

THE WOMAN WITHOUT QUALITIES? THE CASE OF ALICE SCHALEK, INTELLECTUAL LABOUR AND WOMEN INTELLECTUALS

Manca G. RENKO

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

e-mail: manca.renko@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Alice Schalek (1874–1956) is known predominantly as an Austrian war correspondent and one of the first women to practise this profession. Her life and work before and especially after World War I remain fairly unknown, as if the two years on the front were more defining for her than the other eight decades of her life. The article focuses on her intellectual labour and follows her ideological and intellectual development from being an integral part of fin de siècle Viennese artistic society throughout the ideologically fluid 1920s and communist experiments in the 1930s to becoming a tired old woman in American exile. It also presents the ways in which her gender was an obstacle in practicing intellectual work, especially during World War I. No serious attempts to analyse her post-war writings have been made thus far; this article is, at least in part, an attempt to fill in this gap. The article focuses particularly on the division between intellectual labour and the status of an intellectual. Alice Schalek performed intellectual labour; however, she was not recognised as an intellectual. In the conclusion, the article seeks to find the reasons why. Historiography and sociology gave us some answers to the question of who is an intellectual; however, they seem to be applicable mostly to men and their position in society. The case of Alice Schalek also serves as an example of questioning the prevailing qualities of the concept of an intellectual.

Keywords: Alice Schalek, intellectual transitions, intellectual labour, gender, World War I

LA DONNA SENZA QUALITÀ? IL CASO DI ALICE SCHALEK, DEL LAVORO INTELLETTUALE E DELLE DONNE INTELLETTUALE

SINTESI

Alice Schalek (1874–1956) è prevalentemente conosciuta come austriaca corrispondente di guerra e una delle prime donne a esercitare questa professione. La sua vita e il suo lavoro prima e soprattutto dopo la Prima guerra mondiale rimangono abbastanza sconosciuti. L'articolo si concentra sul suo lavoro intellettuale e segue il suo sviluppo

ideologico e intellettuale dall'essere parte integrante della società artistica viennese fin de siècle attraverso gli anni Venti ideologicamente fluidi ed esperimenti comunisti negli anni Trenta fino a diventare una vecchia stanca in esilio americano. Presenta anche i modi in cui il suo genere è stato un ostacolo nella pratica del lavoro intellettuale, specialmente durante la Prima guerra mondiale. Fino ad oggi non ci sono stati seri tentativi nell'analizzare i suoi scritti del dopoguerra e l'articolo in parte cerca di colmare questa lacuna. Particolare attenzione è inoltre rivolta alla divisione tra lavoro intellettuale e status di intellettuale. Alice Schalek ha svolto lavoro intellettuale, ma non è riconosciuta come intellettuale. In conclusione, l'articolo cerca di indagare tali motivi. La storiografia e la sociologia ci hanno dato alcune risposte alla domanda chi è un intellettuale; ma sembra che possano essere principalmente riferibili agli uomini e alla loro posizione nella società. Il caso di Alice Schalek serve anche da esempio per mettere in discussione le qualità prevalenti del concetto di intellettuale.

Parole chiave: Alice Schalek, transizioni intellettuali, lavoro intellettuale, genere, Prima guerra mondiale

INTRODUCTION¹

Some lives seem to be an eternal footnote, merely a tiny explanation that helps us understand the lives of other, more important people. Such footnotes are usually women or members of marginalised groups. The life of Alice Schalek (1874–1956) seems like one of those footnotes; the footnote to Karl Kraus' *The Last Days of Mankind*, where she will always remain a stupid, blood-thirsty, hysterical woman – a pure caricature of war, a child of her time. Her life seems to be reduced to her work as a war correspondent, to the two years that she spent on the battlefields of Tyrol, Isonzo, Serbia, and Galicia as a member of the k. u. k. Kriegspressequartier (KPQ), the central propaganda institution of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces during World War I. She is also partly remembered as a writer of travelogues and a photographer, although not a very good one.² This article seeks to analyse Alice Schalek as an intellectual worker, as someone who devoted her life to writing. From her early fin de siècle writings onwards, we can trace her preoccupation with the idea of women's intellectual work and the lack of possibilities that she as a woman of her generation had in a professional sense. Since the bulk of studies of her life is dedicated to her writings during World War I, this article will focus on the reception of her work during the war and analyse its impact on her in the 1920s. It will also shed light on her work after World War I and analyse her ideological development. It is known that she wrote three communist-oriented books (*Der große Tag* (1930), *Durchgefallen* (1931), *Pudel und Mops und andere Erzählungen für die Kleinen* (1932)); however, it is still unclear what radicalized her. Is it possible to identify her changing ideological positions in her other writings?

The other important aspect of this research is to define the line between intellectual work and becoming an intellectual. Despite the fact that Alice Schalek devoted her entire life to intellectual work, the question of whether she can be called *an intellectual* remains unanswered. It seems that the standards which frame *being an intellectual* according to the historiography and sociology do not apply to her work and – *especially* – her gender. The article will also focus on how her gender defined her role as an intellectual worker: how she was perceived in the male-dominated fields, such as war correspondence and public speaking. It will shed light on Schalek's two major transitions: after World War I, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed and partly also after World War II, when she lived as an emigrant in the USA.

Several studies on Alice Schalek have already been written. In 1999, when the Jewish Museum in Vienna organised an exhibition of her photos, they also published a catalogue that sheds light on her life and work. The catalogue *Von Samoa zum Isonzo. Die Fotografin und Reisejournalistin Alice Schalek* (1999) was edited by Elke

1 The article was produced within the EIRENE project, which is founded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 742683).

2 She is also remembered as such in German Biographical Lexikon – NDB.

Krasny et. al and focuses mainly on Schalek's travel photography and World War I. More about the role of women's writing during World War I can be found in *Der Krieg und die Frauen. Geschlecht und populäre Literatur im Ersten Weltkrieg* (2016) edited by Aibe Marlne Gerdes and Michael Fischer. The monograph also contains an article about Schalek, written by Bernhard Bachinger, *Weibliche Kriegsberichtstättung. Alice Schalek im k. u. k Kriegspressequartier*. Another chapter by the same author with the title *Alice Schalek. Standpunkte einer Kriegsberichterstatterin im Ersten Weltkrieg* can be found in the monograph *Kulturmanöver. Das k. u. k. Kriegspressequartier und die Mobilisierung von Wort und Bild* (2015, edited by Sema Colpan et. al.) In 1990 Ursula Bachinger wrote a thesis at the University of Salzburg with a title *Alice Schalek – Feministin (?), Kriegsberichtstättin (?), Revolutionärin (?)*, which remains relevant today. She analysed Schalek especially from the perspective of literature and German and gender studies, alongside other authors who focused mainly on Schalek's war reporting. Some of these include *Rhetorics of War: Karl Kraus vs. Alice Schalek* (2008) written by Elizabeth Klaus, and *Pioneer Journalistinnen: Two Early Twentieth-Century Viennese Cases: Bertha Zuckerandl and Alice Schalek* (1976) written by Mary Louise Wagener. Although Alice Schalek was far from being the only female war correspondent in World War I, women are still absent from the bulk of overviews of this profession (see e.g. Farrar, 1998; Knightley, 2004). Moreover, as Stephanie Seul emphasises, even histories of women journalists largely ignore female war correspondents and up until today there is no systematic study of female war correspondents during World War I. A small step in this direction was made for the centenary of World War I, as online *International Encyclopaedia of the First World War* was established as a collective project, managed by Freie Universität Berlin, one of the topics on the website is also Women War Reporters, written by Stephanie Seul (last last updated on 22 July 2019).

