

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS  
FROM THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
**FEMINISM**  
AND  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE,  
SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Edited by*

Zsófia Lóránd

Adela Hîncu · Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc · Katarzyna Stańczak-Wislicz

CEU PRESS



TEXTS AND CONTEXTS  
FROM THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
FEMINISM  
AND  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
EAST CENTRAL EUROPE,  
SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Edited by*

Zsófia Lóránd

Adela Hîncu · Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc · Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz



CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Budapest–Vienna–New York

Copyright ©2024 by the editors and authors

Published in 2024 by

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

Nádor utca 9, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary

Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000

E-mail: [ceupress@press.ceu.edu](mailto:ceupress@press.ceu.edu)

Website: [www.ceupress.com](http://www.ceupress.com)



This work is licensed under  
a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0  
International License.

This publication is based upon work from COST Action 16213 New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers.

This boosts their research, career and innovation.

[www.cost.eu](http://www.cost.eu)



The translations in this volume have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement MSCA-IF-EF-ST 841489 hosted by the University of Cambridge and the Research Program "Historical interpretations of the 20th century" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, P6-0347) at the Institute of Culture and Memory Studies of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) in Ljubljana.

Example of recommended citation of the authors' biographies and contextualisations: Alexandra Ghiț, "About the Author" and "Context" to "Ecaterina Arbore: The Working Woman in the Struggle towards Emancipation," in *Texts and Contexts from the History of Feminism and Women's Rights: East Central Europe, Second Half of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Zsófia Lóránd, Adela Hincu, Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc, and Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz (Budapest – Vienna – New York: CEU Press, 2024), 23–30.

ISBN 978-963-386-453-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-963-386-454-8 (ebook)

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Lóránd, Zsófia, editor. | Hincu, Adela, editor. | Mihajlović Trbovc, Jovana, editor. | Stańczak-Wiślicz, Katarzyna, editor.

Title: Texts and contexts from the history of feminism and women's rights : East Central Europe, second half of the twentieth century / edited by Zsófia Lóránd, Adela Hincu, Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc, Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz.

Description: Budapest, Hungary ; New York, NY : CEU Press, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and index.  
Identifiers: LCCN 2024028863 (print) | LCCN 2024028864 (ebook) | ISBN 9789633864531 (hardback) | ISBN 9789633864548 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Feminism--Europe, Eastern--History--20th century. | Feminism--Europe, Central--History--20th century. | Women's rights--Europe, Eastern--History--20th century. | Women's rights--Europe, Central--History--20th century. | Women intellectuals--Europe, Eastern. | Women intellectuals--Europe, Central. | BISAC: HISTORY / Europe / Eastern | HISTORY / Women | LCGFT: Essays.

Classification: LCC HQ1590.7 .T49 2024 (print) | LCC HQ1590.7 (ebook) | DDC 305.4209437/09045--dc23/eng/20240802

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024028863>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024028864>

*This book is dedicated to our daughters,  
Lisa, Zoja, and Pola,  
with gratitude to Maera, our companion.*

# Contents

Introduction	I
<b>1</b>	
<b>The Legacy of the Pre-1945 Period</b>	<b>21</b>
<hr/>	
ECATERINA ARBORE	
<b>The Working Woman in the Struggle towards Emancipation (1911, Romania)</b>	<b>23</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Alexandra Ghiț · Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu	
ŽEMAITĖ	
<b>To the Enemies of Women’s Equality (1912, Lithuania)</b>	<b>35</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Dalia Leinarte · Translated by Jura Avizienis	
ROSIKA SCHWIMMER	
<b>The Grievances of Feminism under the Proletarian Dictatorship (1919, Hungary)</b>	<b>42</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Dóra Fedeles-Czeferner · Translated by Beáta Sándor	
MARISKA GÁRDOS	
<b>On Sexuality, Prostitution, and Feminism (1906 and 1939–40, Hungary)</b>	<b>52</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Zsófia Lóránd · Translated by Beáta Sándor	
SHAQE MARIE ÇOBA	
<b>On Feminism (1921, Albania)</b>	<b>65</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Nevila Pahumi · Translated by Piro Rexhepi	
JOHANNA PÄTS	
<b>Why Must Women Elect Women to Parliament? (1932, Estonia)</b>	<b>72</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Liisi Keedus · Translated by Helis Rõuk	
IRENA KRZYWICKA	
<b>The Fall of Male Civilization (1932, Poland)</b>	<b>79</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Dobrochna Kałwa · Translated by Anna Topolska	
HALINA KRAHELSKA	
<b>The Roots of Changing Sexual Mores (1937, Poland)</b>	<b>87</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Katherine Lebow · Translated by Katherine Lebow	
ANGELA VODE	
<b>The Woman in Contemporary Society (1934, Yugoslavia/Slovenia)</b>	<b>98</b>
“About the Author” and “Context” by Manca G. Renko · Translated by Lukas Debeljak	
<b>2</b>	
<b>Women and War</b>	<b>109</b>
<hr/>	
ŽENA DANAS EDITORIAL BOARD	
<b>The New Feminism (1936, Yugoslavia/Serbia)</b>	<b>111</b>
“About the Magazine” and “Context” by Isidora Grubački · Translated by Suzana Vuljevic	

INA JUN-BRODA	
<b>Two Poems by a <i>Partizanka</i></b> (1943, Yugoslavia)	120
“About the Author” and “Context” by Lucija Bakšić, Isidora Grubački, and Iva Jelušić	
Translated by Iva Jelušić	
MACA GRŽETIĆ	
<b>Report on Women in the People’s Liberation Struggle</b> (1945, Yugoslavia/Croatia)	131
“About the Author” and “Context” by Iva Jelušić · Translated by Suzana Vuljević	
ROMANIAN WORKERS’ PARTY	
<b>Fallen in Battle: Olga Bancic</b> (1949, Romania)	141
“Context” by Cristina Diaç · Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu	
LINA KOSTENKO	
<b>A Female Poetic Voice against Totalitarianism and War</b> (1957, 1962, 1987, Ukraine)	149
“About the Author” and “Context” by Antonina Tymchenko and Galina Babak	
Translated by Vera Rich and Michael M. Naydan	
STAŠA ZAJOVIĆ	
<b>Antiwar Activism after Yugoslavia</b> (1996, Serbia)	159
“About the Author” and “Context” by Bojan Bilić	
Translated by Stanislava Lazarević and by Renée Franić, revised by Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc	
ŠVIATLANA ALEKSIJEVIĆ	
<b>“What Is Our Memory?”</b> (1998, Belarus)	168
“About the Author” and “Context” by Almira Ousmanova	
Translated by Almira Ousmanova, edited by Benjamin Cope	
<b>3</b>	
<b>Ideologies of Women’s Emancipation</b>	181
<hr/>	
HANA GREGOROVÁ	
<b>About March 8<sup>th</sup> and Feminism</b> (n.d., Czechoslovakia/Slovakia)	183
“About the Author and the Source” by Jana Cviková · Translated by Julia and Peter Sherwood	
ANNA KÉTHLY	
<b>Women in Politics</b> (1945, Hungary)	190
“About the Author” and “Context” by Zsuzsanna Kádár B. · Translated by Cody J. Inglis	
MILADA HORÁKOVÁ	
<b>Women in Politics</b> (1945, Czechoslovakia/Czechia)	200
“About the Author” and “Context” by Melissa Feinberg · Translated by Melinda Reidinger	
MARTHA ARENDSEE	
<b>The Right to Motherhood</b> (1946, GDR)	208
“About the Author” and “Context” by Alexandria N. Ruble · Translated by Lea Greenberg	
EDWARDA ORŁOWSKA	
<b>Paper Delivered at the Plenary Meeting of the Main Board of the League of Women</b> (1949, Poland)	215
“About the Author” and “Context” by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz	
Translated by Anna Topolska	

