

VIRGINIJA JURĖNIENĖ

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2818-437X>

Vilnius University

Strategies and Tactics of the Lithuanian Women's Movement: Retrospective Analysis

Abstract

The strategies and tactics of the Lithuanian women's movement helped to change the attitudes of society, political parties, altered political, educational and legal systems and expanded the field of relevant issues on the international level.

However, the state's existence period (1918–1940) was too short for women to be able to fully realise them; thus, most of the formed strategies are relevant today and are realised. The examples of strategy implementation ways show that women's actions were important for the society and the state and had direct impact on their development. The second strategic period is very important; during this period, Lithuanian women were granted political rights.

Novelty of work. The article provides the correct date of women being granted suffrage based on historical sources, i.e., 20 November 1919, the law on election of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania. It does not coincide with the notion established in the Lithuanian historiography that the date is 2 November 1918. The author proves that this error emerged due to incorrect interpretation of the article in the 2 November 1918 Lithuanian Temporary Constitution on the person's (citizen's) rights. Moreover, the researcher takes on a new approach towards the Lithuanian women's movement through the prism of implementation

of strategies and tactics. This approach towards the history of the Lithuanian women's movement is new.

The **methods** of descriptive, analytical and comparative research. The sources studied are: historical sources, including state documents, archival materials, monographs, survey studies, biographical studies, memoirs, private letters, press, etc.

Keywords: strategy, tactic, women's Movement, social development

STRATEGIA I TAKTYKA LITEWSKIEGO RUCHU KOBIET: ANALIZA RETROSPEKTYWNA

Streszczenie

Strategia i taktyka litewskiego ruchu kobiecego pomogły zmieniać nie tylko postawy społeczne, lecz także programy partii politycznych. Wpłynęły również na ewolucję systemu politycznego, edukacyjnego i prawnego oraz poszerzyły pole dyskusji na temat istotnych dla kobiet zagadnień na poziomie międzynarodowym. Jednak okres istnienia Republiki Litewskiej (1918–1940) był zbyt krótki, aby Litwinki mogły osiągnąć pełne upodmiotowienie. Większość z ich postulatów okazała się nadal aktualna po 1991 r. i jest współcześnie urzeczywistniana. W artykule zweryfikowano datę przyznania Litwinkom prawa wyborczego. Według ustaleń autorki nastąpiło to 20 listopada 1919 r. z chwilą przyjęcia ordynacji wyborczej do Zgromadzenia Ustawodawczego Litwy. Nie pokrywa się to z utrwalonym w historiografii litewskiej poglądem, że data ta to 2 listopada 1918 r. Autorka dowodzi, że błąd ten powstał na skutek niewłaściwej interpretacji artykułu Tymczasowej Konstytucji Litewskiej z 2 listopada 1918 r. o prawach obywatelskich. W publikacji uzewnętrznia się nowe podejście do historii litewskiego ruchu kobiecego, gdyż autorka kładzie największy nacisk na analizę stosowanej przez ten ruch strategii i taktyki.

Słowa kluczowe: litewski ruch kobiecy, strategia, taktyka, postęp społeczny

Introduction

At the end of the 18th century the state of Lithuania and Poland was collapsed. It was divided and Lithuania was occupied by Russia. In 19th century two revolts (1831, 1863) took place in Lithuania against the occupation of Tsarist Russia.

In the second half of the 19th century a national movement, and as part of it a women's movement arose in Lithuania which after the revolt in 1863–1864 was directed against the denationalization politics pursued by tsarist Russia. The result was that the tsarist government banned the Latin script in the country, constricted the activity of the Catholic Church, and started to actively colonize the country. By such actions tsarist Russia tried to turn Lithuania Russian. The Lithuanian national movement was targeted against tsarist politics. Secret schools were opened in which pupils were taught in the national, i.e. the Lithuanian language. Women worked side by side with men. In peasant families mothers taught the children to read from prayer-books. These schools, which were active in the period from the second half of the 19th until the beginning of the 20th centuries, were called “mother's” or secret schools. They helped not only to preserve the Lithuanian language but also to develop and strengthen national awareness and opposition to russification. Beside “mother's schools”, the distribution of forbidden books became widespread. All the books and newspapers distributed in Lithuania were printed in the towns of East Prussia and then carried across the border to Lithuania¹. It was hard, dangerous, and altruistic work, which included all Lithuanian territory. There was organised secret system for spreading secret groups of book-spreaders and special secret store-rooms. These brave women and men used various ways for carrying: secret ways, special guides and even bribes for tsarist gendarmes. There are facts, that in this way in the end of 19th century secret association of book-spreaders in Zemaitija (Lowland, Samogitia) carried forbidden books using strings of more than 40 carriages (!) And, e.g., one of the most active women in Tilze region, Morta Zauniute, supported Lithuanian students in abroad also.

