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THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND GOALS AND ACTIVITIES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY AS DEPICTED IN A LOCAL HOUSEWIVES' WEEKLY

RUCH KOBIECY, JEGO CELE I DZIAŁANIA NA POCZĄTKU XX W. Z PERSPEKTYWY LOKALNEGO TYGODNIKA DLA PAŃ DOMU

ABSTRACT: At the beginning of the 20th century, the women's movement in Germany was already well-organized, with its postulates winning increasing public support. Long years of work by multiple organizations led to a wide debate on those postulates and they appeared on the pages of commercial magazines. The article presents an analysis of materials from the periodical „Breslauer Hausfrau” [„The Wrocław Housewife”], which started to operate in autumn 1903 and was successful on a demanding publishing market. The women's movement, its goals and activities are presented to readers from a local and a regional perspective, one very close to them. Due to the effort and involvement of the editorial office in Wrocław, besides interesting recaps of the large conventions and congresses of women's organizations held in Wrocław at the beginning of the 20th century, the discussed women's weekly also included more exclusive information on the hard, day-to-day work of Silesian women's organizations.

KEYWORDS: women's movement, women's organizations, history of Silesia, Wrocław, periodicals

At the turn of the 20th century, the entrenched image of the role of the woman as wife, mother and protector of the hearth continued to function within German bourgeois society. The education of girls from this level of society, like their rearing, was primarily directed at preparing them to perform the duties associated with running a household and with motherhood. The differences between the educations given to girls and to boys were significant, and the low level of schooling for girls

was an effective check on women's professional opportunities. Organizations associated with the bourgeois women's movement protested against this situation.¹

The second half of the 19th century saw intensive growth in the activity of women's organizations, which were demanding fundamental reform of education and better preparation of women for professional work. Alongside the highly active associations located all around Germany, such as *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* [General German Women's Association], *Kaufmännischer und gewerblicher Hilfsverein für weibliche Angestellte* [Commercial and Industrial Benefit Society for Female Employees], or *Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnen Verein* [Universal German Society of Female Teachers], numerous new organizations and clubs emerged, frequently of a local or regional character.²

At the beginning of the 20th century, the bourgeois women's movement in Germany had achieved a high level of organization and its postulates and activities were attracting increasing attention from public opinion. Long years of work by multiple organizations had brought them to the fore of discussion, and they began to spread into the commercial area, with substantial numbers of women's publications in print. It is thus worth taking a closer look at how the women's movement, its goals and activities were presented in periodicals prior to the outbreak of World War I.

This article is based primarily on analysis of materials from a periodical titled „Breslauer Hausfrau. Schlesische Wochenschrift für Hauswirtschaft und Mode, Handarbeiten und Unterhaltung. Mit 'Kindermode' und 'Für unsere Kleinen'” [The Wrocław Housewife. A Silesian Weekly Dedicated to Matters of the Household, Fashion, Handicrafts and Entertainment. With the Supplementals 'Children's Fashion' and 'For Our Little Ones'], first published in the autumn of 1903, and which successfully operated on a demanding publishing market, undergoing a significant evolution.³

The weekly „Breslauer Hausfrau” was intended primarily to serve as a provider of household hints, with extensive sections devoted to fashion (including

¹ Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918*, Bd. 1, München 1993, pp.73–74; Maria Bogucka, *Gorsza pleć. Kobieta w dziejach Europy. Od antyku po wiek XXI*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 261–263; Angelika Schaser, *Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1848–1933*, Darmstadt 2006, pp. 12–14; Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, *Frauenleben im 19. Jahrhundert: Empire und Romanik, Biedermeier; Gründerzeit*, München 1998, pp. 214–216.

² Ute Gerhard, *Unerhört. Die Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, Hamburg 1990, pp. 138–167; Schaser, *Frauenbewegung*, pp. 38–48.

