

ABOUT WOMEN AND FEMINISM IN THE PAGES OF THE TRANSYLVANIA INTERWAR PRESS

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Abstract: This paper aims on one side to observe some of the aspects regarding the feminist movement in Transylvania and, on the other side, to bring into light those subjects and articles that focused on women as main themes and heroes in the contemporary press. Also, this paper aims to show the role played by the press in this era through its mere existence. Our work relies therefore on the main feminist periodical from the Transylvanian space -Lumina femeii- , but also on Femeia satului, a periodical dedicated rather to practical advice and addressed exclusively to women. The wide circulation press (Gazeta Transilvaniei, Ardealul, Societatea de mâine and not only) complete the area of resources that we have used as they provide us with a constant presence of the feminine universe and its themes in their issues during the entire period that is the focus of this study.

Keywords: women, feminism, Transylvania, interwar press, civil and social rights.

The struggle caused by the First World War had a strong impact upon the collective mentality. It confused the former representations and depictions so that at the end of the war the social roles scored important transformations. Women and, especially the feminine elites, began to make their presence felt on the social scene, turning into a more demanding speaker, with a distinct public presence. The damaging experience of the conflagration and the Great Union has opened a hopeful universe that has appeared to be hard to neglect by the following political, social or cultural organization. Fearfully they are scoring the first signs of change and intend to take part in it „the Romanian inter-war feminism is contemporary to and contaminated by the immature neurosis of change, by the national exaltation and the conservatory retentive withdrawal.”¹

All these changes in the social dynamics have been intercepted at large by the Romanian historiography. The researches have been predominantly focused on the feminine status within the Romanian Principalities and to a lesser extent on the Transylvanian territory. Thus through the present paper we aim on the one hand to capture certain aspects related to the Transylvanian feminist movement; on the other hand, we intend to expose those topics that can be found in the pages of the journals and bring to the fore and ascribe to women a major role. In addition to this, we want to emphasize the role played by the press in the period mentioned above by referring to its own existence. A strong argument for choosing this territory is represented by the fact that we assist at a movement of a special nature that has pleaded for moderation, for a gradual emancipation through reforms; therefore, the movement has not been regarded as a rejective one meant to enforce women a militant attitude².

¹ Marian Prutean, “Discursuri despre femei în România dintre cele două războaie mondiale” în *Despre femei și istoria lor în România*, coord. Alin Ciupală, Ed. Universității din București, București, 2004, p. 123.

² Ghizela Cosma, *Femeile și politica în România. Evoluția dreptului de vot în perioada interbelică*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, apud Viora Ciordaș, „Cuvânt de deschidere al Adunării generale din 12 iulie 1921” în *Anuarul al II-lea al Reuniunii Femeilor Române*, 22 febr. 1920-12 iul. 1921, 12 iul. 1921-28 mai 1922, Beiuș, 1922.

In order that we should achieve these goals we have appealed to the first feminist periodical coming from the Transylvanian territory, we mean *Lumina femeii* then we have focused our attention on *Femeia satului* in spite of the fact that the latter is more of a practical magazine appealing exclusively to women. So as to reconstitute a more detailed portrayal we have also included in our research the newspapers of large circulation, such as: *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *Ardealul*, etc., affluent in information regarding various aspects of the feminine subjects and most importantly, having continuity all over the period analysed.

Testifying the execrations of the worldwide conflict, which were portrayed in the most detailed manner, the journalists captured to a lesser extent the situation of those people that were not in the first line of the fighters, especially women. Initially the voice of the periodicals and newspapers was a serious and moralistic one, addressing to educated women that meant that its target was a numerically reduced public. However, the number of periodicals and newspapers has gradually risen in the inter-war period, whereas the feminine press has become more diverse. The moderate feminist current that has portrayed Transylvania is represented by the apparition of the periodical *Lumina femeii* (1920) whose aim was "to bring to light and to encourage the feminine talents and to provide the reader generically with a better training for fulfilling her multiple responsibilities, opening to her new paths, improving her knowledge, deepening her feelings, getting her used to objective discussions about different problems that mark the present status of the woman of all grades".³