A lots of book-spreaders became peculiar national heroes. E.g., one of the the most famous was landowner Jurgis Bielinis, pseu-

¹ E.g. in 1866–1904 women book-spreaders (book-hawkers), who were arrested in Marijampole, Panevezys, Siauliai, Ukmerge came to 26 percents; in Kalvarija, Kaunas and Zarasai districts – 5,5 percents. Though there were less women book-spreaders than men, but it was their active public work for the Lithuanian nation and society. An oldest one was Karolina Laurinavičiūtė (was born in 1840). She learned to read by herself and later spreaded forbidden Lithuanian press in Siauliai and Panevezys. In 1870 she was arrested, and in 1872 was exiled to Karelia (district in Siberia) for unrestricted time.

donym Baltasis Erelis (White Eagle). The legends spreaded about his cunning, courage and capabilities to escape from tsarist gendarmes. As wrote G. Landsbergis-Žemkalnis: once gendarmes caught Jurgis Bielinis with carriage full of hay and Lithuanian books hidden under the hay and took him to the commander. J. Bielinis began to ask set him free, but commander did not want even to listen. The landowner began to offer him as the present various pictures of catholic saints begging to let him go. Commander was Russian orthodox believer, so he soon got into a rage! Then J. Bielinis began to offer not only pictures of catholic saints, but the pornographic pictures also begging further... Then gendarmes' commander' patience was exhausted. He became really furious, jumped to his feet scolding J. Bielinis, seized for collar and threw him out. J. Bielinis as soon as he could jumped into his carriage and made off with all secret books.

It is phenomenal, that in spite of danger, this movement joined so many women and men in Lithuania, even catholic priests and bishops (e.g. Motiejus Valancius), nuns and even old women beggars... Despite all threats women helped men to distribute the forbidden literature, hid it from the Russian gendarmes, and, what is more, taught their children from it. In this way, women engaged in the national movement and started their activity. In 1904 the tsarist government abolished the ban for the press.

In the second half of the 19th century a national and women movements arose in Lithuania.

The issue of woman's status in Lithuanian society arose at the end of the 19th century. The representatives of the National movement, i.e. the so-called *varpininkai* (they were activists and members of the national movement initiated by the newspaper *Varpas* (Bell) that was issued in 1889–1905) were the first to bring up this question. One of the first to join actively the national movement was Gabrielė Petkevičaitė. In the newspaper *Varpas* she pointed out that women were not like flowers, they needed to learn, because a sophisticated woman had “a wide field to work at”. At the end of the 19th century Lithuanian women were quite literate – this is proved by the data of the population census of 1897 which states: “Lithuanian women's literacy in Kaunas governorship exceeded the men's – respectively 54.9 and 51.9%. ... This is a unique phenomenon which was not observed in any other part of the Russian Empire, though most often women's education was limited

to reading skills”². This is confirmed by other facts: in 1873 only 575 girls learnt at state primary schools, and in 1900 the number of the women students increased up to 4,313. State schools for girls had worked in Vilnius and Kaunas since 1860 and in Šiauliai since 1896. Lithuanian noblemen sent their daughters to schools as well. At the same time the percentage of educated women in Russia amounted merely to 13.7%.

At the turn of the 20th century *varpininkai* tried to prove to society that women needed to study just like men and argued: “Current circumstances are more favourable for women than for men since they are not that much kept under surveillance. ... Thus, we must care about educating our daughters so that they will better understand their matters: their religion, their country, their enemies, and ways to fight against them”³.