<b>DUŠANKA KOVAČEVIĆ and RAZIJA HANDŽIĆ</b>	
<b>On Lifting Veils of Muslim Women (1950, Yugoslavia/Bosnia and Herzegovina)</b>	222
“About the Author” (DK) by Ivana Pantelić and Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc	
“About the Author” (RH) by Zlatan Tunjić · “Context” by Ivana Pantelić, Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc, and Zlatan Tunjić · Translated by Suzana Vuljevic and by Jelena Babšek Labudović	
<b>AINA JURCIŃA</b>	
<b>The Consequences of Emancipation? (1980, Latvia)</b>	235
“About the Author” and “Context” by Zita Kārkle · Translated by Ieva Lešinska–Gaber	
<b>LYDIA SKLEVICKY</b>	
<b>The Women’s Antifascist Front as a Potential Factor in the Process of Cultural Change (1985, Yugoslavia/Croatia)</b>	243
“About the Author” and “Context” by Iva Jelušić · Translated by Jelena Babšek Labudović	
<b>NADA LER-SOFRONIĆ</b>	
<b>Neofeminism and the Socialist Alternative (1986, Yugoslavia)</b>	255
“About the Author” and “Context” by Zsófia Lóránd · Translated by Jelena Babšek Labudović	
<b>DRITA BAKIJA GUNGA</b>	
<b>The Women of Kosovo in the Period of Socialist Construction (1986, Yugoslavia/Kosovo)</b>	267
“About the Author” and “Context” by Vjollca Krasniqi · Translated by Piro Rexhepi	
<b>4</b>	
<b>The International Aspects of Women’s Rights</b>	275
<hr/>	
<b>GERMAN DEMOCRATIC WOMEN’S LEAGUE (DFD)</b>	
<b>The First German Women’s Delegation to Stockholm (1947, GDR)</b>	277
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Lea Börgerding · Translated by Lea Greenberg	
<b>TUKUMS DISTRICT FEMALE ACTIVISTS</b>	
<b>Call of the Tukums District Female Activists to District Women on the Decisions of the World Congress of Women in Copenhagen (1953, Latvia)</b>	287
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Vita Zelče · Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Gaber	
<b>MITRA MITROVIĆ</b>	
<b>The Woman’s Position in the Contemporary World (1960, Yugoslavia/Serbia)</b>	294
“About the Author” and “Context” by Isidora Grubački · Translated by Suzana Vuljevic	
<b>RÓZSA IGNÁCZ</b>	
<b>Connections to Distant Women through Travelogues (1968, Hungary)</b>	307
“About the Author” and “Context” by Réka Krizmanics · Translated by Beáta Sándor	
<b>ESMA REDŽEPOVA</b>	
<b>Songs by a Yugoslav Romani Vocal Icon (1961–1987, Yugoslavia/Macedonia)</b>	316
“About the Author/Performer” and “Context” by Carol Silverman	
Translated by Carol Silverman with assistance from Sani Rifati	
<b>VIDA TOMŠIČ</b>	
<b>On the Question of Women’s Social Position in the Contemporary World (1976, Yugoslavia/Slovenia)</b>	323
“About the Author” and “Context” by Manca G. Renko · Translated by Lukas Debeljak	

MARIJA GIMBUTAS  
**An Interview about Prehistoric Matriarchy** (1981, Lithuania) 334  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Rasa Navickaitė · Translated by Jura Avizienis

ELENA LAGADINOVA  
**Statement at the Nairobi Conference** (1985, Bulgaria) 342  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Kristen Ghodsee

## 5

**Politicizing Motherhood (and Fatherhood)** 351

---

MARIA SKOKOWSKA-RUDOLFOWA  
**Mother and Child Day** (1946, Poland) 353  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz · Translated by Anna Topolska

ZLATA GREBO  
**The Hopes and Fears of Rural Women** (1964, Yugoslavia/Bosnia and Herzegovina) 360  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Nermina Mujagić and Sarina Bakić · Translated by Vuk Tošić

SERHII HRYHORIEV  
**Son** (1969, Ukraine) 371  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Olena Gulenok

ALLA HORS'KA  
**Maternity in Ukrainian Dissent** (1960–64, Ukraine) 376  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Simone Attilio Bellezza

LEOKADIJA DIRŽINSKAITĖ-PILIUŠENKO  
**Soviet Women—Active Builders of Communism** (1976, Lithuania) 383  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Dalia Leinarte · Translated by Jura Avizienis

CRISTIANA NICOLAE  
**Two Movies on the Lives of Women Factory Workers**  
(1983, 1992, Romania) 393  
“About the Director” and “Context” by Georgiana Vräjitoru

JÚLIA SZILÁGYI  
**A Spoken World** (1983, Romania) 402  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Andrea Tompa · Translated by Lea Greenberg

MARIA DINKOVA and CHAVDAR KYURANOV  
**Women, Gender, and the Use of Time** (1971, 1979, Bulgaria) 414  
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Boryana Yankova · Translated by Boryana Yankova

## 6

**Time Budgets and Double Burden** 429

---

LIBUŠE HÁKOVÁ  
**Promoting the Marxist Conception of the Woman Question** (1976, Czechoslovakia/Czechia) 431  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Marie Láníková · Translated by Melinda Reidingner

WORKING WOMEN'S COMMISSION OF THE CRZZ  
**The Professional Work of Women and the Family** (1967, Poland) 441  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz · Translated by Anna Topolska