³ The publication was regularly printed during the World War I and in the interwar period as well. The subtitle was modified slightly.

children's) and handicrafts. In each edition there were also serialized stories that boosted circulation, as well as materials for children.⁴ The periodical, addressed primarily to bourgeois women of Wrocław, was a local edition of the Berlin-based women's weekly „Fürs Haus. Praktisches Wochenblatt für alle Hausfrauen” [For the Home. A Practical Guide for All Housewives], which operated on the publishing market from 1882 to 1935.⁵ Until the outbreak of the World War I, there were 18 local editorial offices which worked in concert with the central office in Berlin in creating the local issues of the periodical.⁶

A well-planned publishing strategy resulted in serious commercial success and significant influence of the discussed enterprise. „Fürs Haus” and its local editions reached a circulation level of 450,000 prior to the beginning of the World War I. „Breslauer Hausfrau” itself was distributed during that time with a circulation of over 19,000.⁷ It should be emphasized that the scope of such weeklies was not limited only to household matters. Owing to the efforts of the local editorial office, the readers of „Breslauer Hausfrau” enjoyed a modern periodical that took an interest in various aspects of women's lives, including the activities of the bourgeois women's movement.

⁴ The publisher's favorite author was Hedwig Courths-Mahler, given the title of the queen of the romance. No other author enjoyed comparable commercial success in that period. It is estimated that her 209 novels were published with a combined circulation of 40,000,000 copies. See Gustav Sichel Schmidt, *Hedwig Courths-Mahler. Deutschlands erfolgreichste Autorin. Eine literatursoziologische Studie*, Bonn 1985, pp. 31–37; Gisela Brinker-Gabler, Karola Ludwig, Angela Wöffen, *Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen 1800–1945*, München 1986, p. 59–60; Peter Nusser, *Trivalliteratur*, Stuttgart 1991, pp. 37–45.

⁵ The publishers of “Fürs Haus” were siblings from Silesia, Clara and Arthur von Studnitz. The headquarters of their publishing company, Deutsches Druck- und Verlagshaus GmbH., was located in Berlin (Lindenstrasse 26). Their activity in the publishing field was not limited merely to the founding of “Fürs Haus” and the numerous later local editions. Along with that title, they also published such periodicals as “Deutsche Warte”, “Schiff”, “Hausdoktor”, and “Mädchenpost”. See Joachim Kirchner, *Das deutsche Zeitschriftenwesen, seine Geschichte und seine Probleme*, Tl. 2: *Vom Wiener Kongress bis zum Ausgange des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1962, pp. 358–359; *Geschichte des Deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Bd. 1: *Das Kaiserreich 1871–1918*, Tl. 2, hrsg. von Georg Jäger, Frankfurt am Main 2003, p. 466.

⁶ In the period prior to the outbreak of the First World War the Wrocław publication was accompanied by: “Berliner -”, “Bremer -”, “Chemnitzer -”, “Dresdner -”, “Frankfurter -”, “Hamburger -”, “Hannoversche -”, “Kieler -”, “Königsberger-”, “Leipziger -”, “Magdeburger-”, “Münchner -”, “Nürnberger -”, “Rheinische -”, “Sächsisch – Thüringische -”, “Stettiner -” and “Stuttgarter Hausfrau”. See *Million Anzeiger*, “Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 569, August 9, 1914, p. 1.

⁷ Information about the joint circulation of local edition can be found in the advertising supplement of that publisher. See *Ibidem*.

The women's movement was presented to the readers of „Breslauer Hausfrau” from a primarily local and regional perspective. Information about the activities of women's organizations was initially located in a section titled „Vereine” [Associations], which was later rechristened „Schlesische Frauen Rundschau” [Silesian Women Review]. Such information tended to be brief, in the form of short announcements, and it was most likely supplied to the editorial staff by local activists. Longer articles devoted to the activity of the women's movement were published during important congresses and extraordinary actions that took place around Wrocław.

In the pre-war editions of „Breslauer Hausfrau”, there were announcements and information from such women's organizations as *Frauenbildungsverein* [Women's Educational Association], *Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnen Verein* [General German Association of Female Teachers], *Kaufmännischer Verein weiblicher Angestellten* [Commercial Association of Female Employees] and *Frauenwohl* [Women's Welfare]. They were all a part of *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* [BDF; Federation of German Women's Associations] – a union that during that period brought together a large portion of the bourgeois women's organizations from around Germany.⁸

From the information listed in „Breslauer Hausfrau” we can conclude that *Frauenbildungsverein* in Wrocław focused primarily on offering training and education for women interested in acquiring specific professional qualifications. For example, in 1908, it was announced that graduates of courses for pre-school teachers and nurses run by that organization successfully passed the state exams and obtained certification to work in a profession.⁹

