

Gender seminars for teachers in Open Society Fund, Prague

The beginning of our national women's program

In 1996 the Open Society Fund in New York founded by George Soros encouraged its Prague foundation to start the national women's program. Knowing that Czech society lacks a concept of life-long education and realising that gender issues would be more likely accepted than solely women issues we designed our cycle of trainings in the field of gender studies. In order to implement significant changes in the field we decided to address high school teachers of humanities and related sciences. Many of these teachers had been trained under communism and they were seeking new themes within their subjects, especially 'civic education', that should reflect the changes of society. It was clear that the state was offering the teachers hardly any further training, they had no contact with professionals, most of them were uninformed or misinformed about gender issues and there was a general lack of good and new materials at schools. On the other hand, our brief survey acknowledged a great demand to learn more about gender issues, not only among the teachers but also among the students. And that is why in 1997 we opened our educational cycle called *Women, men and society from a gender perspective*. The objective was not only to approach the educators who can apply and multiply this knowledge in their own teaching, but also to encourage unbiased classroom discussion about today's position of both sexes in personal life, as well as in wider societal contexts.

How the courses are run

Each cycle, which takes place from October until May, consists of eight seminars and workshops, each of them one-day long. The topics cover social, cultural, personal and labour aspects of gender. Lectures are given by leading Czech sociologists, human rights activists, psychologists, artists, university teachers and representatives of non-governmental organisations active in gender issues. As regards the

number of participants, each cycle is intended for a closed group of 25-30 teachers. So far we have trained around 110 teachers, both men and women, from various schools around the whole country. The majority of them were from small regional towns where they are now trying to introduce gender issues into local communities.

The elementary course usually covers the following topics: introduction to gender issues (historical outline, outstanding personalities, role of political regimes and different societal needs), family and work (gender construction within the family and in wider contexts, men and women in labour market, changing gender relations in modern and post-modern society), culture, arts and mass media (their role in defining masculinity and femininity, gender stereotypes in literature, film and visual arts, mass media, style of life, position of men and women in various religious systems, such as Catholic, Jewish and Islamic), social dimension of gender (violence in the society; prostitution, trafficking in women, homosexuality; legal issues).

The subsequent cycle of four all-day seminars is designed differently each year, in trying to correspond with the special needs and interests of the particular group of teachers. Participants are actively involved in running these follow-up workshops: among other things, they write their own essays on relevant topics and present them to other participants.

The development of the program

Since 1998 our courses have also been open to elementary school teachers and other educators. From 1999 they have been not only run in Prague, but also in Brno, the capital of Moravia.

In November 1998 a group of our participants founded "An association of teachers of civic education". One of their aims is to develop a methodology to implement the outcome of our courses into the classroom and to influence the national curriculum by lobbying at the state institutions.

In trying to contribute to a good-quality literature available on the subject the Open Society Fund Prague have published *The Czech Gender Studies Reader* that contains lectures

from our educational courses. Issued in June 1999 it is the first reference study text of its kind to appear on the Czech market. It will be used not only on our courses, but also distributed at high schools, as well as made available to university students, short of background literature.

To support the graduates of our courses in further activities we now offer them small grants in the field of gender issues. These "follow-up grants" are aimed to encourage teachers to organise their own seminars, surveys, projects and round tables within their regional schools and towns.

In the year 2000 we are planning to offer our educational cycle to a new profession group, which, as well as teachers, influences a large number of the public. Having found out that none of the 220 museums existing in Czech Republic reflects gender aspects we want to offer the courses to people working in museums and galleries throughout the country.

Overall impact

Judging from participants' opinions and other means of evaluation the program has proved highly successful. It focuses not only on professional but also on personal development of teachers, and at the same time contributes to the development of democracy in various regions of our country.

The program also received recognition for its results through its selection by the Open Society Institute in New York as a model example for other women programs within the network of Soros foundations.

Let me close with a few excerpts from the evaluation of teachers that graduated from our gender seminars in 1997 and 1998:

"The series of seminars most certainly provided an extensive and comprehensive overview of gender studies. For me it was important in terms of general recognition of one

social issue typical for the end of the 20th century. The series deprived me of my prejudice, which I personally think is the biggest outcome for me. We have used a lot of materials provided by OSF at our school, especially in humanities lessons." (Zdeněk Sviták, High School Blovice, school headmaster.)

"I am a history and literature teacher and the course was very beneficial for me in many ways. I used some of the themes in lessons of history and civic education. Most of the books that we received at seminars will find a wide range of uses in our school, because we can hardly get them in our region and they are perfectly suited for our lessons." (Vladimír Bělský, High School, Soběslav.)

