

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF
WOMEN'S ACTIVISM AND
SCHOLARSHIP**

SITE: GERMANY

Transcript of Eva Maria

**Interviewer: Sławomira
Walczewska and Annette Trost**

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Eva Maria Born in 1949, Eva Maria grew up in Frankfurt on Main. After graduating from high school and apprenticing as a bank clerk, she left home in 1971. She was a university student in Marburg, until 1977 when she moved to Berlin. She was active in different gay and lesbian groups throughout this period, and collaboratively created the first Lesbian Week in Berlin in 1985. She has led the Lesbian Evening in BEGINE for many years.

Sławomira Walczewska, born 1960, feminist activist and philosopher (PhD). In 1999, Walczewska published *Ladies, Knights and Feminists: Feminist Discourse in Poland*, the first Polish book about the history of women's emancipation in Poland from a cultural perspective. That book was nominated, as one of 20 books, for the most prestigious book award in Poland at that time, NIKE, in 2000. She is author of ca. 50 articles about feminism and history of the women's movement. She was teaching history of philosophy at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (1985-1990), history of feminist ideas at the Warsaw University (1997), at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (2000) and the feminist critics of history at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt a/O (2019).

In 1991 she co-founded the eFKA- Women's Foundation, one of the first feminist organizations in post-socialist Poland. She edited the feminist magazine "Pełnym Głosem" (*In Full Voice*, 1993-1997) and was member of the editorial board of *Zadra*, the feminist quarterly (1999 - 2018). She is director of the Feminist Institute for Research and Education (www.efka.org.pl/fibe).

Annette Trost, a psychologist, was born in 1956. She has her own praxis of natural therapies in Berlin. For the last 40 years she has been an activist in many social and ecological projects in Berlin and internationally.

Eva Maria: I was 14 when I was in the hospital. As a young girl I was in Frankfurt am Main¹ for a very long time, half a year, in hospital. I had a problem with my spine and fell totally in love with a 15-year-old girl. She was in the next room, I visited her all the time. Back then I was plastered from there to my hip. I was in plaster for a year, but I could walk around with it. Of course not at the time when I was in surgery, I was lying in bed then.

Anyway, I spent a long time there and always visited this girl and she had had a sled accident, so a pretty bad sled accident and also had something on her spine. She just had to lie for a few weeks, lie in bed tightly. I always visited her and we talked about everything. One day she was allowed to get up and I almost fell off the chair, how tall she was at 15. I just looked at her, she was 1.80 in height.

At that time I was totally in love with this girl and she was also very beautiful. I don't know if you know pictures by Anselm Feuerbach², this painter. I think, from the 18th, 19th century. He had a girlfriend and that was his model, and that was a very beautiful woman. About like this woman in these pictures, this girl was looking. Anyway, I practically came out of this hospital story in such a way that I simply knew that I was falling in love with girls.

I was also in love with a girl at school, in class, but I didn't say it. I also thought that's totally inappropriate. I'm probably the only one in the world who feels that way. I also had no role models, nothing at all and had no girls in my environment where I might have had the idea that they feel the same way. There was nothing. I also grew up in a very Catholic city. Anyway, I thought I was the only one and then I took the detour through the cabinet of horrors of the heterosexual environment, with the dance studio and stuff like that, it was awful. This dance studio, [laughs] no.

I graduated from high school and then did a bank apprenticeship. Then I came to Berlin³, in '77, when I was 28. Then it grew stronger and stronger in me this desire to have a girlfriend, but at that time I was all hetero and I also was looking to join a group. Oh yeah, so I studied in Marburg⁴ in between and there I got in touch with the women's movement. There was also a women's center in Marburg and it was somehow really great to be among women and to be able to express yourself freely.

So the guys at the university were always showing off extremely and when they talked, the girls were mostly quiet. It was just like everywhere else, it sucked. Well, then we had this women's center in Marburg and somehow I knew I just wanted to go there and that's my way. Then I was in Berlin and I had heard of a group called Bread and Roses⁵, but

¹ Frankfurt (officially: Frankfurt am Main), built along the Main River, is the largest city of the German federal state of Hesse and the fifth-largest city in Germany. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt> Accessed 29 March 2020.