The fields of history of labour and of the history of intellectual labour are mostly separated, but this paper aims to reduce the division between the two concepts of work, especially in the field of women's intellectual labour in the early 20th century. Crucial historiographical readings about intellectuals include Ory and Sirinelli's examinations of French intellectuals since the Dreyfus Affair, *Les intellectuels en France, de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (1986), followed by some more recent German publications, such as *Gelehrte, Politik und Öffentlichkeit. Eine Intellektuellengeschichte* (2006) by Gangolf Hübinger and *Kritik und Mandat. Intellektuelle in der Politik* (2000) by Gangolf Hübinger and Thomas Hertfelder. The questions of intellectuals in historiography seems to be a predominantly French-German affair, therefore it is of utmost importance to include Stefan Collini's (2006) contribution *Absent Minds. Intellectuals in Britain*, which focuses on the notion of the word intellectual and its meaning in different historical, national and social contexts.

What most of the literature listed above has in common is that the notion of an intellectual is used for something that one is, not something that one practices. Being an intellectual appears to be more of a calling than a job. In other words, much has been said about being an intellectual, but not enough about what is in fact

intellectual labour.³ We know that not everyone who practises intellectual labour is entitled to the position of an intellectual; however, every intellectual had to practice intellectual labour to become one. Through Alice Schalek, a woman who spent her whole life writing, we will seek to define intellectual labour, the position of a female intellectual worker, and observe the historical and social limitations that shaped women's intellectual labour. It is clear that Alice Schalek was hardworking, but was that enough? The aim of this article is not Alice Schalek's intellectual rehabilitation; the article is aimed at using her as an example in order to show the obstacles to referring to a woman as an *intellectual* in the early 20th century.

The primary sources for this study were Alice Schalek's literature works (*Wann wird es Tagen?* (1902), *Das Fräulein* (1905), *Schmerzen der Jugend* (1909), *Der große Tag* (1930)) and her newspaper articles published in *Neue Freie Presse*, *Neues Wiener Journal*, *Der Neue Tag* and *Arbeiter Zeitung*, between 1919 and 1931. Other sources include her letters kept in the Austrian National Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) and in the Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv). Unfortunately, much of her legacy disappeared, most likely in 1939, when she fled Austria due to the Nazi threat.

EDUCATION FOR FEMININITY, NOT FOR THE PROFESSION

Alice Schalek was born in 1874 to a bourgeoisie Jewish family in Vienna. It was just slightly too early to be possible for her to study at the University of Vienna, where the first women students were allowed from 1896 onwards (Hanisch, 1994). Later in life, she often mentioned her lack of formal education and from her early writings on she focused on the importance of education for women. Her first novel, *Wann wird es tagen?* (When Will It Happen?) was published in 1902 under a male pseudonym Paul Michaely and addressed the questions of women's education and work. This novel, as well as her early literary work in general, is a typical Viennese novel of the fin de siècle; it deals with bourgeois life, Jewish environment⁴ in Vienna, troubles of (women's) honour, and the boundaries between modernity and tradition. She focuses exclusively on women, particularly bourgeois women and their problems. It is clear from her writings that she is sensitive to the social topics, but she sticks to the dilemmas of the bourgeoisie and only rarely writes about the struggles of the working class. The central question of the novel *Wann wird es tagen* is women's education, something that occupied her mind for the rest of her life. She problematized the uneven circumstances in which women received their education and were later in life unable to establish themselves as

3 Intellectual labour seems to be a topic of mainly Marxist studies; amongst them the most well known belong to Antonio Gramsci's division on traditional and organic intellectuals in his *Prison Notebooks*, Alfred Sohn-Rethel's study on intellectual and manual labour and Hans Jürgen Krahel's criticism of intellectual labour in the societies of advanced capitalism. These theories are only partly applicable to the context of female intellectual labour in the early 20th century and were therefore not the main literature for this study.

4 In 1904 Alice Schalek converted to Protestantism (Bachinger, 1990, 84).

independent human beings. She maintained that men could gain education that helps them change their social status, unlike women, who are reduced to care-work and can be socially upgraded only via marriage. She resented this idea.

The central question in almost all Alice Schalek's fin de siècle writings is how a woman can become a full member of the society in a professional, political, artistic, and also intimate sense. She questions the ideals and social conventions applicable to bourgeois women and even portrays them as a lie. The opening motto of her collection of short stories entitled *Das Fräulein* is: "Do not use the foreign word *ideals*. We have that excellent native word: *lies*."⁵ (Schalek, 1905). As shown in the novel *Wann wird es tagen*, women are not limited by their "nature" but by their situation. Almost half a century later Simone de Beauvoir wrote that the limitation of a woman comes from her situation, not from her mysterious essence and asked herself how could women be genius, when they were deprived of every opportunity to do genius work? (Beauvoir, 2013, 552). However, the majority of women sharing Alice Schalek's social and historical background were, in fact, deprived of almost any opportunity to do any kind of work, not just that of a genius (or an intellectual).

In 1909 Alice Schalek published her last work of fiction for the next 20 years. From 1903 onwards she was an editor of the liberal daily Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*. She worked for this newspaper for almost 30 years and wrote hundreds of articles, especially travelogues. This was just the beginning.

THE UNWOMANLY FACE OF WAR

We do not know the reason why Alice Schalek stopped writing fiction and decided to become a full-time reporter, traveller, writer and photographer. At the time when she wrote her last work of fiction she was 35 years old. It is reasonable to believe that she decided to follow a career that was promising a regular income rather than a financially uncertain artistic path, especially after her father Heinrich's death in 1907. She was able to find steady work, of intellectual nature; nevertheless, she produced in the frequency and style that could be compared to mechanic repetition, labour. Her articles differed from the books she had written, they were much simpler and plainer, and if compared to her work as a fiction writer, they did not really problematize any social topics; they merely entertained on a very simple level. Nonetheless, she seemed to have gained recognition progressively and the readers, generally speaking, liked her. Five years later, when World War I broke out, she was invited as one of only two women reporters⁶ to the k. u. k. Kriegspressequartier (KPQ), the central propaganda institution of the

5 Originally, the quote stems from Henrik Ibsen's famous play *The Wild Duck* (1884). Schalek's collection *Das Fräulein* also deals with the question of how difficult it is for a single woman to survive in a male-dominated world.

6 The other female reporter was the Hungarian writer Margit Vészi (Bachinger, 2016, 168).

Austro-Hungarian armed forces during World War I.⁷ She saw this as a great career opportunity; she was accepted to the elite society of artists⁸ whose job obligation was to promote the success of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces and to awake patriotic sentiments in their readership. The KPQ selected eight of the most important Austrian and eight of the most important Hungarian newspapers that could employ reporters to report exclusively about the war. It is a peculiarity of Austria-Hungary that from the outset of the war efforts were made to place cultural workers in the propagandist services (Bachinger, 2016, 173). The reason why Alice Schalek as a woman was entrusted with such an exceptional ideological role is also connected to her close relationship with Maximilian von Hoen, who was in charge of the KPQ between 1914 and 1917. They kept a lifelong contact.

