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R. Amy Elman, ed. *Sexual Politics and the European Union, The New Feminist Challenge.* Providence, R.I.: Berghahn Books, 1996. x + 178 pp. $14.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-57181-046-5.

Reviewed by Lynn Walter (Department of Social Change & Development, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay)
Published on H-SAE (March, 1997)

The feminist scholars whose essays appear in *Sexual Politics and the European Union, The New Feminist Challenge*, edited by R. Amy Elman, ask what the relationship has been between the EU and strategies and goals of feminist movements in the member states since the late 1960s, and suggest what it should be in the future. Specifically, they focus on issues relating to sexual politics/sexual harassment (Collins, Mazur), pornography (Baer, Itzin), sexual trafficking and prostitution (Leidholdt), reproductive technology (Winkler), abortion (Smyth) and domestic violence (Hanmer). Most authors examine the sexual politics issue from a trans-national perspective, but the collection also includes case studies on France (Mazur), the UK (Itzin), Germany (Winkler), and Ireland (Smyth). Such issues of sexual politics, they argue, have not been as effectively addressed by EU policies as they ought to be, mostly because the EU has left the so-called private matters of sexuality to the member states and mostly addressed sex discrimination in employment.

Feminists have contended that the perceived split between public and domestic spheres has been and is being socially constructed to support patriarchy. The authors in this collection take this point of view and call for the EU to enact laws and policies which address issues of sexual politics. They argue that women will never be equal in the so-called public sphere of employment until and unless these so-called private issues–like domestic violence, pornography, prostitution, abortion–are confronted in public policies. They see the EU's powerful institutions as mostly resisting feminist demands for actions on sexual politics and thereby supporting patriarchy. However, they also contend that feminist activists have been able to push the EU equality policies in a somewhat more feminist direction. Delphy concludes the collection by affirming what the other essayists have also concluded, that European feminists should be active and raise such issues trans-nationally at the level of the EU, because it is a powerful reality, and because EU equality directives and parliamentary recommendations have, in some cases, been helpful in promoting feminist goals at the state level, as Collins and Mazur assert is the case for the issue of sexual harassment.

The articles are informative and thought-provoking. Elman's introduction is useful as an outline of EU history and institutions, as is Hoskyns' overview of EU women's rights policies, as related to phases in women's activism. The case studies are also useful for thinking about what feminist goals and strategies should be. Leidholdt's analysis of the growing problem of sexual trafficking in western Europe of women from eastern Europe and developing nations, raises the question of whether the social construction of prostitution as a choice and a right for women is linked with the seeming inability of member states and the EU to address the problem of sexual trafficking and sexual tourism. Smyth concludes that the EU concession to Ireland's patriarchy–by allowing Ireland to outlaw abortion–puts Irish feminists in a catch 22 position regarding whether or not to support the EU.

The value of this collection of essays is somewhat limited by its modest theoretical and empirical ambitions. The authors call for diversity among women to be recognized by EU policy makers, but do not address diversity to any significant degree in their essays. Except for national differences, most of the essays address "women" as a unified category and "feminist" as an uncontested concept. I was especially struck by the lack of any discussion of sexual orientation and by the relatively little attention paid to class. Baer's essay on pornography is exceptional in the extent of her analysis of why the U.S. and EU policies and attitudes about pornography are so different. Especially intriguing was her claim that Europe is, in part, constructing its identity on the basis of not being prudish like the U.S. and on an othering caricature of U.S. feminists, who are seen as "moralistic, rigid, shrink-infested, anti-sex fanatics."

Despite these reservations, I recommend the collection because the essays are assessable, informative, and useful for thinking about feminist sexual politics in relation to the EU. The case studies would be worthwhile

reading in women's studies courses comparing national differences in attitudes and policies toward sexual politics. The data that the authors synthesize is helpful for thinking about the limits and the possibilities of using trans-national political entities like the EU to address sexual political issues and the relationship between national and international feminisms in Europe.

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Citation: Lynn Walter. Review of Elman, R. Amy, ed., *Sexual Politics and the European Union, The New Feminist Challenge.* H-SAE, H-Net Reviews. March, 1997.
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