² Anselm Feuerbach (September 1829 – January 1880) was a classicist painter of the German 19-century school. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anselm_Feuerbach Accessed 29 March 2020.

³ Berlin is the capital of Germany and the largest city by both population and area. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

⁴ Marburg is a university town in the German federal state Hesse, capital of the Marburg-Biedenkopf district. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marburg>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

⁵ Verena Stefan, a Swiss-born feminist living in Germany, was a founding member of the group *Brot Rosen* (*Bread and Roses*). This group famously published *Frauenhandbuch 1* ('Women's Manual 1') in 1972 and

when I got here they didn't exist anymore, I think. Anyway, I couldn't join that group. And then there was the LAZ⁶, too, but I didn't know that back then.

And I was still hetero at that time, so I probably wouldn't have dared even to enter there in the Lesbian Action Center⁷. Then first I lived in flat-sharing communities and then in the winter of '78/79, where it did snow so much, maybe you can remember. So all of Germany was under a blanket of snow, it was a total catastrophe. Anyway, there was a party in Wedding⁸ in that winter, where I knew a woman, an acquaintance of mine.

She also had told me she knew a lesbian and she would be there too. Then I thought to myself, that sounds somehow interesting. I should have a look. So I went there to this party and first I had to change my outfit. Outside the snow was really high. I came of course in boots and had to change then, my shoes, half shoes, and what else.

I was in a room, where all the clothes were laying around. It was a bigger party, but mixed with guys and women. Then somehow this creature came into the room where I was changing my clothes. Then I thought to myself, well, that guy looks very cute. Then the guy says to me: "Hello, I am Birgit". [laughs] The party was actually really boring, but we both had a lot of fun and we were the only two.

We danced, laughed and drank all the time. That's practically how our relationship started. After an hour we practically fell in love. We were then together for more than two years and then she died. I have to stop now. Take a break. Yes, so my girlfriend died in a car accident abroad and that was terrible. That was so horrible, cruel, because we loved each other very much.

But fortunately I was well connected, so I had my groups. I had a writing group, I was in group 1174, and I had a conversation group. So I had girlfriends, I had my family. I had my sisters and they also supported me very much and kept me from falling. Luckily one year later I met a woman with whom I started a relationship, and that was Sabine. I was with her for four years, but somehow it didn't go so well after a very good start.

Because she was very radical and just couldn't make compromises with the hetero world. She wanted to found the Lesbian Nation and somehow didn't want to compromise at all. And through this radicalism and this uncompromising attitude she also drove many women away from her. She was very smart, very sympathetic and had a lot of good ideas. But she simply couldn't make friends with the hetero-world. Well, neither do I, but I think

⁶ 1974. See Afken, Janin, and Benedikt Wolf. *Sexual Culture in Germany in the 1970s: A Golden Age for Queers?* Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. Accessed 30 March 2020.

⁷ The L.A.Z. (Lesbisches Aktion Zentrum) emerged from the group of women that founded the Homosexuellen Aktion Westberlin (HAW) in 1972. A group of women then took the name L.A.Z. in 1975 as a sign of belonging to the feminist women's movement. The group focused on developing open-minded attitudes towards lesbians during the 1970s. See "Home." *LAZ Berlin - Lesbisches Aktionszentrum*, www.laz-reloaded.de/. Accessed 30 March 2020.

⁸ Also known as L.A.Z. (Lesbisches Aktion Zentrum). See "Home." *LAZ Berlin - Lesbisches Aktionszentrum*, www.laz-reloaded.de/. Accessed 30 March 2020.

⁹ Wedding (Berlin) is a multicultural district with several residential areas and parks. It is located in the borough of Mitte, Berlin, Germany. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_\(Berlin\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_(Berlin)). Accessed 30 March 2020.

it's quite clear that we have to make compromises. We have to work, we have to live, we have to pay our rent and eat, drink.

You cannot murder practically every man out there. She didn't want that either, but there was no other way. We all have to see somehow that we can get along. I mean, very few of us can really lead such a radical life. Only with women, it's a dream, this is a utopia⁹, just living and working entirely with women. I mean, some people manage that and also do their projects. Sometimes it works, but for most lesbians it's just that they have to come to terms with the hetero-world.