Lithuanian women like the women in Europe primarily made efforts to educate themselves and others. In 1890 women established the first organization Ziburelis (Light) whose aim was to teach and support gifted children. The founder of Ziburelis was Gabriele Petkevičaitė-Bite (pseudonym Bite, meaning “a bee”). In 1894 she met Jadvyga Juškelytė and they continued working in Ziburelis. In 1903 Felicija Bortkevičienė became its leader.

Lithuania was an agrarian country where more than 80% of the population lived in the countryside. Moreover, this part was very religious. Therefore, Lithuanian women in the countryside were not very active and restricted their activity to within the borders of the parishes. It should be stressed that the women’s organizations in Lithuania were established much later than in Western Europe – the first women’s organization in Lithuania was established as late as 1905.

The analysed historical sources do not provide sufficient data for establishing the contribution of the Lithuanian women’s movement to the international women’s movement. The Lithuanian women took an active part in the majority of the international events organized for women. The Lithuanian women’s organizations learnt much from the experience of various women’s organizations

² Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Antanas Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje Lietuva XIX amžiuje*, (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1996).

³ Aleksandras Dambrauskas, “Keli zodziai apie apsvietima mergaičių (Some Words on the Education of Girls)”, *Tevynės sargas (Homeland Guardian)*, nr 10/11, 1900, 30.

in other European countries where the women's movements were much stronger and influential.

The Lithuanian women's movement highlights four strategies that have tactical actions. Not all of the strategies were implemented, and they continue to be implemented in the restored Republic of Lithuania.

The aim of the article is to reveal the strategies and tactics of the Lithuanian women's movement in the end of XIX century until the first part of the XX century.

It should be mentioned, though, that the historical sources which might be helpful for the analysis of the activities of the Lithuanian women's movement both in the country and abroad at the beginning of the 20th century are rather scarce. Among a few is the book *In the Service of Truth and Love* which was published in 1933⁴. It describes the activities of the Catholic branch of the Lithuanian women's movement both in Lithuania and abroad. It was the first publication which summarized the actualities of the Lithuanian women's movement. Yet, it did not describe Liberal or Social-democratic branches of the women's movement in Lithuania.

Later on, the Lithuanian women's movement was discussed in the inter-war period. In her study *Women's Political and State-National Work in 1907–1937* (1938), Ona Mašiotienė briefly reviews the first steps of the women's activities in 1907, when the First Assembly of the Lithuanian women took place in Kaunas on September 23–24, 1907 and analyses its later activities after the women's movement split into two parts: the Catholic Movement and the Progressive Movement. The author of the paper has discussed the Lithuanian women's movement during the first two decades of the 20th century in a number of articles⁵.

Several survey publications that do not belong to the category of the scientific works should also be mentioned here, such as Dalia Marcinkevičienė's edition of A. Ambraziejūtė-Steponaitienė's collection *Distinguished Lithuanian Women*⁶. The collection was originally finished in 1938, but not published at that time. One can find some

⁴ Ona Gaigalaitė-Beleckienė, *Tiesos ir meilės tarnyboje: Lietuvių katalikių moterų draugija 1908–1933*, (Kaunas: Kauno Kardas, 1933).

⁵ Ona Mašiotienė, *Moterų politinis ir valstybiniai – tautiškas darbas 1907–1937 m.*, (Kaunas, 1938).

⁶ Dalia Marcinkevičienė (ed.), *Ižymios Lietuvos moterys: XIX a. antroji pusė – XX a. pirmoji pusė*, (Vilnius: Vilnius University Press, 1997).

information about women and their activity in archival sources, memoirs and press articles; yet, in these sources, most attention has been given to the cultural figures. In 2005, the collection of articles⁷ was published in which one can find the portrayal of some prominent women who lived and worked in the first half of the 20th century.