In turn, *Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnen Verein* and *Kaufmännischer Verein weiblicher Angestellten* were visible primarily as associations active in campaigning to improve education and working conditions for women. „Breslauer Hausfrau” reported, i.a., on a meeting organized for Wrocław women where the demand was made for greater participation of women in professional life and for a reduction in the disproportion in wages between men and women.¹⁰

By that time, campaigns to improve education and employment conditions for women had ceased to be a source of greater controversy. Objectives thus

⁸ Daniela Weiland, *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation in Deutschland und Österreich*, Düsseldorf 1993, pp. 55–58.

⁹ *Vereine*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 265, October 11, 1908, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Der Kaufmännische Verein weiblicher Angestellten*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 216, November 3, 1907, unnumbered page before the title page.

formulated also enjoyed the support of the moderate wing of the women's movement. Interestingly, the pages of the periodical for housewives also included information on more radical women's organizations such as *Frauenwohl*.¹¹

The materials included in „Breslauer Hausfrau” are an excellent illustration of how multifaceted the activity of the local branch of *Frauenwohl* at the beginning of the 20th century was. In a report published in 1910 and presented by the chairwoman Marie Wegener,¹² it was stressed that the organization's primary objectives included motivating women to greater participation in political and social life. Campaigns initiated by *Frauenwohl* activists around Wrocław took on various forms. They organized meetings with representatives of various political organizations, and a special group of activists sent out informational materials concerning women's voting rights. As chairwoman, Marie Wegener proudly informed in her report that an informational campaign conducted by the local branch encompassed twenty five villages in the area around Wrocław. *Frauenwohl* also made efforts to encourage younger generations of Wrocław women to action, forming special discussion groups for girls.¹³

Nevertheless, reports on the fight for women's suffrage rarely featured in the pre-war editions of „Breslauer Hausfrau”. Targeting the bourgeois, this periodical presented the women's organizations functioning in Wrocław and the region primarily from the perspective of social and charitable work. Even in the case of such an organization as *Frauenwohl*, which conducted a range of campaigns regarding equal rights for women, the pages of „Breslauer Hausfrau” contained far more information about the group's work for the poor, the infirm and the disabled rather than about other types of activities.¹⁴

¹¹ *Frauenwohl* was an organization that, within the structures of the BDF, comprised part of the radical wing, and was frequently in clear opposition to the more cautious bourgeois women's organizations. Among the organization's leading goals was the struggle for change in the legal system and political rights for women. See Barbara Grevén-Aschoff, *Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1894–1933*, [in:] *Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft*, Bd. 46, Göttingen 1981, pp. 90–107; Schaser, *Frauenbewegung*, p. 46.

¹² Marie Wegener was one of the most active members of the women's movement in Silesia, and among her engagements she led a campaign for the equality of civil rights between women and men. See Barbara von Hindenburg, *Politische Räume vor 1918 von späteren Parlamentarierinnen des Preußischen Landtags*, [in:] *Frauenwahlrecht. Demokratisierung der Demokratie in Deutschland und Europa*, hrsg. von Hedwig Richter, Kerstin Wolff, Hamburg 2018, pp. 57–76.

¹³ *Der Verein Frauenwohl*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 352, June 12, 1910, unnumbered page between the front cover and title page.

¹⁴ *Soziale Hilfsarbeit des Vereins Frauenwohl*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 129, March 4, 1906, p. 1; *Gruppe für soziale Hilfsarbeit, Verein Frauenwohl*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 175, January 20,

It should be stressed here that „Breslauer Hausfrau” strongly encouraged women to increase their engagement in civic activity, accenting the substantial role of women’s associations and unions in the struggle against poverty and social pathology. The support of the widely read women’s magazine was all the more valuable as the women’s movement, very active on that front, needed more and more people and resources.

As „Breslauer Hausfrau” observed, a very large number of married women were not engaged in any sort of social or charitable activity, owing to the assumption that they had to devote themselves entirely to their own family. The editors of „Breslauer Hausfrau” harshly criticized such attitudes, stressing the importance of women’s social work. In one article, it was emphatically stated that social and charitable activity conducted by married women by no means entailed ignoring one’s household duties. „Die Zurückhaltung der verheirateten Frau gegenüber den sozialen Aufgaben hat ferner ihre Wurzel in der Empfindung, daß die eigene Familie darunter leiden müsse” [The lack of engagement of the married woman in tasks of a social nature is also rooted in the conviction that this will come at the cost of harm to one’s own family].¹⁵ They wrote about the erroneous raising of girls from bourgeois households in the spirit of familiar egoism.