When Alice Schalek started working for the KPQ, she was 40 years old and had more than 10 years of experience as a travel reporter. Along with works of fiction, she also published several travelogues: *Von Tunis nach Tripolis* (1906), *Indienbummel* (1912), and *Südsee-Erlebnis* (1914). Her first war reports from the Italian front were written as entertaining travelogues from *the land of war*; she perceived war as an excitement and a big adventure. She glorified the war and the Austrian troops. This may seem disturbing, but at the same time this was precisely her task: the KPQ's role was to produce propaganda and she did her best to reproduce the perfect ideology. She was not naïve about her role, which is clear from her letter to Maximilian von Hoen in September 1916, when she wrote: "It is questionable whether in February the Isonzo front can still be a propaganda object."⁹ To Alice Schalek, one of the most brutal battlefields of World War I was not a tragedy, not an example of war brutality – but merely an ideological battlefield.¹⁰ Despite the fact that her excitement about the war decreased in the year 1916 and that during the Isonzo Front she even questioned the war itself (the ideology of the monarchy became much more distant), she remained faithful to the propaganda that employed her. It is also important to remember that before the war she was famous for her lightweight and entertaining articles; as an author she was trained and educated to become a journalist who pleases her readership, just as girls in schools were educated to please the men in their lives. She had to be likable in order to be read and to keep her job. As she became a war correspondent in 1914, she did not know any other way of journalistic writing. Besides, people in general seemed to approve of her work: her most tendentious book *Tirol in Waffen* was sold in 6,000 copies (Bachinger, 1990, 93). She was not only popular as a writer but also as a lecturer:

7 Some war reporters were accredited by their newspapers (for instance Sofia Casanova) and others, especially Austrians, by the KPQ, the military organ itself. Schalek was a lifelong friend of Maximilian Ritter von Hoen, who helmed the KPQ between 1914 and 1917. This friendship was probably useful for her position.

8 Including, inter alia, Robert Musil, Egon Erwin Kisch, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Ferenc Molnár, Stefan Zweig, Franz Werfel, etc.

9 AT-OeStA, KA, BL46 (B), Alice Schalek's letter to Hoen, 22 September 1916.

10 Nevertheless, her later book about Isonzo questioned the war, as did her articles, which were written at the time. There is a vast difference between her writings about Tirol and her writings about Isonzo.

she was the first woman to lecture in *Urania* in Vienna and Berlin, and her Isonzo lectures only were attended by more than 40,000 people in upwards of 20 cities (Rapp, 1999, 30–31). Her role was to listen to the officers' dry reports and turn them into attractive stories. And she was good at performing her role.

Her first war book entitled *Tirol in Waffen* was dedicated to Maximilian von Hoen; it is evident from this gesture, as well as from her letters, that she appreciated the role he had in her life. She also made it clear, why she took her role in the KPQ – because she wanted to have a career as a lecturer and to write books.¹¹ But once von Hoen lost his position in the KPQ in 1917, Alice Schalek was promptly no longer wanted as one of the Empire's propagandists. Hoen's departure was not the only concern that threatened her employment. Calls for her to be banned from working as a war correspondent grew louder and came from different directions.

In *The Last Days of Mankind*, written during World War I and published in 1918, Alice Schalek¹² was portrayed as a caricature of a woman journalist, who was unaware of the world around her. Deadlines and excitement are all that matters to her; she finds her work more important than other people's lives. However, we have to keep in mind that Karl Kraus was often a supporter of conservative ideas and had certain reservations about modernity, especially when it came to his relationship towards women. However, gendered rhetoric was nothing unusual at the beginning of the 20th century. The difference between men and women was believed to be a natural and unquestionable fact. Kraus believed in the difference between the *sexual* woman and *intellectual* man, and he often made fun of women who dared to speak publicly, such as Bertha von Suttner and Bertha Zuckerkandl (Klaus, 2008, 78). To him, Alice Schalek, a female war correspondent, was an intolerable liberal novelty. A similar position towards Alice Schalek had deputies of the Austrian Christian Social Party (Christlichsoziale Partei), who filed a complaint to the defence minister against her work in 1917 for the reason that she enjoys engaging in “the female sensationalism and adventures” where “men take pleasure in their duty to suffer for their fatherland” (Rapp, 1999, 33). This distinction already reminds us of the prescribed gender stereotypes, in which men are taken seriously in their attempt to fight and women are mocked for taking the tragedy too light-heartedly. However, the conservatives were not the only ones to oppose Schalek's work as a war-reporter. The socialist *Arbeiter Zeitung*¹³ started criticizing her back in 1915, in the same year as Karl Kraus¹⁴, as she was reporting from Belgrade; they were triggered by her overly propagandist description of Belgrade and ironically named

11 AT-OeStA/KA, NL 46 (B), Alice Schalek's letter to Erwin Zeidler [June 1918].

12 In *The last Days of Mankind* Alice Schalek is mentioned in 11 scenes. In *Die Fackel* 14 long articles about her were published between 1915 and 1931. Additionally, there were also 77 short reports about her in the same publication (Klaus, 2008, 73).

13 In 1905 Alice Schalek published her feuilleton entitled *Ehrlich, sittsam und treu* (Honest, Modest and Loyal) in *Arbeiter Zeitung*. It was one of her rare literary pieces that dealt with the life of a working-class woman (her protagonist was a governess, a typical figure of the fin de siècle (Viennese) literature).

14 Karl Kraus wrote about Alice Schalek for the first time in October 1915 (*Die Fackel*, 5 October 1915, 15–17).

her “Lady the War Reporter”. They were outraged because of the way she condemned Serbs and described them as culturally inferior¹⁵; however, at the end of the article they pointed out that they used to read her travelogues with pleasure, which made them even more surprised by the tone used in her reports from Belgrade.¹⁶ They believed she did not even know what she was writing about.¹⁷ A month later *Arbeiter Zeitung* published her response. She emphasized that she had always been fond of this newspaper that “fought for freedom and equality”, but she believed the accusations towards her were made just because she was a woman. In her opinion, it is not important whether a war reporter is a man or a woman: before the war no one had experienced anything even comparable and therefore a male reporter could not be better suited for writing than she was.¹⁸ The newspaper replied in the same issue that their complaint was not about her gender but her work. Apparently, they were always on the side of women’s emancipation.¹⁹

Although we can believe that socialists felt resentment towards the war and therefore despised Alice Schalek’s involvement in the KPQ more than they resented her gender, it is clear from other newspapers that her “feminine characteristics” were the most upsetting thing for the majority of her opponents. Most of the complaints about her are described with the same words and phrases that were also used in her interpellation. In that document one can read that she was “eager of thrill”²⁰ and had “the thirst of adventure that is one of the most primitive female instincts.”²¹ How important her gender and her supposedly feminine qualities were is also clear from the following excerpt:

This emancipated un-woman²², who relives herself in the feuilleton section, has been offered the opportunity to liberate her nerves by photographing corpses and to tour with her lectures through half a hundred cities [...].²³

15 Karl Kraus had the same resentment towards her. He disliked the way Serbs were demonised by the media.

16 *Arbeiter Zeitung* referred to the article entitled *Die Erstürmung* published in *Neue Freie Presse* on 21 October 1915. She wrote: “Now, when out of awful necessity you wander through Belgrade’s confused network of streets [...] as a prejudice-free observer, before this artless imitation of a fifth-class Central-European provincial town, an inexpressible sense of amazement rises in you as to how enormous the power of words is: how was it possible to convince the inhabitants of this dull [...] city [...] that they could bring culture to the nation that built Stephansdom?” It is clear from her writing how seriously she took her role as a propaganda writer and it gets even clearer in the next part when she describes the military superiority of Austrian troops.

