

## **Clara Zetkin's educational policy and pedagogical work in the Soviet Union**

Clara Zetkin is discussed primarily as a protagonist of the proletarian women's movement. Her work in the field of education and educational policy has received little attention, and that mainly in the GDR and the Soviet Union in the form of an abridged, one-sided Marxist interpretation which omits all references to progressive educational ideas. Research since 1989, after the opening of Eastern archives, has been unable to remedy this deficit. Zetkin continues to be received primarily as a leader in women's policy, and the sources that have become available since 1989 have only rarely been used to support a reinterpretation of her educational work. Zetkin's work in the Soviet Union, beginning in 1921, has never been studied in depth. This is a blind spot in historical knowledge, especially from the point of view of education, since the development of socialism in the Soviet Union and Zetkin's position in the Comintern offered her a first opportunity to implement her ideas in education and educational policy. The young Soviet state also made ideological objections to progressive education obsolete, so that Zetkin was very probably influenced by the changes inspired by the ideas of progressive educational reformers in the early Soviet educational system. The present project is aimed at investigating Zetkin's work in education and education policy in the Soviet Union using a two-pronged approach: first, Zetkin's work in education and educational policy as a Comintern official is reconstructed on the basis of the extensive source material available in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History; second, Zetkin's works are examined to assess the extent to which her experience in the Soviet Union led her to change her positions on education or educational policy and to take up new issues, such as the education of minorities and the eradication of illiteracy. The present study thus contributes to an understanding of the relation between the workers' movement on the one hand and progressive education and women's history on the other.