

10

Women in Politics in Historical and Gender Perspective: from France to Guinea (1789-1958)

Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux: antoinette.fauve-chamoux@ehess.fr



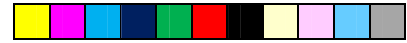
[Figure 1]

French Revolutionist Knitting Women [Les tricoteuses jacobines ou de Robespierre]

Estampe by Pierre-Etienne Lesueur, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, Gouache, © RMN.

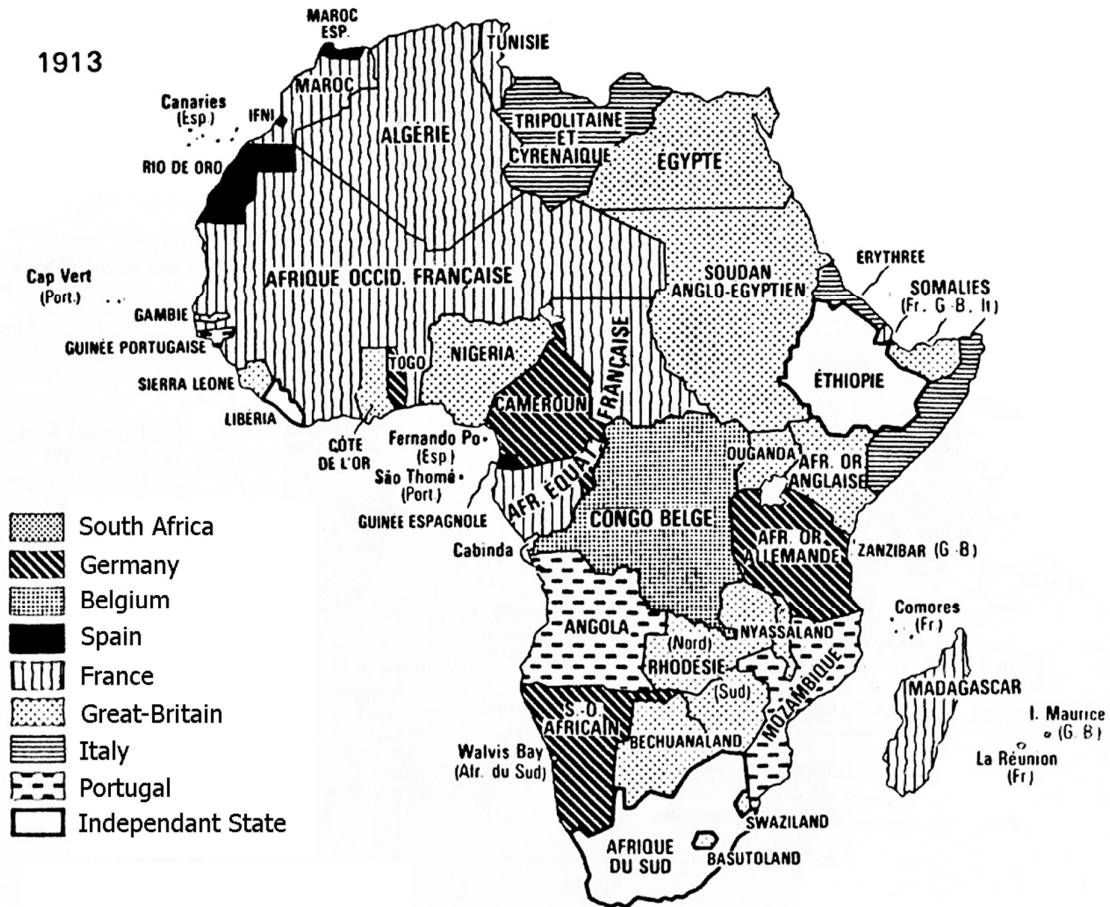
Engaged in proto-industrial work, many working class women were knitting woollen socks and stockings for merchants and, during the French Revolution, in Paris, they attended political meetings and, as says the caption, « A large number to them received 40 pence a day to come to the stand of the Jacobins and applaud the revolutionary motions, Year 2» [1793-1794].





[Figure 2]

Map of colonial Africa in 1913 (before World War I), including the German colonies Reproduced from Thobie *et al.*, 1990, p. 603.





[Figure 3]

Market women in Conakry, 1954.

Reproduced by permission of FR.CAOM. Aix-en-Provence.

According to Elisabeth Schmidt (2005a), women went to the markets every day. If there was a new song, all the women learned it and sang it in the taxis, teaching one another. When there was an event, the leader went to the market with the song to teach it to the other women.