Sabine and I were first together in the Group 1174, I was in there for a few years. We were then also together in the editorial team, so we also published this newspaper, well, we started it, and also co-published it. Then in the autumn of 1984-- that's when the idea of doing a lesbian week came up. There were these women's summer university courses and there was the idea of doing a week just for lesbians. It originally came from the women's center, there was a group called Lestra. There the idea was born and Susanne Bischoff¹⁰ was also participating. Susanne Bischof pushed this project very hard and we then joined forces with her. There were about 8 to 10 women and then we prepared this Lesbian Week for one year.

The first event took place in the autumn holidays of 1985, the first Lesbian Week in Berlin. Of course that was a lot of work and the most difficult thing was to get the spaces. While looking for spaces, it was really funny sometimes. We asked in schools, of course, and some schools were also first quite impressed, but when they heard that we were lesbians, they suddenly remembered: "Oh, we have to renovate. We have to do a big clean sweep."

Then in the end we found a space, namely the FSE at Mehringhof¹¹. So we practically had our first Lesbian Week-, there were the seminar rooms and we also looked for and found lecturers. The agenda was very colorful. Actually, the topics were no different than today, love, work, relationships, sport, health, age, and so on. It doesn't really differ so much from today, I think. Well, racism also and exclusion, demarcation¹². Now I've just lost the thread.

I wrote a novel in 2010. I also looked for a publisher, but didn't find one. Or rather, I had written to two publishers and they didn't want it, it was too experimental for them. But

⁹ A 'utopia' is an imagined community or society that possesses perfect qualities. It focuses on equality in economics, government, and justice for its citizens. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopia>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

¹⁰ Susanne Bischoff, born 1954, is a sports teacher, sports- and movement therapist with focus on psychosomatics, psychiatry, and addiction. In 1982 she founded the first official lesbian sports clubs in West Berlin and is also co-founder of "Seitenwechsel" - Feminist Women's and Lesbian Sports Club Berlin e.V. She is dedicated to feminist sports and movement culture in both research and practice. See <https://www.lesbischerherbst.de/susanne-bischoff>. Accessed 31 March 2020.

¹¹ The Mehringhof is an alternative cultural center in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin. See <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehringhof>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

¹² 'Demarcation' refers to the action of fixing the boundary or limits of something. See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/demarcation>. Accessed 29 March 2020.

it was like that, I was unemployed and thought the Hartz IV system¹³ was absolutely absurd and I got such absurd letters from the Jobcenter.

I was totally mad about them, I don't know, one department asked me for documents. I send them these documents and another office asks me to send them again half a year later. I found this so absurd that I wrote them a satire. Then I also thought to myself, why don't I know any novels about the Jobcenter, about Hartz IV, about this system and these absurd letters. I still have them all, all these funny letters from the Jobcenter.

Then I thought, there is no novel about it, so I have to write it myself. Then I wrote a novel called "Endstation, alle einsteigen" ("Last stop, everybody get in"). As I said, I applied to two publishers. They didn't want that, it was too experimental for them. They had no money for that. Then I left that for a while, that was 2010. And in 2011 I actually wanted to get really stuck behind it, and try something again.

But then, that year, I call it the year of my dead ones, someone died all the time. Friends, relatives, a very close friend. So Sabine, with whom I also worked during Lesbian Week, had moved back to her hometown in the meantime and just drank herself to death. That was so terrible, also for her whole surroundings. We still had quite a lot of contact, but then she didn't get in touch any more. And then I just got the death notice in December 2011.

That was so awful. Then finally I heard from her family what was going on; liver cirrhosis and so on. Anyway, in that year some people died and I was in the cemetery practically every quarter year. Relatives, acquaintances, and so on, and then finally Sabine as the climax. Then I didn't care about my novel anymore at all, I didn't want anything to do with it anymore. Or rather, I gave readings at home in a small circle of friends. I also gave the novel to 10 women to read and some of them laughed themselves limp, because I also wrote it a bit satirically. So these readings, I quite liked reading to them.

