1

Socialist Women and the Great War, 1914–21: Protest, Revolution and Commemoration

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The German Women's Paper, the *Central-Blatt*, of which Frau Marie Stritt, the President of the Bund [*deutscher Frauenvereine*], is editor, gives an account of a most interesting women's meeting held lately in Berlin on the subject of the women textile workers, who, with the men, have been so many weeks on strike in Crimmitschau. Fraulein Alice Salomon, a well-known worker in the woman's cause, had just returned from a visit to the scene of the strike, and spoke feelingly on the evils to health and to social and domestic conditions caused by the eleven hours day, which (with the two hours often taken up by going and returning from work) kept the workers thirteen hours away from their homes. We learn also from her reports that men's wages, being rarely higher than 13s. to 16s. a week, all married and single women are forced to work these long hours in the factory … A certain Herr Tietje, however, representing the factory owners, attempted to prove to the audience that the conditions demanded by the work-people would destroy the textile industries. A most animated discussion followed his remarks, and he was vigorously opposed by Mr. Jutz, an editor and Miss Bohn, who spoke for the Socialists. The meeting finally carried the following resolution:- 'That this meeting expresses its hearty sympathy with the demands of the Crimmitschau textile workers for the reduction of the hours of the working day. It considers this demand doubly justified, because women, both married and single, form a large percentage of the workers. This meeting further protests against the attitude of the judicial officials, whose actions tend to increase the hostility, and regrets the continued refusal of the factory owners to consider proposals for a settlement of the dispute; and this meeting requests the Reichstag and the Bundesrat to fix a legal maximum of ten hours for women working in factories'.[1]

This description of a feminist meeting in Berlin in January 1904 is interesting on a number of different levels. It came just five months before the foundation of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), the first major cross-border pressure group for the female vote, at a conference, also held in Berlin and again involving Marie Stritt, in June 1904. It was written by Dora B. Montefiore, a London-based British-Australian member of the militantly pro-suffrage Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) who later aligned herself with the international socialist views of Ellen Wilkinson and Clara Zetkin and joined the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1920.[2] It concerned calls to support 7,500 women and men striking for the ten-hour day in Crimmitschau, a relatively obscure textile town in the Zwickau district of Saxony, which at the turn of the century had a population of around 20,000 and no significant organized women's movement at local level. By the time the piece was published, the strike had collapsed, being called off on 18 January 1904. Hundreds of strikers were fired, and those who were spared dismissal were forced to go back to work under the same terms and conditions that they had had to endure before August 1903. All this was achieved because the factory owners had resorted to a lock-out, backed by the local military, police and judicial authorities, who declared a 'lesser' state of siege in the town, enabling bans on public assemblies and 'seditious' literature.[3]

For labour and gender historian Kathleen Canning, the 'legendary Crimmitschau textile strike of 1903[–04]' is significant above all because it demonstrated the 'fluid boundaries between factory and family in women's working lives, as they fought to set their own rhythms of work'.[4] The ten-hour day was both a long-standing demand of the German labour movement, and a campaign which had a specifically gendered meaning in the context of Crimmitschau, where the majority of women workers were married and had to take an extended lunchbreak to see to their domestic duties, and where 58 per cent of the strikers from August 1903 to January 1904 were women. The relevance of gender-specific needs at work was being asserted over the supposedly universal issue of pay. 'One more hour for our families!' was the slogan which they used to justify their demand not only for a reduction from eleven to ten hour shifts, but for a guaranteed two-hour midday break.[5] This was all the more remarkable as 'half the women were unorganized' – in other words, not members of the (male-led) trade union for textile workers.[6]

As we will show in this volume, the battle over who or what might have the sovereign right to determine female productive and reproductive lives at both micro and macro levels was not just a phenomenon of the mid-1900s and early

1910s. Rather, it gained renewed intensity during the years 1914–21, when the First World War and its brutal three-year aftermath haunted the continent of Europe. Once again, albeit now on a much larger transregional and transnational scale, unorganized working-class women, and some who belonged to official trade unions or unofficial shop steward movements, asserted the right to self- and co-determination of the political – with the added dimensions of their growing consciousness as consumers and de facto single parents raising children in the absence or death of soldier-husbands; as revolutionaries, street protestors and co-combatants in the struggle against wartime militarism and militant post-1918 counter-revolution; as citizens, members of left-wing political parties and voters; and as (self-) emancipated sexual beings determined to cast off many of the conventions of 'bourgeois' morality. This understanding of and claim to participatory rights in the creation of the social, the productive and the reproductive, and the forging of personal and community-based interconnections between all three, too often dismissed by socialist men as 'unpolitical' or 'pre-political',[7] as too bodily and/or too emotional, or as lacking in strategic purpose or plan, has yet to garner the scholarly attention and critical scrutiny that we believe it deserves. Our volume meets a long overdue imperative to place socialist women at the heart of understandings of the political in the era of the Great War.

Figure 1.1 Photograph of a group of women campaigners for the ten-hour day in Crimmitschau, Saxony, taken on the final day of the twenty-two-week textile workers' strike of August 1903 to January 1904. Source: Alamy.

Through five further multi-authored chapters and drawing on case studies from Austria, Britain and British-ruled Ireland, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia, the volume shows that the involvement of socialist women as opponents of war and militarism, as advocates of social and political change, and as participants in industrial and street protests, was a core feature of European history in the years 1914–21. Their contributions ensured that, alongside the continent-wide strike wave of 1903–5 and the upheavals in Tsarist Russia in 1905–7, the First World War and its immediate aftermath marked a key moment in the development of a new mass democratic politics and new visions of national and global citizenship. The volume is at the same time intended as a critique of much of the previous literature on this subject, which is heavily skewed towards actions by men and primary accounts written by men. This preference, we would argue, reflects, among other things, a seldom examined but nonetheless historically rooted prejudice against the involvement of women in modern revolutions, except in the purely allegorical form made famous by French artist Eugène Delacroix's 1832 painting 'Liberty Leading the People' (*La Liberté guidant le peuple*).[8] It is a conscious and unconscious method of exclusion that can be found as much in the conventional historiography of modern European revolutions as it can be in the hidden assumptions and languages of gender present in many left-wing political organizations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as trade unions, workers' councils and socialist or Social Democratic parties.