17 *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 24 October 1915: Dem Fräulein Schalek hat Belgrad nicht imponiert, 5. The descriptions of the battlefield and superiority of the Austrian army (without mentioning the Allies) does in fact seem unconvincing and partly fictional.

18 *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 26 November 1915: Die Kriegsberichtstatterin, 8.

19 *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 26 November 1915: Die Kriegsberichtstatterin, 8.

20 The term *Sensationslust* is used.

21 WBR, TP 045764/1: Haus der Abgeordneten – 19. Sitzung der XXII. Xxx am 13. Juli 1917, Anfrage.

22 The term *Unweib*, unwoman, is used.

23 *Bosnische Post*, 28 September 1917: Eine Interpellation über Fräulein Alice Schalek, 4.



Fig. 1: The Kaiser (Charles I of Austria) in conversation with Alice Schalek at the Isonzo Front (Das interessante Blatt, 28. 6. 1917, 4).

According to the interpellation and what was written about her, she was at the same time not womanly enough (she was unmarried, independent, and practised a profession that was at the time regarded as an extremely “masculine” one) and rendered incompetent due to her “female features” (curiosity, naivety, nervousness, vanity). Ironically, she was well aware of these double standards and she had already described them in her pre-war fiction.²⁴

Alice Schalek embodied several conflicts; not because of the way she was, but because of what she dared. Karl Kraus, who also pejoratively called her

24 The character of misogynist Heinz Troll in her novel *Schmerzen der Jugend* sarcastically describes the only type of woman that he does not scorn: “I can only have a small appreciation for unwomen who push themselves out of their role, assigned by nature.” (Schalek, 1909, 157). Then again, in *Wann wird es tagen?*, the character Otto states the opposite about emancipated women: “They don’t use all their powers to please, and a woman who does not rejoice when she pleases is an abnormal, crippled organism.” (Schalek, 1902, 144). With some historical irony, one can recognize the self-fulfilling prophecy that accompanied Alice Schalek’s life: she was always too much or too little of a woman or too much or too little of a man.

“an unwoman”²⁵, wrote: “It has become possible for our public to be given the obscene diary sheets of a woman²⁶ that knows no other way to stimulate her femininity than in the field of honour.”²⁷

Stimulation of femininity in this context has an implicit sexual connotation that could be perceived as dishonourable for a woman of her generation, especially when unmarried. The same goes for his scornful use of the word *Mannweib*, unwoman. It is clear from the quote that Karl Kraus was not trying to write a critique of Alice Schalek but was shaming her personally. He was triggered by her role in the public sphere; however, the way he wrote about her was predominantly personal. In July 1916 Alice Schalek filed a lawsuit against this particular article and its author. She sued him for public abatement and contempt and for violation of her personal honour. In her statement of grounds, she claimed that her profession of a war correspondent was attributed to “erotic and sensual motifs” and she believed that her “female qualities were attacked and were shown as if she was drawn to immoral and dishonourable behaviour.”²⁸ The lawsuit between both authors was not complete until the end of the war.

Alice Schalek stayed on the Isonzo front as long as she could. She wrote her last article about Trieste²⁹; and she remained true to her propaganda mission.³⁰ She lost her job in the late 1917 due to the public pressure and personnel changes in the KPQ. She was devastated and convinced she did not deserve that. She believed that the conservatives plotted against her and convinced simple people to sign an interpellation against her. She wrote to Erwin Zeidler von Görz that the interpellation was signed by “farmers from small villages, innkeepers, men who were pouring out schnapps and fire-fighters, who of course had never read or heard a word from me.”³¹ Her return to Vienna was followed by a severe illness that lasted for two years. In that time, she quit lecturing and her writings were rare. She focused on non-political travelogues about America, India, and Italy. She seems to have felt humiliated and forgotten. And largely forgotten was also the part of her life that followed after the war.

25 He used the word *Mannweib*, a pejorative term signifying an unfeminine woman, a manly woman.

26 He used the archaic pejorative term *Frauenzimmer*.

27 *Die Fackel*, May 1916, 18.

28 The whole trial was published in the February issue of *Die Fackel* in 1920 (Year 21, No. 521–530). The quote was taken from p. 11.

29 *Neue Freie Presse*, 24 August 1917: Triest im Kriege, 7.

30 In her last article as a war correspondent she wrote about the city’s Austrian character and made plans for its bright and Austrian future. The city lacked Austrian patriotism, she noticed, and she believed that much is to be done in order to make it fully Austrian. She hoped Austrian and German investors will take over the city and enable it its true character. Schalek’s reporting from the Isonzo Front and Gorizia, as well as her description of Trieste, shows that one of the foundations of propaganda was to ignore any existing national tensions. Although national tensions in the Northern Adriatic caused fundamental political and social shifts before World War I, the propagandist Alice Schalek did her best to ignore them.

31 AT-OeStA/KA, NL 46 (B), Alice Schalek’s letter to Erwin Zeidler [undated].

WHAT'S IN A NAME

It took Alice Schalek a while to return to the public sphere after the war was over. In April 1919 several Austrian newspapers published a notice that Alice Schalek will, “after two years of serious illness”³² deliver a lecture in Urania, where she will speak about her memories of the front and show some photos. A day later a note was published, claiming that the interest for her lecture was so vast that it will be repeated. In the years to follow she again held several lectures that sparked the broader public’s interest. She also began to write more regularly. She remained interesting to her readers and listeners, as well as remembered by her opponents. Her name stood for a certain type of a woman, who dared to exist as a public person. Back in July 1919 we can read in the newspaper *Der neue Tag* that “after the war was over, Alice Schalek seems to have returned from the underworld.”³³ Then the newspaper described her as an “admirer of hysterical militarism”³⁴³⁵; however, as we continue reading the article, we realize it is in fact about a completely different woman, as they write: “what difference does it make that she now names herself a communist and uses a different name, Elfriede Freiländer”³⁶. To them, they are both the same person: “Before she wrote that it was justice for Belgrade to be destroyed during the war because it was not cultivated enough, and today she writes that she would not shed a tear for Tyrol, because it is not communist enough.”³⁷ Names are not important, argued the author of the article, since both women are the same person: “What do we need names for, if we have the type? Alice Schalek is dead, long live Fritz Freiländer!”³⁸

Alice Schalek and Elfriede Freiländer were in fact not that similar at all; especially not in the year 1919. The only thing they had in common was that both of them dared to step out into the public, traditionally male-dominated sphere. The author of the article lets the reader know that all emancipated and educated women who address questions that have traditionally been reserved for men, such as war and politics, are the same person, the same *type*, that deserves to be mocked. This incident also shows that her reputation preceded her and made her name a trademark that was partly separated from her. Just like in the theatre play by Kraus, in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* during the war, in the interpellation – and also here, we can see that her name represented her more than her work; many people heard of her, but not many of them actually read her.

32 For instance, in *Neues Wiener Journal*, 16 April 1919, but also in other newspapers in the same week.

33 *Der Neue Tag*, 7 July 1919: Ein Paar Worte, 3.

34 Probably a wordplay for “historical materialism”.

35 *Der Neue Tag*, 7 July 1919: Ein Paar Worte, 3.

36 Elfriede Freiländer alias Elfriede Eisler alias Ruth Fischer (1895–1961) was a co-founder of the Austrian Communist Party in 1918 and a notable communist activist.