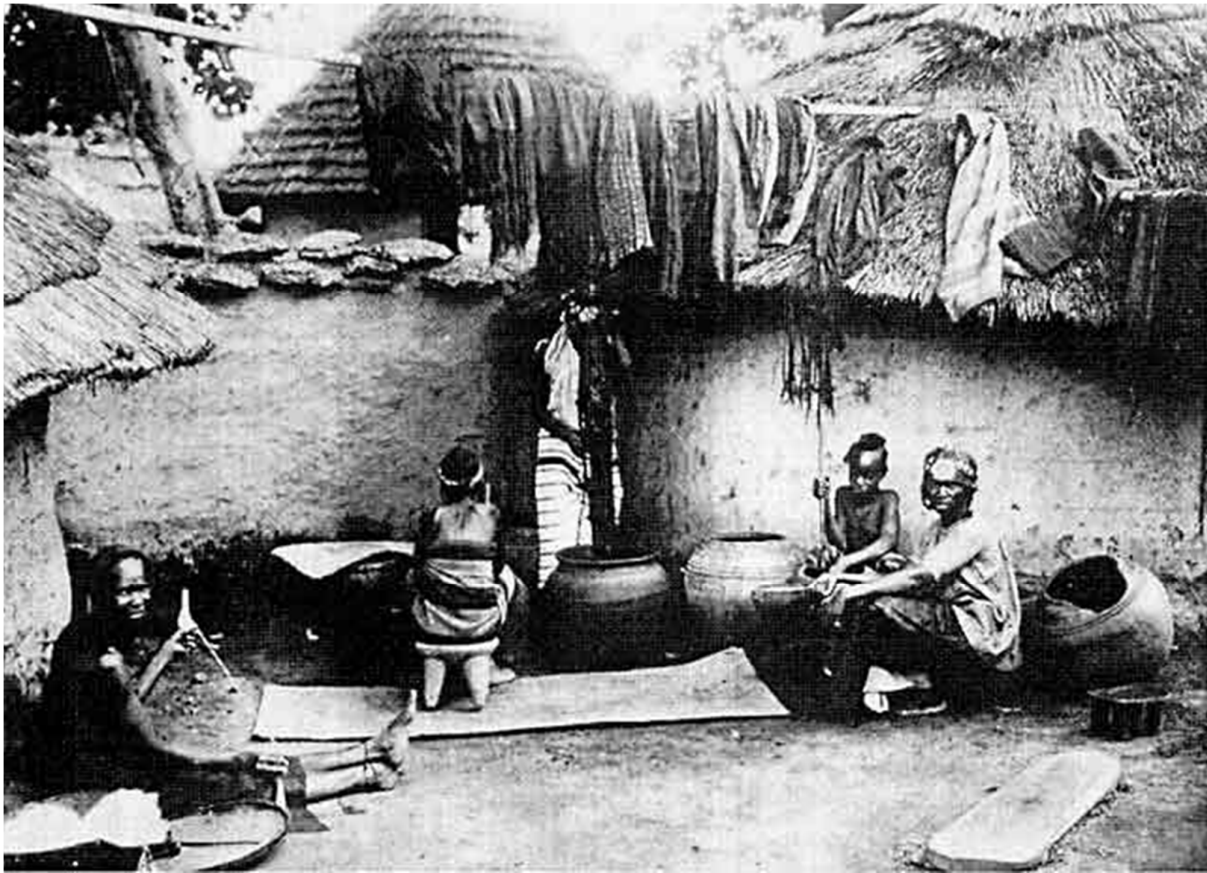




[Figure 4]

Malinke women spinning and dyeing cloth that they would later sell on the market, in their village, with family members, 1954

Reproduced by permission of FR.CAOM. Aix-en-Provence.