Meant to provide the readers with cultural patterns and ways of life, the practical periodicals were appropriated for helping women in their roles of mothers and housewives, spreading at a larger extent pragmatic and conservatory values. Such a role was assumed by the publications addressed to the rural world, we mean *Femeia satelor*, whose pages were popularizing the morality, the hygiene, the medicine and the household⁴. Apart from the information of practical nature and the writings that were intended to outline and to consolidate the major role of women, the publication contained a special section where the readers could ask for advice, write to the editorial office about the ordinary problems encountered daily and, most importantly, they could receive an answer to their calls.

Up to the Second World War the feminine press has been playing several roles, but first and foremost through the practical advice provided it can be considered "a practical guide that has offered useful advice, a guideline on topics such as kitchen, fashion, beauty, defining the practical and documentary function of the feminine press"⁵. But one must not neglect the normative role because in process of time the press gets to include topics related to work, rights, education and sexuality. The informative function resumes to presenting pieces of information about the feminine condition and is defined by frivolity and artificiality when approaching political and social problems. Finally, we can admit a therapeutic function of the

³ Sanda I. Mateiu, „Primul cuvânt” in *Lumina femeii*, Year I (1920), No. 1, p. 2.

⁴ The articles are trying to offer the readers a vast palet of subjects like: „Portul nostru național”, „Femeia”, „Către mame”, „Despre educația în familie”, „Calea femeilor de la sate”, „Câteva cuvinte pentru femeile noastre”, „Vaccinarea copiilor”, „Hrănirea copilului cu lapte”, „O bună gospodină”, etc.

⁵ Ghizela Cosma, „Presa feminină după model sovietic. Studiu de caz „Femeia” (1948-1958)” in *Condiția femeii în România în secolul XX. Vol. 2: Imagini și reprezentări în documentele vremii și presa de specialitate*, Vol. II, coord. Stan Ana-Maria, Diaconu Crina, Alexandrescu Mihai, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, p. 137.

press deriving from the correspondence with the readers⁶ that has developed a feeling of affiliation and solidarity only because more women have read the same journal⁷.

A few considerations about the evolution of the feminist movement

At the beginning of the 20th century, the feminist movement has been defined by a dynamic spirit as a direct consequence of the transformations within the social and political Romanian way of thinking and within the national ideology. The national movement has incorporated the feminine theme in order that the feminist ideology in its turn should re-evaluate its topics and its general direction and should minister directly to the national movement "which will put on a secondary place the ideas related to the social and political emancipation of women, ideas claimed in other part by the feminist movement. In Transylvania, the feminist ideology has conditioned the emancipation of women by the preliminary emancipation of the nation, to whom the movement has been asked to bring its contribution."⁸

Soon afterwards the war, the main center of the feminist movement from this part of the country would come into being within The Romanian Women Union. If up to the dawn of the global conflagration the Union has lead an activity focused on charitable and cultural objectives, during the first years of the inter-war period, it has had to cope with the broadening of the feminist program and the rethink of its incidence. Following the debates, the program has widened and has been filled up with demands for civil and political rights for women⁹. Along with the foundation of the Romanian Women Union Federation and its development outside the regional limits, the vote and also the civil emancipation of women have been included in the program of the Transylvanian Feminists.

If outside Transylvania the leaders of the movement have submitted to discussion an emancipated and economically independent woman, ranking in all aspects with men, indifferently to the consequences that these changes would have on family, within the Transylvanian area the Feminist have appeared to be reluctant to alter the traditional dimension of the feminine way of life, to drag her out from his field and so to endanger the family life; this is however the main reason for continuing to fight for activism in the cultural and charitable fields. Their demand has been addressed especially to the elite and has centered on the problems of the poor women, of the peasant women¹⁰ and of those living at the periphery.