37 *Der Neue Tag*, 7 July 1919: Ein Paar Worte, 3.

38 *Der Neue Tag*, 7 July 1919: Ein Paar Worte, 3.

Despite her war-time experience and the disappointment that followed, she never regretted she was part of it; she reminded her readers over and over again about the war as if there was nothing she could be ashamed of. This suggests that she saw her involvement in the war as the highlight of her career and that she did not want to give her critics the pleasure of hiding the past they were so fiercely attacking. Despite the fact that she did not hide her involvement in the war, she also seemed to have changed her opinion of it. We can see that for the first time in an interview with Jane Addams in 1919. In the introduction she wrote that “the four powers could have prevented the World War, but they failed: the Church, social democracy, art, and women.” She goes on to say that there has only been one woman who clearly opposed the war, namely Jane Addams. Alice Schalek welcomes her internationalism (“It is easy to be national; you just have to be born in order to become a nationality. It is much harder to be international, because it forces you to rid yourself of egoism.”³⁹) She only used superlatives to describe Jane Addams and she seemed to have shared her pacifist and anti-nationalist positions. Of course Schalek’s change of narrative did not go unnoticed. *Arbeiter Zeitung* mocked her the next day, writing that “the courage of Fräulein Schalek – man could also name this something else –, to write those sentences, is unbelievable.” They reminded their readers, and also her, how tasteless her reports during the war were and that as a war correspondent she never took the pacifist or antinationalist position.⁴⁰

But one cannot say that Alice Schalek’s attitudes towards war changed drastically; they simply depended on her interlocutor. About a year after her interview with Jane Addams, *Neue Freie Presse* published her memories of Field Marshal Svetozar Boroević. The reason behind her article was the death of this field marshal, who made a name for himself on the Isonzo Front (she dedicated her book *Am Isonzo* to him as well). As evident from her writings during the war, they had a good relationship and she was still very fond of him in 1920. The article about him is written in a different tone than that about Jane Addams, here she cherished his patriotism (“There was no place of greater patriotism and heroism than in the Isonzo battles.”)⁴¹ and masculinity. She also emphasised that he himself censored every article she wrote and was a very accurate reader; but apparently, he only cared about the fact-checking, the ideological censure happened, according to Schalek, only in Vienna.⁴²

However, what soon becomes clear in Alice Schalek’s post-war writings is that she, just as she it was the case during the war, remained perpetually amazed. This is especially obvious in interviews; she always seems to adore her interviewees and never questions their statements. One can, however, also notice that war made

39 *Neue Freie Presse*, 21 May 1919: Jane Addams. Die Frau, die Präsident Fehrbach sucht, 3.

40 *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 22 May 1919: Die Kriegsberichtätterin, 5.

41 *Neue Freie Presse*, 12 June 1920: Ein Mann. Persönliches von Boroevic, 2.

42 *Neue Freie Presse*, 12 June 1920: Ein Mann. Persönliches von Boroevic, 3.

her more sensible to the questions of social justice, which is especially obvious in her interest in the position of women. Some authors (Rapp, 1999, 34; Bachinger, 2016, 187) argue that her postwar writings reveal even certain socialist positions, but I will return to the question of her ideology later.

In the 1920s, she penned many articles for many different Austrian newspapers, especially for *Neue Freie Presse*, but also for *Moderne Welt*, *Neues Wiener Journal*, and a few other papers. Being a working woman was extremely important to her; she was even one of the founders of the Federal Association of Working Women in Austria and was very active in several other women's organisations. She was not only a worker, but an "intellectual worker", as she liked to refer to herself. In March 1920 she published an article about the Danish funding that was supposed to financially help intellectuals all around the world. In the introduction, she wrote: "It is well known that the so-called⁴³ intellectual worker is the real victim of the world war, not only in the defeated but also in the victorious countries [...]."⁴⁴ And we can feel in her afterwar writings that she tries to publish more and more, since she was probably financially dependent on every article she wrote and every lecture she held. The twenties are the years when she seemed to have worked constantly and she wrote hundreds of articles.

Alice Schalek was rarely directly politically engaged, especially when it came to the Austrian politics, but she wrote more freely when it came to political questions abroad. Her report from Trieste in July 1921 is among articles that are especially interesting in the early twenties. What strikes the reader the most is the fluid understanding of politics and its context. She opened the article with a political description of the city and wrote about the dangers of fascism:

*It is a mortal shock for communists that their opponents can call themselves "the party of order" and can be elected, although in reality they are adding to disorder and nobody really agrees with them. Their side programme is D'Annunzio's nationalistic propaganda and the complete ownership of the "Mare Nostro", which makes even the level-headed Italians uneasy.*⁴⁵

One could easily take this excerpt for an opening of a political article or even assume that Schalek was approaching socialist ideas. However, in the further course of the same article she also addressed other topics that seem to be the direct opposite of the sentiment stated above. She wrote about Italian soldiers strolling around the city and Italian flags that were seen everywhere. She light-heartedly discussed prices and compared the price of a silk dress in Vienna and Trieste. She described fruit and vegetables available at the farmer's market in Trieste. She let the readers know how walking down

43 In German "sogenannte geistige Arbeiter". More about the connotation of the term "the so-called" in connection to intellectuals in Collini, 2006.

44 *Neues Wiener Journal*, 7 March 1920: Eine beginnende Internationale der Geistigkeit, 3.

45 *Neue Freie Presse*, 15 July 1921: Momentbilder von der Adria, 1.

the streets of Trieste made her feel her “Austrian heart” and she described how Austrian monuments were nowhere to be found. She was sad to see the shipping company Austrian Lloyd being renamed Lloyd Triestino and she compared the names of ships and realised how none of them any longer bears an Austrian name. Her last report from the war was about Trieste and the “Austrian nature” of the city – and in 1921 we can see she that was still trying to hold on to the Habsburg heritage. A part of her mental map was, at least emotionally, still connected to the old empire. Nonetheless, she also spent a great deal of the article describing the greatness of Lloyd Triestino and business success of the company. At the end she softly returned to politics. She emphasised that Italians no longer hate Austrians and wrote:

*This politically most ardent people of Europe have evidently risen above all phases and have now realized that the problem of the future is not a fight against Germany but a much more difficult struggle against the Slavs and the possession of the Adriatic.*⁴⁶

The article about Trieste is a good example of Alice Schalek’s post-war writing – just as she starts getting political, she changes the topic and her political convictions are not fully articulated, which makes her ideological development hard to follow. A meticulous reader cannot overlook ideological contradictions in her writing: at the beginning she describes the threat that fascism poses to communists, but later enthusiastically writes about Lloyd, one of Trieste’s capitalist strongholds. We can assume that her fondness of Lloyd was partly also filled with nostalgia; the company must have reminded her of the Habsburg times.

In general, she seems to be fonder of cruise ships than political ideology. An interesting example is her portrait of Hugo Stinnes, published in the Christmas edition of *Neue Freie Presse* in 1923. He was a prominent German capitalist and conservative, also a founding member of the Deutsche Volkspartei (German People’s Party), the former National Liberal Party. Her interview with him was amicable; she described him as a pleasant man, who laughs a lot, is a hard-working hero and a saviour of Germany. She did dare to ask him about his most notorious positions, such as opposing the 8-hour workday, conflicts with trade unions, and his speculation with inflation (he borrowed vast sums in Reichsmarks during the inflation in the Weimar Republic and repaid his loans in nearly worthless currency), but let him form his own statements without debating him. It is clear from her introduction that she was aware of his reputation and stated that he is a notorious person, about whom people like to talk, just as they do about Lenin or D’Annunzio.⁴⁷ In the article one can read that Stinnes did not believe in the concept of the 8-hour workday, but he argued that “everyone has to work until they earn enough to make a living” and that “he himself works all his waking hours”.⁴⁸ He

46 *Neue Freie Presse*, 15 July 1921: Momentbilder von der Adria, 3.