SONIA BAKISH	
<b>Let's Cancel the Second Shift</b> (1967, Bulgaria)	448
"About the Author" and "Context" by Krassimira Daskalova · Translated by Valentina Mitkova	
ECATERINA OPROIU	
<b>Two Key Questions</b> (1975, Romania)	456
"About the Author" by Ileana Tureanu · "Context" by Adela Hincu Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu	
MILEVA FILIPOVIĆ	
<b>The Working Class and Woman's Emancipation in Socialism</b>	
(1979, Yugoslavia/Montenegro)	467
"About the Author" and "Context" by Nataša Nelević and Ervina Dabižinović · Translated by Vuk Tošić	
VIZMA BELŠEVICA	
<b>Time Budgets and the Double Burden</b> (1981, 1983, Latvia)	476
"About the Author" and "Context" by Kārlis Vērdiņš · Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Gaber	
REGĪNA EZERA	
<b>Betrayal</b> (1982, Latvia)	484
"About the Author" and "Context" by Zita Kārkla · Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Gaber	
<b>7</b>	
<b>Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence</b>	491
<hr/>	
BLAŽENKA DESPOT	
<b>Feminist Marxism and Violence against Women</b> (1987, Yugoslavia/Croatia)	493
"About the Author" and "Context" by Zsófia Lóránd · Translated by Una Blagojević	
FRAUENTEESTUBE WEIMAR	
<b>our critique of the legal concept of rape</b> (around 1987–89, GDR)	504
"About the Author" and "Context" by Jane Freeland · Translated by Lea Greenberg	
ANDRA NEIBURGA	
<b>Domestic Violence</b> (1988, Latvia)	512
"About the Author" and "Context" by Jānis Ozoliņš · Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Gaber	
MOJCA DOBNIKAR	
<b>Feminism and Social Work</b> (1997, Slovenia)	522
"About the Author" by Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc · "Context" by Jasna Podreka Translated by Lukas Debeljak	
<b>8</b>	
<b>Women in Politics</b>	535
<hr/>	
JÚLIA RAJK	
<b>Christmas Troubles</b> (1946, Hungary)	537
"About the Author" and "Context" by Andrea Pető · Translated by Beáta Sándor	
TSOLA DRAGOICHEVA	
<b>Eight Years of Equality and Happiness</b> (1952, Bulgaria)	544
"About the Author" and "Context" by Krassimira Daskalova · Translated by Valentina Mitkova	

LATINKA PEROVIĆ	
<b>Ahead of the Elections</b> (1963, Yugoslavia/Serbia)	553
“About the Author” and “Context” by Ivana Pantelić · Translated by Suzana Vuljevic	
OLIVIA CLĂTICI	
<b>On the Social Condition of Women</b> (1973, Romania)	561
“About the Author” and “Context” by Luciana Jinga · Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu	
VERA VESKOVIĆ-VANGELI	
<b>Women in History</b> (1974, Yugoslavia/Macedonia)	571
“About the Author” by Iva Jelušić · “Context” by Iva Jelušić and Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc Translated by Vuk Tošić	
WOMEN’S FORUM	
<b>To the Presidium of the 9th Extraordinary Congress of the Polish United Workers’ Party</b> (1981, Poland)	582
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Natalia Jarska · Translated by Anna Topolska	
INA MERKEL	
<b>Without Women, There Is No State</b> (1989, GDR)	589
“About the Author” and “Context” by Jane Freeland · Translated by Lea Greenberg	
<b>9</b>	
<b>Reproductive Rights and Demography</b>	601
MARIA JASZCZUKOWA	
<b>Proposal on the Criteria of Abortion Permissibility</b> (1956, Poland)	603
“About the Author” and “Context” by Barbara Klich-Kluczewska · Translated by Anna Topolska	
ZSUZSA KÖRÖSI et al.	
<b>Petition for the Protection of the Freedom of Abortion</b> (1973, Hungary)	610
“About the Author” and “Context” by Fanni Svégel · Translated by Beáta Sándor	
AIMÉE BEEKMAN	
<b>Freedom to Choose</b> (1978, Estonia)	618
“About the Author” and “Context” by Liisi Keedus · Translated by Helis Rõuk	
JASENKA KODRNJA	
<b>The Diary of a Woman in Labor</b> (1981, Yugoslavia/Croatia)	630
“About the Author” and “Context” by Ana Maskalan · Translated by Suzana Vuljevic	
ANA BLANDIANA	
<b>Children’s Crusade</b> (1984, Romania)	643
“About the Author” and “Context” by Corina Doboş · Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu	
VLASTA JALUŠIČ	
<b>Abortion, Women, and Politics</b> (1990, Yugoslavia/Slovenia)	651
“About the Author” and “Context” by Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc · Translated by Lukas Debeljak	
ÁGNES GERÉB	
<b>The Circumstances of a Home Birth Case</b> (1995, Hungary)	664
“About the Author” and “Context” by Fanni Svégel · Translated by Beáta Sándor	

# 10

## Health and the Body

673

KATALIN LADIK

**Performance Art and Marginalization** (1970, Hungary and Yugoslavia/Vojvodina) 675

“About the Author” and “Context” by Emese Kürti

MARIA PINIŃSKA-BERES

**Is a Woman a Human Being?** (1972, 1973, Poland) 682

“About the Author” and “Context” by Agata Jakubowska

ANNA ŚWIRSZCZYŃSKA

**I Am Baba (Selected Poems)** (1972, Poland) 688

“About the Author” and “Context” by Monika Rudaś-Grodzka and Katarzyna Nadana-Sokołowska

Translated by Anna Topolska

SANJA IVEKOVIĆ

**Sweet Violence—Mass Media and Feminist Art in Yugoslavia**

(1974–1983, Yugoslavia/Croatia) 696

“About the Authors” and “Context” by Ivana Bago

LEPA MLAĐENOVIĆ and BILJANA BRANKOVIĆ

**Alternatives to Psychiatry** (1985, Yugoslavia/Serbia) 703

“About the Author” and “Context” by Bojan Bilić · Translated by Jelena Babšek Labudović

# 11

## Sexuality

713

ÁGNES HELLER and MIHÁLY VAJDA

**Family Structure and Communism** (1970, Hungary) 715

“About the Authors” and “Context” by Zsófia Lóránd · Translated by Andrew Arato

TODOR BOSTANDZHIEV

**Sexology—A Belated Conversation** (1970, Bulgaria) 727

“About the Author” and “Context” by Valentina Mitkova · Translated by Valentina Mitkova

SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ

**Women and the Sexual Revolution** (1980, Yugoslavia/Croatia) 736

“About the Author” and “Context” by Zsófia Lóránd · Translated by Jelena Babšek Labudović

RADU DUMITRIU

**Sexology and Sexual Education** (1968, Romania) 749

“Context” by Luciana Jinga · Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu

ERZSÉBET GALGÓCZI

**“I Am the First Woman Writer of Peasant Origin in Hungary”** (1975, 1981, Hungary) 759

“About the Author” and “Context” by Anna Borgos · Translated by Cody J. Inglis

VESNA KESIĆ

**Isn't Pornography Cynical?** (1982, Yugoslavia/Croatia) 770

“About the Author” and “Context” by Leda Sutlović · Translated by Suzana Vuljević

SUZANA TRATNIK and NATAŠA SUKIČ  
**The Slovenian Lesbian Movement** (1990, Yugoslavia/Slovenia) 782  
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc · Translated by Lukas Debeljak

POLISH LESBIAN INITIATIVES  
**The Violet Pulse, Fury the First** (1995–2000, Poland) 793  
“About the Initiatives” and “Context” by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz

## 12

**Debating “Western” Feminisms** 801

---

NADEŽDA ČAČINOVIĆ  
**Equality or Liberation** (1976, Yugoslavia/Croatia) 803  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Una Blagojević · Translated by Jelena Babšek Labudović