"It was the best 'school after school' that I have experienced." (Jaroslava Petra Filipová, Institute for Handicaped Children, Prague.)

"I'd like to thank you for a very good choice of lecturers – all lessons were of a very high quality. I use the newly gained knowledge in my lessons of literature as well as social sciences." (Věra Hlavatá, High School, Děčín.)

"I learned something that would not normally reach our school. Thank to some lecturers I judge certain problems differently and I have gained courage to contribute to their solution. I also realised how important it is in our country to respect differences between men and women and – starting at schools – to prevent the vulgarisation of women's role in society." (Jan Duda.)

"I am seriously considering including gender issues as part of our school leaving examination." (Jaroslav Staněk, High School, Aš.)

"The course enlarged my vision of this world. Perhaps in the future I will be more tolerant." (Jan Zouhar, Masaryk High School, Vsetín.)

Lucie Ryntová

Gender Studies Centre, Prague

The Prague Gender Studies Centre (GSC) was set up in 1991 in the flat of the dissident sociologist Jiřina Šiklová, and initially functioned

primarily as a library of mostly foreign language literature and a so-called curriculum centre. A group of women from different professions (sociologists, philosophers and academics from various fields of the social sciences, writers, students, and a number of

Americans and Canadians who were mostly in Prague for a short time only) soon formed around the centre and developed the debate on the position of women with lectures, research and publicity. From the outset, the GSC was in close contact with similar centres in other countries. An important stimulus in the early stages was the conference on "Women in a Changing Europe" held in Denmark and the East West meeting of women in Dubrovnik, where the Network of East West Women was founded, with its offices in the USA. The GSC also took an active part in international dialogue, including the co-organisation of conferences, starting with *Emerging Women's Organisations in Post-Communist Europe* in Jiloviště u Prahy (Frauen Anstiftung Hamburg, 1992), or *East-East Gender Studies Inspirations* in Liblice (1993). Many other conferences followed directed at both the Czech and the international public (Politics with Women or without Women?, Women in the History of Prague, Project Parity – Training Women for Public Life and Politics, Woman and Man in the Media, The Hidden History of Women, Feminist Theology in Post-Communist Countries, Regional Action in the 43rd Session of the UN Commission for the Status of Women, etc.). The GSC received its earliest financial support from the Network of East West Women and its later development was aided by long-term support from the German women's foundation, *Frauen Anstiftung*, and grants from international foundations. The GSC was officially registered as a non-profit, non-governmental organisation in 1992 (under the law in force at the time, with the title of foundation) and two years later moved from Jiřina Šiklová's flat to its first premises in Prague's second district.

The great success of the GSC and the partial achievement of its aims since the beginning of the 1990s has been the introduction of gender studies in the social sciences in Czech universities. As early as 1992/3 GSC organised a lecture cycle on *Social Aspects from the Point of View of Gender* and *Gender-Culture-Society* at Charles University in Prague. In the following academic year the lecture cycle was extended to Masaryk University in Brno and J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem. Mem-

bers of the GSC gradually introduced the gender and feminist aspects into their respective fields and gave lectures in their departments or institutions. The Centre's greatest achievement in introducing gender and women's studies into university education was the establishment of the Centre for the Study of Gender in the Department of Social Work at Charles University in Prague, the first such centre in this country. The Academic Senate decided to establish the Centre on the basis of a proposal by members of GSC in 1998 and the first semester of teaching is now under way. The GSC is however still providing financial and organisational support for the work of this department, providing premises for its co-ordinators and a support for students in the form of its library.

Lectures are also directed towards the general public and since 1996 the GSC has organised regular lectures and debates in its *Tuesdays with Gender* cycle. GSC also responds to need for discussion on women's questions in the regions and participates in public debates on the invitation of local organisations or activists.

The library has at present around four thousand volumes in the field of gender and women's studies and feminism, as well as fiction and 200 periodicals (in both Czech and foreign languages). It has an extensive collection of cuttings from Czech and foreign newspapers, monitoring the media view of women's questions. The library also publishes its own works, provides an information service on the activities of women's organisations and the state bureaucracy and is developing an internet project, www.feminismus.cz. An important feature of the library is its archive, which includes a collection of historical materials and works by activists of the Czech Women's movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

One of the GSC's most extensive projects is *Women's Memories*. Using oral history methods it is collecting women's experiences under communism. This idea has aroused interest among women academics in other post-communist countries and groups from the Czech Republic, Poland, Serbia, Croatia and Germany are collaborating on the project.