47 *Neue Freie Presse*, 25 December 1923: Hugo Stinnes. Ein Porträt, 3.

48 *Neue Freie Presse*, 25 December 1923: Hugo Stinnes. Ein Porträt, 4.

also believed that he prevented bolshevism in Germany by providing jobs. At the end of the article Alice Schalek wrote that his goal in life was “to save a part of Germany through his own work.”⁴⁹ He was presented as some sort of a saviour, a mythical figure, and even compared to Lenin. It is hard to make sense of this analogy: was it ironic or coincidental? Was she fond of the conservative industrialist? Did she want to express her ideological centrism and withdraw herself from any radical positions? Was it a provocation for her readers?⁵⁰

The answer to this question becomes clear a few years later. In 1925, when her essay collection about Japan was published (*Japan: Das Land des Nebeneinander*), she dedicated the book to no other than Hugo Stinnes. Even later in the 1920s she often wrote fondly of his steamers, she would sometimes even mention them in the subtitle of her travelogues.⁵¹ As she often mentioned Lloyd’ cruise ships as well, we can assume that this was a sort of compensation, namely free travel in exchange for public exposure.

However, Stinnes was not the only important German industrialist interviewed by Alice Schalek. In the late 1920s, starting in 1927, she also portrayed Kurt Sorge (from Friedrich Krupp AG), Paul Reusch (Guttegoffnungshütte, GHH), Felix Deutsch (AEG), Carl Bosch (IG Farbenindustrie), and many other less prominent but also important industrialists and businessmen of her time. Schalek’s attitude towards them did not change until the end of the twenties. She sought to find their best and most human characteristics. What most of them had in common was that their companies were not part of Vereinigte Stahlwerke (United Steelworks), a German industrial conglomerate founded in 1926. The ideology behind the majority of men reproduced by Alice Schalek could be referred to as *economic individualism*.⁵²

Even more than by businessmen Alice Schalek was fascinated by industrialisation; she named Bochumer Verein “an industrial marvel”, adored facilities for workers and even for people with disabilities, but missed more dwelling units for families. Nonetheless, she was amazed how “this beaten and demeaned Germany is admirable in the quiet further development of its old efficiency, entrepreneurship, and proficiency.”⁵³ She also added that the facility is a shining example of how to revive an area. Her fresh obsession with the industrialisation is traceable in other articles as well. A few days later *Neue Freie Presse* published her admiration of the Westphalian industrial area that was matched by that expressed in the article about Bochau.⁵⁴

49 *Neue Freie Presse*, 25 December 1923: Hugo Stinnes. Ein Porträt, 5.

50 She definitely provoked *Arbeiter Zeitung*; they despised the way she wrote about Stinnes, just as they scorned her war reporting. They clearly saw him as an enemy of the working class (see for instance *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 30 December 1923, 4).

51 For instance, when she travelled to Brazil in 1926 (see *Neue Freie Presse*, 11 February 1926).

52 This is best described in her interview with Kurt Sorge, as he argued that “In my opinion, the current catchphrase of co-working within countries and also within the world goes too far. It is absolutely not yet proven that mergers can save the economy. Who should determine the limits? The limitlessness of this idea leads straight to the utopia or to state socialism, which in my opinion would be the obstacle to all profitability and progress.” (*Neue Freie Presse*, 9. January 1927: Grenzen der Nationalisierung, 2).

53 *Neue Freie Presse*, 25 January 1927: Ein industrielles Wunderwerk, 3.

54 *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 February 1927: Durch das Westfälische Industriegebiet, 3.

At this point one can already discern a pattern: she trusted her interlocutors, seeking to portray them as pleasant as possible. In her interviews she never revealed her belief system, she seems to have always agreed with her interviewees. It is similar to feuilletons; her tone is exultantly excited when she writes about the Japanese fashion, the war or factories. However, the biggest question here is how the transition to the 1930s transformed her into a convicted communist? The abovementioned examples demonstrate that she did not show any sympathy towards socialism or even communism. Her profiles of businessmen and industrialists are anything but socialist. She also kept her writings about women's emancipation on the level of lifestyle: in 1925 she wrote about how too many women in Vienna wear their hair long (although "Bubikopf" peaked in Vienna and in Berlin at the time), how they should drive cars like they do in the USA or take care of their own entrepreneurship.⁵⁵

However, the 1920s came to an end and at the beginning of the 1930s she published three fiction books in the Soviet Union. Following more than two decades of writing non-fiction, she decided to revisit her artistic roots and address dekulakisation, for instance in *Der grosse Tag* (The Big Day 1930), or communist stories for children (*Pudel und Mops und andere Erzählungen für die Kleinen*, 1932). It was not unusual for Europeans of the thirties to sympathise with Stalinism, but it was unusual for Alice Schalek to make such a sharp left turn. The tone of her novel is clear from the beginning:

If only the poor organised themselves and followed the Communist Party [...]. We can now do what is absolutely necessary – namely to destroy the class of kulaks, a genuine contra-revolutionary clan standing in the way of building socialism. (Schalek, 1930, 3)

It is hard to understand Schalek's transition, as it arrived suddenly and abruptly. And just as it appeared, it later disappeared. Apart from these books, there is no other evidence about her Stalinism, neither before nor after that. There is not even much evidence of her political convictions or ideological beliefs in general.

In 1939 she had to survive another transition, namely her emigration to the USA. She was arrested by the Gestapo for "Grauelpropaganda" for possessing photos of a carnival procession in Tel Aviv in 1935, which were considered to have mocked National Socialism. As documented in a Gestapo report, she made a photo album of a few of these photos and planned to take it abroad. These were the same photos that she had already used for one of her lectures in Urania (1935) and the Gestapo predicted that she wanted to repeat her lecture as "Grauelpropaganda against German Reich". It is written at the end of the report that "the material was

55 *Neue Freie Presse*, 7 August 1925: Heimkehr nach Wien, 3; *Neues Wiener Journal*, 12 May 1934: Frauen am Volant, 6; *Die Österreicherin*, 11 March 1931: Als Gast bei Amerikanischen Berufsfrauen, 7.

secured” by the Gestapo (Krasny, 1999, 17).⁵⁶ This is probably also one of the reasons why these photos are nowhere to be found, since they were most likely destroyed. She managed to escape to New York via Switzerland with the help of the English PEN-club (Krasny, 1999, 16–17). She lived in the USA until her death in 1956 at the age of 82. There are not many documents from her American years to be found. In 1941, when she was 67 years old, she replied to Gertrud Redlich’s letter (*née* Flaschar, 1896), Joseph Redlich’s widow (they got married in 1919). She declined her invitation to take part in Ladies Committee, maintaining that she has no interest in giving money, collecting it or in political engagement. She emphasised that she is 67 years old and has to do everything herself:

*[...] I have to save every penny, which means that I did not have a single hour of help in the last 13 months. With my 67 years, I do all the work myself: I have to type, but at the same time I also have to clean, iron, shop, cook, clean windows, sew, repair shoes and all other things!*⁵⁷

She was also very clear about not wanting to do any political work or be publicly recognised. She wrote:

*It is completely out of the question for me to do any political work, be it under complete anonymity without any contact with co-workers, who would definitely speak to their wives about me. And this is not how you keep a secret. I may not go public with my name under any circumstances.*⁵⁸

And her name really did not appear publicly during her American years. A woman who spent most of her life fighting to be publicly heard spent her final 15 years in almost complete anonymity and silence. To this day, there are more questions than answers about her life.