Unfortunately, in the pre-war volumes of „Breslauer Hausfrau”, we find very few articles that take a closer look at the persistent, day-to-day work of women active in a wide range of organizations. Thus, all the more valuable are those materials devoted to the specific activities of women’s organizations in and around Wrocław – for example, articles concerning work within the sex worker community or describing the activities of Wrocław legal aid centers for women. The fact that the editors of a Wrocław women’s periodical decided to shed a closer light on those issues was doubtlessly no pure coincidence.

The issue of prostitution was certainly among the more important issues raised by the bourgeois women’s movement and was associated with a broad-based campaign against double standards of morality. It should not be forgotten here that women’s organization activists did not conduct witch hunts and avoided taking the easy path of criticizing women who earned a living doing such work, but rather took the view of the phenomenon as a social problem. Many women’s associations

1907, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Sozialer Frauensinn*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 290, April 4, 1909, pp. 1–2.

and unions engaged in efforts intended to support women from that community.¹⁶ Materials published in „Breslauer Hausfrau” show us that *Der evangelische Frauenbund zur Rettung gefährdeter Mädchen* [The Evangelical Federation of Women for Rescuing Endangered Girls] was deeply involved in that type of activity in Wrocław.¹⁷

The women who belonged to this organization attempted to establish contact with sex workers, offering them help in escaping what was frequently a crime-ridden environment. Information and addresses of such women were obtained through cooperation with the city's police force. Women who were seeking to move on from that occupation were offered lodging in a home operated by the association and the possibility of learning a trade. In an article published in 1909, the editors of „Breslauer Hausfrau” tried to whip up support for the campaigns conducted by that union, which was clearly suffering from a lack of volunteers. As the magazine reported, the Wrocław branch of *Der evangelische Frauenbund zur Rettung gefährdeter Mädchen* was at the time composed of just a few permanent members, and a slightly larger group of women worked with them on an occasional basis. „Breslauer Hausfrau” regretfully emphasized that prejudices existing among members of the bourgeois effectively limited potential candidates' engagement in the activities of the union. „Leider gibt es heute noch viele Damen, die es als eine Schande betrachten, einer Gefallenen mit Rat und Tat beizuspringen (...)” [Unfortunately, there is no shortage of ladies who consider the provision of aid and advice to fallen women as a source of shame (...)]. However, in the editorial staff's opinion, it was not only bourgeois prejudice that held people back from engaging in such activities. There was also an equally strong apprehension of engaging in work in an environment unfamiliar to the bourgeois housewife. And in this case, „Breslauer Hausfrau” attempted to explain to its readers that their negative notions about unpleasant situations and dangers that volunteers may encounter in the course of their work were vastly exaggerated. „Gar mancher Frau mag das wohl ein schwererer Gang dünken, und doch versichern jene Mutigen, daß ihnen noch nie ein grobes Wort oder eine Gehässigkeit begegnet sei, und daß selbst die Männer, die sie ab und zu in den Wohnungen antreffen, höflich und anständig blieben.” [Some

¹⁶ Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, pp. 84–85; Greven-Aschoff, *Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung*, pp. 104–105.

¹⁷ *Der ev. Frauenbund zur Rettung gefährdeter Mädchen*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 322, November 14, 1909, p. 1.

women seem to believe that it is difficult to make the decision to take such steps, and those who have already done so explain that they have never been the target of insults or aggression, and even the men whom one can meet from time to time in those apartments behave pleasantly and decently].¹⁸ The extensive article was clearly intended to convince readers that aid for girls and women prostituting themselves is an important social activity and should not only be approved of but also supported by the entire women's community.