RADA IVEKOVIĆ  
**The Position of Women: Immediate Tasks and Neglected Aspects**  
(1978, Yugoslavia/Croatia) 813  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Chiara Bonfiglioli  
Translated by Joan and David Rouge, revised by Chiara Bonfiglioli and Rada Iveković

STANA BUZATU  
**Issues for a Fruitful Dialogue between Feminism and Marxism** (1979, Romania) 822  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Adela Hincu · Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu

ŽARANA PAPIĆ  
**Sex and Gender—Categories of the Social Organization of Sexuality**  
(1984, Yugoslavia/Serbia) 833  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Adriana Zaharijević · Translated by Jelena Babšek Labudović

AGATE NESAULE  
**Conversation about the Second Sex** (1991, Latvia) 843  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Kārlis Vērdiņš · Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Gaber

JIŘINA ŠMEJKALOVÁ, PAVLA HORSKÁ, and JAROSLAVA PEŠKOVÁ  
**Feminism and the Woman Question at the Time of Transition**  
(1991/2, Czechoslovakia/Czechia) 851  
“About the Author” and “Context” by Libora Oates-Indruchová · Translated by Melinda Reidinger

BARBARA LIMANOWSKA and AGNIESZKA GRAFF  
**Feminism during Political Transformation** (1993, 2001, Poland) 870  
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz · Translated by Anna Topolska

## 13

**Dissidence** 885

---

NADIJA SVITLYCHNA and VIRA PAVLIVNA LISOVA  
**Women and the Dissident Movement in Soviet Ukraine** (1979, 1997, Ukraine) 887  
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Galina Babak · Translated by Yuliia Maksymeiko

DIJE NEZIRI LOHAJ  
**Innocence (a Poem From the *Ilegalja* Movement)** (1980s, Yugoslavia/Kosovo) 904  
“About the Author” by Elife (Eli) Krasniqi · Translated by Piro Rexhepi

LARYSA HIENIJUŠ and IVONKA SURVIŁŁA	
<b>The Position of Women in the Belarusian Diaspora</b> (1993–2018, Belarus)	907
“About the Authors” and “Context” and by Uladzislaŭ Ivanouŭ	
Translated by Wolf Rubinčyk and Uladzislaŭ Harbacki	
JANA JURÁŇOVÁ	
<b>... without context... How Is Feminism Doing in Slovakia?</b> (1994, Slovakia)	929
“About the Author” and “Context” by Jana Cviková · Translated by Julia and Peter Sherwood	
VERONIKA CHERKASOVA	
<b>The Country Just Across the Way</b> (2004, Belarus)	939
“About the Author” and “Context” by Almira Ousmanova · Translated by Benjamin Cope	
<b>14</b>	
<b>Transitions</b>	949
<hr/>	
DUNJA BLAŽEVIC	
<b>The Activist of the Avant-Garde</b> (1982, Yugoslavia)	951
“About the Author” and “Context” by Jasmina Tumbas · Translated by Suzana Vuljevic	
ÁGNES DARÓCZI	
<b>Making Gypsiness Bearable</b> (1984, Hungary)	962
“About the Author” and “Context” by Angéla Kóczé · Translated by Beáta Sándor	
TEUTA ARIFI	
<b>Police and Cooking Recipes. Yugoslav Feminism’s Precarious Solidarity with Kosovo</b> (1991, Yugoslavia/North Macedonia/Kosovo)	971
“About the Author” and “Context” by Linda Gusia and Nita Luci · Translated by Piro Rexhepi	
IRENE DÖLLING, with ADELHEID KUHLMAY-OEHLERT, GABRIELA SEIBT, and WOMEN IN THE GDR	
<b>“Our Skin.” Women about the Fall of 1990</b> (1992, GDR)	981
“About the Authors” and “Context” by Marcus Böick · Translated by Lea Greenberg	
MIHAELA MIROIU and LAURA GRÜNBERG	
<b>Liberal Feminism on Eastern Europe in the Aftermath of Communism</b> (1994, 1996, Romania)	992
“About the Authors” by Adela Hincu · “Context” by Alexandra Ghiț and Adela Hincu	
Translated by Adela Hincu, revised by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu	
HANA HAVELKOVÁ	
<b>A Liberal History of the Woman Question in the Czech Lands</b> (1995, Czechia)	1011
“About the Author” and “Context” by Libora Oates-Indruchová · Translated by Melinda Reidinger	
LITHUANIAN WOMEN’S PARTY	
<b>Party Platform for the 1996 Parliamentary Elections</b> (1996, Lithuania)	1025
“About the Author” and “Context” by Agnė Bagdžiūnaitė · Translated by Jura Avizienis	
NICOLETA BIȚU	
<b>The Romani Women’s Movement in Romania</b> (1999, Romania)	1036
“About the Author” and “Context” by Luiza Medeleanu	
<b>Contributors</b>	1051
<b>Index</b>	1059

# 1

## The Legacy of the Pre-1945 Period

Ecaterina Arbore

## The Working Woman in the Struggle towards Emancipation

**AUTHOR** Ecaterina Arbore

**TITLE** *Femeia muncitoare in lupta spre emancipare. Conferință ținută la Brăila în ziua de 28 martie 1911, organizată de sindicatul muncitorilor din port* [The Working Woman in the Struggle towards Emancipation: Conference Held in the Port of Braila on March 28, 1911, organized by the Dock Workers' Union]

**ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED** Bucharest: Cercul de Editură Socialistă, 1911.

**LANGUAGE** Romanian

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR<sup>1</sup>

**Ecaterina Arbore-Ralli** (1873, Switzerland–1937, USSR) was a physician and socialist women's labor activist in Romania and the Soviet Union. Arbore was born into a family of radical intellectuals and artists with ties to Russian nihilists, Western European socialists, and anarchists.<sup>2</sup> In 1896, she graduated from medical school in Bucharest, then specialized in puericulture (preventative pediatrics) in France between 1896 and 1899. As a physician employed by the Bucharest municipality (1899–1905), she advocated for improved living conditions for fostered children and the women caring for them. A gifted writer on social issues, Arbore wrote on working and living conditions in Bucharest neighborhoods and in rural areas, and on the heavy toll of malnutrition and infectious diseases on lower-class people in Romania. Arbore's political writings were meant to educate non-intellectuals as well as build support for her key stances among party members. Like other socialist women intellectuals in Romania from the period, including Sofia Nădejde (1856–1946) and Tatiana Grigorovici (1877–1952), Arbore embraced short, popular textual genres, such as magazine articles or brochures.

With significant archival materials about Arbore or her ego documents not yet analyzable, Arbore's international networks are difficult to reconstruct. Through her father and her own travels, in her youth she was linked to political networks that tied radicals

---

1 Research for this contribution was funded through the ERC Advanced Grant-funded project ZARAH: Women's Labor Activism in Eastern Europe and Transnationally, from the Age of Empires to the Late 20th Century (Grant agreement No.833691 - ZARAH). I would like to thank Prof. Susan Zimmermann and the editors for their comments on the first version. Dr. Zhanna Popova kindly assisted in locating records about Arbore in RGASPI catalogs, and in finding and translating the titles of Russian-language publications by Arbore. Dr. Ivelina Masheva drew my attention to *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* and its interesting contents.