Some information about particular women who were active in the Lithuanian women's movement during the first half of the 20th century is available in the book titled *The Lithuanian Seimas* (1996)⁸. It tells that in 1926 two women Gabrielė Petkevičaitė and Felicija Bortkevičienė were candidates for Presidency in the 3rd Lithuanian Seimas. However, each of them received only one vote and thus none of them was elected⁹. Both of the candidates were suggested by members of the Seimas, and they belonged to the Lithuanian Farmers' Populist Party.

Julius Butėnas' biographical study *Notes of a Historiographer*¹⁰ devoted to the life and works of Bortkevičienė is also very important for the analysis of the Lithuanian women's movement in the early 20th century. The activity of Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė (the wife of a world-famous Lithuanian painter and composer M. K. Čiurlionis), another distinguished personality in the context of the League of the Union of Nations was analysed by Vladas Gustainis¹¹. The documents of the Lithuanian State also provide the necessary data about the State's support for women's participation in international venues.

The biographies of the women elected to the Constituent Seimas are pithily presented in the book *Short biographies of the Constituent Seimas members*¹² published in the interwar Lithuania. In the overview of the Constituent Seimas, the researcher in history Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė mentioned that women received suffrage and seven of them were elected to Seimas¹³. American Lithuanian in the memorial book Konstantinas Žukas noticed, "A strange

⁷ Ona Voverienė, *Žymiosios XX amžiaus Lietuvos moterys*, (Kaunas: Naujasis amžius, 2005).

⁸ Lietuvos Seimas, (Vilnius: Kultūra, 1996).

⁹ Ona Voverienė, *Žymiosios*.

¹⁰ Julius Butėnas, *Istorografo užrašai*, (Vilnius: Vaga, 1974).

¹¹ Vladas Gustainis, *Nuo Griškabūdžio iki Paryžiaus*, (Kaunas: Spindulys, 1991).

¹² *Trumpos Steigiamojo Seimo narių biografijos*, (Klaipėda: Seimo kanceliarija, 1924).

¹³ Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė, *Lietuvos Steigiamasis Seimas*, (New York: Lithuanian National Foundation, 1975), 2.

coincidence: the oldest [in Seimas] was Gabrielė Petkevičaitė and the youngest – Ona Muraškaitė. Ill tongues, mostly progressives, mocked at «womanish» seimas¹⁴. The beginning of the women movement and the first assembly of Lithuanian women were described by sociologist Juozas Leonavičius¹⁵. Virginija Jurėnienė explored the women movement of the two decades of the 20th century in her papers¹⁶. The author paid much attention to the Constituent Seimas and the activity of the first parliament members-women in it¹⁷.

The first strategy – establishment of women’s organisations (around 1890–1905)

Tactic – participation in the national movement and social and political life.

Means

- education;
- distribution of national literature (books and newspaper *Varpas*);
- organisation and participation in the Lithuanian theatre (1889 Palanga);
- participation in political parties.

Education. Women worked side by side with men. In peasant families mothers taught the children to read from a prayer book. Such a school, which was active in the second half of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th centuries, was called “mother’s” or secret school. It helped not only to preserve the Lithuanian language but also develop and strengthen national awareness and opposition to russification.

¹⁴ Konstantinas Žukas, *Žvilgsnis į praeitį: žmogaus ir kario atsiminimai: medžiaga istorikams*, (Chicago: Terra, 1959).

¹⁵ Juozas Leonavičius, *Petras Leonas – Lietuvos sąžinė*, (Kaunas: Technologija, 2002).

¹⁶ Virginija Jurėnienė, *Lietuvos moterų judėjimas XIX a. pab. – XX a. vidurys*, (Vilnius: Vilnius University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Virginija Jurėnienė, “Steigiamojo Seimo narės ir jų veikla įteisinant lyčių lygiateisiškumą 1922 m. Konstitucijoje (Women Members of the Constituent Seimas and Their Activity to Legitimize Equality of Rights in the Constitution of 1922)”, in: Aigustė Bartkutė and Andrius Vaišnys (eds.), *Mūsų konstitucionalizmo raida (Development of Our Constitutionalism)*, (Vilnius: Valstybės žinios, 2003), 96–109.