The GSC works closely with other women's NGOs. Together with the organisations profFem, LaStrada, Elektra, Rosa and *Bílý kruh bezpečí*, it has founded the Co-ordination Circle for the Prevention of Violence against Women and was one of the initiators of the Association for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men. In collaboration with state organisations, the GSC is attempting to influence the functioning of institutional mechanisms to improve the position of women and to monitor the respecting of international accords such as CEDAW or the Platform for Action. Members of the GSC were involved in founding the coalition of NGOs in post-communist countries, the Karat Coalition, and within the coalition are now working on the Peking+5 project (an assessment of the gains made by the World Conference on Women in Peking in 1995, and new perspectives).

The Gender Studies Centre in Prague can claim much of the merit for the increasing awareness during the 1990s, both among the general public and in academic circles, of questions of feminism and the position of women in this country and in the world. Its activities have created a space for discussion on the relations between women and men from the point of view of various academic disciplines, it has drawn attention to existing problems, contributed to reflection on the communist period and revived historical memory, carrying on the idea of the women's movement between the wars or even earlier as an integral part of a developed civil society.

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The GSC has also published many works, to date:

Altos and Sopranos: A Pocket Handbook of women's Organizations, 1995.

Antologie filozofických, sociologických a historických esejů o českých a slovenských ženách [Anthology of Philosophical, Sociological and Historical Essays of Czech and Slovak Women], 1993.

- L. Busheikin, S. Trnka (ed.): *Bodies of Bread and Butter: Reconfiguring women's lives in the post-communist Czech Republic*, 1993.
- N. Cetković, P. Frýdlová: *Epistolae*. Praha: CGS, profFem, Berlin: OWEN 1999.
- M. Čermáková, H. Maříková: *Data o ženách v České republice* [Data on Women in the Czech Republic], 1996.
- M. Čermáková, H. Maříková, L. Simerská: *Platforma pro Akci* [Platform for Action], 1998.
- R. Eisler: *Číše a meč, agrese a láska aneb Žena a muž v průběhu staletí* [The Cup and the Sword, Aggression and Love, or Woman and Man in the Course of Centuries]. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny with contribution by GSC, 1995.
- P. Frýdlová (ed.): *Všechny naše včerejšky I., II. – Paměť žen* [All Our Yesterdays I, II. – Women's Memories], Praha: Nadace Gender Studies, 1998.
- H. Havelková (ed.): *Existuje středoevropský model mateřství a rodiny?* [Is There a Central European Model of Motherhood and the Family?], Praha: Divadelní ústav, in collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Institute and the Nadace Gender Studies, 1995.
- H. Havelková, M. Vodrážka (ed.): *Žena a muž v médiích* [Woman and Man in the Media], 1998.
- S. Hendrychová (ed.): *Právní postavení žen v České republice* [The Legal Position of Women in the Czech Republic], 1998.
- V. Ledvinka, J. Pešek (ed.): *Žena v dějinách Prahy* [Women in the History of Prague], Praha: Documenta Pragensia XIII. Scriptorium in collaboration with Nadace Gender Studies, 1996.
- Regionální zpráva o institucionálních mechanismech pro zlepšení postavení žen v zemích střední a východní Evropy* [Regional Report on Institutional Mechanisms for the Improvement of the Position of Women in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe], 1999.
- M. Vodrážka (ed.): *Politika s ženami či bez žen?* [Politics with Women or without

Women?], Praha: Nadace Gender Studies, 1996.

M. Vodrážka: *Feministické rozhovory o "tajných službách"* [Feminist Interviews on the "Secret Services"], 1996.

Zpráva o Nadaci Gender Studies v Praze 1991-1997 [Report on the Gender Studies Centre in Prague 1991-1997], Praha: Nadace Gender Studies, 1998.

With financial support from the UNDP the GSC is preparing a publication *Women in the Czech Republic in the 1990s*, assessing a decade of democratic development of this society in relation to women. The book will be published in early 2000 in both Czech and English editions.

Lenka Simerská

Gender in Sociology – Teaching at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague

I have been teaching courses under this title in the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University since 1996. The first course was a one-semester optional course on "Gender and the Labour Market". This was initially intended as an intensive thematically linked cycle covering the historical, cultural and social aspects of women's work, including contemporary economic-social theories on the position of women on the labour market, gender differences, social exclusion and other topics. It became clear that the students lacked an elementary sociological sensitivity to gender and feminist approaches and concepts, and so from the winter semester of 1997-1998 I added a further course under the general title of "Gender in Sociology". The course aimed to provide a systematic explanation of concepts of gender in contemporary sociology. This was a worthy ambition since it was the only opportunity for students of this faculty to come into contact with gender and feminist concepts. The number of students enrolled ranges from 25 to 50 and both courses are now in their third year in this faculty.