2 Cotoi, *Inventing the Social in Romania*, xii. Zamfir Arbore, *În exil*.

in the Russian Empire to those in the Swiss republic, social democrats in Habsburg Austria to those in the Kingdom of Bulgaria.<sup>3</sup> Later, in the 1910s, Arbore was in contact with the Bulgarian Social Democratic Labor Party, particularly with the “narrow,” the faction supporting revolution rather than reform.<sup>4</sup> In the 1920s until her death, Arbore was a member of the global network of the Communist International (Comintern), and linked to women from the Communist Women’s Movement.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1893 and 1918, Arbore was active in the socialist movement in Romania. In the 1910s, when the socialist movement was flourishing in the country, she was a member of the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Romania (1912–1918). During this period, she led the socialist “Feminine Circle” in Bucharest (1913–1918).<sup>6</sup> Arbore was a supporter of women’s claims and involvement in the socialist party, arguing that women ought to have party work that went beyond “handing out little ribbons and selling tickets for celebrations.”<sup>7</sup>

In the 1910s, Arbore’s stances as a socialist activist were influenced by developments in women’s and labor politics around the world, especially in Central Europe and Russia. Thus, when Arbore insisted that women should be more visible in the Social Democratic Party in Romania, similar pressure was put on socialist parties across Europe.<sup>8</sup> Arbore’s line of arguing concerning working women and their place in socialist politics tracks closely with the approach to the issue developed by German socialist Clara Zetkin.<sup>9</sup> In 1911, when Arbore lectured on women’s exploitation in both factories and home industries, the issue of sweated labor in home-based work

3 Polexe, *Netzwerke und Freundschaft*; Todorova, *The Lost World of Socialists*; Cotoi, *Inventing the Social in Romania*.

4 For a quick explanation of “narrow” and “broad” factions within Bulgarian social democracy before the First World War, see Todorova, *The Lost World of Socialists*, 18.

5 On the transnational networks of the Cominternists, see Brigitte Studer, *Reisende der Weltrevolution: Eine Globalgeschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale* [Travelers of the World Revolution: A Global History of the Communist International] (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2020); Brigitte Studer, *The Transnational World of the Cominternians*, trans. Dafydd Rees Roberts (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). On the Communist Women’s Movement, see Daria Dyakonova, “‘Through the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in All Countries, Onward to the Complete Emancipation of Women!’: The Transnational Networks of the Communist Women’s Movement in the Early 1920s,” *Journal of Women’s History* 35, no. 1 (2023): 11–33.

6 Other key organizers of the Feminine Circle were Jana Brănișteanu, Ana Comănescu, and Maria Popescu. Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*; Tudoran, “Din lupta socialistă pentru afirmarea femeii.”

7 Quoted in Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*, 53.

8 The German SPD began following a policy of mandatorily including at least one woman in each local committee of the party in 1910. In the period when Arbore was most active in socialist politics in Romania, between 1905 and 1918, the number of women in the German SPD increased four-fold, from 4,000 to 174,000, with numbers almost doubling between 1907 and 1909. This trend was matched in several other socialist parties in Europe. During this period, the international socialist women’s movement was energized by Zetkin and the German socialist stance on women’s emancipation Zetkin had shaped. In 1907, Zetkin initiated an International Conference of Socialist Women. It would meet irregularly until 1915. Daniel Gaido and Cintia Frenica, “‘A Clean Break’: Clara Zetkin, the Socialist Women’s Movement, and Feminism,” *International Critical Thought* 8, no. 2 (2018): 12–18.

9 Zetkin’s *Die Arbeiterinnen- und Frauenfrage der Gegenwart* (1889) appeared in Sofia Nădejde’s Romanian translation already in 1891. Clara Zetkin, *Chestia lucrătoarelor și a femeilor de acuma. Trad. din nemțește*



was of great international interest.<sup>10</sup> The question of the effects of women's paid employment outside the home, present in the 1911 lecture, had been hotly debated in male-dominated trade unionism in various European countries since the 1890s.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Arbore had detailed knowledge of women's organizing in the Russian Empire, in Finland, and beyond Europe. This global outlook on the woman question would become even more pronounced in the 1920s—as testified by her publications from the decade.

After the beginning of the First World War, Arbore was active in the local and transnational antiwar movement. In 1914, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party, she co-signed a position statement against what the committee defined as a struggle between empires, and for Romania's neutrality in the conflict.<sup>12</sup> This position placed Arbore and her co-signers on the left flank of European socialism already before the 1915 Zimmerwald Conference, where the division between revolutionary and reformist socialists on the question of militarism came to a head. Like other socialists in the Balkans, in 1915 Arbore supported the idea of the creation of a socialist Balkan Federation as a way to bring lasting peace in the region.<sup>13</sup>

In September 1915, in a public meeting against the war, Arbore spoke about “the action of socialist women abroad who struggle with all their might for the conclusion of peace.”<sup>14</sup> She most likely meant the radically antiwar Bern Manifesto adopted in March 1915 by the International Socialist Women's Conference, spearheaded by Zetkin, calling for peace without annexations.<sup>15</sup> Arbore's and other Romanian Social Democrats' antiwar activities were popularized in 1916 among the many readers of the SPD women's biweekly *Die Gleichheit*, in an article on “Romanian socialists' actions for peace.”<sup>16</sup>

---

de S. Nădejde [The Question of Women Workers and of Present-Day Women. Translated from the German by S. Nadejde] (Bucharest: Lupta, 1891).

- 10 Marilyn J. Boxer, “Protective Legislation and Home Industry: The Marginalization of Women Workers in Late Nineteenth–Early Twentieth-Century France,” *Journal of Social History* 20, no. 1 (1986): 49–50.
- 11 For 1890s discussions on the effects of women's presence in the labor market in France, see Sandra Salin, *Women and Trade Unions in France: The Tobacco and Hat Industries, 1890–1914* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 92–100. Notably, Zetkin's influential 1889 Paris speech, “For the Liberation of Women,” defended women's employment outside the home, given the existing historical-material circumstances. For a transcript of the speech and its thoughtful contextualization, see Dalia Nassar and Kristin Gjesdal, eds., *Women Philosophers in the Long Nineteenth Century: The German Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 154–66.
- 12 Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*, 45.
- 13 L. S. Stavrianos, “The Balkan Federation Movement: A Neglected Aspect,” *The American Historical Review* 48, no. 1 (1942): 34.
- 14 “Întrunirea socialiștilor” [The Meeting of the Socialists], *Viitorul*, no. 2735, 22 September 1915, 2.
- 15 In 1915, Clara Zetkin led the adoption of the radically antiwar Bern Manifesto, one that vexed both Lenin and the German SPD leadership. The Manifesto backed the Rosa Luxemburg–led, left minority, antiwar position in the Second International. In 1917, because of her antimilitarism, Zetkin was removed from the executive committee of the SPD and from her position as editor of the women's biweekly *Die Gleichheit*, which she had founded. Gaido and Frenica, “A Clean Break,” 17–18; Zimmermann, *Grenz-Überschreitungen*, 173–83.
- 16 “Friedensaktionen der rumanischen Sozialdemokratie,” *Die Gleichheit* 26, no. 24 (August 18, 1916): 178–79. The article reported information published in the main SPD newspaper, *Vorwärts*.