'Wild, wacky and wrong' are the words chosen by Sheila Rowbotham to denote how men have typically castigated female revolutionaries.[9] The genealogy of this deep-seated prejudice can be traced back to the era of the French revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848, and, in the British case, to the period between the radical movements of the 1780s and 1790s and the Great Reform Act of 1832, as Nan Sloane has also recently argued.[10] It was at this point that the 'convention that women were not qualified for politics and needed to be trained or educated before they could participate or express an opinion' first became the dominant factor in the gender politics of modern revolutions and counter-revolutions.[11] Needless to say, it was a way of thinking that reared its head anew at various moments in the late nineteenth century, and again in the wake of the First World War. Sometimes women activists themselves bought into the 'wild and wacky' label. The Austrian Social Democrat Marianne Pollak, for instance, in a 1928 article on the actions of women 'barricade brides' in the revolutionary year 1848, mentioned their participation in a raid on a bank building, as well as their work sewing badges and reading revolutionary leaflets, while suggesting

that when it came to organized political or military struggles, 'they did not join in'.[12] Men, however, were at the forefront of suggestions after 1921 that women insurgents in Austria were not only lacking in self-control, but an all-out abomination. Similarly in Ireland, after the 1922–3 civil war, female militants were seen as 'hysterical women', who were 'unlovely, destructive minded, arid begetters of violence' and largely responsible for the horrors of the fighting, although as Maryann Valiulis points out, this position is not supported by events of the period.[13] At its most insidious, the male gaze can be found in the fearful image of the 'dangerous' female revolutionary masses developed by the German criminologist Hans von Hentig in his 1923 article 'Die revolutionäre Frau' ('The Revolutionary Woman'):

> Experience teaches us that in revolutions the woman exceeds the man in determination … The woman, once rebellious, knows no fear; this is rooted in her divergent sense of morality. The morality of the women extends to her small circle, her family and not the state or society, two entities to which she mostly does not share a strong relation … Because the organism of a broad part of women succumbs to periodical flows, that leave deep marks in their mental state, a mass consisting of women is much more explosive than a mass consisting of men.[14]

Strategies adopted by socialist women in the years 1914–21 for combatting such chauvinistic-reductive arguments about their moral and biological 'unsuitability' for revolution included their involvement in work-based strikes, food riots and street demonstrations. However, as our five further chapters make clear in different ways, this was simply the outward manifestation of a variety of more hidden yet equally important methods for demanding economic and social resources and claiming sovereignty over their own lives and the lives of the nations and communities in which they lived, many of which have since been erased from the historical record. These include: smuggling and distributing illegal literature and (less frequently) money and arms, often at night; running underground printing presses and arranging forbidden private gatherings and reading circles that were often disguised as 'trivial' meetings of women for harmless gossip; hiding deserters and men on the run; standing up for teenagers when they were arrested or brutalized by the police; and supporting strikes through carrying out reproductive tasks such as caring for pre-teenage children and ensuring their education at times of enforced school closures. They also involved 'memory-work' – in other words, female-specific and self-empowering ways of working through and communicating lived experience for future

generations of women (and men).[15] Indeed, by bringing scholars with expertise in gender-based historical research in different national contexts into dialogue with one another, our separate chapters aim to highlight the different forms that socialist-oriented and anti-militarist political action could take, and make women's agency in creating and sustaining the various revolutionary contexts visible.

Understanding these developments as historical phenomena also requires substantial critical engagement with historical methods and sources, including interrogation of how masculinities as well as femininities were constructed during this period. The German socialist (and later communist) Martha Arendsee judged, perhaps a little harshly, that proletarian women's participation in strikes and protests during the First World War was 'always more an emotional decision [made in the moment] than the outflow of a socialist worldview with a consciously desired end goal'.[16] This also makes women's participation more difficult to see in the surviving records, as it did not always conform in gender-normative terms to the political category 'worker' as constructed in the official programmes, minuted meetings and informal rites of socialization to be found in male-dominated socialist parties, strike committees and trade unions.[17] These gender norms could be casually and almost unthinkingly enforced by male socialist leaders for whom the 'amorphous', 'erratic' or 'uncontrolled' mass only acquired agency and purpose with masculine party leadership.[18] Socialist men usually had little interest in the 'specific deformations of women's conditions', as Frigga Haug puts it, and were unwilling to do the necessary 'detective' or 'memory-work' to identify them empirically, situate them historically into understandings of the material and cultural reproduction of human social relations, and integrate them meaningfully and sensibly into a general Marxist theory of the emancipation of both sexes.[19] The German revolutionary Rosa Leviné-Meyer, for instance, remembered an off-the-cuff remark made by her second husband, the former KPD (Communist party) general secretary and hard-line Leninist Ernst Meyer, who died suddenly in 1930:

> I was taught on many occasions to distinguish between the revolutionary value of organised and unorganised workers. Once I was carried away by the sight of a large demonstration. 'Too many housewives, women, youngsters,' Ernst coolly remarked.[20]

And yet, as Moritz Föllmer has shown, the supposed straightforward, historical-materialist thinking of 'disciplined' male workers within organized labour movements of the post-1848 period itself met a dead end in the revolutions of

1918–19, as men too found that they lacked a clear-cut script to help them make sense of the unexpected and unpredictable events happening around them.[21] Conversely, as some of this volume's authors have argued elsewhere, emotion-driven responses to human suffering and unorganized feelings of solidarity with those who suffered most from state-led violence and economic exploitation could also lead to some very clear and rational, utopian *and* strategic political reasoning about how to achieve the one immediate goal that really mattered in the here and now to socialists in 1914–21: ending the war and restoring peace on terms that benefitted workers, including women workers, young people, conscientious objectors and army deserters, not capitalists.[22] This was a goal that depended on creating new horizontal structures of protest and imagining new possibilities for everyone to become 'independent citizens who show solidarity'.[23] It required a de-centring of power, or rather a reclaiming of power at the margins, including the power to interpret what constituted legitimate and purposeful protest. It also entailed using strikes, demonstrations, illicit leafleting, police interrogations and court appearances to communicate lived, everyday war experiences from the edges.

One example here would be the 'communal strikes' across urban parts of Russia, Italy and Spain in 1917–22, written about in 1987 by Temma Kaplan for the second volume of the path-breaking feminist series *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*. According to Kaplan, these strikes – rather like the anti-eviction demonstrations in Budapest in the 1900s, or the Glasgow rent strike of 1915 which we discuss in Chapter 2 – were legitimized in the first instance as a protest against neighbourhood economic conditions that made it impossible to survive, even in a neutral country like Spain, during the war and immediate post-war period. By 'demanding food, fuel or housing at reasonable rent until they succeeded in mobilising the support from the men of the same social class', the women strikers hoped to 'force action from the side of those in power'.[24] However, in most accounts of Russian, Italian and Spanish history during the First World War era, just as in most accounts of Glasgow's 'Red Clydeside' in the 1910s and 1920s, or of the Swedish hunger riots of 1917 (also examined in Chapter 2), it is the subsequent challenges to authority made by their husbands, fathers and sons that are foregrounded and labelled political. The female 'neighbourhood', the characteristic public space in which urban and suburban working-class women did their politics – as 'protesters plain to see'[25] – was thereby rendered 'unpolitical' or 'pre-political', in other words, not part of the 'crisis' or the new society in the making. This is a phenomenon that we examine and challenge in Chapter 2 of the volume, using case studies from Germany,

Austria, Britain, Sweden and Switzerland during the years 1914–18, and again in Chapter 3, where we show how working-class women in post-war Austria, Germany, Finland and Ireland often laboured and lived in the same small neighbourhoods and again saw revolutionary activities as an opportunity to claim urban space.

