

Abstracts

Female students and intellectuals in the historical, social, and cultural frame of the Habsburg monarchy's last decades

The first Slovene women started their university studies already in 1897. Therefore, we propose that the first Slovene female intellectuals faced similar problems to those of any female intellectuals at the beginning of the 20th century. The paper confirms this hypothesis by means of a comparison between the European and Austro-Hungarian contexts and the specific Slovene circumstances. The paper also deals with the role of female students and intellectuals in the context of social development, particularly the work of selected Slovene intellectual women from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. We find that many Slovene female intellectuals left a lasting impact on the Slovene culture, science and society.

Ana Štěrba-Böhm, born Jenko (1885–1936), the first Slovene woman with a Ph.D.

Ana (Anica) Jenko (1885–1936) was born in Ljubljana as one of the four children of the physician Ludvik (Ljudevit) Jenko (1841–1912) and Terezija (Terezina) née Lenče (1858–1938). After attending the First Gymnasium in Ljubljana and higher courses for women at the University in St. Petersburg (Russia), she enrolled in 1906 at the Faculty of Arts of the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague as a non-regular chemistry and physics student, and she was a regular student from the study year 1908/09 on. On 10 July 1911, she passed the doctorate examination (“Rigorosum”) in chemistry and physics, on 21 July 1911 she passed the doctorate examination in philosophy, and on 22 July 1911 she successfully defended her Ph.D. thesis, all at the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague. The title of her PhD thesis was *Studie o stanovení a dělení kyselin: jantarové, jablečné a vinné* [Studies on determination and separation of acids: succinic, malic and tartaric acids]. Ana Jenko stayed in Prague all her life. On 4 December 1912 she married Dr Jan Stanislav Štěrba-Böhm, who was at the time Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University. Ana Jenko took both her husband's surnames and was thereafter named Ana (Anna) Štěrba-Böhm. According to extensive research, Dr Ana Jenko, married name Štěrba-Böhm, was the first Slovene woman with a Ph.D. degree.

Angela Piskernik (1886–1967), botanist and the first Slovene female Ph.D. at the University of Vienna

The Carinthian botanist, Angela Piskernik (27 August 1886, Lobnik – 23 December 1967, Ljubljana), one of the first university-educated Slovene women, was recognised internationally as a natural scientist, educator, and environmentalist. Between 1916 and 1926, she worked for the Provincial/National museum in Ljubljana; after that she worked as a teacher in secondary schools. Between the world wars, she was active in Catholic women organizations. She spent the years between 1943 and 1945 in prison and in the Ravensbrück concentration camp. After the war, she returned to her museum and conservation work. She wrote on Carinthian ethnography and cultural history and published German language handbooks. She received several national and international awards.

Milena Perušek (1893–1978), the first Slovene phytopathologist

The paper deals with the life and work of the first formally appointed Slovene phytopathologist, Milena Perušek, Ph.D. Until now, her name has been completely absent from the Slovene historical and mostly overlooked in Slovene phytopathological writings. Although her work in phytopathology was largely routine and carried out with limited means, she paved the way for modern Slovene phyto-medicine. Milena Perušek was one of the first Slovene women to obtain a doctoral degree in philosophy, which at the time also encompassed natural sciences.

Ana Mayer Kansky (1895–1962), the first woman with a Ph.D. at a Slovene university

In 1920, Ana (Anka) Mayer (1895–1962), who had previously, from 1914 to 1918, studied chemistry at the University of Vienna, received the first Ph.D. at the University of Ljubljana. Due to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in September 1919, she continued her studies and research under the supervision of professor Samec at the newly established Chemical Institute of the University of Ljubljana where she prepared her doctoral thesis and a research paper. The inscription documentation in the *Frauen Nationale* held by the University Archives in Vienna helped me to reconstruct Mayer's course of studies at the University of Vienna. Based on the materials at the archives of the University of Ljubljana,

I evaluated her doctoral dissertation and analysed the »rigorosa« (oral doctoral examinations). Dr Ana Mayer Kansky example represents a milestone in the empowerment of women in scientific and economic areas in Slovenia, since she was an equal member of Professor Samec's research group. She worked as a research associate and published five scientific papers in a co-authorship with Professor Samec in the years 1920–1922. In 1922, she and her husband, Prof. Dr. Evgen Kansky, opened and successfully managed the Dr. A. Kansky Chemical Plant, which shows that she was also a skilled businesswoman.

Melitta Pivec-Stelè (1894–1973), the First Slovene Woman with Two Doctorates

Melitta Pivec-Stelè left her mark on Slovene cultural history as both a historian and librarian. She was a well-rounded, educated intellectual, who, at a time when universities were only beginning to open their doors to women, was extraordinary because she defended two dissertations and earned two doctorates. In 1919 she received a Ph.D. in early medieval history at the University of Vienna, and in 1931 she earned another doctorate at the Sorbonne University in Paris. Her research on the economic aspects of the Napoleon's Illyrian Provinces is still considered a fundamental work in the field. Melitta Pivec-Stelè served as a senior librarian and the head of the Cataloguing Department at the National and University Library in Ljubljana until her retirement in 1950. Due to her work and numerous scholarly publications (on the history of libraries and librarianship in Slovenia among others), she earned a place among the leading lights of Slovene librarianship. In addition to already known facts about Pivec-Stelè, this article sheds light on some unpublished sources related to her studies, which eloquently testify to the extraordinary curiosity and scholarly excellence of this extremely important (but very humble) Slovene intellectual.

