

# Claire Waldoff, “Raus mit den Männern aus’m Reichstag” (1926)

## Abstract

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In 1926, the year that Claire Waldoff recorded this song, women held just 33 out of the 493 seats in the *Reichstag* (the German national legislature), or just under 7% of the total. In fact, the percentage of female parliamentarians in the mid-1920s had declined slightly from its initial high-water mark of 8.7% in the 1919 elections for the National Assembly, when women held 37 out of the 423 total seats. Women’s representation in the various *Landtage* (the provincial/state assemblies) fared no better. In Prussia—far and away the largest of the Weimar Republic’s 17 states—for instance, women averaged a mere 6.5% of the seats between 1919 and 1933.

So when Waldoff belted out Friedrich Holländer’s brash lyrics here, in her unmistakably full-throated Berlin accent, she was insisting that precisely therein lay the country’s problem. For millennia, Waldoff argued, women had sacrificed all of their strength to empower men, and now women needed “to get right into the thick of it” themselves. Waldoff (born Clara Wortmann) had launched her performing career with much less political fare, but, by the 1920s, she began tackling larger societal issues, especially the gulf between women’s emancipation on paper and their emancipation in reality. This song’s pertinent critique notwithstanding, German women actually held a greater percentage of seats in their national legislature than did their counterparts in other large democracies. Whereas the Weimar Republic’s National Assembly had 37 women in its body when it convened in 1919, the U.S. House of Representatives and the British House of Commons had only one woman each, and women in France did not yet even possess the right to vote.

## Source

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Source: Claire Waldoff, “Raus mit den Männern aus’m Reichstag,” 1926. Music and lyrics: Friedrich Hollaender.

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