Lithuanian women the same as ones in Europe primarily made efforts to educate themselves and others. In 1894 women established the first organization *Žiburėlis* whose aim was to teach and support gifted children. The founders of *Žiburėlis* were Gabrielė Petkevičaitė and Jadvyga Juškelytė. In 1903 Felicija Bortkevičienė became its leader¹⁸.

Liuda Didžiulienė was a writer, a social activist and while living in Mintauja (Latvia) from 1896 to 1907 she established a dormitory for Lithuanian students who studied in Mintauja gymnasium. Both men and women lived and studied there. At that time already Lithuanian society let their women study. Liuda Didžiulienė published the books “Lithuanian girls”, “Lithuanian housewife”, “For Homeland”¹⁹.

At the break of the 20th century *varpininkai* tried to prove the society that women needed to study the same as men. The claims were reasoned by the argument that educated women could join the national movement since only few of them took part in it and were aware of its significance. They claimed: “Current circumstances are more favourable for women than men since they are not that much kept under surveillance. Thus, we must care about education of our daughters so that they would better understand *their* matters: their religion, their country, their enemies and ways to fight against them”²⁰.

Distribution of national literature (books and newspaper *Varpas*). After the revolt in 1863–1864 it was directed against the denationalization politics pursued by tsarist Russia. Having subdued the revolt the tsarist government banned Latin script in the country, constricted the activity of the Catholic church and started an active colonization of the country. By such actions tsarist Russia tried to turn Lithuania Russian. The Lithuanian national movement was targeted against tsarist politics. Secret schools were opened in which pupils were taught in the national, i.e. the Lithuanian language.

Beside “mother’s school”, distribution of forbidden books became wide. All books and newspapers were printed in the towns of East Prussia and carried across the border to Lithuania. It was

¹⁸ Toma Birmontienė, Virginija Jurėnienė, “Development of Women’s Rights in Lithuania: Striving for Political Equality, Aftermaths of War”, in: Blanca Rodriguez-Ruiz and Ruth Rubio-Marin (eds.), *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe*, (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012), 82.

¹⁹ Virginija Jurėnienė, *Lietuvos moterų judėjimas*, 35.

²⁰ Aleksandras Dambrauskas, “Keli žodžiai apie apšvietimą mergaičių”, *Tėvynės sargas*, nr 10/11, 1900, 30.

hard, dangerous and altruistic work. Press distributors and carriers could be sentenced to penal servitude in Siberia. Despite these threats women helped men to distribute the forbidden literature, hid it from the Russian gendarmes, and, what is more, taught their children from it. In this way, women engaged in the national movement and started their activity.

Participation in political parties. After a significant change of the social and political situation in Russia in 1904–1905 women became more active in the social and political activity. Sophisticated women were active members of *Social Democrats* and *Democrats* parties. They formed 3–5% of all party members.

Women's meetings and counsels. In the spring of 1905 women started organizing meetings and counsels. On June 13, 1905 in a May day celebration a meeting of Liuda Didžiulienė and other active women was summoned at Zubov's estate in one of the province centres, Šiauliai. 50 intellectual women took part in it. The meeting participants decided to establish an information centre in Šiauliai which would collect and distribute material about women movements in other states. Yet, while discussing an organization establishment the participants diverged on the question of the time for establishment. A part of them demanded, "to build the base of the new organization at once". The rest considered that statutes should be prepared and an assembly called. The meeting ended. The information centre was ascribed the role of a mediator among the disagreeing intellectual women and it was obliged to summon an assembly and prepare a project of the meeting programme. The information centre started its activity in two weeks.

THE SECOND STRATEGY – SUFFRAGE RIGHTS OF WOMEN (1905–1918? OR 1919?)

Tactics:

- participation in the national movement;
- Political women's rights;
- positions of women's organisations in everyday and state life;
- women's involvement in the activities.

Means:

- education;
- participation in social and political life;
- organisation of women's meetings;
- issuing newspapers;
- creating a women's party.