Recognizing women's lived experiences and political subjectivities, and their reflection in the historical record, or rather lack thereof, as a methodological challenge for feminist and gender historians also requires acknowledging what Joan Wallach Scott refers to as the uneven relationship 'between the seemingly fixed language of the past and our own terminology'.[26] Acknowledging and working through such 'anachronistic' tensions, as Caroline Arni argues, allows a more critical approach to gender and makes historical conditions more susceptible to feminist analysis.[27] Where 'emotions' end and where 'reason' and 'long-term goals' begin, in other words, is both context-dependent from a historical point of view and at the same time inseparable from gender politics, in other words, from the problem of gendered divisions, hierarchies and blind spots within the concepts and analytical/political categories used by historiography itself to decide what is relevant to the study of revolution. In this respect, we also agree with the Austrian historian Gabriella Hauch when she writes that 'the separation of everyday life and the public sphere, of productive politics and reproductive routines, is an antiquated way of writing modern history'.[28] In this volume, we bring the two together as a critical part of our method for uncovering and reinterpreting socialist women's activism in the Great War era.

The liberal-progressive and the Socialist women's movements: overlapping temporalities and spaces

One of the key analytical categories used by historians to understand and conceptualize the political and social upheavals of the First World War era is sovereignty. The crumbling of imperial dominion, for instance, has been identified as a central part of the war experience in Eastern Europe, not least in the 'shatterzone' along the frontiers of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, German and Ottoman empires.[29] The successes and failures of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–20 have also been measured against the ability of the victorious Allies to reshape the European state system according to Western models of territorial sovereignty and stable borders,[30] while contrasts have been drawn with Leninist

and other 'eastern' solutions to the national question in the borderlands and central regions of the former Tsarist Empire.[31] In this volume, we also recognize the matter of political sovereignty and the demand for new democratic polities to be central questions thrown up by the First World War. These were issues that US President Woodrow Wilson, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and French premier Georges Clemenceau, with their tendency to 'conflate … the individual with the white male', failed to resolve.[32] Race blindness was one of their key faults. However, we also challenge master narratives that, at Paris and in other arenas, privileged certain highly gendered versions of sovereignty – the ruggedly individualized, the bordered and the national – over others – female self-determination and transnational organization, sexual freedom for both sexes, and workers' self-government.[33] In particular, we ask what happens when we place working-class women, the very people whose voices were least heard during the peace negotiations between the victor powers, at the centre of discussions of sovereignty.

One immediate barrier to doing so is the thesis of a 'clean break' between socialist and progressive middle-class women's movements from the 1890s onwards, the former focused on collective rights, the latter on individual ones.[34] This 'clean-break' notion serves to highlight the biographies of some prominent women campaigners from both the socialist and non-socialist camps, especially those who took a notably doctrinaire position for (Zetkin) or against (Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst) class-based models of sovereignty. Yet it also obscures the lives of hundreds and thousands of ordinary working-class women activists, who were less interested in issues of ideological demarcation or in campaigning for single causes such as the vote, and more willing to shift their positions pragmatically, in line with particular temporal, geographical and political contexts.[35]

In Chapter 5, we see how women's experiences of revolution and the choices they made to pursue their vision of a better world led them into conflict with authority figures, meaning not only representatives of state governments but also those who saw themselves as an authority on Socialism. Some of the activists we discuss in this volume thus identified only temporarily as socialists, for instance in the moment of revolution and the achievement of full adult suffrage in 1918–20 in Austria, Germany and Sweden, while others retained a lifelong self-identification as Marxists and party members first, and women only second. Some rejected nationalism and/or feminism outright, whereas others adopted a more fluid approach in contexts where (full) voting rights for women (in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Britain) or claims to national independence (in the

Slovene parts of Yugoslavia and in Ireland) were still contested after 1921. Above all, while some had already been involved in the workers' or women's movements before 1914 or during the years 1914–18, others were inspired to do so by the end of the First World War. Quite a few of the latter – often referred to, pejoratively, as *Novembersozialistinnen* (November Socialists) because it was only then that they joined the Social Democratic Party – remembered the autumn of 1918 as a revolutionary new beginning in their activist lives.[36] Chapters 3 and 4 in this volume tease out some of these fluidities and consider how they empowered women to enter the political sphere in new and unforeseen ways.

Our more flexible approach requires some justification as is at odds with the tendency in much of the current literature to shy away from complexity and diversity and to focus instead on the surface continuities in political and ideological separation of 'bourgeois' feminism and the women's socialist movement from the end of the nineteenth century through to the 1920s and beyond.[37] In the case of Germany in particular, the radical stance taken by committed Marxist Clara Zetkin against cooperation with middle-class suffragist, and later pacifist groups, is seen both as characteristic of this division, and as an appropriate way of defining who was and who was not a socialist. Thus Werner Thönnessen quotes Zetkin as writing in the Social Democrat magazine she edited, *Die Gleichheit*, in early 1901, declaring her firm opposition to any attempt to open up this periodical to 'bourgeois' voices and influences.

> The characteristic standpoint, that of class struggle, must be keenly and unambiguously stressed in a magazine for the interests of proletarian women. This must be done all the more keenly, moreover, the more the bourgeois women's libbers make it their business, by the use of general humanitarian phrases and petty concessions to the women workers' demands for reform, to bring intrigue into the world of proletarian women and to draw them away from class struggle.[38]

Zetkin's impact was felt far beyond Germany's borders, not least after she became secretary of the women's section of the Second International in 1907, after she helped to launch the first International Women's Day in 1911, and again after she organized a conference of anti-war women socialists in Bern, Switzerland, in March 1915.[39] Her influence could even be seen in post-1918 Denmark, where – in the words of Ann Taylor Allen – the country's first female Minister of Education, Nina Bang, who held office from 1924 to 1926, 'supported the Social Democratic Party's opposition to feminism as a movement that distracted working-class women from the class struggle'.[40] From there, according to Marilyn

J. Boxer, 'the concept ["bourgeois feminism"] spread around the world, and it persisted [until the late twentieth century] as a means to discredit nonsocialist women activists', leaving a 'divisive residue' in its wake which the European Left is still coming to terms with today.[41]

And yet as Gisela Bock argues, the lines between 'socialist' and 'bourgeois' women could be blurred on occasion even in the 1890s and 1900s and continued to be so in decades to come. Both feminists and socialist women prioritized the social question for much of the period before 1904, even though both actively embraced suffrage from the early to mid-1890s.[42] By 1908, all wings of the German women's movement – 'moderate' bourgeois, 'radical' bourgeois and socialist – had come to see the vote as a necessary, if perhaps not sufficient, step towards the full-scale democratization of society at national and international levels. Whether they held a largely positive or negative view of the militant tactics adopted by the WSPU in Britain, they were all influenced by the latter's core message that it could not be left to men alone to decide whether women should be given the vote.[43] True, at international level, the foundation in 1904 of the IWSA was possibly something of a turning point, as socialist women had to draw a line when it came to supporting a single-issue, cross-border pressure group for women's suffrage lest it alienate indifferent or actively hostile proletarian men.[44] Three years later, and partly in answer to the IWSA, the Second International formally created its own women's section under Zetkin at the first international congress of socialist women, held in Stuttgart. At this event, Zetkin went out of her way to denounce the specific form of suffrage about to be granted to women in Norway as 'reactionary' as it applied only to those with a certain level of income. In other words, she presented it as a setback for full adult suffrage, and for working-class women (and men) in particular. Furthermore, it was another reason to stay clear of feminist internationalism as a 'fake' liberation movement.[45]