The key question in preparing all lectures is to develop a sociological sensitivity for the category of gender. This is extremely difficult in the Czech cultural context and social unawareness, since it is necessary to constantly cultivate the process of understanding and critical thought for subjects which already carry considerable 'baggage'. Cultivating analytical abilities and work with empirical data of a gender character is impossible without ex-

tending the students' knowledge of working with arguments in different paradigms and theoretical concepts.

There is good reason for calling the course "Gender in Sociology". It is concerned with the way in which gender subjects penetrate sociology and the social sciences and with introducing students to contemporary thought on gender and feminist sociology. The social rejection of feminism, which may not be particularly important in western universities, always infiltrates the subjects discussed here. Since the ground is thus inappropriately narrowed, the only alternative left to me is to concentrate on teaching students methods and comparative skills in work with theories and the scientific products of various social sciences. I place considerable emphasis on both feminist and gender perspectives and also provide students with the theoretical and empirical skills to develop their sociological imagination in different directions.

The course on "Gender in Sociology" presents students with concepts, definition of gender questions, conceptual apparatus and also various aspects of women's identity. It is constructed in such a way as to make students aware that every subject, problem or social phenomenon which they may meet in theory or their own lives can be understood from the point of view of gender. In concrete terms, lectures cover gender roles, power, female culture, socialisation, stratification, the family, motherhood, fatherhood, feminism, solidarity, sexism and other topics.

The course on "Gender and the Labour Market" discusses the dualistic theory of the market, the division of labour, segregation of professions, careers, mobility, female employ-

ment, men's work, the non-monetary system, the gender contract, and so forth.

Both courses are interspersed with intervention into the field of methods and techniques of research into the position of women, particularly Czech women, as I am an external lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences. My main area of interest is research into the female population, which I carry out within the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of

Sciences. I also suggest how the set and recommended readings for the courses can be located, which is a major problem. The set work for the course include an essay, work with foreign-language texts, and an examination. My work includes an endless series of consultations and support for students who are interested in working on 'women's questions' for their undergraduate papers or final thesis.

Marie Čermáková

Lectures on Feminism at Charles University

I have been lecturing on feminism at Charles University since 1994. The first two courses, entitled *Feminism and the Media*, were taught in the 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 winter semesters in the Department of Mass Communications of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and I was employed as an external lecturer. The course presented the basic concepts and key problems of feminism as a political and cultural phenomenon, the world and Czech history of women's struggle for emancipation, Czech women's journalism and the question of women's journalism in general, contemporary gender issues in the foreign media, and attitudes to gender questions in the Czech media since 1989. Beginning with the summer semester of the 1995-1996 academic year I began to teach this course in my own institution, the Institution of the Fundamentals of Learning of Charles University, where it has now become a permanent part of the programme of study under the title of *Feminist Theory*. In response to the great interest on the part of the students I began to teach a second course, *Feminist Theory II*, in the 1996-1997 summer semester. In the 1997-1998 academic year the breadth of the question required that both courses be extended to two semesters and at present there are two two-semester courses running in parallel. These are also attended by students of other faculties, who can gain credit for these courses.

Feminist Theory I is an introductory cycle of lectures introducing the most important sociological and psychological theories of the formation of sexual and gender identity, a historical-sociological study of the two major

changes in the position of the sexes in the last two hundred years, theoretical issues and practical aims of the first and second wave of feminism, existing hypotheses on changes in gender relations during the communist era and since its collapse, the problems of women and men in this country and in the world today, in both the private and public arenas. Considerable attention is paid to the application of feminist theories in the area of critical and criminal social phenomena between the sexes, such as prostitution, rape, harassment, domestic violence, pornography, etc. *Feminist Theory II* is a seminar course which continues on from *Feminist Theory I* and is based on reading and analysis of key feminist texts on feminist psychology, sociology, anthropology, theology, history, philosophy, etc.