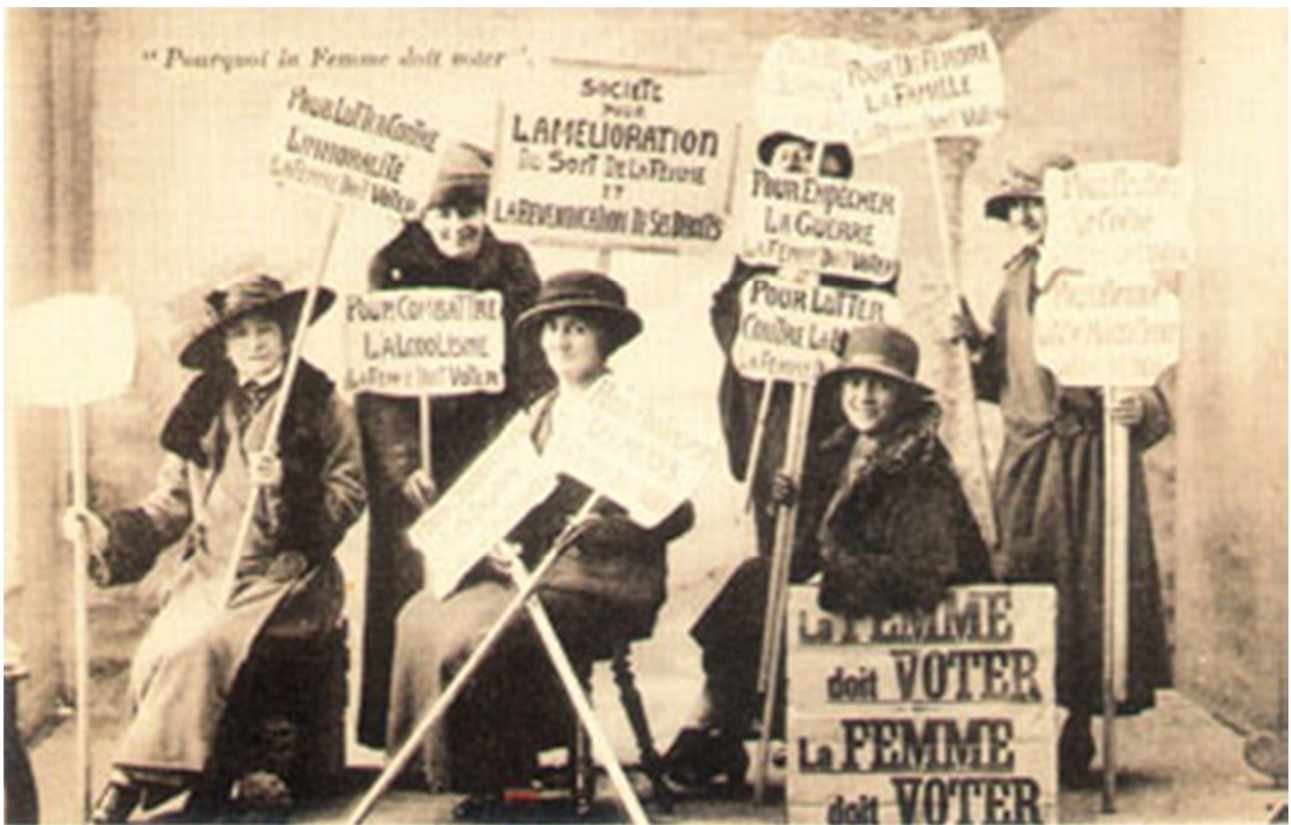
[Figure 5]

French post card c. 1915: “Pourquoi la femme doit voter” [Why the Woman must vote], showing a group of “suffragettes”, exhibiting panels claiming for the right to vote.

On the panels that they carry we can read, from left to right :

« Pour lutter contre l’immoralité, la femme doit voter » ;
« Pour combattre l’alcoolisme » ;

« Société pour l’amélioration du sort de la femme et la revendication de ses droits » ; « Pour lutter contre la (?), la femme doit voter » ; « Pour empêcher la guerre, la femme doit voter » ; « Pour défendre la famille, la femme doit voter ».





[Figure 6]

Louise Weiss, leader of the female activists of *Femme Nouvelle*, holding chains, attached together with them to the monument, place de la Bastille, Paris, and making a fire, proclaimed with posters « The French woman should vote » [*La française doit voter*], 1935.

Louise Weiss told the media and the crowd: "this place evokes for us the end of the ancient regime and the *Declaration des droits de l'homme*. This noble and so renowned *Declaration* is in reality only a masterpiece of egoism: its authors have just forgotten the woman" (Weiss, 1970, p. 89).





[Figure 7]

In 1936, French deputy Suzanne Lacore, a member of the National Committee of Socialist Women, became *sous-secrétaire d'État*, in charge with protection of children.

At the same time, Cécile Brunshvicg, présidente de l'Union Française pour le suffrage des femmes (U.F.S.F.), was *sous-secrétaire d'État*, in charge with education and Irène Joliot-Curie was *sous-secrétaire d'État*, in charge with scientific research.





[Figure 8]

French woman voting for the first time, General elections of 21 October 1945

For this Referendum of 21 October 1945, two questions were asked: 1/ Is a new constitution needed? and 2/ Is it needed to limit the powers of the constituent Assembly which is elected simultaneously?

Concerning the gender balance at the Assembly formed in 1945, only 5,6 % of elected deputies were females.

