information], in: Edith Stumpf ed., *Der wohlinformierte Mensch – eine Utopie. Festschrift für Magda Strebl zum 65. Geburtstag* [The Well Informed Man – a Utopia. Anniversary Publication for Magda Strebl for her 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday], Graz 1997, 94–116, 107ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Andrea Fennesz and Christa Wille, *Durchführbarkeitsstudie zur Errichtung einer Dokumentations- und Informationsstelle für frauenspezifische Literatur. Forschungsbericht im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Wissenschaft und Forschung* [Feasibility Study for a Centre for Information and Documentation for Women-related Literature. Project Report for the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research], Wien 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Hofmann-Weinberger/Wille, *Faden*, see note 3, 172f; Helga Hofmann-Weinberger and Christa Wille, *From Utopia to Reality. The Austrian Network of Women's Studies Information and Documentation Centers*, in: Eva Steiner Moseley ed., *Women, Information and the Future. Collecting and Sharing Resources Worldwide*, Fort Atkinson 1995, 105–110, esp. 105–108.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Helga Hofmann-Weinberger and Christa Wille, *Small is beautiful: frauenspezifisches Arbeiten an einer Großbibliothek* [Small is Beautiful: Women-related Work in a Major Library], in: *Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Frauenforschung/Bulletin*, 18 (1999), 94–97, 94f.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bittermann-Wille/Hofmann-Weinberger, *Ariadne*, see note 1.

<sup>10</sup> <<http://www.onb.ac.at/ariadne.htm>>, accessed: March 23, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hofmann-Weinberger/Wille, *Arbeiten*, see note 8, 96; Bittermann-Wille/Hofmann-Weinberger, *Ariadne*, see note 1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hofmann-Weinberger/Wille, *Utopia*, see note 7, 109.

<sup>13</sup> Helga Klisch-Melliwa and Angelika Zach, *thesaurA. österreichischer Frauenthesaurus* [thesaurA. The Austrian Women's Thesaurus], Wien 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger, *FrauenB cher FrauenDaten FrauenNetze. Zehn Jahre Ariadne* [Women's Books Women's Data Women's Networks. Ten Years of Ariadne], in: *Mitteilungen der Vereinigung österreichischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare*, 56, 1 (2003), 52–61, 54; Bittermann-Wille/Hofmann-Weinberger, *Ariadne*, see note 1.

<sup>15</sup> The long-term archiving of digital origin material, i. e. material that only exists in digital form (as for example the filing of the web of the Austrian domain) is distinguished from retro digitization; cf. Peter Haber, *Digitalisierung und digitale Archivierung. Trends und ausgewählte Projekte* [Digitalization and Digital Archiving. Trends and Selected Projects], January 31, 2007, <[http://infoclio.ch/downloads/infoclio\\_digitalisierung.pdf](http://infoclio.ch/downloads/infoclio_digitalisierung.pdf)>; accessed: April 1, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger, "Frauen in Bewegung". *Ariadne Goes Historical and Digital*, in: *Biblos*, 53, 1 (2004), 37–39, 38.

<sup>17</sup> <[http://www.onb.ac.at/ariadne\\_projekte.htm](http://www.onb.ac.at/ariadne_projekte.htm)>; accessed: March 23, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> <<http://www2.onb.ac.at/ariadne/vfb/index.htm>>, accessed: March 23, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> According to Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger a major source of inspiration for “Women in Motion” was the publication “Utopian Feminism” by Harriet Anderson. Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism. Women’s Movements in fin-de-si cle Vienna*, New Haven 1992.

<sup>20</sup> <[http://www2.onb.ac.at/ariadne/vfb/fv\\_ewdfv.htm](http://www2.onb.ac.at/ariadne/vfb/fv_ewdfv.htm)>, accessed: March 23, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Frauen in Bewegung. Project description, March 2004, <[http://www2.onb.ac.at/ariadne/vfb/vfbbschr\\_engl.htm](http://www2.onb.ac.at/ariadne/vfb/vfbbschr_engl.htm)>, accessed: March 21, 2008; Bittermann-Wille/Hofmann-Weinberger, *FrauenB cher*, see note 14, 57f; Bittermann-Wille/Hofmann-Weinberger, *Frauen*, see note 16, 37ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Frauen*, see note 21.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Christa Bittermann-Wille and Helga Hofmann-Weinberger, Von der Zeitschrift “Dokumente der Frauen” zur Dokumentation von Frauenzeitschriften [From the Journal “Documents of Women” to the Documentation of Women’s Journals], in: *Medien & Zeit*, 15, 2 (2000), 52–62, 60.

<sup>24</sup> Essential for the history of women’s movements would be the holdings of the *Union of the Austrian Women’s Associations* [Bund österreichischer Frauenvereine]. Unfortunately public access to the archive and the library has for some time now no longer been granted.