However, other socialist women were less doctrinaire and/or had other priorities than distancing themselves from feminism. One example among many from the pre-war period would be Hannah Mitchell, a Lancashire seamstress and Independent Labour Party (ILP) member who joined the WSPU in 1903 precisely because she saw it as a vehicle for ending the 'life of drudgery that trying to make ends meet' brought to the mass army of female wage-earners.[46] She also contributed to the debate about women's special interests versus their common interest with men in the struggle for socialism, noting in an opinion piece for the ILP newspaper *Labour Leader* in January 1906 that working-class women did not need journals to tell them about food and clothes but about politics, since 'our lives are [already] one long round of cooking and sewing'.[47] 'I

realized,' she later wrote in her memoirs, 'that if women did not bestir themselves the socialists would be quite content to accept Manhood Suffrage in spite of all their talk about equality.'[48] After the war and the granting of female suffrage in the UK, she remained loyal to the ILP but refused to join the mainstream Labour Party. According to Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, this was because 'she did not like the Party's constituency Women's Sections' whose main task – as she saw it – was to side-line local female activists by channelling them into organizing social events and taking on the role of '[o]fficial cake-maker[s]'.[49]

Views like those of Mitchell can also be found in the pages of the *Irish Citizen*, the newspaper launched in 1912 by the Irish militant suffrage group the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL, founded 1908), which provided a forum for suffrage and socialist women. Articles thus regularly appeared in this paper on the right to vote as well as on 'working-class women's conditions and their need for trade union organisation [and] equal pay'. It also made frequent calls to reform the legal system, especially when dealing with domestic and sexual violence against women.[50]

Another, somewhat different but equally striking case would be that of Sonja Lerch (aka Sarah Rabinowitz), a Jewish woman born in Warsaw in 1882 who took part in the 1905 Russian revolution by helping to organize workers and students' soviets in the Ukrainian port city of Odesa, one of the major sites of unrest at this time. Forced to flee to Central Europe in 1907, she retained her lifelong attachment to the secular, non-Zionist Jewish socialist movement, the Bund, and was eventually drawn to the anti-war Independent German Socialists (USPD) around Kurt Eisner in First World War Munich. A member of a pro-revolutionary reading circle and (briefly) a prominent strike leader in the Bavarian capital in January 1918 (see Chapter 2), she mixed with anarchists and pacifists as well as socialists, and refused to take up any doctrinaire positions. Instead, she channelled the possibility of protest into the specific, the immediate and the everyday – a form of pragmatism that Bundists referred to by the Yiddish term *Doigkejt* or 'doing in the here and now'.[51]

With a view to integrating these and many more concrete individual examples into our analysis, we follow Kathleen Canning in deliberately adopting a much more open and 'capacious' definition of 'socialist woman' in this volume than that offered by the 'inveterate Marxist' Zetkin.[52] We do so without wishing to deny Zetkin's own consistent rejection of feminism, a repudiation which was much more 'strenuous' than the approach adopted by the pre-war leaders of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), August Bebel and Hugo Haase,[53] but with the intention – again, following Canning – of exploring *revolution* as a

'rupture in time and space' and a site of (gendered) political imaginaries and experiences transcending political loyalties, class divisions and pre-existing scripts.[54] In particular, we recognize the existence of important national, temporal and situational variations in how starkly the separation between the different wings of the women's movement was experienced and understood by contemporary activists from the 1890s onwards. Socialist women, in our definition, were those who wished to empower the working people of both sexes, the majority in society, against the privileges of the male propertied elite. They did not intend to leave the struggle against capitalist economic exploitation to men alone to fight, but nor did they wish to fight against men of their own social class (even though they often felt forced to do so owing to the latter's frequent lack of interest in issues of gender equality). The important thing was not their own origins, but their self-identification as women activists for the proletarian cause and for the rights of all workers. In the decade or so before the First World War, they also took on a distinct anti-militarist stance, meaning opposition not just to the present, and in their view, solely profit-driven, arms race between the European great powers, but to the increasing control of the military over ever greater aspects of civilian life within nations, including interference in strikes, threats to use martial law against anti-war street protests and peacetime conscription of young men. They were campaigners against (capitalist) war but did not necessarily consider themselves absolute pacifists, even though in Britain and Germany in particular pacifist and socialist women mingled side by side in the ILP and USPD.

In other contexts, such as post-war Slovenia, socialist women worked together with nationalist groups disputing Serb hegemony in the new Yugoslav state. Here and elsewhere in the former Habsburg Monarchy they formed Marxist reading circles in an attempt to reach out to non-party but fellow-travelling female (and male) academics and intellectuals. Already existing associations like the *Bildungsverein Karl Marx* in Vienna or the Galileo Circle in Budapest were places where they met with socialist men and women who were later organized in different parties and federations – be they Social Democratic, Communist or Anarcho-Syndicalist.[55] One example would be the Austrian Anna Frey, née Schlesinger, who was active in youth and student organizations, connecting young women workers with young intellectuals who were interested in the social question. Another would be the Polish-Hungarian revolutionary Ilona Duczynska, who moved between Hungary, Switzerland, Russia, Austria, Britain and Canada, and between organized political work (for communist and left-socialist parties) and more scholarly pursuits linked to the life-work of her

husband, the economist and founder of the Galileo Circle Karl Polanyi (see Chapter 5).

In short, socialist women lived in the moment while working for a better future. They wished to bring an end to 'bourgeois' order, but this did not stop them from cooperating from time to time with, or even identifying themselves as simultaneously belonging to, communities of social reformers or political campaigners from the non-socialist or 'bourgeois' camp.

The battle *against* militarism and socio-economic injustice and *for* democracy and mass civic participation also led socialist women to campaign for the right of women of all social classes to vote and stand for election to state parliaments, without making this the be-all and end-all of socialist political activism or visions of democratic socialist citizenship. In some countries, such as Sweden, and to a more limited extent, Britain and Ireland, the very restricted male vote at the turn of the twentieth century 'encouraged Liberal-Socialist cooperation' in pursuit of a wider franchise.[56] In Ireland, Countess Markievicz, one of the main revolutionary leaders of 1908–22, argued, in 1909, that women should fix their minds 'on the ideal of Ireland free, with her women enjoying the full rights of citizenship in their own nation'.[57] For Markievicz, like so many Irish women of the revolutionary period, the three great causes of women, of workers, and of Ireland, were interlinked.