Since there is a tendency in this country to include such courses under the heading of *Gender Studies*, I would like to explain why I personally prefer the title of feminist theory. The principal reason is one of merit: I consider feminism to be an important part of modern thought, an intellectual paradigm, the application of which does not simply provide an alternative view of gender questions, but also of a much broader social and cultural context, of the nature of institutions, of the periodisation of history, and so forth. Contemporary gender studies offer an intellectual and practical political perspective of key analytical instruments and material, but feminist thought is a much broader concept. In simple terms it presents general cultural categories (including that of science). The second reason is historical-empirical: not only were many important works of feminist theory written long before the concept of *gender* began to be used in the sense it

is today, contemporary feminist thought does not accept without reservations the dualist concept of sex-gender. The attempt to create a politically (humanistically) neutral gender studies is not so much a question of rejecting ideology, but rather of rejecting the critiques of ideology. My experience has shown that stu-

dents are not put off by the use of the concept of 'feminism', indeed quite the reverse, since the questions that interest them most are those linked with changes in gender roles taking place at present.

Hana Havelková

Men's Studies at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University

For the second year now the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno is offering a course on Gender as a standard component of the curriculum of the Department of Sociology. Two interrelated courses *Gender Studies I – Women*, taught in the autumn semester and *Gender Studies II – Men* taught in the spring semester, offer undergraduate students a space for open discussion of the position of women and men in society in the form of seminars led by Iva Šmídová (PhD. candidate). Both courses deal with the relations between men and women, and the inter-relatedness of the two questions is stressed. Courses on gender issues and particularly on feminism are gradually becoming a part of teaching in Social Sciences and Humanities Faculties, but a course on Men's Studies is still a rarity in the Czech Republic.

The seminars of this year's *Gender Studies II – Men* course will cover the questions of (in chronological order) why men should be a subject of study, the relation of Men's Studies to the concept of patriarchy, hegemony or the crisis of masculinity discussed in western sociological literature. An important part of the syllabus consists of discussions on the forms of male identity (their de/construction, changes), the analysis of male sexuality (with considerable importance given to readings on homophobia and homosexual identity), violence, male ties/bonds, and texts and discussion on the male body and its depiction are also included. A second thematic block covers the family, fatherhood and inter-generational relationships. The second-to-last block of the course is made up of seminars dealing with possibilities for change, men in transformation,

'new men' and the men's movement. The final block pulls together and rounds out the whole course, dealing with the relation of masculinity, men's studies and the men's movement to feminism, feminisms, the women's movement and women. The syllabuses of the two courses are attached.

Discussions on the texts are directed towards tolerance for a plurality of forms of masculinity, the advantages and limits of norms and normative hegemonic masculinity. Favourite topics of discussion include stereotypes linked with male identity and roles, particularly the division of work in the home. The course draws on the rich English language literature on the subject. Thanks to a book grant from the Network of East West Women, a grant from HESP, the positive attitude of the Faculty management and personal donations, students have access to a good library. Visiting professors who have helped to broaden the spectrum of the discussion include Prof. Victor Seidler, Goldsmiths College London (April 1999), and Prof. Ann Snitow, New School, New York City (November 1999).

The course takes the form of seminars with student presentations and discussions, based on a wide range of literature which is linguistically very demanding. Each student must also prepare a book review and a final essay. Students are led to reflect on the question from reading to their own experience and the situation in the Czech Republic. *Gender I* is conceived as an introductory course and offers the standard number of credits, *Gender II* is optional and is more demanding (earning twice the number of credits). I am now considering offering a further course which will consider other aspects of feminism in more detail (also continuing, optional and more demanding). The courses are in great demand with the number of applicants about twice the permitted

limit for a seminar course. The students' responses vary widely. Those who finish the course find that their perspective on gender questions has shifted considerably, but a certain number fail to complete the course through

lack of interest or because it is too demanding. A group of students have however gone on to gain a grant for their project in the area of gender questions.

Iva Šmidová

One semester course on *The Czech Women's Movement up 1914*

In the winter session 1999-2000 at the faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, Prague

This course covers the period between 1820s and 1914. It is based on existing literature as well as on archival sources. It focuses mostly on struggles of Czech women, represented by several dozens of activists, to step outside of their private sphere and to achieve more possibilities for their education and gradually, for a more equal position in private as well as public spheres. With the exception of the revolutionary period 1848-49, up to the 1860s the overall political situation in the Habsburg Empire did not allow for organised women's efforts. Cultural and social events thus played the role of communication means on matters of public interests. And still, even in this period a number of women managed to achieve admirable results through their courageous private initiative, especially in education and as writers, although at the cost of heavy personal sacrifices. The lives of M. D. Rettigová, Josefa Pedálová, Bohumila Rajská, Božena Němcová, etc. are fascinating stories as well as those of other women in later periods. They were all aware that education and self-knowledge, in the broad sense, was a key to all kinds of improvements, and this aspect was at the centre of their efforts for the whole period.