Helena Stupan, born Tominšek (1900–1992), the first Slovene female archaeologist and university lecturer of German literature

Helena Stupan, one of the most educated women of her time, left her mark on generations of German language and literature students at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, where she taught during the politically sensitive period between 1960 and 1975 as a lecturer in German literature. Interestingly, it was in her

later years that she became dedicated to German literature. In autumn of 1918, immediately after World War One, she went to the University of Graz, where she studied German and Classic literature, Slavic and French studies, pedagogy and archaeology. She was so attracted to archaeology that she chose to pursue a Ph.D. in it, and she earned her doctorate at the University of Graz in 1925. For a short time, she studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris, at Charles University in Prague, and in Strasbourg. Finally, after completing her studies in Graz, she enrolled at the University of Zagreb, and completed the courses of German, Slovene and Czech. She devoted all her life to teaching: she taught at the classical grammar school in Maribor and later at a grammar school in Ljubljana (IX. gimnazija, today Gimnazija Vič). She started to teach at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana at the age of sixty. With her arrival, the study of German language and literature took on new dimensions: Her lectures included contemporary literature and new methods of literary didactics, which deepened her students' interest in German literature. She was awarded the Yugoslav Order of Labour with Silver Wreath for her pedagogical work.

Zofka Kveder (1878–1926), the first Slovene female professional author and writer

Zofka Kveder (1878–1926) was the first Slovene professional female writer making a living solely as an author of literary and journalist texts, editor, translator, and inter-cultural mediator. After finishing school in Bloke and Ljubljana, she moved to Bern (Switzerland), where she took one term at the University but had to discontinue her studies due to financial difficulties. Thus, she was largely self-taught, she read a lot, travelled, corresponded with many important cultural figures of her time, and was extremely observant and empathetic. Her vast literary work of novels, short stories, novellas, and plays deals with femininity, focusing on the role of the female body and views on motherhood, sex, women's social role, desire for education, etc. This was a novelty in the Slovene literature at the time. She was a cosmopolitan, working in the multicultural environment of Austria-Hungary, and she left her mark not only on the Slovene but also on the Croatian and Czech cultural scenes. Her literary work, public appearances and newspaper articles, as well as her life story, illustrate the typical career of a female Slovene intellectual at the break of the 19th century.

Ljudmila Poljanec (1874–1948), a passionate student, a devoted teacher, and an overlooked poet

Ljudmila Poljanec is one of the most important Slovene woman poets before World War One. For more than twenty years, from 1899 to 1920, she was a teacher at Kapela in the north-eastern part of today's Slovenia, and at the turn of the 19th century she published her poems in numerous Slovene newspapers and magazines, often under a pseudonym. In 1906, the well-known Slovene publisher Lavoslav Schwentner published a collection of her poems, *Poezije* (Poems). Her book was not very well received by the critics, so this was one of the reasons that she tried to fulfil her other dreams: In 1908, at the age of 34, she entered the Faculty of Arts in Vienna as a part-time student, and she studied German and Slavic philology, pedagogy and philosophy. Her letters from that time reveal great enthusiasm and immense gratitude for the opportunity to enjoy the privileges of student life. However, due to financial distress and disagreements with the school authorities, she had to give up her studies without completing them. In Vienna, she associated with literary historians Franc Kidrič, Ivan Prijatelj and Ferdo Vesel; she was a friend of the poets Vida Jeraj and Kristina Šuler; and her literary mentor was the poet Anton Aškerc. Because of her great intellectual and creative powers, as well as her strong presence in the literary field and her introduction of forbidden themes into Slovene literature, Ljudmila Poljanec undoubtedly belongs among those unique literary figures that should be kept alive in the Slovene cultural memory.

Minka Skabernè (1882–1965), the founder of the first Slovene library for the blind

Minka Skabernè (1882–1965) founded the first Slovene library for the blind and co-founded the first Slovene institute for the blind in 1918. She was a teacher by profession but she devoted most of her spare time to charity work for the blind. She was one of the first Slovene educators of the blind. She realized that the war time presented an opportunity to develop the care for people with disabilities, in her case the blind. She wrote two fundamental texts about caring for the blind, namely the booklet *Skrb za slepce* (Care for the Blind, 1919) and the treatise entitled *Vzgoja slepcev* (Educating the Blind, 1920); the latter strongly contributed to the foundation of the *Zavod za slepe* (Institute for the Blind) in Ljubljana. Over

the years she organized five courses, training and later working with numerous women volunteers to transcribe books by Slovene authors into Braille. In this way she kept enriching the library for the blind.