Organisation of women's meetings. The first women's organization in Lithuania, i.e. the *Association of Lithuanian women* was established in 1905. On September 22–23 the meeting participants founded it and elected a board. The board members were Felicija Bortkevičienė, Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė and Stasė Landsbergaitė. The meeting prepared and approved the Association's programme which aimed to obtain autonomy for Lithuania within the ethnographic boundaries with Seimas elected by general, equal, secret and direct vote in Vilnius; to gain equal rights for women and men; and acknowledged equal membership of both women and men in the Association²¹.

The programme also stated the ways to achieve its aims, i.e. elaboration of theoretical questions concerning women and men rights; development of political self-awareness, especially women's one; wide activism for women and men's equal rights in towns as well as villages; help women to reach equal status with men both in general activity and professional education; care about the improvement of working women's state; writing and distribution of books, brochures, articles, appeals, lecture reading and other propaganda-related methods; creation of professional organizations, care about new women organizations and associations in the whole country²². The *Association of Lithuanian Women* also had tactics to realize the programme: to explain woman's position and describe political means to improve it; to explain Lithuania's situation and matters not only to adults but also to children; to include this issue into school curricula. The establishment of the *Association of Lithuanian Women* allowed the women movement to grow from the level of sporadic dissipated actions to the one of an organized movement. The *Association of Lithuanian Women* created

²¹ Felicija Bortkevičienė, *Straipsniai iš Varpo ir Ūkininko redakcijos archyvo*, Vilniaus universiteto Rankraščių skyrius, (The Department of Manuscripts of Vilnius University), 1–423, 269, 1905.

²² *Ibidem*.

a number of women chapters in the province, made contacts with associations and unions of Russian women.

Participation in social and political life. On August 6, 1905 the law on State Duma (Russia) election was passed. It stated that representatives to Duma should be elected on the basis of the qualification of wealth, dividing the country into three curiae. Women did not get suffrage, which arose their dissatisfaction. It was by *Lithuanian Social Democrats* and *Democrats* parties supported. In the party manifest, which was promulgated in September 1905, *Lithuanian Social Democrats* pointed out that, "All the country, Lithuania, should be created self-independently. For this purpose, all adult Lithuanian inhabitants, men and women, disregarding their nationality, religion and gender elect representatives to Seimas by general, direct, equal and secret vote"²³. Both the parties declared equality of rights of both genders, though *Social Democrats* had done that already in the first programme of the party in 1896. They also organized chapters in the country, read lectures in which "proclaimed equal rights of men and women."

In 1905 in Lithuania educated young women joined into chapters, small organized groups, took interest in the country's history, political and social sciences. In the press there were more and more statements that there had to be intellectual women who were involved into social work in the villages. It should be noted that at that time many women in Lithuanian towns and villages lived in a closed area, and their expectations were related only to private life, traditional culture that dominated the communities. Women activeness was connected not only with the changes in the country but also with the society's changing attitude to woman.

December 11, 1905 the tsar declared the law on election to the State Duma which lowered the qualification of wealth for electors. Also, workers above 25 years of age who had worked in a factory for more than 6 months received suffrage. Women were not granted it. After the manifest, which permitted activity of social organizations, an idea to call a Lithuanian assembly in Vilnius arose. Lithuanian women took an active part in preparation of the meeting. On October 19, 1905 the assembly of Lithuanians,

²³ Toma Birmontienė, Virginija Jurėnienė, "Development of Women's Rights in Lithuania", 82.

who belonged to various political trends, was held in the editorial office of the newspaper *Vilnius news*. It elected 15 members to its steering committee. Two women, i.e. Felicija Bortkevičienė and Ona Sapkauskaitė were elected to it. The steering committee did not set any regulations for electing representatives, thus the election was held agreeably to the ones for local meetings – in some places representatives were elected even by people from various peasant layers. There were also women elected to the meeting – Felicija Bortkevičienė, Liuda Purėnienė, Ona Brazauskaitė, etc. There was no separate group of women in the meeting. In the conference of the assembly Ona Brazauskaitė put forward the principles of men and women equality which were to be realized in Lithuania²⁴.