In Germany, although the battle for manhood suffrage was largely won at Reich level in 1867–71, unequal voting systems persisted at the level of individual states. The SPD, the principal party of the democratic left and of Zetkin until 1917, was committed from 1891 to introducing votes for women on an equal basis to men and saw this as a crucial part of its battle against the *Klassenstaat* (class rule/the ruling class). On 10 January 1908, several thousand socialist women demonstrated in Berlin in front of the House of Deputies (*Abgeordnetenhaus*) against the unequal franchise in Prussia, and on 22 and 24 January, a further 8,000 and 2,000 women turned up to hear Zetkin speak at two public rallies in favour of full adult suffrage.[58] In Austria, socialist women, disappointed that the universal franchise granted in 1907 applied to men only, emphasized the social progress that had been achieved in Finland since the introduction of female suffrage there in 1906.[59] In the Saxon capital, Dresden, a 25,000-strong demonstration in favour of universal adult suffrage 'without distinction of sex' took place on 1 November 1908, with women making up an estimated 5 to 10 per cent of the participants, according to a report in the *Dresdner Nachrichten*.[60] Around the same time, Zetkin was also invited by Dora Montefiore to address an audience in Britain on the subject of adult suffrage,

'[Zetkin] having been in Germany the leading woman to advocate in her paper, *[Die] Gleichheit*, the enfranchisement, more especially, of the working woman'.[61] And on 19 March 1911, the first International Women's Day, 'more than a million women – mostly, but not exclusively, women organized in the SPD and the unions – took to the streets in Germany demanding social and political equality'.[62]

The pre-war campaigns of socialist women for full adult suffrage are thus well documented and cannot be eradicated from the feminist historical record. Even so, Geoff Eley is right to note that the failure of most European socialist parties to engage positively with feminist movements before 1914 was 'extremely short-sighted', not least as it weakened their claim to be in the 'vanguard of democracy'.[63] This is borne out when we bear in mind that electoral successes for Social Democrat parties in Germany and the German-speaking parts of Austria (with a wide male franchise) and in Sweden and Britain (on a more restricted male franchise) were never going to translate into political power or social justice without support from a broader, more female-friendly and gender-aware, progressive base. In France and Switzerland, formation of such a progressive alliance was also hindered by the traditionally strong link between male left-wing republicanism and anti-clericalism, and by the deeply ingrained fear that enfranchising women would hand power to Catholic reactionaries.[64] Here and in other parts of Europe, as Marilyn J. Boxer puts it, socialist parties sought to win elections under the current rules, and therefore – in practice if not in theory – opted to campaign significantly harder for 'the votes of [those] men who envisaged no part in public life for women' than they did for female suffrage as a political goal.[65]

In fact, of all the countries mentioned in this volume, the real outlier before 1914 was Finland, which in 1906 became the first nation-state in Europe, and the first in the world after New Zealand (1893) and Australia (1902), to enact votes for women, in spite of its lack of a significant *organized* industrial workforce at this time. The key factor, as Jad Adams argues, was the extension of literacy into rural areas and the integration of women into the Finnish nationalist movement, which by late 1905 was ready to join forces with Social Democrats in launching a general strike in support of national autonomy from Tsarist Russia and voting rights for all adults.[66] By this time, '[e]ven the conservative [Finnish] Women's Association had … come round to universal suffrage, moving away from its stance of enfranchising only the wealthy'.[67] At the other extreme, women did not obtain the right to vote at federal level in Switzerland until after a referendum in February 1971, another reflection, says Bock, of the influence of radical republicanism and anti-clericalism on anti-feminist politics there.[68] This was in

spite of full adult suffrage having been on the programme of the Swiss Social Democrats since the 1890s and in spite of it having been listed as the second of nine demands made during the Swiss general strike (*Landesstreik*) of November 1918.[69]

Women also did not get the vote in Yugoslavia in 1918–21, and in Hungary, initial wholesale success was met with partial reversal in 1920 under the counter-revolutionary measures introduced by the reactionary regime of Miklós Horthy, which were directed primarily against the Left (as well as against Hungarian Jewry). Our decision to place working-class women at the heart of debates about sovereignty in the First World War era and the period to 1921 is nonetheless justified when we consider all the new and expanding, national and transnational spaces on which such women met during that time: food protests, unofficial strike movements, anti-conscription and anti-war campaigns, the revolutionary overthrow of defeated empires in 1917–18, and ongoing demands for the full and equal enfranchisement of all adults. Without wishing to ring-fence ourselves into taking a definite position in the now tired debate over whether the vote was 'won' through women's war work or through longer-term political struggles, we argue, in Chapter 4 of the volume, that the achievement of female suffrage, in whole or in part, in many of the countries we have placed under consideration was a revolutionary act. It was a temporal and spatial breach in the male-dominated order that also represented, in the political imaginary of the years 1918–19, a victory for an unscripted and non-doctrinal version of socialism. It brought many women to believe – some temporarily but others in deeper and more life-affirming ways – in the possibilities of a new era of democratic emancipation reaching into the spheres of citizenship and reproduction, social relations and military organization, as well as education, the workplace and communal politics. And as we show more fully in Chapter 5, this working-class female identification with democratic socialist revolution as a fluid and shifting construct was sustained and reproduced in many of women's personal biographies and life trajectories after 1921.

1905 – 1914 – 1917: overlapping moments in the development of a democratic protest culture

For many early twentieth-century observers of modern revolutions, the coming to power of the Bolshevik regime in Russia in late 1917 represented a turning point in world history. In the eyes of the Bolshevik leadership and its Western

supporters, it provided a 'laboratory for new forms of political order', in other words, a space for creative thinking, not only about questions linked to sovereignty, violence, war and civil war, anti-imperialism and national self-determination, but about all aspects of human creativity, collective organization and social relations.[70] For socialist women, it was the next stage on from the granting of female suffrage in Russia, which had already happened under the provisional government between April and September 1917.[71] It also overcame the many limitations of Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points and, for some national movements representing peoples newly liberated from oppressive imperial regimes in Central and Eastern Europe – such as Béla Kun's short-lived councils republic in Hungary – it provided an alternative model of global order to that offered by the Western victor powers meeting in Paris in 1919–20.[72] Certainly we would not wish to deny the equally momentous impact of the Russian Bolshevik revolution (and of Kun's extraordinary five-month reign in Hungary) on the outlook of socialist women across Europe, and the different chapters in our volume give ample consideration to this. Nonetheless, the volume as a whole begins in 1914, not in 1917, and focuses not on Russia, but on other European contexts and spaces. Decentring the Bolshevik revolution, we believe, offers us another way of challenging established master narratives in the interests of uncovering female subjectivities and women's political agency during the entire period 1914–21. We declare it here as one of our major interventions in the debate on socialist women and revolution.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, many socialist women felt they had already been at war for at least a decade, albeit not against any particular nation, but against the militarism and economic injustices of the capitalist world around them. This had been brought to a head in the years around 1905–6, through the revolutionary uprisings of oppressed workers in Russia, the mass strikes across many other continental countries, and the refusal of the incoming Liberal government in Britain to consider votes for women. At this point, Europe witnessed the birth of what Amerigo Caruso calls a cross-border 'democratic protest culture'.[73] Socialists no longer sought to seize power through spontaneous, one-off blows directed against the class system such as a national strike or Paris Commune-style uprising, or through individual acts of terrorism, as happened with the murder of the King and Queen of Serbia by a group of army officers in 1903, but by organizing the downtrodden and dispossessed in a mass movement that would be too heavily populated for the state authorities to repress. History, as the Dutch socialist Henriette Roland-Holst put it, with specific reference to events in Russia in 1905 and their repercussions throughout Europe, had 'taken

wings'.[74] Calls for the enfranchisement of all workers was a fundamental part of this transnational phenomenon, a fact that has too often been ignored in the debate about the long-term versus short-term causes of the revolutions of 1918–19 and the simultaneous partial or full achievement of votes for women in many of the countries under consideration in this volume: Britain, including Ireland, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Sweden.

