

Kateřina Sklenková: „The 1972 *Interruption of Pregnancy Law* in the context of the family and women’s policy of the GDR.“

Abstract

The Bachelor’s thesis focuses on the *Interruption of Pregnancy Law* of 1972, which was the only law in East Germany that was passed unanimously. It gave women the option to terminate a pregnancy during its first 12 weeks without any indication. There were ambivalent views in society about this practice. After numerous protests, the churches were granted an exemption and abortion could be denied on the basis of faith. In the wave of resistance that rose when it became apparent that artificial terminations of pregnancy would be criminalised again in the process of German unification, it can be seen that the *Law* was generally viewed positively. The thesis places the *Law* in its historical context and in the context of the regime’s other family and emancipation policies. This text answers the question of how it was possible that such a liberal norm was in place in the GDR. It explains that there were multiple factors. First, it was the socialist regime itself, which was supposed to be scientific and egalitarian in the spirit of the Marxist revolution. Then there was pressure from within the state, where the restrictive policy was criticised by the general public, backed by professional circles. This gave the regime the opportunity to bolster its legitimacy by complying with them. Crucial for the timing was pressure from outside – firstly from the Eastern bloc, where abortion was already liberally regulated. Secondly, from the West, which threatened to surpass the GDR in liberality and emancipation with its own reforms.