But I just left it behind at first and I didn't have time to worry about it at the moment. But I could imagine looking at it once again and maybe writing to publishers, but it's not my crazy heart's desire right now. If I were 40 years younger now, if I were 30, I'd go to a reading stage and perform something, but I don't have to do everything. Can you just ask the question again and then--

Sławomira Walczewska: All right, already asked. Can you--

EM: Yes, well this group, this lesbian network in Schöneberg¹⁴, I find very, very exciting, because the women are all very different. As I said, the youngest is 26 and the oldest 78. We also have many different topics, depending on what the individual women are going through, what moved them and what they read, saw or experienced. Some are very sporty and go on excursions and some like to go to the cinema or read interesting books.

¹³ The Hartz concept or Hartz reforms is a set of recommendations submitted by a committee on reforms to the German labor market in 2002. The German governments *Agenda 2010* series of reforms became known as Hartz I – IV. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hartz_concept. Accessed 30 March 2020.

¹⁴ Schöneberg is a locality of Berlin, Germany, founded in 1264. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schöneberg>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

Then we exchange ideas or just everyday life. Of course, health, some small accidents, crashes and so on also play a very important role. Lately it gets more and more frequent that women just fall down, slip. And then they have bruises and so on. Well, these are just topics. We must all make sure that we stay healthy, which is actually not so easy. I mean, we can really be happy if we are still reasonably fit.

As I said, I told you earlier that two have already died and one is dying. That simply comes closer to us, that we also have to deal with these topics, that is quite clear. But a few years ago-- No, that was a bit longer ago, I once asked, "What is happiness?" Everyone got a piece of paper and then she wrote down what means happiness for her or what means happiness in general and what comes to her mind.

That was very nice. Some people answered philosophically and quoted some famous people what they understand by happiness. Or some simply said and wrote normal things. Then I put that together, the individual statements and then we had two pages, "What is happiness." I think I could repeat that, ask a question like that again.

I also find it exciting to experience what other women understand by happiness. For me, for example, happiness is-- I am happy in the morning when I can drink my coffee because I make the best coffee in the world. And without coffee the whole day is crap, so when I drink coffee I can identify with the day. It simply has to be, drinking coffee in the morning and adjusting to the world and to what I want to do and what I have to do.

My mother wasn't so excited at first. My sisters were thrilled. That was in 1979, when they heard from me that I fell in love with a woman, then they said, "Oh Eva, that suits you so well. That's great." Of course I was very happy about that. I could not tell my mother directly, because my middle sister, she was faster. She told her that and then my mother got into a bit of a pondering and, as I heard, had to drink a schnapps¹⁵ first. But she quickly came to terms with it. And she basically didn't really care whether we get married or have children or do anything else with our lives.

It didn't move her so madly. She was rather unaffected. She was happy when we were out of the house, when we had finished our studies. Somehow she could do her own things with her husband and recover from all the stress. We left home practically all at the same time because my two sisters were in the same class together. But they were of different ages. They were in the same class because my middle sister also had this story with her back and lost a school year. And that's how she got into my youngest sister's class.

They all graduated from high school together and I did an apprenticeship as a bank clerk after graduating from high school. And then practically all of us left the house in 1971 at the same time. There are many mothers who then say, "Oh God, the children--. And now I'm alone." Not my mother. She was so happy. My mother was also very creative later. She did silk painting and loved to read. And travelled with her husband, made beautiful trips. She also did weaving, made woven carpets. It was wonderful, what she did about silk painting, that was really great. And now I only say "her husband" because our father sexually assaulted us. That's why the relationship was terrible.

¹⁵ Schnapps is a type of alcoholic beverage that can take several forms including distilled fruit brandies, herbal liquors, and infusions. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schnapps>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

My sisters and I were all happy that he died in 1998. My great fear at that time was that my mother would die before him. But luckily she didn't. We were so happy that he was gone. We were all already out of the house, but it was just a great relief that he was gone. And my mother didn't mourn so much either, she didn't get along so well with him anymore. We had also told her at some point what he had done and she found it horrible. She had to take care of him in the last years of his life, he had pulmonary emphysema¹⁶ and was only at home. It made her really mad.

When he died, I think she was happy. She didn't say it so openly that she was happy. But it wasn't a love relationship anymore. I remember we saw him when he was laid out dead. Shortly before the funeral service we saw him, my mother was there and a few grandchildren. I think my sisters didn't, but I wanted to see him, I wanted to see him again. We saw him lying there and then we looked at him for a while, he was laid out behind a glass wall. When we left, my mother just waved as if he was just leaving by train.