Among the resolutions of the assembly, the second clause of Lithuania's autonomy urged, **“To demand Lithuania's autonomy with Seimas in Vilnius elected by general, equal, direct and secret vote notwithstanding gender, nationality, religion”**²⁵. It was the beginning of legitimising political equality. After the meeting in Vilnius, in December 1905 the *Association of Lithuanian Women* organized a meeting. Here the participants spoke for equal political and economic rights.

In 1906 the tsarist government subdued the activity of various organizations and associations. A great harm was made to *Lithuanian Social Democrats*. The activity of the *Association of Lithuanian Women* weakened as well, women's chapters started disappearing. Yet, despite these conditions women still accentuated a social necessity to educate women in the press because, they claimed, education of both genders would bind the nation to unity and eliminate social evils.

On May 27, 1917 in the Russian city Petrograd Russia's Lithuanians Seimas was summoned. 336 representatives were elected to it in a democratic way; women were among them as well. Ona Mašiotienė, a representative of Lithuanian women of the Voronezh chapter, delivered a speech “Lithuanian women in the future social life.” She noted that the assembly should include decree No. 7 into its resolutions. The decree was passed by the Lithuanian national board on August 17, 1917 and granted full suffrage to women in the forthcoming Constituent Seimas. Ona Mašiotienė reminded

²⁴ Ibidem, 83.

²⁵ Ibidem.

that such a decree was also issued by the great Vilnius Seimas in 1905. **Petrograd's Seimas also endorsed the law of women's political equality**²⁶.

From 1917 the war took a different course, and in response, the new German government changed its policy in the occupied countries. In the light of events in Russia, it allowed representatives of political parties who were resident in Lithuania to call a **conference in Vilnius in 1917**. The conference participants were not elected by the Lithuanian society because the occupying government did not allow that.

In September 1917 a conference in Vilnius was called but women were not invited to it. Lithuanian Catholic women were especially active in protesting against such actions of Lithuanian parties. They protested against ignoring them and demanded that their representatives had to be invited to participate in the government of the state and legislation. Their demands for political rights were based on the resolutions of 1905 Great Vilnius Seimas and St Petersburg Seimas which declared the right of both genders to elect representatives and be elected to the state bodies. Realization of these resolutions was postponed until the re-establishment of the state, yet, there were no women in the Lithuanian Council, which was the legislative body.

On 16 February 1918, the Council of Lithuania proclaimed the independence of Lithuania. On 17 February, 1918, a meeting was organized and a petition was signed that demanded to include women into the body of Lithuanian Committee by the way of cooptation (*Lietuvių konferencija Vilniuje 1917*).

From November 1918, after the State of Lithuania was restored, the Council of Lithuania became the legislative institution. It worked as a legislative body till 15 May 1920, when the Constituent Seimas started to work. During the whole period of activity of the Council of Lithuania, women were not able to participate in it, nor were they able to hold any positions in the government of the state: some members of the Council thought that women politicians would damage the image of the state.

The question of women being granted political rights. When were the rights granted?

²⁶ Virginija Jurėnienė, *Lietuvos moterų judėjimas*, p. 78.

On 2 November 1918, the State Council of Lithuania adopted the fundamental laws of Lithuanian Temporary Constitution that defined Lithuanian citizens' rights and obligations as well as functions of governmental institutions. This legal act did not directly address women being granted suffrage rights; however, it stated that, "citizens of the gender ... are equal in the face of the law" (i.e., both men and women shall be liable to crimes committed, have the same inheritance, asset management rights, pay the same taxes, etc.) and repeated that, "The Constituent Assembly of Lithuania is elected on the basis of public, equal, straight and secret voting"²⁷. This legal act does not mention gender equality; however, it mentions "equal voting" without detailing how this statement should be understood. At places it is stated that this "equal voting" means granting women suffrage rights. However, the general thought is that "equal voting" means that each voter has only one vote and all votes are equal. As the linguistic period used in the texts from that period shows, equalization of women and men's civil rights should have been recorded in the legal act directly²⁸. Such statement does not exist in the Constitution; thus, it is incorrect to claim that women in Lithuania were granted suffrage rights on 2 November 1918. However, Vilma Akmenytė-Ruzgienė states that according to the fundamental laws of Lithuanian Temporary Constitution, the "temporary government" was obliged to prepare and announce law on election of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania²⁹, which would have granted women political rights. The official website of the parliament (Seimas) of the Republic of Lithuania publishes Akmenytė-Ruzgienė's article *Rinkimų teisė ir moterys 1920–1940 m. Lietuvos Respublikos Seime* (En. Suffrage and Women in 1920–1940 Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania) that draws the following conclusion: "To sum up, the principles of women's suffrage were declared in the fundamental laws of Lithuanian Temporary Constitution; however suffrage itself was fully established in the election law of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania adopted by the State Council of Lithuania that implemented the provisions of Lithuanian Temporary Constitution on 30 Octo-