In what regards the discourse practiced by the leaders of different Transylvanian societies, it expresses at the highest level the feminism it promotes¹¹. The nation is seen as the ultimate value that has to be protected and consolidated, it is the nation to whom the woman

⁶ See „Pagina fetelor” from *Lumina femeii*, or „Sfaturile mătușii” from *Femeia Satelor*.

⁷ Ghizela Cosma, „Presa feminină după model sovietic...”, p. 138.

⁸ Ghizela Cosma, „Le mouvement féministe en Transylvanie dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres” in *Transylvanian Review*, Vol. X, Nr. 3, 2001, p. 13 See also Cristina Tănase, „Mișcarea feministă reflectată în presa interbelică” in *Țara Bârsei*, Nr. 7, 2008, p. 172.

⁹ Ghizela Cosma, „Aspecte privind mișcarea feminist din România în perioada interbelică. Anii ‘30’ in *Condiția femeii în România în secolul XX. Studii de caz*, coord. Ghizela Cosma, Virgiliu Țărău, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj, 2002, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰ Maria Baiulescu, „Ocrotirea țărâncei noastre” in *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, Year (1919), No. 95.

¹¹ „Cuvântarea prezidentei Maria B. Baiulescu la jubileul Reuniunii femeilor din Brașov în 8 septembrie la a 75-a aniversare” in *Gazeta de Transilvania*, Year (1926), No. 94, p. 2.

has to subordinate its destiny of mother and wife, of life companion and educator. Through her family the woman could serve the nation, no wonder that a development regarding the cult of the family and the maternity has begun within the Transylvanian space. The strong belief in the social place and the social role of the woman has been influenced by the discourse previous to the break of the war¹². In order to affirm the feminist problem all over the 20s as well as the 30s the traditional roles in the life of the community has grown in stature¹³.

During the inter-war period the necessity for asserting themselves gained a character of militantism exhibited by public actions that were asking for access to the social and political life in the name of a collective identity and of certain social groups, but also by the individual behaviour of some feminists. They paid a special attention to the way in which they appeared in public, "focusing their discourses on the metaphor Mother-Homeland and appealing for the promotion of women within the social and cultural life gambling on the supreme argument, the maternity"¹⁴. This public discourse was meant to awake the woman from the lethargy which has marked her over the centuries and to make her become conscious of her abilities and competences.

Woman, work and family

In the 30s, under the impact of the economic crisis, the work and the professional condition of women have turned into a topic of great interest. The life difficulties and the shortage of money brought by the husband and meant to ensure a decent way of life have determined a larger number of women to search for a working place; along with this a new fight has broken, we mean the fight for labour and for an equal income¹⁵. In their struggle for entering multiple domains, women's major argument has been represented by the idea that sex, marriage or maternity should not be regarded as strongly enough obstacles in exercising the right to work.

Hardly had the struggle begun when threatened by unemployment, many countries thought of adopting a series of measures so that women's work outside home should be limited. Even though the phenomenon did not reach the same dimensions as formerly in Occident, the Romanian authorities seemed to dally with the idea of implementing a series of restrictive measures scraped against the employees¹⁶. Such a debate put the woman-employee in an inconvenient situation. The advocates of the bill regarding the dismissal of the married women considered that by this way the libertinism of many women who had the living wage at home, but preferred to leave their children in housemaids' charge could be dealt with. They went on asserting that once the wife's earnings had been cancelled, the husbands would have seen the extra-familial income affected and so they would have been necessitated to spend much time at home rather than in pubs, beerhouses or game halls¹⁷.

¹² Ghizela Cosma, "Le mouvement féministe...", p. 15.

¹³ M. Baiulescu, „Problema feminină” in *Gazeta de Transilvania*, An XCIII (1931), nr. 13, p. 1. See also „Rolul femeii în societate” in *Gazeta de Transilvania*, Year LXXXVI (1923), No. 41, p. 2

¹⁴ Aurora Liiceanu, “Rivalitate și solidaritate: începuturile feminismului în România” in *Cine suntem noi? Despre identitatea femeilor din România modernă*, Mădălina Nicolaescu, Ed. Anima, București, 1996, pp. 33-34.