The editors of „Breslauer Hausfrau” also returned on multiple occasions to the issue of legal aid centers (die Rechtsschutzstellen) operating in Silesia. They are a very interesting example of the everyday work of women's movement activists in the region. In 1905, „Breslauer Hausfrau” published an extensive introductory article covering the functioning of a center in Wrocław that had already been in operation for over two years.¹⁹ The periodical informed readers that similar legal aid offices for women had been opened around the Silesian province in Legnica and Görlitz. As „Breslauer Hausfrau” reported, women who came in search of help could count not only on legal aid, but also concrete assistance and advice on how to solve difficult life problems. At the Wrocław legal aid center, women were told where to find places that could care for a sick or disabled family member; assistance was provided in obtaining social benefits; one could learn where to borrow money for starting one's own small business. A very important element of the work of the office was providing assistance in completing what were frequently quite complicated bureaucratic formalities.²⁰

As „Breslauer Hausfrau” emphasized, the Wrocław legal aid center was also planning to provide much stronger support for women fighting to secure maintenance payments for children born out of wedlock. For this purpose, „Breslauer Hausfrau” was also seeking women from among its readership who would act as wards of funds created for children by well-to-do fathers who were motivated to pay. „Auch in Breslau würde die Rechtsschutzstelle gern dem Vormundschaftsgericht eine Liste solcher Frauen, die bereit sind, Vormundschaft zu übernehmen

¹⁸ *Der ev. Frauenbund zur Rettung gefährdeter Mädchen*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 322, November 14, 1909, p. 1.

¹⁹ The headquarters of the Wrocław legal aid center for women was located near the present day Podwale street, at Basteigasse 7. The street does not exist in the present-day layout of the city.

²⁰ *Die Rechtsschutzstelle für Frauen in Breslau*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 74, February 12, 1905, p. 1.

übermitteln” [Also in Wrocław, the legal aid center for women would forward a list of women prepared to act as wards to the family and guardianship court].²¹

The editors of „Breslauer Hausfrau” must have considered the work of such centers as exceptionally important and valuable, as the article shows that a journalist who wrote the publication decided to take a closer look at the work of the Wrocław branch. Her attention was drawn by the fact that while the women working there did not possess a legal education, they nonetheless found a way to provide effective aid to women in need. The volunteers working in such places maintained a special register of all satisfactorily resolved cases and problems, which then constituted a model to follow in legal proceedings in similar cases. Information for the register came from various offices operating around Germany, in line with the assumptions of the founder, Dr. Marie Raschke.²²

The editors were generous with their praise for such an important initiative of the women's movement, stressing the need for such centers around Silesia. They were delighted to inform their readers that women's organizations in the region were preparing to open successive offices. The needs among women for legal aid and counselling must have indeed been tremendous, as just three years later there were twenty legal aid centers in operation around Silesia.²³

Unfortunately, such detailed reports on the everyday work of women's organizations in the region were quite rare on the pages of „Breslauer Hausfrau”. There was far greater interest on the part of editorial staff in the extraordinary congresses and conferences organized by the women's movement around Wrocław.

Without a doubt, the most important event associated with the women's movement presented in the pre-war „Breslauer Hausfrau” editions was the general convention of the chief union of all bourgeois women's organizations in Germany, the BDF, which was held in Wrocław in October 1908.

As early as 1907, first reports on preparations for this exceptional event of such significance to the Silesian women's movement appeared. „Breslauer Hausfrau” informed its readers that the national conference of the BDF planned for

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² Here the editors of “Breslauer Hausfrau” refer to a very specific example of the activity of legal aid centers established, i.a., owing to the engagement of Dr. Marie Raschke. She fought for changes in the family code to assist women. See Tanja-Carina Riedel, *Gleiches Recht für Frau und Mann. Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung und Entstehung des BGB*, Köln 2008, pp. 262–270; Ute Gerhard, *Debating Women's Equality*, New Brunswick–New Jersey–London 2001, p. 103.

²³ *Schlesische Frauen-Rundschau*, “Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 455, June 2, 1912, p. 3 before the title page.

