

Department of History Workshop

New Histories of Women's Lives: Methodology, Theory, and Practice

10 March 2023 | 10:00 – 17:00

Sala degli Stemma (Villa Salviati) & Online

Organisers: Jennifer Ashby (HEC), Giselle Bernard (HEC), Minja Bujakovic (HEC), Marta Chmielewska (HEC), Gözde Kılıç (MWF-HEC), and Cynthia Sadler (HEC)

Co-organized with the [Queer and Feminist Studies Interdisciplinary Working Group](#) with collaboration from the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS) and Central European University (CEU).

Abstract

This one-day workshop brings together early career scholars working broadly on the history of women's lives. Together with our keynote speaker, Professor Emerita Francisca de Haan, we aim to examine new approaches to women's history. We particularly aim to discuss how the dominant historical narratives can be re-centered by the use of new methodologies and sources, such as ego documents. Changing the perspective from macrohistory to microhistory, we analyze the role of individual actors, their actions, ideas, and their understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts they lived in.

Programme

10:00-10:15 [Introduction from the Organizers](#)

10:15-12:15 [Panel 1: Non-Conforming Selves and Otherness:
Early Modern and Modern Approaches to Women's Lives](#)

Chair: **Rosario Freire Saray** (SNS)

- **Mónica Morado** (EUI), "But Icarus Lived: Eleno de Céspedes and Early Modern Hermaphroditism on Trial"
- **Cynthia Sadler** (EUI), "On the Hunt for Françoise - Problems of a Biographical Research"
- **Giselle Bernard** (EUI), "Queer Intersections: Exploring the Traveling Lives of European Women Desiring Women in the Early 20th Century"
- **Jennifer Ashby** (EUI), "'Traversing Myself': Mina Loy, Life-Writing, and the Construction of a Spiritual Aesthetic"

12:15-13:00 [Lunch Break](#)

13:00-15:00 [Panel 2: Contemporary Encounters: Sources, Methods, Practices](#)

Chair: **Cynthia Sadler** (EUI)

- **Minja Bujaković** (EUI), “Ego Documents and Networks: Reconstructing the Communist Women’s Movement”
- **Aikaterini Acheimastou** (EUI), “Women, Violence and Resistances: Greek Civil War through Women’s Testimonies”
- **Uladzimir Valodzin** (EUI), “Male and Female Written and Oral Accounts on a Kompanija of the ‘Thaw’ Period (Minsk, Belarusian SSR, early 1960s): (In)visibility of Women”
- **Christina Maraboutaki** (EUI), “Creating a Digital Archive: Stories of Violence and the #MeToo Movement”

15:00-15:30 [Coffee Break](#)

15:30-16:30 [Keynote Lecture](#) by **Francisca de Haan** (CEU)

Chair: **Minja Bujakovic** (EUI)

The Three Global Foremothers of the Communist Women’s Movement: Biographies, Impact, and Connections

In my lecture, I will discuss the life and work of the German Clara Zetkin (1857–1933), the Russian Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952), and the Trinidad-born Claudia Jones (1915–1964), whom I regard as the three global foremothers of the Communist Women’s Movement. For each one of them I will present a summary of their biography and the key reasons for regarding them as global foremothers. In that context, I will also explore some of the ways in which their lives and work were connected. My lecture will be based on the findings in *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World* (F. de Haan, ed., February 2023).

Francisca de Haan is Professor Emerita of Gender Studies and History at Central European University in Vienna. Her research interests include international women’s organizations in the 19th and 20th centuries but with a focus on the Cold War era, global socialist feminism, and women’s archives. Examples of her recent work include *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries* (2006), *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World* (2023), and *The Women’s International Democratic Federation: A Left-Feminist Organization in the Global Cold War* (forthcoming).

16:30-17:30 [Roundtable Discussion](#)

17:30-18:30 [Cocktail](#)