With the introduction of constitutional freedoms in the 1860s more possibilities opened to women and they used them fully to advance their course and to fight the conservative perceptions of women as inferior creatures. In the 1860s charitable work and the struggle to establish pre-school care for the poorest women in Prague was primary concern, since the social conditions for lower classes in Prague were inhuman and the government and the Catholic Church considered sharp social differences normal. At the same time their concern

with the possibilities for older girls' schooling was growing fast.

Various women's associations were gradually being established, although the imperial government was not in favour of women's efforts to achieve too much too fast, and only women's persistency and diplomacy succeeded in overcoming great difficulties. Formation of women's associations for the purpose of establishing girls schools were at the centre of their activities from the mid-1860 until the end of the 1890's. Thousands of women in Prague and other larger cities participated in these associations, mainly to gather sufficient financial means from the Czech public, occasionally from rich sponsors and institutions, to establish these schools. Despite great pressures from women, the government never included the girls schools into the state system. The devotion of Marie Riegrová-Palacká, Karolina Světlá, and other women had formed an important example for women even in the next generation. The most interesting is the story of the foundation of first girls *gymnasium* (high school) in 1890, thanks to the skills and diplomacy of writer Eliška Krásnohorská. Especially in this period the co-operation of a number of enlightened men was indispensable to women to achieve their aims.

Since the beginning of the 1870s the Czech women had a good women's monthly journal *Ženské listy* (Women's Papers) under the editorship of a writer Eliška Krásnohorská, who over thirty years took care that the journal informed women about everything important to them. She included good educational articles by experts of both genders on history, arts, health, etc. From the 1890s the number of women's journals increased to five, including one for working class women. Journals maintained a broad context, fostering traditional awareness that the women's aims were also in the interest of the quality of families, society and the nation as a whole. All journals brought

regular reports on women's conditions and movements in foreign countries, which was often an inspiration for closer contacts with these movements. Since women gradually realised that their education was not sufficient to change the prevailing prejudiced attitudes towards women, these journals became a platform for exploring their roots. In this respect T. G. Masaryk was most helpful, especially with his articles on great differences between the original Christian teachings and between traditional attitudes of the Catholic Church, and with his philosophy that the "women's question" was also a men's question. Women also explored the periods, when the Churches were most destructive to women.

Gradually women got involved in struggles for more rights and for an equal position with men in other areas, such as health, private and public law, employment and finally the political sphere.

Only when the first medical doctors graduated, did the issue of women's health

obtain the needed attention, and traditional practices dangerous to women's health were removed and changed. The legal position of women was never satisfactorily improved, but in the social sphere a number of improvements were made in relation to working women, although probably more in theory than in practice. The involvement of women in the struggle for political rights is not only fascinating but was successful in unexpected ways. The personalities of F. Plamínková and B. Vilková-Kunětická played a key role in this success. With the involvement of women in the political sphere, their efforts culminated, and were then interrupted by the outbreak of World War I.

Besides compulsory and recommended literature, students have at their disposal (in the library of history departments) rich material from original sources carefully selected to cover all issues.

Marie L. Neudorřlová

Gender, Family, and Social Interconnections

Course for students of psychology, Philosophical Faculty, Charles University, Prague

This one-semester course, intended for students in the final stages of the Masters' programme in psychology at Charles University's Philosophical Faculty, I first offered in the academic year 1995-1996 under the title *Gender and Psychology* – in full awareness that it would, by necessity, merely touch upon selected topics in relation to the general theme, rather than constituting a thorough inquiry into all aspects of gender. My initial intention was primarily to develop in the students a sense of intellectual receptivity to the concept of gender ('gender sensitivity') in light of their future work in applied psychology, in particular in the so-called 'helping professions'. The aim was to draw attention to certain themes that have become points of feminist concern in the field of psychology, for instance domestic violence or eating disorders, and finally to acquaint the participants with the feminist critique of much traditional theory in developmental psychology, including the theory of psychoanalysis.

These questions, or rather issues, have in large measure not yet found systematic thematisation in the standard psychological curricula.