QUALITIES IN AN INTELLECTUAL

Even in contemporary biographies it is hard to find a source that would take Alice Schalek for someone with intellectual capacities. In online Deutsche Biographie, a service jointly managed by the Historical Commission and the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (BSB), one can read that Schalek’s writing is “attributed to the trivial literature.” It is also pointed out that despite “Schalek’s fundamental openness, the travel reports often hardly go beyond a Europocentric and superficial discussion.” (Chrambach, 2005). The web portal 1914–1918, which was established by

56 The original document is reprinted in Krasny, 1999, 17 (and quoted as: Geheime Staatspolizei, Staatspolizeistelle Wien, Tagesrapport Nr. 2 vom 2. und 3. März 1939 (NA)).

57 ÖNB/HAN, 1452/13–16, Alice Schalek’s letter to Gertrud Redlich, [1941].

58 ÖNB/HAN, 1452/13–16, Alice Schalek’s letter to Gertrud Redlich, [1941].

the Austrian National Archive as a commemoration of the centenary of World War I, is critical towards her work and mentions in the first sentence of her profile that she is known “through the devastating criticism of Karl Kraus, especially because of her role in Karl Kraus’ play.”⁵⁹ Such contributions evoke the impression that Karl Kraus, the male intellectual, is an objective norm, even a historical judgement itself, whereas she is merely an object of an objective judgement, a historical footnote. In fact, as also shown earlier, the Karl Kraus’ role in Schalek’s life was anything but objective. And just as Schalek has some problematic elements in her professional and personal judgements, so does Karl Kraus; however, his are usually not mentioned in his biography (see online Deutsche Biographie) or at least not in the first sentences. Schalek’s case is a good example that represents the perception of women intellectuals, the position they held in public and the way they are remembered (or, mostly, forgotten). It also evokes the question of what it meant to be an *intellectual* and what kind of ideological and gender bias is connected to this concept in the early 20th century, but also in today’s historiography. Why is Alice Schalek as someone who reproduced⁶⁰ intellectual labour for more than 50 years not remembered as an *intellectual*? Does she fulfil any norm that historiography (along with sociology and other studies) has set for the definition of being an intellectual? There is no definite concept of *intellectual*: the term itself is vague and was at the beginning of the 20th century used in various cases, all of which have one thing in common. From the beginning onwards they excluded women, not necessary by definition but by the possibilities to achieve that definition. Some of the most important common highlights in the definition of intellectuals according to various authors (Weber, 1919; Mann, 1919; Lepsius, 1990; Said, 1996; Bourdieu, 2003; Fuller, 2005; Collini, 2006; Hübinger, 2006) are political engagement and/or intervention, radicalism, intellectual and personal autonomy, and eternal opposition. With the case of Alice Schalek I will seek to show how these definitions, despite the democratisation of the public space, could not apply to just anyone who practiced intellectual labour and was involved in the public debate. I will not focus on Alice Schalek’s intellectual achievements but on her working conditions as an intellectual.

The fields of history of labour and history of intellectual labour are mostly separated. Intellectual achievements are often analysed as if they had occurred without any labour or the labour itself even serves anecdotal purposes only. It is still commonly believed that there is such thing as a work of genius or enormous talent which is separated from dull, mechanic, repetitive practice and labour. One *is* an intellectual, it is not something you practice, but something you are. As Ory and Sirinelli (1986) were defining the term *intellectual* in regard to the

59 <http://wk1.staatsarchiv.at/frau-im-krieg/alice-schalek/#/?a=artefactgroup427>.

60 Bernice A. Carrol (1990) claims in her essay *The Politics of Originality: Women and the Class System of the Intellect* that women are often, even when they have achieved extraordinary intellectual accomplishment, perceived only as systematizers, expositors, promoters and as such »retailers of ideas«.

Dreyfus affair, they claimed that the intellectual is not defined by his function or status (what he⁶¹ *is*), but by his intervention in the political field (what he *does*). This can be applicable to Zola or any other established male writer of late nineteenth-century France: they *did* venture into political field, and could be successful in *doing* that, but this intervention is not something anyone could do. What was the possibility of women's intervention in the political field in late nineteenth-century Paris or Vienna? First you have to *be* something in order to *do* something and get your work acknowledged.

The history of intellectuals in France is almost entirely written by political historians (Collini, 2006, 49). It is not much different elsewhere; sometimes intellectuals are part of cultural history, but rarely social or even labour history. As if work (including working conditions, salary, equal opportunities, etc.) were not part of being an intellectual. The development and changes of Schalek's ideas, as well as her life trajectory described on previous pages, enable us to see where her life diverged from the dominant definition of an intellectual. From the beginning of the 20th century onwards intellectuals were associated with venture into politics, especially on behalf of a radical or even revolutionary cause. But radicalism is not an objective term; for the Russian *intelligentsia* it signifies something different than for the German *Intelligenz*, for a French bourgeoisie male intellectual it has a different connotation than for an Austrian woman writer without any formal education. Schalek's radicalism during World War I is often dismissed, not because she was not radical enough, but because her radicalism had a different form. Her radicalism occurred in public, in a male-dominated world, and this is a political intervention per se, partly even *revolutionary*, but was rarely acknowledged as such. However, radicalism and revolutionary commandment can also be taken more literally. Being a public intellectual is often linked to a leftist political orientation. In this case the slippages in judgment are also not treated with such seriousness (for instance, European intellectuals' flirtation with Stalinism and Maoism), but rather anecdotally, within the anti-capitalist discourse and value system.⁶² As shown in this article, Alice Schalek had a shorter excursion into Stalinism, but it was a lonely ideological experiment rather than nurturing leftist thought. Her writings over the course of the twenties show that she was politically quite ambivalent and also unarticulated, and her views were relatively fluid and dependent on specific circumstances. (One could guess that ideological clarity and consistency in nurturing her leftist or revolutionary thoughts would also bring her a more lenient historical judgment.)

61 Only a masculine pronoun is used.

62 Vocal critics of intellectuals include Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. In his article *The Intellectuals and Socialism* (1949) Hayek claimed that intellectuals as a social class are attracted to socialism and social democracy, and Friedman (2017) maintained that intellectuals believe in freedom for themselves but oppose freedom for others and are therefore inclined towards socialism.