¹⁵ Dr. V. Cotruș, “Femeia în familie și societate” in *Familia*, Year I (1926), No. 1, pp. 6-7

¹⁶ Ghizela Cosma, “Aspecte privind mișcarea feminist..”, p. 87.

¹⁷ Ecaterina Gârneață, “Între cămin și profesie” in *Gazeta de Transilvania*, Year XCV (1932), No. 99, pp. 3-4.

On the other hand, the critics of the project felt that the woman's dismissal would be a step leading to a decrease in the family earnings up to the incapability of its maintaining, to an increase in the number of divorces and of concubinages, so the woman's work was instrumental to the family. No matter the large range of difficulties which the woman had to cope with, once got at the work place, she would devote herself excitedly and conscientiously to her working place just because she wanted to demonstrate that she was respectable and she deserved working. She would face the mean and accusing words saying that the woman benefited by her beauty to get what she wanted.

At the same time, although in relatively reduced circles, the debates began to stress the importance of the young girls education. The parents emboldened their daughters to complete their studies and so to have the opportunity of gaining a working place that would ensure them a more independent life and a less dependent one on the husband's dowery or fortune. By this way the primary, secondary, professional and academic system of learning has broadened, *the state room education* has disappeared and both sexes have been provided with the same training program, measures that have led to an increase in the number of well-trained women for all domains¹⁸. Once the training has been achieved, the feminist movement has pleaded for woman's right to access all working places and has lead campaigns especially in what regards the development of the feminine professional ability in the field of the protection and the social security, emboldening women to adopt this place of employment¹⁹. This action has been related to the particular interest of the movement in problems such as guarding the mother and the child.

The critics have constantly tried to doubt whether the woman has the capacity to do something else rather than homemaking; the target of such an attack has been the woman-employee, arguing that "among those who nowadays are active in the public institutions one can find fewer who fulfill successfully the responsibilities of their job, while the large number of women is represented-by them-the proteges and the graces of several "daily almighties" and who counting on the authority of their protectors do not do their job"²⁰. The opponents decline the new order, arguing that this step would lead to the downfall of the old social order and particularly, of the family institution. The men's discourses are focused on the traditional pattern of the family in which the public sphere and the private one are clearly divided and the women's and men's roles are well-defined.

Following the critique, the modern woman has been accused of being too attentive to her external appearance²¹ so that she could not be at the same time housewife and mother. In her attempt to do the job the man does she will gain among time masculine features²², being made at this point a direct reference to several feminists who do not fit the beauty standard established within the society of those times.

¹⁸ Ștefania Mihăilescu, "Din istoria feminismului românesc. Studiu...", p. 21.

¹⁹ Venturia Manuilă, "Rolul femeilor în asistența socială a familiei" in *Buletin Eugenic și Biopolitic*, Year I (1927), No. 1, pp. 24-26; I. Moldovan, "Sora de ocrotire" in *Buletin Eugenic și Biopolitic*, Year I (1927), No. 1, p. 27; Izabela Sadoveanu, "Rolul social al femeii" in *Buletin Eugenic și Biopolitic*, Year II (1928), No. 7-8, pp. 220-231.

²⁰ N. Thomescu Baci, „Femeia funcționară” in *Ardealul*, Year VI (1927), No. 4, p. 1.

²¹ "Femeia Modernă" in *Nihil Sine Deo*, Year I (1923), No. 9; Lusica, "Cochetăria" in *Gazeta de Transilvania*, Year LXXXIII (1920), No. 8, p. 2.

²² Coriolan Bărbat, "Femeia de azi" in *Gazeta de Transilvania*, Year XCII (1929), No. 80.

The image portrayed in this type of articles is an apocalyptic one, foretelling the disappearance of the woman. According to the canons of their way of thinking, if the woman devoted herself to a public career, the natural consequence would be to adopt the celibacy. So she would renounce at her wish of becoming mother which would lead to a social disorder and ultimately to the appearance of a new sex, the neutral one²³, women becoming physically speaking inappropriate for marriages.

