

Stefiuk on Diaz, Dupont, and Durand, eds. (2022)

Diaz, Delphine, Alexandre Dupont, and Antonin Durand, editors. *Femmes et genre en exil au XIXe siècle*. PU du Midi, 2022, pp. 150, 12 illustrations + 6 tables, ISBN 978-2-810712-17-5

Femmes et genre en exil au XIXe siècle is a recent thematic issue of *Diasporas*, a journal exploring the history of diasporas, migrations, ethnic and religious minorities, and transnational networks. This volume's gendered approach builds on a 2008 issue of the journal, *Étrangères*, edited by Isabelle Lacoue-Labarthe, and opens with a passage from Victor Hugo's account of Louis-Napoléon's coup d'état, *Histoire d'un crime* (1877). In a chapter recounting the Republicans' rush for refuge in Britain and Belgium, Madame Cantacuzène hurries to present her passport to the police patrolling the border in Lille, only to be allowed to pass unchecked. She is informed: "C'est inutile, madame. Nous n'avons que faire du passeport des femmes."

For this volume's editors, Hugo's phrase captures the elusiveness of women in histories of exile in the nineteenth century. The authorities' lack of interest in women's movement has had crucial implications for contemporary researchers wishing to retrace their steps. Described by the editors as "un double aveuglement" (9), a lack of surveillance records relating to women has often led to false assumptions about their migration, either reducing them to secondary actors (the wife, sister, mother, or daughter who was dragged along or left behind) or erasing them from the map altogether. The editors' introduction to this volume sets out the stakes of this process of invisibilisation and offers a brief but rich literature review of scholars—including Anne Morelli, Camille Schmoll, Donna Gabaccia, Katharine M. Donato, Mirjana Morokvasic, Sylvie Aprile, and Laura Guidi—working across women's history and migration studies to redress this account in and beyond French and nineteenth-century studies.

Nancy L. Green's tripartite formulation, summarized by the editors as "celle qui reste, la suiveuse, et l'exilée politique" (12), is particularly formative for this volume's contribution to recovering the nuances of migration activities and women's active participation in them. The editors also propose an addition to Green's categories: "celle des femmes qui vont et viennent" (14). This intermediary, go-between category seeks to do justice to the often-paradoxical nature of women's exile experience, which sees women's place in the domestic and public spheres interrogated, often resulting in new possibilities and challenges for them and family life with—intentionally or not—political consequences.

The collection's seven chapters span from the French to the Russian Revolution; five concern the Francophone world. In chapter one, Sydney Watts explores exile in Jersey during the French Revolution through a gendered lens. Watts notes how, in British public opinion, the failure of counter-revolutionary mobilizations launched from Jersey sparked a crisis of masculinity and, in turn, emphasized female vulnerability and the moral imperative to provide humanitarian aid. And yet, exile also offered women new professional opportunities and the chance to demonstrate their independence and resourcefulness. In chapter two, Paolo Conte examines the experiences of Neapolitan refugees living in France since 1799 and women's active role in corresponding with French authorities to request support and to negotiate their return—

permanently or temporarily—to their homeland. Their letters to the Ministry of Police testify to the difficult conditions endured during exile and women’s ability to rise to these challenges enterprisingly. Christophe Chevalier draws on Alien Police records, newspapers, and testimonies in chapter three to shed light on the Belgian response to female exiles between 1830 and 1870. Whilst women’s absence in the *Sûreté publique*’s dossiers suggests that Belgian authorities generally did not see women as a political threat, Chevalier notes that if they were perceived to pose a moral threat to the public order (e.g. through poverty or prostitution) they were increasingly surveilled and risked expulsion. In chapter four, Faith Hillis examines the communities created by Russian revolutionaries in exile in Europe between 1860 and 1910. Taking the examples of Vera Figner, Vera Zasulich, and Vladimir Lenin, Hillis argues that the lived experience of exile—specifically the experiments with gender roles found in exile communities—significantly shaped revolutionary ideologies. Chapter five explores the exile of Ranavalona III, the last Queen of Madagascar, at the behest of General Gallieni, who deemed her a threat to Madagascar’s transition from protectorate to colony at the end of the nineteenth century. Here Frédéric Garan traces Ranavalona’s exile from Madagascar to Réunion to Algiers and her trips to metropolitan France, noting the political and personal motivations for Gallieni’s desire to impose unusually harsh exile conditions on her. Garan also explores Ranavalona’s success in garnering personal and political sympathies from the French metropole. In chapter six, Guilhem Chauvet explores the exile of members of the Carlist dynasty between 1870 and 1900, noting how exile rendered the domestic, family unit a space for women’s political activity for the preservation of Carlism. Finally, chapter seven by Catherine Brice examines the experiences of women in the Italian peninsula between 1821 and 1860 when male family members went into exile. Brice notes the autonomy and agency gained by these women as they assumed economic, administrative, and political responsibilities managing the family estate and liaising with authorities on behalf of themselves and exiled male family members.

The contributions to this thematic issue offer a breadth and depth of analysis that will appeal to specialists of the periods and regimes discussed as well as to scholars interested in gender politics, women’s history, history of exile, migration, transnationalism, history of policing, and the politics of the archive. The contributors attend to the complexities, tensions, and paradoxes of women’s experiences of exile. However, the volume might have benefitted from further reflection on how these might relate to—and perhaps reshape—our understanding of men’s experience of exile and questions of masculinity too; their experiences are discussed only briefly by Watts, Conte, and Hillis. Archival research has helped to recover some women’s experience of exile, but, as the editors and some contributors acknowledge, more digging needs to be done to ensure that this is not limited to the experiences of a wealthy elite. Nonetheless, this volume’s contributions are a testament to how thinking critically and creatively about the archive can help to salvage forgotten or neglected histories and thus offer hope of new insights in future scholarship.

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