<sup>25</sup> <<http://www.literature.at/webinterface/library/>

COLLECTION\_V01?objid=1022&zoom=1&view=0>; accessed: April 1, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Bittermann-Wille/Hofmann-Weinberger, *FrauenB cher*, see note 14, 59f; *Frauen*, see note 21.

<sup>27</sup> The research project is dedicated to the historiographic and documentary-based analysis of women’s movements and is composed of two complementary parts. The historiographic part will provide a conspectus and an analysis of research perspectives on the history of women’s movements of both the Habsburg Monarchy and the inter-war period in Austria. The project design ensures interdisciplinary cooperation of historical and documentation sciences. Cf. Natascha Vittorelli, “Frauen in Bewegung”. Digitales Archiv und Historiographie. Habsburgermonarchie und sterreich von 1848 bis 1938 [“Women in Motion“. Digital Archive and Historiography. The Habsburg Monarchy and Austria from 1848 to 1938], in: *Stichwort Newsletter*, 23, (2007), 11f.

<sup>28</sup> Included are individuals, women’s associations/organizations and publications that a) articulate common interests for women – including, but not only, for women’s rights – publicly, b) acquire new public spaces for women, e. g. professional fields women were denied access before, c) improve the status and position of women in many respects including activities in artistic, educational, literary or architectural areas.

<sup>29</sup> This includes also women’s party organizations or religious women’s associations.

<sup>30</sup> In some countries material on women’s movements has been available for quite some time at ‘physical’ archives. So at the *Archive of the German Women’s Movement* or at the *International Information Centre and Archives for the Women’s Movement* in the Netherlands.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Martina Gugglberger, Web-Rezension zu: *Frauen in Bewegung* [Web-review of *Women in Motion*], in: *H-Soz-u-Kult*, May 7, 2005, <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=85&type=rezwww&sort=datum&order=down&search=gugglberger>>, accessed: March 20, 2008; Cornelia Niedermeier, Die berlistung des Minotauros [The Circumvention of the Minotaur], in: *Der Standard*, April 14, 2006, 26; Sabrina Adlbrecht, Erster Aufbruch in die Freiheit. Fr he Frauenbewegungen in sterreich [First Break-out into Freedom. Early Women’s Movements in Austria], in: *1/Dimensionen – Die Welt der Wissenschaft*, February 21, 2008 (radio feature on basis of interviews with co-workers of the project); Veronika W hrer, Bericht – Frauenbewegung vernetzt. Historiographie und Dokumentation [Report – Women’s Movements Networked. Historiography and Documentation], April, 20, 2007, in: *Salon 21 – Internet-forum of the research platform Repositioning of Women’s and Gender History*, <<http://www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/Neuerortung-Geschlechtergeschichte/salon21/?p=160>>; accessed: March 28, 2008.

# THE FIRST WEB CATALOGUE OF WOMEN AND MINORITY ARCHIVE FONDS IN BULGARIA

Nurie Muratova

One of the aims of the project “Archive fonds of women and minorities” is the elaboration of electronic catalogue to expose the existing archive fonds concerning the history of women and minorities in Bulgaria.

The specifics of the Bulgarian archive system, its centralized character, and the existing unity of the state historical archives define the parameters of the covered by the catalogue archive fonds. We researched the documents stored in the Bulgarian state archives which are mainly fonds of state institutions but for the pre-socialist period there were also documents of social and private institutions. Another kind of documents are the so called personal fonds – documents of prominent persons. This is why we divided the catalogue into two parts – archive fonds of institutions directly connected with the life of minorities and women, and personal fonds of women and representatives of minorities.

The catalogue supplies information about the archive fonds of women and minorities in the 29 archives in Bulgaria. It is on the site of the project:

**[www.history.swu.bg/aso.htm](http://www.history.swu.bg/aso.htm)**. We supply an English version of the catalogue as well.

The extract of documents is divided into two main parts: 1. Documents of women in the state archives; 2. Documents of institutions dealing with minorities and minority institutions. In the two parts there are sub-parts concerning the personal fonds – of women and representatives of minorities.

In the first part – about the institutions dealing with women – data about all female high schools are collected, data about women charity and educational organizations, female monasteries, medical and social institutions are collected as well. In the minority part data about the documents of minority schools, religious organizations, cultural and educational organizations, and state institutions dealing with minorities are collected.

## Archive documents about women in the Bulgarian state archives

This part of the catalogue is divided into 6 sections:

1. Female schools – 85 fonds
2. Female monasteries – 16 fonds
3. Women organizations – 138 fonds
4. Nursing schools – 9 fonds from the 1950s - 1960s
5. Health institutions – 22 fonds
6. Other women institutions – 12 fonds

85 fonds of female schools, high and professional ones, all over the country are stored in the state archives. Documents about female schools from the very beginning of the female education are included.