As a rule, the women's discourse has depended on the major changes scored by the society, stressing the conformation to the new social realities. They have argued the fact that a part of the women's activity has already evolved outside the house where women have been working so as to enrich the family wages, but this activity has not caused the destruction of the family institution²⁴. Elena Meissner asserts: "The family therefore does not perish, but it transforms imperceptibly, going by stage to stage so much that without knowing we have ranged our contemporary form of the family just like a dog rose race that has previously blossomed a simple flower with five petals but nowadays is blooming an infinite variety of roses. Do we think that the actual form of the family will not evolve? It will evolve and it will change according to the progress law and we hope that the future form of the family will be better than now because this is the progress law."²⁵

The civil status

During the 30s the feminist movement has achieved an important success in what regards the sphere of the civil rights. So if in Transylvania the Austrian Civil Code has acknowledged the general ability of the married woman, the common properties gained along with the marriage, the opportunity to use her dowry since the age of 14, to change her confession since the age of 18, to come at age and to get all the rights, excepting the political ones at the age of 24, the women from the other Romanian territories have not been equally blessed. Soon afterwards the Union the necessity for changes has become evident whereas the legislative unification has made the promise of a more rapid civil emancipation of all women.

Although the Constitution of 1923 has laid down that the civil rights of women have been to be established on the basis of the full equality between the two sexes, the married woman has had "the same status as the minors and the insanes, she does not have legal entity, so she could not make a contract and to come to the fore of the justice without her husband's previous permission. Married to a stranger, the woman would lose her nationality. Consequently *checking over the fatherhood* is forbidden (...) the woman is bare of the right of castigating her children; even though she is a widow, she is not allowed to use the personal fortune of her children during the marriage and her rights of tutory upon her children are seriously limited. The husband has the exclusive right to use the dowry and at the moment of his death the dowry of the married woman together with all the expectations come into the possession of the husband's belongings and even into the children's possession"²⁶.

A law voted in the month of February, 1924 brings a change within the provisions of the Civil Code related to the fact that the woman is obliged to listen to her husband; according

²³ "Apariția sexului neutru" in *Ardealul*, Year I (1923), No. 149.

²⁴ Ramona Păunescu, *Evoluții politice ale modernității*, Polirom, Iași, 2012, p. 110.

²⁵ Ramona Păunescu, *op. cit.*, apud Ștefania Mihăilescu, p. 133.

²⁶ Ștefania Mihăilescu, „Din istoria feminismului românesc. Studiu...”, Polirom, Iași, 2006, p. 23.

to it, "the husband and her wife owe each other faith, aid and help. The marriage does not confine the woman's capacity to exercise her civil rights"²⁷. Only in the month of April, 1932 the government adopts the law by which the civil incapacity of the married woman is banned, the woman being awarded the right to make contracts, to come to the fore of the justice without asking for her husband's previous approval²⁸, to choose the working place she wants without being necessary her husband's sanction. By this way the civil emancipation of the married woman has been achieved.

In spite of all struggles the claims script remained open as long as a series of challenges continued to be unsolved. The woman owed commitment to her husband, being obliged to follow him; in addition to this, the father continued to exert his paternal authority on his own, the right of using the children's dowery was mismanaged, searching for the fatherhood was still banned, the mother had the exclusive obligation to maintain and raise the illegitimate children, the dowery system was carried on, the woman was not provided the right to dispose freely of her fortune, the hereditary right of the widow as well as the right to benefit from the income earned by mutual work during the marriage were still contested.

The right to vote

The beginning of the inter-war period is defined by an intensive activity in what regards the fight for achieving the elective for women. This is in fact the natural consequence of a general context which enables the woman to accede to the political scene. As a matter of fact, even before the First World War, in the Northern-European countries, such as Finland, women have managed to gain the right to vote and to be voted since 1906-1907. Soon afterwards during the period 1917-1921 the movement has spread all over the European continent as well as in the North America. Scoring an accountable delay because of the slow dynamics of the social scaffold, the stream has broadened during the 30s in the Oriental and Meridional parts of Europe so that after the second World War another group of countries, whereof Romania, should provide the women with political rights²⁹.