Wrocław had been a serious impulse to Silesian women's organizations to disseminate the goals and ideas of the women's movement in the region. In the context of preparations for the conference, it was planned to compile a series of reports and papers presenting the achievements of the women's movement. As statements cited on the pages of „Breslauer Hausfrau” attest, activists from Wrocław primarily emphasized the successes and milestones of the women's movement in Germany, as well as the tremendous growth of women's organizations around the entire country. „Louise Otto²⁴ war die erste, die vor vierzig Jahren den Impuls zu dieser Erhebung gab und trotz Spott und Hohn, der ihr reichlich, namentlich von den Männern, zuteilwurde, unbeirrt ihren Weg ging. Aus diesem kleinen Anfang, der den ersten Kindergarten ins Leben rief, ist die Epoche mancher Frauenbewegung entstanden” [Louise Otto was the first who, forty years ago, provided the spark to action, and despite the insults and mockery which were so generously hurled at her by men, she never veered off course. From these humble beginnings, when the first pre-school was founded, the age of the women's movement was born].²⁵

It is interesting that such views were being published at a time when the pursuit of fundamental goals of the bourgeois women's movement, such as changes in the educational system for girls or admitting women to university education, was gaining momentum in Silesia – and across Prussia (although in fits and starts) – even more so than in other regions of Germany. Fundamental reform was not introduced until 1908.²⁶ This fact, however, was simply glossed over in silence by the editors of „Breslauer Hausfrau”.

The grand women's congress, prepared for over a year in advance, took place in Wrocław on 6–9 October 1908. „Breslauer Hausfrau” felt it was their obligation to provide extensive reporting from the event.²⁷ The editors proudly emphasized that the grand congress in the city on the Odra was attended by leading activists of the German women's movement such as Maria Lischnowska, Dr. Gertrud

²⁴ The periodical invokes the figure of Louise Otto-Peters, author and journalist, one of the first activists in the women's movement in Germany. See *Sind das noch Damen? Vom gelehrten Frauenzimmer – Journal zum feministischen Journalismus*, eds. Ruth-Ester Geiger, Sigrid Weigel, München 1981, pp. 48–49; Schaser, *Frauenbewegung*, pp. 18–20.

²⁵ *Die Generalversammlung des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine 1908 zu Breslau*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 203, August 4, 1907 p. 1.

²⁶ Schaser, *Frauenbewegung*, pp. 33–37; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, pp. 561–562.

²⁷ *Frauentage in Breslau*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 267, October 25, 1908, p. 1.

Bäumer, Helene von Forster, Rosa (Anna) Pappritz, Dr. Alice Salomon, Else Lüders, and Marie Stritt, then chairwoman of the BDF.²⁸

The article emphasized that the sessions of the BDF in Wrocław involved discussions of issues important to the entire bourgeois women's movement, such as women's education and professional work, reform of the penal system, and the matter of women's work at home. There was also information about presentations warmly received by attendees that addressed the matter of voting rights. Little space was devoted, however, to a more in-depth analysis of current problems of the women's movement. There was also no information about the fierce fights over the group's platform which took place during that time within the ranks of the BDF itself.²⁹

The local editors joyfully reported that, contrary to the fears of BDF chairwoman Marie Stritt, the large spaces hired out in prestigious locations around Wrocław were filled to the brim, and interest in the women's congress in the city was huge. „Sie wird freudig überrascht gewesen sein in Breslau Frauenwelt ein so lebhaftes Interesse an allen den behandelten Stoffen vorgefunden zu haben, daß die Räume wegen Überfüllung zeitweise geschlossen werden mußten” [She was very positively surprised that the women of Wrocław were so interested in all of the subjects discussed, and that at times it was even necessary to close the entrance to the halls due to overcrowding].³⁰

The municipal authorities of Wrocław also expressed their admiration for the 300 leading activists of the bourgeois women's movement, holding a reception in their honor at the town hall. As „Breslauer Hausfrau” reported, the large crowds of women's movement activists present at sessions had the opportunity to learn about the achievements of local women's organizations. The delegates visited, among other ventures, a crèche, a kindergarten, and modern home economics

²⁸ The activists named in the article were among the highest-ranking officials in the BDF. They represented different strands and organizations of the bourgeois women's movement. The organization itself at the time boasted around 200,000 members. During the congress in Wrocław, the union's leadership was most heavily influenced by its radical wing, represented by Marie Stritt, at the head of the BDF. In 1910, the more cautious fraction was victorious, and leadership of the BDF was assumed by Gertrud Bäumer, who was associated with the journal “Die Frau”. See Weiland, *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation*, pp. 55–58; Schaser, *Frauenbewegung*, pp. 42–44.