After 1918, like other Romanian socialists with revolutionary leanings, Arbore became a political refugee in the Soviet Union. She returned to Romania as a communist activist in 1924 but was expelled by the government after only a few months—a legally unjustifiable decision which generated public outcry in the country.<sup>17</sup> Between 1925 and 1929, she held various functions in the Soviet sanitary system, possibly working in the Caucasus. In the first half of the 1920s, she contributed articles to the journal *Kommunistische Frauen Internationale*, edited by Clara Zetkin. She was a member in the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI), representing an envisioned Communist Balkan Federation. In the period 1931–1935, Arbore worked as a university instructor and translator in Moscow.<sup>18</sup> Like many other non-Russian ECCI members, she was arrested in the “Great Terror” autumn of 1937 in Moscow.<sup>19</sup> She died before the end of that year, in detention. Arbore was rehabilitated by the Socialist Republic of Romania in April 1968. After her political rehabilitation, biographical articles and volumes transformed Ecaterina Arbore into a key figure of an emerging pantheon of Romanian militant socialists.

MOST IMPORTANT WORKS · *Copii găsiți și orfani din capitală* [Foundlings and Orphaned Children in the Capital City] (Bucharest: Tip. Universitară “A. G. Brătianescu,” 1905); *Înfluența industriilor asupra sănătății lucrătorilor* [The Influence of Industries on the Health of the Workers] (Bucharest: Editura Revistei “Viitorul Social,” 1907); *Femeile în revoluțiunea din Rusia* [Women in the Revolution in Russia] (Bucharest: Editura Institutului de Arte Grafice “Minerva,” 1908); *Întinderea tuberculozei în București în anii 1902–1912* [The Spread of Tuberculosis in Bucharest in the Years 1902–1912] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1913); “Martirii care au luptat și au murit pentru Comuna din Paris” [The Martyrs Who Fought and Died for the Paris Commune], in *Comuna din Paris* [The Paris Commune] (Bucharest: Cercul de Editură Socialistă, 1913); *Cincizeci de zile între holerici* [Fifty Days among the Sick with Cholera] (Bucharest: Tipografia Poporul, 1914); *Mat’ i ditya v Sovetskoy Rossii* [Mother and Child in Soviet Russia] (Moscow, 1920); with B. Casparova, “Der Erste Kongress der schaffenden Frauen in den transkaukasischen Sowjetrepubliken” [The First Congress of Working Women in the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics], *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, no. 7–8 (1922): 632–37; “Die Arbeitende Frau in der Revolutionären Arbeiter- und Bauernbewegung des Ostens” [The Working Woman in the Revolutionary Workers’ and Peasants’ Movement of the East], *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* 5, no. 2 (1925): 18–23; *Zhenskiy trud na Vostoke* [Women’s Labor in the East] (Moscow: Voprosy truda, 1926).

*Alexandra Ghiț*

17 D. Ch., “Expulzarea d-rei Arbore înaintea Camerei” [The Expulsion of Mrs. Arbore before the Chamber of Deputies], *Adevărul*, no. 12386, 17 June 1924.

18 The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) holds several files in connection to Arbore’s activity as a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, as a university instructor, as well as mid-1920s correspondence with Clara Zetkin (two letters). Although declassified, they could not be consulted for this contribution.

19 Studer, *The Transnational World of the Cominternians*, 134.

## CONTEXT

In 1968, during the April Plenary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, around twenty communist militants who had been killed in the late 1930s in the USSR were formally rehabilitated. Ecaterina Arbore was one of two women rehabilitated.<sup>20</sup> Through the rehabilitation of these socialists, Party Chairman Nicolae Ceaușescu wanted to consolidate his power and make a break with the legacy of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, his predecessor who had died in 1965.<sup>21</sup> Already in 1966, historians had been asked in the 9th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party to “strictly observe the historical truth.”<sup>22</sup> Less than five months after the April 1968 Plenary, in a public speech on August 21, 1968, Ceaușescu condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the other five members of the Warsaw Pact. Apparent support for the Prague Spring and the Romanian leader’s insistence on independence from Moscow (a policy stance since the Gheorghiu-Dej era, in fact), bolstered Ceaușescu’s popularity domestically and his clout in the West. Socially, in Romania, the late 1960s and early 1970s were perceived as a “period of cultural openness and consumer liberalization.”<sup>23</sup>

In the aftermath of the April Plenary, and in this new institutional and societal context, historian Elisabeta Ioniță began researching Ecaterina Arbore.<sup>24</sup> In fact, research and writing on Ecaterina Arbore ushered a period of renewed interest and funding for activist women’s history.<sup>25</sup> Ioniță interviewed Arbore’s descendants, collecting documents and objects that had belonged to the activist. A first article on Arbore was published in 1969 by Ioniță in the broad-circulation women’s magazine *Femeia* (The Woman),<sup>26</sup> followed in 1973 by a well-researched biographical volume by the same author, at the prestigious publishing house Editura Politică.<sup>27</sup> Ioniță’s

---

20 For Romanian communists purged in the USSR, and a focus on Elena Filipovici, the other woman activist rehabilitated in 1968, see Diac, “Comuniști din România în arhiva Cominternului,” parts I and II.

21 Fischer, “Idol or Leader?,” 121.

22 The 9th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in 1966 laid out what the flagship historical journal of the time considered to be a “veritable program for the activity of historians,” focused on “the stringent requirement to strictly observe the historical truth.” The Congress, the Plenary, and various speeches by the Party Chairman encouraged research into the lives of militants who had been unjustly condemned while Gheorghiu-Dej was in power or had been killed in Stalin’s purge of Moscow-based former Cominternists. “Un act de înalt umanism” [An Act of Great Humanism], *Anale de Istorie*, no. 2–3 (1968): 18–19.

23 Massino, *Ambiguous Transitions*, 323.

24 Ioniță was a historian who had joined the Museum for the History of the Communist Party in 1963 and otherwise had ties to communist activism since her childhood in the interwar period. Ștefan Ștefănescu and Adolf Armbruster, *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești* [Encyclopedia of Romanian Historiography] (Bucharest: Editura științifică și enciclopedică, 1978), 181.

25 For much of the 1960s, the histories of women’s lives and their militancy were marginal to historical production, partly as a politicized reaction to a first period of flourishing of the field between 1945 and 1953. Ghiț, “Professionals’ and Amateurs’ Past.”

26 Ioniță, “Amintiri despre Ecaterina Arbore.”

27 Ioniță, *Ecaterina Arbore*.

work and subsequent landmark women's history volumes mention Arbore's activity as a pioneering socialist woman and dedicated social medic.