In such a context there have been held public meetings, conferences and summits, there have been sent petitions to the political men so as to sustain these proposals, but in spite of the vivid activity, the electoral legislation dating from the years 1918-1921 has not provided women with the universal vote.

However, in this struggle for the provision of the political rights one must observe that during the first years there have been scored two types of feminist discourse: on the one hand, a moderate³⁰ and reformative discourse and on the other hand a much more militant one, promoting a program defined by maximal proposals³¹. The Transylvanian feminists have fought for moderation, focusing especially upon the feminine activism within the cultural and

²⁷ Ștefania Mihăilescu, *Din istoria feminismului românesc. Antologie de texte (1838-1929)*, Polirom, Iași, 2002, p. 43. apud Monitorul Oficial, nr. 41 din 26 februarie 1924.

²⁸ Ștefania Mihăilescu, „Din istoria feminismului românesc. Antologie...”, p. 44. apud Monitorul Oficial, nr. 94 din 20 aprilie 1932.

²⁹ For more details see Christine Pintat, „Les femmes dans les Parlements et dans les partis politiques en Europe et en Amérique du Nord” in *Encyclopédie politique et historique des femmes. Europe, Amérique du Nord*, Ed. Christine Fauré, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1997, pp. 793-795.

³⁰ Promoted by Uniunea Femeilor Române.

³¹ The second one was developed by the women from Asociației pentru Emanciparea Civilă și Politică a Femeii Române.

charitable fields³², whereas the woman's activity without home has been accepted under the condition of not endangering the family institution³³. Their struggle has been centered on a gradual emancipation through reforms³⁴. Different from the radical current that with the help of the press, the conferences and the proposals, has proved a vivid activity inspired from the similar movements scored in the Western part of Europe, the moderate feminists of Transylvania have made public their conviction through the journal *Lumina femeii*, a journal which would turn into a true promoter of their opinion³⁵.

The articles found in the pages of these journals capture their intentions, debate the major problems considered by the authors as necessary to be approached and clarified³⁶. They reject the universality and obligativity of vote for women, they try to explain this opposition, seen as hurried and constrained, through the lines dedicated to this topic, stressing the fact that the Romanian woman is not educated enough so as to understand these problems and to become conscious of the consequences her actions might bring upon the society. The articles outline the fact that before implementing such a measure and turning it into a law, a profound debate is needed. The woman's presence in the political field is not considered as necessary at the moment, but it is much more necessary to draw a distinction regarding the way in which women should be provided with this right in order not to bring a whole chaos³⁷.

Once with the discussions within the Parliament about the reforms related to woman, attributing to her new activity fields and civic responsibilities, it is time for the feminine world to come out from its indifference, to take attitude and to adopt a position. Apart from the women who insist on the provision of the political rights, the voice of the other part must be heard. Both parties must express their opinion and must not accuse themselves. In the same way the opinion of those women who fight for moderation and for the provision of the political rights through gradual and well-defined reforms must become public³⁸. Finally the opinion of the Association has managed to score an important victory, whereas the Transylvanian feminists would broaden their program and would adopt the request of universal vote for women.

After dealing with the technical problems and the unification of the objectives, the campaign has been carried on all over the period before elaborating and adopting the Constitution of 1923 and the feminists have made requests with the purpose of gaining the recognition of the civil and political rights; nonetheless, the Constitution has rejected the provision of women with full rights, being maintained the conservatory views endangering the woman's dignity, her freedom and her property. Even so, it might be foreseeable that women be ensured the political rights through a series of special future bills.

Regardless of the fact that hopes of possible changes existed in the past³⁹, the first progresses have been scored at the end of the third decade of the 20th century, when through

³² Elena Cădăriu, „Femeia prezentului” in *Lumina femeii*, Year II (1921), No. 6-7, pp. 263-266.

³³ Elena Pop Hossu-Longin, „În chestia feminină” in *Transilvania*, Year LI (1920), No. 11, pp. 900-901.

