

Report

EU-Conference 30th June – 3rd July 2007 in Bonn

by Christiane Goldenstedt

„Making Women’s History visible“, was the subject of the EU-Conference in Bonn, organised by the House of Women’s History¹ led by Professor Dr. Annette Kuhn. The opening speech for the conference was delivered by Ms. Eva Welskop-Deffaa representing the Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth.

Like on a big woven carpet female historians from Malta, Greece, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Estonia and Germany knotted, to show the marks of the matriarchy. The word matriarchal refers to our historical beginnings: to the mother as the measure of all things (mater = mother and measure like matrix) and to the beginning in terms of the Greek word arché: birth, source of life, source of power.² So the Red Thread should be visualized and interpreted in seven spaces of time and in the spiral of time. The seven rooms of the House of Women’s History include the Matriarchal Cultures from 40.000 - 3000 BC (room 1), Woman in the Encounter of Cultures 3000 BC - 1350 (room 2), Woman Leading the Way into Modern Times 1350-1550 (room 3), Women’s Movement in Europe 1550-1850 (room 4), German Woman in Search of a Democratic Society 1850-1938 (room 5), Women’s Politics and Fascism 1938-1958 (room 6) and Feminist Visions and Concepts of the one World (room 7). In Bonn the outcomes of all stations of the European project, which started in Malta and continued in Greece, Spain, Denmark, Austria and Estonia, were summarised. Our women’s history has their beginnings in the matriarchal early history. From women’s historical perspective the early history beginnings of our European culture were elaborated, which has left marks until our present. In the high cultures of the Orient, the Mediterranean area and in the Eastern European and Scandinavian countries these Red Thread has become visible as formative matriarchal sample (see the contributions from Marie Mifsud (Malta), Merete Ipsen (Women’s Museum in Aarhus), Maria Suarez-Lafuente (University of Oviedo, Spain), Gertrude Eigelsreiter-Jashari (Austria), Tiina Aunin (University of Talinn, Estonia) and also Marianne Hochgeschurz and Monika Hinterberger (House of Women’s History Bonn)). The European model is oriented on women’s historical experiences which are affected by fascism and communism, by war and mass killings.

¹ Be part of the contributors by the House of Women’s History Bonn amongst others: Annette Kuhn, Marianne Hochgeschurz, Monika Hinterberger, Barbara Degen, Heidemarie Wünsche-Piétzka und Marlene Zinken.

² Annette Kuhn, Marianne Hochgeschurz, Monika Hinterberger (Hrsg.), Spiral of Time, Schriften aus dem Haus der FrauenGeschichte, 1/2007, S. 1.

Altogether it was a very impressive congress, which was enriched by a lot of dazzling Colouredness. Included were the organised walk to the Matrons from the Roman times under the leadership of Gudrun Nositschka, the fascinating introduction in the exhibition JUSTICE IS A WOMAN by Barbara Degen and the visit of the House of Women's History in Bonn. A kudos for the perfect organisation of the conference to Heidemarie Wünsche-Piétzka and Tom Wünsche. With a lot of professional competence and dynamic Prof. Dr. Annette Kuhn led this conference and created with the historians of the House of Women's History a pleasant and cordial working ambiente for all participants. It is succeed by the historians of Bonn to build a City of Women in Germany, modelled on the Italian renaissance writer Christine de Pisan, to show women as important historical innovation and to make women's history visible. In that the whole project about the theme "Making Women's History visible" could be seen as path breaking European women's project and the final conference in Bonn could be evaluated as a big success.

Also see other conference reports:

Karin Gille-Linne & Heike Meyer-Schoppa: "We know an Ol-Stube". A personal retrospect of the European Conference "Women's Perspectives on the Roots of European History, July 1-3, 2007" in: SPIRAL OF TIME, Journal of the House of Women's History, ed. by Annette Kuhn, Marianne Hochgeschurz, Monika Hinterberger, Leverkusen / Farmington Hills, 2/2007, pages 66-69

News from the House of Women's History, SPIRAL OF TIME, Ibid. pages 78-79