Through further experience, the course has gradually changed in both form and content, to ensure that it remains as stimulating as possible while retaining its original breadth of scope. The changes thus made in the original curriculum led to a selective refinement in the range of themes, yet simultaneously allowed attention to be focused more on basic principles of feminist analysis, for instance the 'social construction' approach, which the students found to be of great interest. I am well aware that extending the time-frame of the course to two semesters would be highly advantageous; this solution, however, is at present impossible for me as an adjunct lecturer with a demanding external work-schedule. The social construction of gender is an especially revelatory approach for the students, particularly in that it differs so markedly from the main theoretical currents encountered in their studies. Students at Charles University are at present exposed primarily to essentialist standpoints, as in the past decade theories of traditional psycho-

analysis and depth psychology (which before 1989 could not be officially taught) have now become dominant. Within the framework of constructionism, we have considered (among other subjects) the creation of 'gender identity', masculinity and femininity, motherhood and fatherhood, various forms of family life, and physical and mental health in both men and women. I have often made use of the skills acquired in the course of both teaching and practising family therapy. Interactive forms of teaching and the personal experiences of the

students themselves have also shown themselves to be highly valuable.

In the semester 1999-2000, approximately 25 students took part in the course, among them an increasing number of students of social work and sociology. I have welcomed the collaboration of other lecturers offering courses with gender-related themes, and together we are searching for methods of efficiently co-ordinating our efforts.

Šárka Gjuričová

The Social and Economic Position of Rural Women, Particularly Those in Agriculture – Report on a Project of the Czech Grant Agency

Institution: Agricultural Economy Research Institute Prague, Brno Centre
Researchers: PhDr. Hana Horská,
PhDr. Daniela Spěšná
Period of Research: 1998-1999

Outline and Aims of the Research

Since 1991 there have been several sociological projects in the Czech Republic investigating the position and living conditions of women in Czech society – their situation in the family, at work, on the labour market and in society. These complex research projects were not aimed at a deep-reaching analysis of the factors determining the position of specific social subgroups of women. The question of rural women and women employed in agriculture (including farmers) was virtually untouched by these research projects and consequently information on this significant group of women is very fragmented and incomplete. The economic and social consequences of the transformation (including the restructuring and changes in property relations in the agricultural sphere), together with the traditionally specific conditions of life in these areas, have also had a more severe effect in rural areas. Quantitative and qualitative information on the development of conditions for the rural population and for particular groups of this population are also important with respect to the supposed entry of the Czech Republic into the EU and the begin-

ning of work to create regional rural development programmes.

This project analysed the social and economic dimension of the position of rural women of working age on the rural labour market, in connection with their position in the family, household and social environment of the rural area and in comparison with selected characteristics that determine status within a representative sample of rural women, women working in agriculture or otherwise, and rural men. (The information collected in the subsample of the male rural population provided a view of the position of women from the men's point of view, and where necessary to extend the database to include the entire rural population of working age.)

Research Method

The research was based on an empirical representative survey carried out on the basis of direct standardised interviews using a prepared lists of points. During the preparation of the questionnaire focus group interviews were carried out. Data was collected from four representative samples of women and men of working age (15-60 years) in settlements with up to 2,000 inhabitants:

1. A sample of rural women (1010 respondents)
2. A sample of rural women working in agriculture (732 respondents)
3. A sample of rural women working outside agriculture (711 respondents)
4. A sample of rural men (538 respondents).

The samples were selected using quotas on the basis of information from the Czech Statistical Office (SLDB 1991, AGROCENSUS 1995, Mikrocensus 1996, VSPS 1998). The samples are representative by age, education and region (district).

The field survey was carried out by the FOCUS agency and was completed in December 1998.

The questionnaire covered the following areas:

- characteristics of rural families and households
- the division of labour and decision-making in rural families
- rural origins, real and potential mobility
- reflections of the conditions for men and women in rural areas
- property relations for land and agricultural property
- household economy, division of work and decision-making

- employment of and level of discrimination against women on the rural labour market
- the income and standard of living of rural women and rural households
- the situation of women farmers (private land owners)
- demographic characteristics

The questionnaire for women included 75 questions (393 variables) and that for men 33 questions (110 variables). The data was processed by the FOCUS agency using the SPSS/PC program (univariate analysis of variables of all samples, bivariate analysis of variables in the samples of rural women, women in agriculture and women outside agriculture by age, level of education, marital status, employment, position at work, ownership relations to the land, personal income, household income, size of settlement and region, and a multivariate analysis of selected variables.

The results of the research will be published at the beginning of 2000 in a VÚZE publication and in specialist journals.