²⁹ Weiland, *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation*, pp. 55–58.

³⁰ *Frauentage in Breslau*, “Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 267, October 25, 1908, p. 1.

school, and they were also given the opportunity to get acquainted with the city itself.³¹

At nearly the same time as the grand BDF congress took place, the women's movement in Wrocław organized yet another superregional meeting of women's organizations: a conference devoted to the issue of women trafficking. „Breslauer Hausfrau”, reporting on this event, emphasized that women's organizations in Silesia should pay particularly careful attention to the issues being presented during that women's conference. It was noted that the province, bordering both Russia and Galicia, constituted an important transit route for those engaged in human trafficking. „In Schlesien selbst findet, wie bereits gesagt, ein Mädchenhandel nicht statt, aber es kommt als Durchgangsbezirk für die russischen und galizischen Händler in Betracht.” [In Silesia itself, as has already been said, there is no girl trafficking, but the province is treated as a transit zone by Russian and Galician traffickers].³²

Another important event for the women's movement, extensively reported on in „Breslauer Hausfrau”, was the meeting of the Eastern German Women's Congress (Der Ostdeutsche Frauenkongreß), held in Wrocław on 7–10 June 1913. Active participation as declared by 150 women's organizations and another 50 intended to send representatives from all eastern German provinces.³³

An article published during the sessions of the congress was clearly intended to encourage readers to participate in the numerous open meetings and lectures accompanying the sessions. The Wrocław editors even included a program of meetings and appearances in order to help readers plan their participation in the congress. The periodical appealed to women in Wrocław to demonstrate their engagement and activity through mass participation. „Sie sollten es für eine Ehrensache halten, unsere Provinz gut zu repräsentieren, damit die Veranstaltung gegen gleiche Versammlungen in anderen Städten nicht zurück steht” [The ladies should treat this as a matter of honor and represent our province well, so that this event should not be considered lesser in rank than those in other cities.].³⁴

³¹ *Ibidem.*

³² *Von der Konferenz zur Bekämpfung des Mädchenhandels*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 268, November 1, 1908, p. 1.

³³ *Der Ostdeutsche Frauenkongreß in Breslau*, „Breslauer Hausfrau”, No. 508, June 8, 1913, p. 1.

³⁴ *Ibidem.*

The program of the congress, alongside the reports typical of such meetings, advanced two interesting and important proposals. The first was directed to municipal authorities, which should facilitate the employment of women in municipal housing inspectorates. „Die Verbandsvereine wollen bei ihren Stadtverwaltungen petitionieren, daß die städtische Wohnungsinspektions-Frauen ehrenamtlich oder besoldet angestellt werden.“ [The associations intend to forward a petition to municipal authorities for municipal inspectorates dealing with matters of housing to employ women, as part of their civic activity or for salary.]. The second proposal concerned compensation for widows whose husbands died before 1912, and who, as a result of legal loopholes, were financially disadvantaged. Participants in the Wrocław congress were also planning to send the relevant petitions to the Bundesrat and Reichstag.³⁵

Patriotic and nationalist sentiments growing in Germany in the run-up to the outbreak of the World War I were also visible in the programs of some of the women's organizations. „Breslauer Hausfrau“ proudly emphasized that participants in the congress would take part in anniversary celebrations and visit a famous exhibit organized in commemoration of the war of liberation against Napoleon. „Nachdem man am Sonntag, den 8. Juni, früh die Gäste durch die Ausstellung geführt hat, folgt dann nachmittags 3 Uhr die Gedenkfeier für 1813 in der Jahrhunderthalle.“ [After the guests are led around the exhibit on the morning of Sunday 8 June, at 3:00 PM they will participate in a ceremony commemorating the year 1813 at Centennial Hall]. Moreover, participants were encouraged to attend a specially prepared lecture by one of the Berlin delegates (Mrs. Gerken-Leitgeb), who was supposed to indicate the links of the German women's movement with the events of 1813. The lecture, announced on the pages of „Breslauer Hausfrau“, bore the title „Die Bedeutung der Erhebung von 1813 für die Entwicklung der Frauen und der Frauenbewegung“ [The significance of the 1813 uprising for the evolution of the position of woman and the women's movement].³⁶