Two key events in the first decade of the twentieth century in fact played a key role in persuading more women (and men) from the socialist camp across Europe to see full adult suffrage – in other words, the equal enfranchisement of all men and women, whether to be achieved by means of parliamentary legislation or extra-parliamentary force or both – as an indispensable weapon in the battle to overturn capitalist and authoritarian states: the first Russian revolution in 1905 and the granting of votes to women in Finland in 1906. Neither event is given sufficient weight in current feminist or socialist histories. The movement of ideas within international women's or revolutionary-utopian movements is instead often depicted as being largely west to east, at least until 1917, with much less emphasis on travel in the opposite direction.[75] This in turn reflects the bias towards middle-class organizations in much feminist historiography, the example of the IWSA, which held its one and only pre-war conference in an 'eastern' capital, Budapest, in 1913, being a case in point.[76] It also reflects a tendency to downplay the role of working-class street protests and industrial militancy in democratic nation-building in favour of progressive middle-class reform movements, both feminist and non-feminist.[77] And in some branches of the inter-war communist movement, whose influence can still be felt in many radical-left histories today,[78] it reflected a line of thinking that dismissed the 'mass' as a purposeful political force in its own right and assumed that the working class required visible and disciplined leadership in the form of an avant-garde revolutionary elite of the type provided by Lenin's Bolsheviks. 'For the revolution we need factory workers, organised in a party or at least in a trade union', former KPD leader Ernst Meyer told his wife Rosa Leviné-Meyer in the 1920s. While she remembered 'favour[ing] "the revolutionary unorganised"', he insisted that 'we could not rely on them for any action'.[79]

Our identification of 1905–6 as a critical juncture nonetheless chimes well with recent writing on the global history of twentieth-century revolutions. Caruso, for instance, refers to the appearance of a 'transnational moment of crisis around 1905', during which 'mass rallies and demonstrations established themselves as a new, conflict-laden, emotionalised and medialised form of political participation'.[80] Likewise, Stefan Berger has argued that integrating

national and regional case studies of strikes and street protests in the first years of the twentieth century into European-wide and perhaps even global histories of popular opposition to authoritarian regimes can lead to significant new insights.[81] In particular, it can embrace a wide range of at times overlapping and at other times competing transnational impulses, such as demands for social justice, democratization and national self-determination, as well as for international peace, recognition of the rights of racial and sexual minorities, and an end to colonial and economic exploitation across the world.[82] Some of the impulses behind this broad movement for change were distinctly utopian, but utopianism itself did not necessarily rule out extremely practical thinking about everyday matters such as health, housing, education and use/ownership of public space.[83]

Conceptualizing the Great War era as part of a larger revolutionary period from 1905–6 in which crises of sovereignty and representation occurred simultaneously in many parts of the continent is also a useful means of de-centring (North-) Western Europe in narratives both of the Great War era and of women's international and transnational activism. Russian Social Democrat and Anarchist influences were very important in several of the countries discussed in this volume – in Finland and Sweden, but also in Germany and Austria, where many revolutionaries from the 1905 events in Petrograd and Odesa later fled, among them Sonja Lerch, whose story is discussed above and in Chapter 2. Pre-war Switzerland was home to numerous Russian revolutionary exiles, not least revolutionary women, who were able to study for degrees there from the 1870s, much earlier than in other parts of Europe.[84] This followed an earlier movement of French communards to Switzerland after the 'bloody week' (*semaine sanglante*) of May 1871, including the socialist-feminist Paule Mink, who, as the train she was hiding in left France, 'waved to a guard on the French frontier, and shouted, "*Vive la Commune*!"'.[85]

Vienna, Prague and St Petersburg were also sites of significant working-class protest and political unrest in the period up to 1914, with the 'right to the streets' increasingly being contested by working-class women as well as men.[86] During the textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912, as Ardis Cameron has shown, the demands of the predominantly female and teenage, first-generation immigrant workforce were rooted in the 'convoluted yet ordinary web of female daily life' in the town, rather than the official structures of the syndicalist movement, leading to a special kind of militancy 'formed below the surface of official scrutiny'.[87] According to one highly troubled Lawrence judge, the women who had taken to the streets had 'lots of cunning and also lots of bad temper'.[88]

In Ireland, from at least 1900 onwards, while there were debates and arguments between suffragists, 'many of the more radical nationalist feminists were also socialists'.[89] This was manifest during the lock-out strike in Dublin from August 1913 to January 1914 (also discussed in Chapter 6), when the feminists of the militant IWFL, trade unionists active in the Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU) and other revolutionary women, many of them inspired by the self-declared feminist and socialist leader James Connolly, co-operated in supporting and feeding the workers, male and female. As Senia Pašeta has shown, between 1910 and 1917 Irish feminists moved 'increasingly in a leftward direction, especially after the Labour Party and a number of trade unions and trade unionists began to openly support women's suffrage while the major Irish parties remained resolutely opposed'.[90]

Violent clashes also took place between male and female strikers and the forces of 'order' in Habsburg Trieste during the general strike in February 1902, Barcelona during the 'tragic week' (*Setmana Tràgica*) in July 1909, and the Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions of Italy during the 'Red Week' (*Settimana*

Figure 1.2 Members of the Irish Women Workers' Union on the steps of Liberty Hall, Dublin, during the lock-out strike of 1913–14. Source: Alamy.

Rossa) of June 1914.[91] All of these developments of course raised fears among the ruling classes, and played no small part in the push for war in 1914 as a 'flight forwards' ('*Flucht nach vorne*') from present intractable political and social conflicts into an imagined glorious national/imperial future in which all enemies, big and small, external and internal, would be forced into submission or slain through total victory on the battlefield.[92]

The impact of war on women's bodies and the fight back against militarism

Alongside the question of whom revolution is for, and how gendered subjectivities should be represented in historiographies of revolution, we see our volume as an intervention in the debate on the place of violence in the First World War and its aftermath. This is a subject which again has focused largely on men and male actors, whether as regular soldiers, paramilitaries or more loosely organized participants in 'communities of violence'.[93] '[P]erpetration of violence was overwhelmingly a male affair', as the editors of one very important anthology on twentieth-century European military and political conflicts put it.[94] The vulnerability of the male body to wartime trauma, whether of the physical or mental kind, and the cultural meanings attached to this vulnerability has also produced a large volume of literature.[95] Some veterans' groups have been shown to have developed anti-militarist tendencies in the inter-war years – and to have sought international solidarity with associations of ex-soldiers in other countries.[96] By contrast, the gender-specific violence that soldiers did to women – for instance in occupied territories – was and is often forgotten, or pushed into the realm of the symbolic and representational rather than the immediate, the bodily and the urgently political.[97] Only a small number of studies – notably Annette Becker's work on German-occupied northern France – have looked in concrete empirical and situational terms at these forgotten female victims of male wartime violence in the years 1914–18.[98] Moving beyond the First World War itself, the complexities of women's participation in the Irish revolutionary period (1919–21 and 1922–3) became victim to selective and gendered remembering; their contributions and experiences, and particularly the violence and traumas they suffered were denied, downplayed, overlooked or indeed simply forgotten. However, there has been a shift among gender historians of the revolutionary period, and in recent decades several studies on gendered violence against women have been published.[99]