Pierre Bourdieu (2003) claims that opposing positions of the same person can also build an intellectual's autonomy: an intellectual is not supposed to be someone who is unwilling to change beliefs. Intellectuals were, claims Bourdieu, when they venture into political life with their position of special authority, based on belonging to the autonomous world of art, science and literature, and with all the values associated with that autonomy. Alice Schalek was a professional propagandist, whose intellectual labour reproduced Austria's national ideology during World War I. Later she was a propagandist of German industrials, luxurious cruise ships, *Bubikopf* and dekulakisation. This takes away her aura of autonomy, opposition, and devalues her intellectual work. However, it must be remembered that autonomy, like radicalism, has different forms, and above all, it is not equally accessible to all. As pointed out by Steven Fuller (2005, 113–114), it is easy to demonstrate autonomy if you come from a wealthy background. One could use the same point when it comes to gender at the beginning of the 20th century⁶³ – it is much harder to demonstrate autonomy if you are woman. But it would also be naïve to believe that male intellectuals were in fact an eternal opposition or personification of autonomy. The position of intellectuals as outsiders, as argued by Collini (2006, 61), is “pure romanticization” that suggests sort of independence and above all – purity. In fact, the most well-known and usually self-proclaimed outsiders are those who were well connected, reviewed, excepted and cherished (just think of George Orwell or Jean Paul Sartre, to name a few of them). An unmarried female intellectual worker of the early 20th century could be nothing but an outsider, but at the same time if she wanted to support herself, she could not afford to be one. It is obvious from what Schalek wrote throughout the twenties how desperate she was to please her readers (as well as her interlocutors and editors). She did not want to stand out and be provocative. Her early writings, especially fiction, were much more daring and engaged than her journalistic work. This reminds us of Virginia Woolf, who often emphasised that where the truth is of utmost importance one should write fiction (Woolf, 1977; 2011). Alice Schalek articulated her truth about women, education, work, art, and marriage in her early books; what she produced afterwards was pure labour.

It was almost impossible for a woman of Schalek's generation to be known as an intellectual. Even if women were proclaimed intellectuals, the term was not neutral, it was usually ironic, incompatible with their gender. We are familiar with the pejorative term *blue stocking* (*Blaustrumpf*, *bas-bleu*) and even have Flaubert's (1913) definition of it; *bas-bleu* is a term of contempt to designate any woman who is interested in intellectual things (Flaubert, 2010, 124). To be an intellectual, a woman had to lose her gender, as made clear by the case of Alice Schalek during World War I. Many such cases are known in fiction as well. H. G. Wells published his novel about the “New Woman” Ann Veronica in 1909. In the novel, which was at the time regarded as scandalous, the protagonist's

63 Or race or any minority.

sister warns her not to become “one of those unsexed intellectuals, neither man nor woman.” (Wells, 1909, 99).

When discussing concepts, in our case the concept of the intellectual, we construct realities that tend to be more exclusive than inclusive. In these concepts intellectuals can only be people with many qualities: academic, artistic, personal, moral, and maybe even financial. Such people never exist, they are only constructed by themselves and others. Just as the past never only exists, we have to construct it, and what is even harder, strive for its deconstruction.

Robert Musil’s protagonist Ulrich, the man without qualities and Alice Schalek’s imagined contemporary in Vienna, failed to grasp the reality of modernity over and over again. His character was, just as Schalek’s life and work, dependent on the outer world and its ever-changing conditions. To name Alice Schalek a woman without qualities, tells us something about her, but even more about the world in which she lived.

CONCLUSION

There were three main purposes of this article: to portray the intellectual and ideological development of Alice Schalek in the years after World War I, to analyse prejudices and obstacles that she had to overcome due to her gender, as well as to shed light on the concept of intellectual work, especially characteristics of the term intellectual.

In order to do this, the article illustrates Alice Schalek’s life trajectory, which is relatively poorly researched due to limited access to sources, especially her transitions after World War I. The article fills in some biographical gaps; however, for a more detailed biography, we unfortunately lack available biographical sources that most likely disappeared upon her abrupt emigration to the United States in 1939.

According to other researches, Alice Schalek slowly radicalized after World War I until she became a communist in the early 1930s. Analysing Schalek’s articles in the twenties, the research shows that one cannot speak of such ideological development, since her intellectual work remains fluid, without a clear record of a certain worldview. Selected articles show that she also defended diametrically opposed positions: nationalism, internationalism, classical liberalism, pan-European movement, capitalism, militarism, pacifism, etc. Her radical turn to the left is surprising or unexpected and can only be conceived from her writing; unfortunately, there are no other sources to confirm her *weltanschauung*.

The attitude towards women’s intellectual work was evident when Schalek was a war reporter during World War I and immediately afterwards. Her gender and qualities attributed to the female gender played a role in the devaluation of her work. Over time attacks were less and less common, but she never interfered with men’s occupations to the extent that she did during World War I. The case of Alice Schalek showed how a woman who sought to establish herself intellectu-

ally in the early 20th century was restricted by her gender: on the one hand, her “feminine qualities” impeded her from professional intellectual work, and on the other, her opponents rejected her femininity and taunted her as a man.

The last part of the article illustrates how the female gender was incompatible with the concept of the term intellectual in the early twentieth century; both historiographical and sociological definitions make it, at least implicitly, impossible for women to obtain the status of an intellectual. According to the existing literature, the main attributes of intellectuals include political articulation in the public space, radicalism, personal autonomy, and intellectual opposition. But when these specific qualities are analysed, we can see that they are not equally accessible to everyone. The main focus of the article were therefore not Alice Schalek’s intellectual achievements, but rather conditions under which she had to practice intellectual labour.

In conclusion, the article suggests that historiography should redefine the concept of intellectuals in a more inclusive way and come up with criteria and qualities that are equally accessible to all who practiced intellectual labour. However, in order to establish a new concept, we first need to focus our research on particular cases of women and minority intellectual workers and the reasons why they were left out of the predominant historiographical narratives. Many studies of this kind have already been accomplished in the recent years, but there are many more to come.

ŽENSKA BREZ POSEBNOSTI? INTELEKTUALNO DELO IN ŽENSKÉ INTELEKTUALKE NA PRIMERU ALICE SCHALEK

Manca G. RENKO

Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska Fakulteta, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija

e-mail: manca.renko@gmail.com

POVZETEK

Članek se posveča Alice Schalek (1874–1956), avstrijski pisateljici, novinarki in fotografinji, ki je bila med prvo svetovno vojno tudi vojna dopisnica z več front, med drugim tudi soške. Njeno življenje in delo sta razmeroma dobro raziskana do konca prve svetovne vojne, nato pa se je historiografsko zanimanje zanjo nekoliko izgubilo. Članek skuša z razpoložljivimi viri (nekatera pisma hranita Avstrijski državni arhiv in Avstrijska narodna knjižnica, analizirane pa so bile tudi njene knjige ter časopisni članki, ki jih je napisala sama ali pa govorijo o njej) zapolniti nekatere biografske vrzeli, predvsem pa se posveča njenemu ideološkemu razvoju in intelektualnemu delu po prvi svetovni vojni. Ali jo je prva svetovna vojna radikalizirala ter se je v dvajsetih letih čedalje bolj približevala marksizmu, dokler ni v tridesetih postala komunistka? Kako je potekala njena povojna tranzicija? Kakšen je bil njen politični in družbeni angažma? V zadnjem delu članek pozornost namenja odnosu historiografije do statusa "intelektualca" ter intelektualnega dela. Kriteriji in posebnosti, ki naj bi intelektualcem podeljevali njihov status in zgodovinopisno obravnavo, so, kakor se pokaže tudi na primeru Alice Schalek, razmeroma izključujoči oziroma dostopni le določenemu tipu mislecev, zato ni nenavadno, da ženske ali predstavniki manjšin kljub prakticiranju intelektualnega dela niso bile upravičene do statusa "intelektualcev".

Ključne besede: Alice Schalek, intelektualne tranzicije, intelektualno delo, spol, prva svetovna vojna

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