Ones of the earliest documents created by and concerning women are the documents of the female monasteries. Unfortunately they are a few. In this archives one could find the earliest documents written by women.

The highest is the deal of the documents concerning the women's organizations – documents about female charity organizations, mostly before 9.9.1944; educational societies from the same period; patriotic women organizations, reflecting the nationalistic pathos after 1934.

For the time of socialism especially big is the corpus of documents of the neighborhood, town, and district women's organization structured by the state. In the socialist period the work with women was brought about in a prominent position, and by that reason it was well documented. The big amount of documents compensates for the poor information they offer being ideologically indoctrinated. Documents about the work of the authorities with minority women could also be found.

The personal fonds of women are about 700 and 100 of them are family fonds. The archives as state institutions are subjected to certain compiling prescriptions. Hence only the documents of persons considered "important" for the society, were accepted in the archives. A comparative analysis about the relation between the documents of women and men will be done. We could see what kind of professions were considered prominent:

1. Actress – 68 fonds
2. Teacher – 62

3. Public woman – 61
4. Writer&Poetess – 50
5. Professor&Scientist – 42
6. Opera singer – 23
7. Musician&Conductor -17
8. Doctor - 13
9. Communist party figure&Politician - 12
10. Hero of socialist labour&Worker - 11
11. Agronomist – 10
12. Journalist - 9
13. Ballerina – 8
14. Lawyer - 6
15. Singer - 6
16. Veterinary surgeon - 6
17. Engineer - 5
18. Translator - 5
19. Hospital nurse - 3
20. Pioneer leader - 3
21. Midwife - 3
22. Archivist - 2
23. Others

The catalogue allows searching by professions, regions, and alphabetic order.

### **The documents about minorities in the Bulgarian state archives**

1. State institutions
2. Cultural minority organizations
3. Religious institutions
4. Minority schools
5. Other minority institutions
6. Minority representatives' personal fonds

Following the Decree of 26.08.1959 . about the State Archives the documents of the private schools – Bulgarian and minority ones – were stored as documents of the “old poque”. According to the archive practice such were considered all the documents



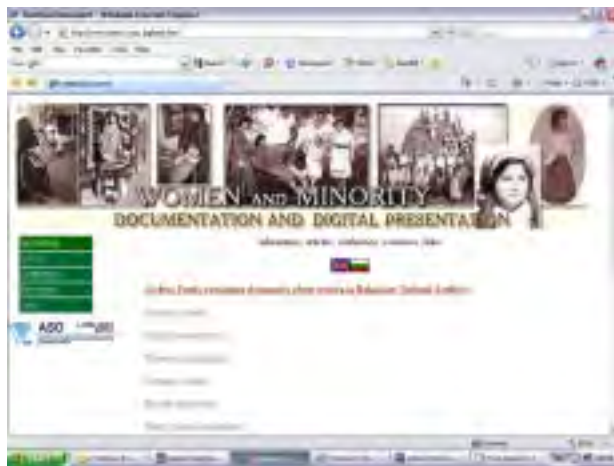
before the take-over on 9.9.1944. Up to the separation of the church from the state, the documents of the central governing bodies of the religious institutions as monasteries, mosques, etc, were considered as belonging to the “old poque” From the catalogue one could see that the number of the private minority schools is considerable. They are divided into:

1. Turkish minority schools
2. Jewish
3. Armenian
4. Others

The highest is the deal of the Muslim schools in all educational degrees.

The same is the situation with the Religious institutions:

1. Muslim
2. Jewish
3. Evangelistic
4. Catolic
5. Orthodox ethnic minorities
6. Others



The elaborated catalogue does not represent the whole archive corpus concerning women and minorities. It just outlines their presence. Furthermore we plan to expand the catalogue creating thematic photo-collections. Our ambition is to turn the catalogue into Balkan one.

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The archives took central place in the contemporary social memory. According to the French scholar Pierre Nora there are three types of archives according to their level of development: juridical or supplementary, historical-documental, of social memory and identity. The researcher who is interested in the political, social and cultural past of women and minorities finds information quite by chance working with the different archive fonds of state institutions. The existence of such groups in the archives is hidden: in the inventory lists they miss because the inventories reflect the activities of the institutions not the subjects. This is the reason the information about such groups to be mostly about them not the one coming from them. Most often the proscribed information combines data of different official sources: police, public health, educational, political and cultural institutions. It is necessary to discover another sources for the past of such groups, to systemize and compare the fragmentized information about them and to encourage the digitalization of the information.

24 authors from different countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and USA discuss various traditions and ways of archiving of women and minority documents.

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