Other gendered aspects of the extreme physical and developmental harm done to human bodies during the war have waited even longer to be recognized by scholars as political phenomena that were closely entangled with, and directly impacted on, the core questions of sovereignty and democracy. Food scarcity – or what Mary E. Cox calls 'nutritional deprivation' – was a shared experience for many European women and their children in the Great War era, including in neutral countries.[100] The bundle of authoritarian state measures that had begun in 1914 under the heading 'emergency war regime' soon turned into what the Austrian *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (the chief Social Democrat newspaper) described as a 'nutrition regime' (*Ernährungsregime*).[101] While the physical impact on bodies was already evident in 1915–16, the situation grew worse in the last two years of the war. In revolutionary Russia, in Finland, and in the defeated nations of Central Europe, food scarcity was in fact at its worst in the years immediately following the war, with full recovery only evident after 1924. While violence in the sense of mass killing of the enemy (*Tötungsgewalt*) and 'action deliberately aimed at causing physical harm to another' was most intense on the Western front,[102] the violations done to the bodies of women, children and the elderly also had measurable physical, and therefore political, consequences. As Cox shows, tangible 'generational injury' had been inflicted even before the end of the war.[103] In 1917, for example, 'nearly one third to one half of women between twenty and forty years old in [the Saxon city of] Leipzig [in Germany] suffered from CED' (Chronic Energy Deficiency), meaning that they 'were not only unable to engage in normal household activities but also unable to seek employment outside of the home, engage in market activities, or pro-actively search for supplemental calories for their families beyond the government ration'.[104] We touch on this topic again in Chapter 3.

While standard means of measuring and categorizing different levels of Chronic Energy Deficiency in adults and children were not drawn up until much later in the twentieth century, by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and other bodies, and are still prone to variation,[105] the political and historical implications of war capitalism, meaning manufactured food scarcity for the low-paid masses and bigger and bigger profits for the few, were already evident to the German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht by the end of 1915. Several months before his arrest and imprisonment by the Prussian state for anti-militarist activities in May 1916, he used an anonymized article for *Die Jugendinternationale*, the organ of the International Socialist Youth organization, to take up the point that the war, by worsening hunger and exhaustion among the poorest, 'by eliminating and preventing the exchange of ideas [and] by

preventing the spread of news, is able to hold back the effect of individual thought and actions, and to control the outcome of processes which in themselves would be expected to excite the masses to the highest degree [against the system]'.[106] To Liebknecht's continued outrage, majority Social Democrat parties and trade union bosses were still in late 1915 supporting their countries' respective war efforts, and thus 'the wholesale military slaughter of the working class for the benefit of Capitalism and absolutism'. But he continued to express confidence in (unorganized) women and young people, who, he suggested, had 'retained [their] internationalist spirit in spite of the general collapse' of the Socialist International in 1914.[107] His work is important because it was an early recognition of what Sheila Rowbotham refers to as 'the significance of specific contexts in shaping the forms and content of protest'. For him during the First World War, just as for Rowbotham in the early 1970s,

> It was evident that women's economic, social and cultural circumstances had changed and changed again over time, and there was no such thing as a universal immutable condition of women.[108]

This volume of essays also shows that socialist women became increasingly visible and active as challengers of militarism, and in particular of the intensified militarization of public spaces and prioritization of military needs in the allocation of scarce resources, as the material and social content of their lives was subject to rapid changes in the period from 1914 to the early 1920s. Not only the content, but also the (largely unorganized) forms of protest they took part in were in constant flux during this time, reflecting the shifting 'relationships between work for wages, domestic labour and family structures'.[109] But rather than taking Liebknecht's pronouncements as the last word on this subject, or even the pronouncements of leading female international socialists like Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, we aim instead to uncover the voices of the thousands of unknown and hitherto largely unwritten about working-class women who helped to shape both the form and content of the peaceful and/or violent democratic protest culture of these years, whether within or beyond the bounds of organized left-wing parties and trade unions.

In part, we do so by following the work of social psychologists like Stephen Reicher in seeing the crowd as a purposeful collective with specific and often gendered aims.[110] We also reassess and add a gendered dimension to the transnational impact of political violence in Europe after the end of the First World War. While the histories of revolutionary movements are still written as a male story, we give voice in Chapter 3 to the multiple ways in which women were

involved in and impacted by violent events in Finland, Germany, Ireland and Austria. Some women, as the Irish and Finnish cases highlight, were drawn into the wars on their doorsteps, and military service could be a means of empowerment and ensuring a better income. Women were involved in combat, in the auxiliary forces, and were doing clandestine work. This little-known activity needs to be cast alongside the sexualized and gendered violence employed by counter-revolutionary (and sometimes revolutionary) forces to target socialist women and their sexual and bodily integrity – a phenomenon that has received much more scholarly attention, albeit often as an addendum to male-on-male post-war fighting and bloodshed.[111]

Biographies, networks and life trajectories

Just as women's war with the militarism and patriarchal world around them did not begin in 1914, or end in 1918, for many socialist women, the fight for a better world continued for the rest of their lives. They maintained the struggle for better working conditions, education, health care, and political power, and for some, as right-wing forces seized control in authoritarian movements across Europe, they fought for the right to exist. Many of the women whose life trajectories are explored in Chapter 5 led transnational lives, traversing geographical boundaries in pursuit of their vision, or escaping persecution. The revolution could not be contained, and neither could they as they persisted in their revolutionary activism wherever they found themselves. By examining their biographies, their beliefs and the longevity of their convictions come to the fore, challenging Leninist party apparatchiks such as Martha Arendsee (quoted above) and many male labour historians who have criticized and continue to criticize their activism as spontaneous and purely driven by the immediate and the irrational.

The impetus that had led them to socialist causes in the revolutionary moment in the latter stages of the First World War placed them in a perpetual state of opposition and defiance against the regimes that sought to exclude them. It is only through examining their later life trajectories that we can understand their motivations, aims and experiences. Their oppositional stances brought them into resistance movements and into danger, often resulting in exile or imprisonment, as the women found new ways to continue to live by their values under very difficult circumstances. Many women joined a variety of resistance movements, fighting capitalism, fascism, Stalinism and war, and we can see how they were central to these movements through their underground activities but

also through supporting their comrades. For some of the women discussed in Chapter 5, this work would also lead to their deaths as they sacrificed everything to the struggle.

Alongside more violent resistance activity, transnational networks of the labour movement had to be and were reconfigured after the First World War. Social democrats and communists met under the new auspices of international politics. The first International Congress of Working Women (ICWW), for example, took place in Washington, DC, USA, from 28 October to 6 November 1919 upon invitation of the American Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) at the same time as the International Labour Conference. Twenty-eight official delegates were mandated to represent particular organizations, and more than two hundred women in total attended the congress. Women from neutral or Allied states (and almost only from Europe) were invited, but not representatives from revolutionary Russia or the defeated Central Powers. However, among the official delegates were women from the successor states to the defeated imperial powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary, such as Poland and Czechoslovakia. One of them was the Czech socialist Marie Majerová, who, together with her comrade Luisa Landová-Štychová, proposed a revolutionary reorganization of women's position in the labour market, including the socialization of domestic work.[112] The International Federation of Working Women, which was founded by the ICWW, held two more conferences (1921 in Geneva, and 1923 in Vienna) before being dissolved. Social democrat women dedicated to improving women's labour rights nonetheless continued to network internationally, for example in the women's committee of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), which held its first congress in 1924 in Vienna. Here the Austrian social democrat and trade unionist Anna Boschek was an important figure.[113] Revolutionary communists organized themselves separately. They participated in the International Conferences of Communist Women, where Austrian Anna Hornik-Strömer was a key player,[114] or in the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU or Profintern), which held its founding congress in Moscow in summer 1921.[115]

Those who opposed these individual activists and networks endeavoured to silence them, erasing their work from the historical records or creating conditions that made it impossible for them to exist openly or speak plainly. Yet, by reading against the grain, evidence of women's ongoing activism is visible. Chapter 5 is by no means a comprehensive examination of all biographies and networks, but it presents some key examples to highlight the possibilities of this type of research and indicates new directions that it can take. To reclaim these women's

biographies and networks is to challenge their erasure and to recognize their role in twentieth-century struggles to build a better world.