³⁴ „Liga pentru emanciparea progresivă a femeii” in *Lumina femeii*, Year II (1921), No. 9, pp. 343-344.

³⁵ *Lumina femeii* fought for the moral cultivation of the women showing that only a gradual change can be useful and can help the destiny of a woman.

³⁶ Valeria Tulbure, „Cum înțeleg emanciparea femeii” in *Lumina femeii*, Year I (1920), No. I, p. 97.

³⁷ Elena Cădăriu, „Femeia română și dreptul de vot” in *Lumina femeii*, Year II (1921), No. 10, pp. 381-384.

³⁸ „O mișcare necesară în legătură cu emanciparea femeii” in *Lumina femeii*, Year II (1921), No. 9, pp. 329-332.

³⁹ Ghizela Cosma, „Femeile și politica...”, pp. 50-51.

the administrative law of 1929 women were ensured the right to vote and to be voted in the local councils⁴⁰; for this reason, they have to fulfill several conditions, such as to be graduates of the secondary normal or professional cycle of education, to work as state, county or village employees, to be war-widows, to be decorated for their activity during the war or to have taken part in adopting the law. Along with providing this right for a category of women, the discussion concerning the women's entry into political parties, their mobilization for exercising the rights once gained and lastly elaborating and putting into practice a strategy of enlarging these rights has been reactivated⁴¹. Although the request for the right of vote has remained in the feminist program up to the end of the 30s steps have not been taken to establish its enlargement⁴².

The fact that women have not been ensured the right to vote has had direct consequences; for example, there has been scored an increase in the feminine activity without the social sphere and in their struggle for accomplishing the social goals. Women have seen in their social activity a means of exposing their civic role and of improving their status and their situation within the society. With the help of the organizations whose member they are, through the new professional quality of communal councillors gained in the year 1929, through their working place and their social relations (many of them are wives of politicians, workers and people of high status) "women have led a lobby activity in particular. They have argued the need for consulting and getting them involved in adopting the legislative measures concerning the reformation of the social system, the promotion of a legislation meant to protect the woman and the functioning of certain fields and institutions in which the women's performances and the competences have been given serious consideration"⁴³.

The activity of the feminist movement has been richer during the inter-war period, a large part of its objectives being achieved. Despite of being limited to local councils, the right of vote has been gained, the judicial status has been improved and the last, but not the least, the activity field has been enlarged. Many problems from the movement's program have remained unsolved, but most people feel that important evolutions have been scored, whereas the situation and the position of women within society have been put under the sign of major transformations.

The press dating from the analyzed period has been richer enough, dedicating entire pages to the feminine topics of discussion. No matter that we talk about simple articles with approaches upon daily problems addressed to the feminine target or articles that bring a scientific contribution concerning various subjects, the feminine universe has been well-captured in the first pages or at the end of the journals. The woman's work has been vividly debated, taking as a starting point the man's professional condition up to the ensurance of working conditions and rights similar to those of men. The problem of the civil rights has

⁴⁰ "Dreptul de vot al femeilor" în *Gazeta de Transilvania*, Year XCII (1929), No. 20, p. 1.

⁴¹ Ghizela Cosma, "Aspecte privind mișcarea...", pp. 82-83.

⁴² For more details see Mihaela Miroiu, *Drumul către autonomie. Teorii politice feministe*, Polirom, Iași, 2004, pp. 62-63.

⁴³ Crina Diaconu, „Aspecte privind rolul femeilor în procesul de reformare și modernizare socială în România interbelică. Activitatea și inițiativele Asociației Cercurilor de Gospodine în domeniul ocrotirii și asistenței mamei și copilului” in *Condiția femeii în România secolului XX. Studii de caz*, coord. Ghizela Cosma, Virgiliu Țărău, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 11.

been brought into attention by the pages of the newspapers and the pens of the writers, while the struggle for achieving political rights has been followed with major interest and made public to the readers, both men and women, focusing especially on the women's presence in the local elections on behalf of those who vote or are voted for.

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