Now I just lost the thread. I also mentioned that earlier, I am now 70, and what will I do for the next ten years until I am 80? I have set myself the goal of experiencing many beautiful things, also culturally, and going dancing. I also think it's great here in the Begine¹⁷ that there is so much to do here. Vernissages¹⁸ and Karaoke. I have been singing karaoke as well. It was funny, although I don't have a voice. Singing-along concerts and readings, I find everything very exciting. But I've also set myself the goal of somehow reducing my possessions.

I don't have as much stuff as other women. I know certain apartments, and what has piled up there, I have to say, with me it is quite manageable. But in the next ten years I would like to go through things to see what I need and what I don't need anymore. Yes, of course, I want to be 100, but of course I might die at the age of 80. And so my sisters, who are a bit younger, will have to clean out my apartment. Then I don't want to leave them so much work.

I also have many letters, for example. And I have to think about it, are they really so important that I have to keep them? I have files full of letters and boxes, shoe boxes full of letters. Of course I also have a lot of things from my mother. She died two years ago. Because she also liked writing very much and received a lot of mail, I looked through 800 letters, because some relatives wanted their letters back as well. A few nieces, for example, my mother's granddaughters wanted their letters back. I looked through 800 letters and cards.

That was weeks of work. I also found it very nice to see how many people my mother liked so much and with how many people she had contact. Her letters were also very popular. Many also roared with laughter, and so did I. Although we talked on the phone

¹⁶ Pulmonary emphysema is a chronic lung condition. It is often part of COPD, a group of lung diseases that cause airflow blockage. See "Pulmonary Emphysema." *Pulmonary Emphysema / Johns Hopkins Medicine*, www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/pulmonary-emphysema. Accessed 30 March 2020.

¹⁷ Begine is a cultural center exclusively for women. It was established in 1986 to provide a place for meeting others and self-help. It's a place for reading women's and lesbian magazines as well as a pool of information on lesbian events in the city. See "Begine." *VisitBerlin.de*, www.visitberlin.de/en/begine. Accessed 30 March 2020.

¹⁸ A vernissage is a term used for a preview of an art exhibition, which may be private before a public opening. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernissage>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

every week, we also wrote each other letters in between. Also written like this, "Yes, I read this and that book and watched this TV show, and that was great. I'll send you a review." My mother always sent me reviews or things that were exciting for me.

I also sent her something and anyway it was a very lively correspondence. She also had this sense of humor. Many of our relatives said, "I am so thrilled by her letters." She had already thrown away a lot of her letters. But when she died, I still took 800 letters with me, it's madness. I still have them all, or of course I have returned to some relatives the letters they wanted, but I still have many. And I also have my own, so the things I got, I still have quite, quite a lot.

Even from my time in hospital I have some things, as I told you before, that I was in hospital when I was 14. There I also made some nice friendships, which lasted for years, although we never saw each other again. We wrote each other for years, and there I also have some letters. My classmates also wrote to me when I was bed-ridden for half a year. It was very sweet what they wrote me. I still have some letters there, too. I have to look it all up and also check, can I get rid of something? Or not? Is it important? For whom is it important?

I also have so many T-shirts that I'm not wearing anymore. I want to make something out of them, I want to sew pillowcases from them, but I can't get into it. These are things that pile up and I've given a lot away in the last ten years. So I don't need five cooking spoons, of course I can give away two or three of them. Doesn't have to be. Or just casseroles, there I had five, and I gave away three. So things like that. Or 20 glasses, why do I need 20 wine glasses. So if I invite someone, okay, then maybe once I need six glasses or something, but not 20.

Then I want to create some space in my apartment and also free up some shelves. I also plan to write another novel soon, so I always write down some ideas. Sometimes I also write scenes or dialogues, which just come to mind. I imagine myself in some situation and then invent characters and write dialogues. Then I have to laugh about it and I think to myself: "Well, it would actually be nice to write another novel." But I know what that's like, then everything stops, everything else stops. The newspapers pile up, because I don't really get to read anymore then. That's just a piece of work. I've been there before, too. For that I really have to have a clear space in my apartment. And also, I don't know, empty shelves, where I can actually stack material. Or things that I need for writing novels. Back then I invented biographies for my characters, which I didn't use in part. I invented characters and then they started a dialogue with each other, that was very funny. There were five main characters which I invented and then they suddenly started chatting, practically in my head. They talked all day. All I had to do was write it down. But for this I need somehow-- It would be nice if there wasn't such chaos, that I just had a shelf where I could put the different materials in order. Back then it was a terrible mess. Stacks, stacks, stacks and then I'm always sorting and stuff. But that was also a lot of fun, I told about it in my group. So they knew I was sitting at the breakfast table with five people and they were chatting.