Commemorating revolution, commemorating women

In much of the one hundred years since these revolutionary moments, academic works, mainstream scholarship, remembrance ceremonies, commemorative statues and events, museum exhibitions and other sites of memory have focused almost exclusively on the male experience. In looking at the transnational commemorative landscape from 2012–21, the predominant events have been those which commemorated the First World War, 1914–18, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. For those European countries impacted, to a greater or lesser degree, by this war, the memory of the 'lost generation' remains powerful.[116] The narratives of high politics and war, and of the soldier who went to the front, who fought for his country, who died far from his home, who returned home injured, remains powerful whereas in this 'theatre of memory, women are tenuous shadows. The traditional historical narrative does not leave them much space, specifically insofar as it favours the public arena – politics, war – where they barely seem to appear'.[117] However, this emphasis on the glory, drama, trauma and sacrifice of the First World War and Russian Revolution masks the many smaller yet impactful revolutionary moments which occurred throughout Europe at this time.

Acts of collective remembrance are gendered, and we have to remain aware of why, what, how, and for whom commemoration occurs. It is also the case, however, that commemorative practices do not remain static; they shift, change and adapt to the changing political and/or cultural demands of societies and communities. Thus, as memory scholar Oona Frawley notes, it is important always to consider

> what stories are we telling ourselves? Who is doing the telling and who is included in those stories? Conversely, who is not speaking and who is excluded? How … is the past being narrated to us – and which 'us' is being addressed? What audience have these stories found and reached, and what are their courses? What forms of narration are being deployed, and in what forums? And, crucially, what are the social contexts into which these narrations are inserted?[118]

The development of the discipline of gender history and the influence of second wave feminism have, over the past five or more decades, demanded a corrective

to male-centric narratives and commemorations, albeit unevenly throughout Europe. Telling the stories of women's involvement in war and revolution often began through recovery projects, driven by a desire to shine a light on those female activists 'hidden from history'.[119] Feminists, and increasingly, academic scholars began to tell those stories of suffrage, socialist and militant women. However, these early histories, more often than not, delivered a focus on liberal, middle-class, educated, political women – to the exclusion of the narratives of working-class women. In many ways, scholarship on the experience of women in war and revolution centred on the domestic, on motherhood, on mourning or suffering and trauma. Women's experience of war work, for example, was only examined later, particularly the experience of working-class women.[120]

The question remains: has who and how we commemorate changed over the past hundred years, and if so why and how? In Chapter 6, using case studies from Ireland, the UK, Germany and Finland, we seek to explore what stories are now being told, by whom, in what way, in what forums and what contexts, during the centenaries of these revolutionary moments. What has the impact of five or six decades of gender history scholarship, of feminist activism, and of intersecting understandings of class histories been? What are the important stories we now tell ourselves, about ourselves, in the twenty-first century? Can commemorative practices be said to have become more inclusive of women, and if not, why not?

Feminist methodology: curious conversations

Gender-aware approaches to history include methods as well as aims and questions, and the process, the 'how', is as important as the end-product. The research methods we used to produce this book embrace feminist methodologies inspired by Cynthia Enloe's concept of feminist curiosity, which entails paying close attention to women's lives, especially those operating at the margins, to see how ideas about gender inform power relations.[121] Enloe's approach asks us to be 'on guard against treating all men or all women as homogeneous – in their ideas, actions or their experiences'. This is because such an approach 'is certain to produce unreliable analyses'.[122] She also urges us to resist uncritically adopting terms and definitions that cannot adequately capture the lived experience of historical agents, in particular marginalizing and erasing women's realities.[123] One characteristic of feminist methodologies is their ability to overcome the dichotomous and hierarchical thinking inherent in either-or positions and instead embrace complexity. Thus we do not need to decide whether women

won the vote as a result of the revolution or because of decades of campaigning, or whether socialist and liberal-progressive women worked together or remained firmly apart. Our findings show that both statements can be true: while the separation in terms of priorities, methods and experience of protest is very real, there were areas and times in which the women worked together and made common cause.

Above all, we have embraced Enloe's concept of collaborative work across disciplinary and national boundaries and employed the model of the conversation both to identify the themes of our study and to reflect on their significance.[124] This has informed our approach to the historical sources we have used, bringing a consciously sceptical curiosity to see what is hidden and omitted from contemporaneous accounts and asking what this reveals about normative gender discourse in the past and the present, and pre-conceptions about the nature and scope of revolutionary activism. It has also informed our approach to sharing our scholarship and bringing different areas, as well as levels of expertise and knowledge, into conversation with one another in order to create knowledge in an inclusive and collaborative way. In particular, the practice of listening with an open-minded willingness to revise our views in response to new perspectives and examples – and 'a readiness to be surprised'[125] is embedded in each of the subsequent chapters of the book. While the lead and named authors have been central to structuring and shaping particular chapters, each of the themes has benefitted from the intellectual generosity of the collective in challenging, critiquing and expanding the arguments put forward. In this way, the final versions are a product of debate, discussion and compromise and represent a development in our individual as well as collective thinking. While the chapters on protest and strikes, violence, suffrage, life trajectories and commemoration can be read as stand-alone units, they are also in dialogue with one another and contribute to the internal coherence of the volume as a whole.

The study is not intended to be comprehensive and there is further scope for bringing scholars into conversation about the gender dynamics of revolutions both outside and within Europe, incorporating revolutionary activism in India, China and Egypt,[126] or looking in more detail at the experiences of socialist women in Eastern, Central and Western European states not included in this volume. However, by integrating scholarship from different national contexts and diverse disciplinary traditions into productive and open-minded conversation using a gender lens, we have been able to uncover commonalities and identify thematic links and connections between the socialist women who are our subjects. Above all, it is the anomalies, the complexities and curiosity

about the things that do not fit that have prompted us to look very carefully at the diversity of women's experiences of revolution in the period 1914 to 1921. Taking account of and indeed centring the stories and the fluid and shifting subjectivities of the women in revolutionary contexts as messy as post-war Hungary, Yugoslavia, Finland and Ireland has allowed us to see the scope for both tension and cooperation in how socialist women interacted, to challenge ideas about the periphery and the centre, and to think more critically about who or what is relevant to the study of revolution. In this way, we have been able to move beyond a master narrative that legitimizes one version of Socialism or revolution over another, to look beyond constraining scripts and narrow definitions, and to ask instead what the lived experience, political subjectivities and recorded actions of socialist women can tell us about the nature of revolution in early twentieth-century Europe.