The 1911 lecture excerpted here supports a somewhat different understanding of Arbore's stances, compared to the 1970s take on her politics. The lecture reveals Arbore to be, in part, as state socialist historians in Romania saw her: a Marxist intellectual engaged in educating and persuading rank-and-file members of the labor movement and in shaping the stances of the Social Democratic Party in Romania. At the same time, the lecture reveals Arbore to be a critic of exploitative labor arrangements within factories but also in home industry, and a strong supporter of working women's struggles worldwide. And it reveals Arbore's internationalism and tendency to think in global terms. These latter aspects were barely mentioned in 1970s research about her.

The lecture was published as a 31-page brochure-sized booklet by the Socialist Publishing Circle, shortly after Arbore delivered it on March 28, 1911, likely to a mostly male audience of members of the Brăila Dock Workers' Trade Union (Sindicatul Muncitorilor din Port). The paragraphs selected here represent about one third of the first edition's length. The selection captures the philosophical and historical arguments and comparisons Arbore marshaled to discuss women's work and the struggle for women's rights. A second edition appeared in 1912. The introduction was changed to appeal to women workers more directly, encouraging them to organize. The term "emancipation" (*emancipare*) was replaced with "liberation" (*desrobire*) in the title of the publication.

The main theoretical (or philosophical) argument Arbore made in the lecture was that women's exploitation as workers was determined by the "inexorable laws" of capitalist development. Politically, this implied that solutions such as the removal of women from industrial establishments or from working outside the home, in general, were retrograde and practically misguided. Arbore made this point in the context of a new, growing trend of women's employment in industrial establishments in the Kingdom of Romania.

In effect, in 1911, Arbore was defending women's work in industry outside the home, combatting the idea that such work was an immoral local trend and contributing to a gendered critique of cottage industries. Her argument that women's work was part of a large historical development, that it underpinned women's demands for rights, and that women ought to struggle for their rights within supportive socialist movements strongly echoes Zetkin's stances.

Using historical examples and contemporary information about the exploitation of women workers in cottage and home industries, Arbore combatted the notion that such industries could constitute alternatives to the exploitation of women workers in factories. To support her claim, Arbore discussed the case of exploited Saxon cottage weavers in the medieval period as well as the unfavorable time:pay ratio for

home-based crafts done by women, as revealed by a 1909 handcraft exhibition in Geneva.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1911 edition, implicit and explicit comparisons between various countries where women had played significant roles as workers, and especially as political actors, were used to build an argument about the entangled development of socialist and women's activism. Arbore claimed that socialism (*socializmul*) and the struggle for women's emancipation—the “fight for what goes under the name of feminism [*femenismul*]”—were mutually strengthening struggles with entangled histories, of equal significance in a historical dialectic progress. Notably, when discussing global developments Arbore referred to East and West, and to “North and South,” but also to more or less “civilized” (meaning politically developed and industrialized) countries, with Romania among the “less civilized.”

When Ioniță published her preliminary research on Arbore in *Femeia* in 1969, the article on the opposite page praised the state-encouraged revival of home-based industry and traditional crafts, the very industries and crafts the social doctor and socialist theorist had criticized sixty years before.<sup>29</sup> In fact, as part of a process of “socialist flexibilization,”<sup>30</sup> in the late 1960s piece-rate contracts for home-based work, clearly conceived with women workers in mind, were reintroduced in Romanian labor law.<sup>31</sup> In the early 1970s, Arbore's intellectual contributions were mentioned by historians, but neither Arbore's contributions to the development of local socialist thinking nor her internationalism were fully explored. Arbore's criticism of home industry did not have an echo in Romania's policy-making circles in the 1970s.

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING

Arbore, Zamfir. *În exil: din amintirile mele* [In Exile: From My Memories]. Craiova: Institutul de Editură Ralian și Ignat Samitca, 1896.

Câncea, Paraschiva. *Mișcarea pentru emanciparea femeii în România* [The Movement for Woman's Emancipation in Romania]. Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1976.

Cotoi, Călin. *Inventing the Social in Romania, 1848–1914: Networks and Laboratories of Knowledge*. Leiden: Brill, 2020.

---

28 For the latter example, she referred to information gleaned from a 1909 handcraft exhibition in Geneva, where note cards displayed next to embroidery, lace, or artificial flowers indicated the price of the item and the number of hours required to execute it.

29 Ileana Alexeni and Stan Udrea, “Reactualizarea unei tradiții: Industria casnică” [Reactualization of a Tradition: Home Industry], *Femeia*, 22, no. 10 (1969): 6.

30 Alina-Sandra Cucu, “Going West: Socialist Flexibility in the Long 1970s,” *Journal of Global History* 18, no. 2 (2022): 153–71.

31 Michael Charles Kaser, “Romania,” in Hans-Hermann Höhmann, Karl Christian Thalheim, and Michael Charles Kaser, eds., *The New Economic Systems of Eastern Europe* (London: Hurst and Co., 1975), 191.

- Diac, Cristina. "Comuniști din România în arhiva Cominternului: Elena Filipovici, sfârșitul unui revoluționar de profesie, 1934–1937" [Communists from Romania in the Comintern Archives: Elena Filipovici, the End of a Professional Revolutionary, 1934–37] part I: *Arhivele Totalitarismului* 25, no. 3–4 (2017): 219–39; part II: *Arhivele Totalitarismului* 26, no. 1–2 (2018): 209–24.
- Fischer, Mary Ellen. "Idol or Leader? The Origins and Future of the Ceausescu Cult." In *Romania in the 1980s*, ed. Daniel N. Nelson, 117–142. Boulder: Westview Press, 1981.
- Georgescu, Elena, and Titu Georgescu. *Mișcarea democratică și revoluționară a femeilor din România* [The Democratic and Revolutionary Movement of Women in Romania]. Craiova: Editura Scrisul românesc, 1975.
- Ghiț, Alexandra. "Professionals' and Amateurs' Pasts: A Decolonizing Reading of Post-War Romanian Histories of Gendered Interwar Activism." *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 25, no. 1 (2018): 21–44.
- Ioniță, Elisabeta. "Amintiri despre Ecaterina Arbore" [Memories of Ecaterina Arbore]. *Femeia* 22, no. 10 (1969): 7.
- . *Ecaterina Arbore*. Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1973.
- Polexe, Laura. *Netzwerke und Freundschaft: Sozialdemokraten in Rumänien, Russland und der Schweiz an der Schwelle zum 20. Jahrhundert* [Networks and Friendship: Social Democrats in Romania, Russia, and Switzerland at the Threshold of the 20th Century]. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011.
- Massino, Jill. *Ambiguous Transitions: Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania*. New York–Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019.
- Ștefan, I. M., and V. Firoiu. *Sub semnul Minervei* [Beneath Minerva's Sign]. Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975.
- Todorova, Maria. *The Lost World of Socialists at Europe's Margins: Imagining Utopia, 1870s–1920s*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.
- Tudoran, Georgeta. "Din lupta socialistă pentru afirmarea femeii la sfârșitul secolului trecut" [From the Socialist Struggle for Woman's Affirmation during the Previous Century]. *Revista de istorie* 38, no. 2 (1985): 128–44.
- Zimmermann, Susan. *GrenzÜberschreitungen: Internationale Netzwerke, Organisationen, Bewegungen und die Politik der globalen Ungleichheit vom 17. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert* [BorderCrossings: International Networks, Organizations, Movements, and the Politics of Global Inequality from the 17th to the 21st Century]. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag eG, 2010.