As the articles by the editors of „Breslauer Hausfrau“ presented above demonstrate, they included with exceptional eagerness reports from extraordinary meetings and congresses of women's organizations in Wrocław. It should be emphasized that similar materials can also be found in many other popular periodicals

³⁵ *Ibidem.*

³⁶ *Ibidem.*

targeting the female readership.³⁷ Congresses of women's organizations were also described in the largest competing periodical, „Fürs Haus” and its local editions, „Dies Blatt gehört der Hausfrau” [„The Journal Belonging to the Housewife”],³⁸ „Gartenlaube” [„The Garden Arbor”], the family periodical considered a standard-bearer for traditional bourgeois values presented also information about the objectives and activities of the women's movement.³⁹

Reports and articles printed in „Breslauer Hausfrau” concerning the activities of women's organizations were, however, of a different character. The women's movement was presented on the pages of this weekly from a local and regional perspective, exceptionally close to its audience. The efforts and engagement of the Wrocław editorial staff meant that alongside interesting and at times exceptionally detailed reports from important conferences and congresses of the women's movement, we can also find rare information about the difficult everyday work of Silesian women's organizations. It should, however, be emphasized that the editors focused primarily on their social and charitable activities. It was less common to find information about the engagement of Silesian women in the struggle for political rights or changes to the legal system. However, when taken together, the totality of the material we may find on the pages of „Breslauer Hausfrau” comprises a very interesting and colorful, although certainly incomplete, picture of the activities of the bourgeois women's movement in Wrocław, and – to a far lesser extent – around the province of Silesia.

STRESZCZENIE

Na początku XX w. ruch kobiecy w Niemczech był już dobrze zorganizowany, a jego hasła i postulaty przyciągały coraz większą uwagę opinii publicznej. Długie lata pracy licznych organizacji sprawiły, że były one szeroko dyskutowane i przenikały nawet na strony komercyjnej prasy kobiecej. Artykuł zawiera analizę materiałów z czasopisma: „Breslauer Hausfrau. Schlesische Wochenschrift für Hauswirtschaft und Mode, Handarbeiten und Unterhaltung” (Wrocławska pani domu. Tygodnik śląski poświęcony sprawom gospodarstwa domowego, modzie, robótkom ręcznym i rozrywce), które roz-

³⁷ Kirchner, *Das deutsche Zeitschriftenwesen*, pp. 358–360; Ulla Wischermann, *Frauenfrage und Presse. Frauenarbeit und Frauenbewegung in der illustrierten Presse des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München 1983 pp. 172–176; Angelika Schaser, *Helene Lange und Gertrud Bäumer. Eine politische Lebensgemeinschaft*, Köln 2010, p. 151.

³⁸ *Berliner Frauenkongress*, „Dies Blatt gehört der Hausfrau”, 16 (1901/1902), 4, pp. 102–103.

³⁹ *Die deutsche Frauenbewegung*, „Gartenlaube”, 1903, 1, pp. 22–23.

poczęło działalność jesienią 1903 r. i z sukcesem funkcjonowało na rozbudowanym rynku wydawniczym. Dzięki wysiłkowi i zaangażowaniu wrocławskiej redakcji na stronach tego lokalnego tygodnika obok obszernych relacji ze spektakularnych kobiecych zjazdów i kongresów, które odbywały się we Wrocławiu na początku XX w., znajdujemy także rzadko spotykane w innych źródłach informacje na temat codziennej, trudnej pracy śląskich emancypantek. Należy podkreślić, że uwaga miejscowej redakcji koncentrowała się przede wszystkim na działaniach o charakterze społecznym i charytatywnym. Wynikało to z komercyjnego charakteru czasopisma, które skierowane było głównie do mieszczańskich pań domu. Zdecydowanie rzadziej pojawiały się informacje o zaangażowaniu w walkę o prawa polityczne dla kobiet, czy zmiany o charakterze prawnym. Przykładem mogą być tutaj doniesienia redakcyjne na temat punktów pomocy prawnej dla kobiet, które funkcjonowały w wielu miastach Śląska. Warto zauważyć, że analiza materiałów zamieszczanych w „Breslauer Hausfrau” pozwala na ciekawe uzupełnienie informacji na temat celów i działania organizacji kobiecych we Wrocławiu i w mniejszym stopniu na śląskiej prowincji.

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