SW: Are they all women?

EM: No, so in the novel, there are guys as well. But of course the main characters are women. And two of those who fall in love, too. But the special thing about the novel is that

they are held prisoner in the Jobcenter. It's not called Jobcenter there, but Center for Work. They are held prisoner there, which they don't know at first. But I'd rather not spoil that now, because when the thing is published, one day it might be published [unintelligible 00:33:33] which I didn't tell you and mentioned is, once I was also for four and a half years in a gay association, on the board of directors, in the AHA, from 1995 to 1999. They deliberately integrated lesbians at that time, wanted to integrate them. And then there were a few lesbians, too. They came there regularly. And I was pushed into that board position, so to speak. They absolutely wanted to have a woman in there one day. There was another one, Barbara, who was also on the board, but then she retired. And then I was there-- Well, that was very interesting. To also experience these gays, because they deal with each other in a completely different way than lesbians deal with each other. They already have such a culture of conflict. So if, for example, they would have liked to smash their heads in privately, they still showed solidarity with each other in public. And I really think that-- I have to say that we lesbians can really copy something from that. Just stick together when it's necessary. And that's what I think is very important, this solidarity when it's necessary. Simply to signal to the public: "We stand together. We support each other." Okay, so there are disputes everywhere, but they just settle them so that everything doesn't collapse. Well, that's certainly been the case in projects over the past 30 years, that they simply collapsed. I suppose that it was the case, that women simply couldn't manage to stand together and solve the disputes in a constructive way. I think that is a really important thing. We can really learn something from the gays. Although, on the other hand, I'm not so crazy about gays either, because we also saw that they can also be quite misogynistic, and then gays are capable of cutting out the ground from under the lesbians' feet. There were also these incidents with this property there from Roth [unintelligible 00:36:07] and so on. I didn't like that at all.

SW: What property?

EM: That they practically snatched away a property from [unintelligible 00:36:18]. Not all the gays altogether, but a certain gay group, which actually already had two projects, like, plots. And the [unintelligible 00:36:34] also wanted a project "Living in old age." They already had found a plot of land and then they didn't get it. It went to court, too. I found that extremely unfair from this gay group, that they showed such a lack of solidarity. They probably had the better lawyers, more money, or whatever. Anyway, [unintelligible 00:37:07] somehow didn't get that. So I have to say, there are also gays who are very, very misogynistic. And forget about this saying, "We're all in the same boat." You can forget that.

I met gays in the AHA, they were really very, very kind and very cordial, and so on, and I liked them very much. But there were also a lot of people who were, well, really a bit contemptuous of women. Or also a bit irresponsible. So we had this café there, too. And if they were-- some of them left everything there and then others could clean it up. With this kind of sense of responsibility, probably some of them had yet to learn a lot. Some of them were very young gays who left everything lying around. And I thought to myself, well, they're probably boys whose mothers are always cleaning up at home. Or they also did such incredible stupid things--. We used to have cafés like this and then I also worked there. And then someone, for example, took a dish towel and wiped the floor with it. I thought I'm losing it. You can't do that. Well, things like that, somehow without any sense or comprehension.

SW: And why did you quit?

EM: Why did I quit? Well, I was a little burned out, then. I really did a lot of things there. I had a full time job, 39 hours and I worked ten hours a week for the AHA. I also did the bookkeeping and was running often also the café. And I had founded a small group as well, a discussion forum called "Frische Brise" ("Fresh breeze"). There were always about ten people, guys and also a few lesbians and they told about their lives, that was really nice. But it was just so much work and I with my full time job, 40 hours, I had a 50 hours week, that was just too much at some point. And then I also wanted to do something else again. That's where I left then.