Alexandra Ghiț

Ecaterina Arbore

## **The Working Woman in the Struggle towards Emancipation**

*Conference Held in the Port of Brăila on March 28, 1911,*

*Organized by the Dock Workers' Union*

We will soon celebrate half a century since two great movements, two immense struggles have started pushing humanity in its entirety toward changing present-day social forms in all countries of Europe, in America, Australia, and New Zealand. A fierce struggle is ongoing to realize new ideas, for progress. New horizons open for the human mind. The purpose of these movements across humanity is to forge a more just and happier life than the one today, and the one before, for all people.

These two large movements, these struggles of ideas spread ever wider to all countries, they win ever more proselytes, and break through all the obstacles that their enemies build in their paths; and while they have yet to attain full victory, in many parts of the world they are on the way to winning, and, without a doubt, will eventually prevail the way Christianity did two thousand years ago. They will prevail precisely because they bring justice and happiness for all.

These two movements that cause unrest across humanity today are, on the one hand, the struggle of the proletariat, the working class's struggle for liberation, for *socialism*, and, on the other hand, women's fight for their own rights.

Both of these struggles have begun around the same time, half a century ago, when women from various countries woke up and saw they were treated unjustly, deprived of any rights, and at the same time the workers understood that they were being exploited by capitalists.

These movements, class struggle and the struggle for women's emancipation, both arose from the same inexorable historical causes, namely the *economic*.

[...]

The patriarchal family, as described, and which existed for our ancestors, is no more and can no longer be. Life today no longer resembles life in the old days, when the woman would be at home growing her own vegetables, kneading and baking her own bread, weaving the cloth for her entire family's clothes, and tending to her children. Today, when life has become much more complex and expensive, when a person's needs are much more numerous and varied, the wheat is more likely to be sown by some people and eaten by others, the bread is baked by bakeries, the clothes are woven by factories, and even if we would like to go back to life as it used to be and as described in such detail in fairy tales written in books, it would be in vain. Today, in order for them to escape death in misery, women must work outside their homes, in factories, workshops, or offices, but if

their work is equal to that of male workers, if they earn their own living, then it is only fair that women should be asking for the same rights that men are asking for.

[...]

In civilized countries, especially more democratic ones, women have won many rights, just like workers have won more rights.

Women's emancipation, breaking their economic, legal, and political chains, went hand in hand with the progress of socialism, the rise of the Socialist Party, and on the other hand, socialism rose faster in those countries where more women embraced the socialist cause.

How did they fight? For what purpose? And what did women achieve in different countries, particularly women workers?

It has been already over forty years since women of all social classes have begun to act, write, unite, and fight to obtain *rights*. The rights that they asked for, and still do, belong in two categories: (1) the right to economic emancipation, meaning women's right to work outside of the home, in factories, or workshops, in various industries; (2) the right to embrace a liberal profession, to become teachers or doctors, and to receive equal pay for equal work, equal to the men's pay.

*For equal work, equal pay.*

At the same time, working women began to ask for political and legal rights equal to those of men, too—to be treated equally before the law, to be *citizens* on an equal footing with men, to have the right *to vote*, to elect their representatives to Parliament, and to be elected.

What could have caused this? What drive pushed them then and continues to push women across countries to ask for their rights, to act, to fight for what goes under the name of *feminism*?

It was a long time ago that women stayed at home and could produce cheaply everything necessary for living.

It has been already over a century since countries in Western Europe, England, and France began to develop heavy industry, establishing factories that could employ thousands of workers and, with the introduction of machines, sought to hire women, especially for the weaving of all types of textiles. Women would learn the craft faster and (unfortunately) accept smaller pay than men. But however small their pay at the factory, it was still more than what they would have earned staying at home.

[...]

*Home industry*, women's work at home, is still said to be the only type of work suited for women, enabling them to take care of their *home* and families at the same time. This is what all opponents of the feminist movement all over the world say, failing to take into account historical evolution and social progress; those who hold power in their hands seek to spread and encourage home industry.



In our country, and even in Russia, charitable societies and women's societies sought and still seek to spread and organize increasingly home industry. But in Russia it has been years since even the women who wished to do good understood that they only encouraged the exploitation of women workers.

Today, just like in the past, *home industry* remains the worst-paid and least hygienic work, and in all countries this type of work leads to the cruelest exploitation of women workers.

[...]

This is the same everywhere; the price paid for whatever is produced in the home is smaller, and the worker who produces in her own home lives in more miserable conditions than factory workers.

In Russia, home industry is paid even lower than in the West. Despite the state's encouragement and philanthropic societies' efforts to spread the manufacturing of carpets, national-motif embroidering, cloth, etc., among Russian peasant women, because the women earned too little, they abandoned this work in favor of agricultural work or factory work.

The same has been happening in our country over the past ten years or so; women who used to work at home until around ten years ago, and earned so little despite the activity of philanthropic societies, after the opening of weaving, textile factories, have gone to work there, pushed by the inexorable law of economic need, the same everywhere.

Since manufacturing products at home, namely home industry, was found to be the most exploitative of women and men workers, as it is not subject to any control and usually highly unhygienic, in all those more civilized countries, where women earned more rights, they asked that manufacturing products at home, namely home industry, be banished. Socialist parties included the banishment of home industry in their programs too.

[...]

Women in countries more advanced on the ladder of civilization than Romania have already begun to organize half a century ago and first struggled only for *economic emancipation*, for the right to work, to earn their own living in an honest and dignified way, to be paid for their work enough to afford living costs and not have to depend on the charity of others.

The first women's organizations were philanthropic societies and aid societies that failed however to improve the lives of women, and often degenerated into a new type of workers' exploitation.

Only in those countries where women and men workers organized together into a Socialist Party could they obtain the creation of laws which would protect women's labor and achieve a betterment of women's lives.

[...]

If we look at the movement for women's economic and political emancipation in different countries, we find that while it has made great headway in the past years, the movement has gained more ground where there is a stronger socialist movement, which is only natural.

The full emancipation of women depends on the triumph of socialism, just as the socialist cause cannot advance without women's participation. And just as the duty of women workers is to fight for socialism, so too is the duty of socialist parties everywhere to fight for the rights of women.

The struggle for women's emancipation is only beginning in our country, but natural social evolution pushes us on the same path that other countries have taken before us. And here just as everywhere, despite all the obstacles put in the way, both the feminist and the socialist movements will go forward, ever forward!

*Translated by Ioana Miruna Voiculescu*