Hana Horská

Family and Fertility Survey

At the end of 1997 the Czech Statistical Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Sofres-Factum research agency (for the field survey) carried out a "Family and Fertility Survey". This was part of the international Family and Fertility Survey Project, which is underwritten by the population unit of the European Economic Commission of the UNO, the Centre for Population and Family Studies (SBGS) in Brussels, and the Dutch interdisciplinary demographic institute in The Hague (NIDI). Twenty countries have taken part in the survey up to the present time.

On the basis of internationally recommended methods, the survey focused on women of reproductive age (i.e. aged 15 to 44) and women living with a husband or partner and their partners. The sample was selected by a three-phase process: first, all households surveyed completed a questionnaire with basic information. If the household included a

woman aged 15-44, the surveyor asked the questions in the basic questionnaire and if the woman was living with a partner, he too completed a virtually identical questionnaire. The initial sample included 7,611 randomly selected families, of which 5,773 completed the questionnaires. Answers to the woman's questionnaire were obtained in 1,735 households and in 721 of these a man/partner also completed a questionnaire.

The survey was not primarily intended to gain a description of reproductive behaviour (which is ultimately shown better and more precisely by demographic statistics), but was more concerned with attitudes, opinions and values, that is, with questions of motivation. It is the combination of these two views, demographic and sociological, that is this survey's greatest contribution. The project has also provided a basis for international comparisons.

In addition to the basic features of the household, i.e. socio-demographic data (sex, age, marital status, occupation, relation to the respondent) on all members of the household

and information about the form of ownership of the dwelling, the questionnaire had nine basic sections and three modules. Unlike the basic sections, the modules did not have to be included in the questionnaire and the choice depended on the research team and the country concerned. A more detailed description of the content of basic sections and modules is provided below:

Basic section *The Parents' Home*: Ascertained the family's past history according to the following criteria: the number of children in the parents' family, who was the head, history of parents' cohabitation and reasons for the respondent's leaving this family.

Basic section *Partnership*: Ascertains the existence and type of the respondent's present and past partnerships, and asked about children living or having lived in the partnership.

Basic section *Children*: Ascertains information about all children of the respondent – both their own and adopted, fostered or stepchildren.

Basic section *Pregnancy*: Ascertains the number of births, abortions or miscarriages the woman has had.

Basic section *Regulation of Pregnancy*: Asks about use of contraception and/or opinions on this.

Basic section *Ideas on Children – To have or not to have?*: Ascertains ideas, attitudes and motives for decisions to have a child.

Basic section *Other Opinions*: Asks about attitudes and opinions on selected questions related to marriage, the family and parenthood.

Basic section *Education and Occupation*: Seeks to find out the respondent's education and work history.

Basic section *Partner's Characteristics*: Asks about the general outline of the partner's life, about the nature of the partnership, about the division of work and responsibilities between partners. Also includes questions on both partners' relations to faith and religion.

Module *Gynaecological Prevention*: Relates to the section on regulation of pregnancy and asks about regular check-ups and self-examination of breasts.

Module *Values and Convictions*: Concerned with attitudes towards circumstances which can or could influence the reproductive climate in

society and seeks to ascertain the importance of this aspect in the context of the broader connections in the people's life and society.

Module *Population Policy*: Ascertains ideas on society's relation to population questions and to circumstances affecting this and on how 'tuned in' the respondent is to these questions.

The results of the survey show that there is still a strong preference in Czech society for marriage, with a traditional view of the family prevailing in the questionnaires. The family into which a respondent was born and grew up is still a very strong and indeed deciding model for future reproductive and family behaviour. There are no great differences in opinions between the sexes, nor between inhabitants of rural and urban areas. The major influences on the public attitude to family and population policy and the relating reproductive behaviour are age and education. It remains an open question whether this confirms theories about a coming fundamental change in the institution of the family or whether it is simply the traditional generational shift in opinions, from more radical ideas among young people to a greater acceptance of the traditional model with increasing age and life experience. A single demographic survey is not sufficient to provide an answer to this question, which calls rather for continuing, long-term research. The influence of education was shown to be decisive. Increasing education and the increasing employment of women relating to this is basically reflected not only in opinions but also in the actual life of families and so in their patterns of reproduction. The main negative influence is the problems faced by young families in finding appropriate accommodation. This seems to be the most burning question connected with the negative trends in population development. Those interested in the details of the results can consult the publication *A Detailed Report on the Family and Fertility Survey* (1997), published by the Czech Statistical Office in its "News and Reports" series. For further information, contact PhDr. Eva Čáková (cakiova@gw.czso.cz) or ing. Jaroslav Kraus (kraus@gw.czso.cz).

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