²⁷ Vilma Akmenytė-Ruzgienė, *Rinkimų teisė ir moterys 1920–1940 m. Lietuvos Respublikos Seime*, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=37727&p_k=1 [17.03.2012].

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ Ibidem.

ber 1919”³⁰. However, one cannot agree with such treatment of women’s rights. The author clearly points out that the 1918 Lithuanian Temporary Constitution did not announce equality of political rights for both genders; it was carried out only on 2 November 1919 with a law on the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania elections. Moreover, in her article Akmenytė-Ruzgienė did not provide the 1905 resolutions of Vilnius Seimas that included a declaration of the principles of women’s suffrage rights in Lithuania. This has already been discussed when reviewing the 1st strategy.

Therefore, it can be said that political rights were granted to women in Lithuania on 2 November 1919 by means of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania election law adopted by the State Council of Lithuania, rather than by means of Lithuanian Temporary Constitution of 2 November 1918.

Organisation of women’s meetings. During the election to the third State Duma Lithuanian women were preparing for the first *Women Assembly*. *Liberal Democrats* Felicija Bortkevičienė, Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė, Ona Brazauskaitė, Gabrielė Petkevičaitė led the women movement in Vilnius. They raised ideas of, men and women’s political equality, tried to enhance women’s social awareness, tackled education issues.

At the same time another centre of women movement was formed in Kaunas. It was led by the Catholic clergy. In 1906 priests established Christian societies *Saulė* (Sun), *Žiburys* (Light), *St. Joseph*, *St. Zita* in the country. *St. Zita* society of maidservants started its activity in Vilnius in 1905, and in 1906 it established its chapters in Kaunas and other towns. Priests tried to direct the women’s increasing social activeness to work for the interests of the Church, and in 1907 they organized the first *Lithuanian Women Assembly*. All Catholic societies and political parties, e.g., *Lithuanian Democrats* and *Lithuanian Christian Democrats* sent their representatives to the assembly.

Election to the third Duma determined that the first assembly of Lithuanian women was not numerous. About 400 women took part in it. The entire elite of intellectual women of that time was there – Gabrielė Petkevičaitė, Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė, Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė, Julija Žymantienė-Žemaitė, Marija Pečkau-

³⁰ Ibidem.

skaitė, Felicija Bortkevičienė, Liuda Didžiulienė, Juana Griniuvienė. The event assembled women of different convictions, social layers, political beliefs, confession, education background. Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė wrote: “The theatre hall is full of women from villages. There are some men – on one side of the hall the progressive gather, Augustinas Janulaitis dominate among them, on the other side – priests, among who the most prominent is Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas”³¹. Only Lithuanian women were present in the assembly because the steering committee’s notes indicated that the event would be held in the Lithuanian language.

Issues of women organizations, education, nurturing were analysed in the assembly. The discussions on the questions of women’s employment and labour unions were especially heated. The chairperson of the assembly Gabrielė Petkevičaitė noted that countrywomen also had a say in the assembly, yet they mostly complained about men’s drinking and in case of maidservants – about being exploited by their mistresses. Julija Žemaitė in her memoirs mentions that the countrywomen waited and demanded some magic salvation from their trouble, and they did not understand the necessity to educate.

The assembly presidium proposed the following resolutions: “1) to establish a union that would fight for women rights and would cooperate with similar unions in other countries; 2) women themselves create unions according to their occupations for the improvement of their household conditions; 3) women unions act separately or together with men’s; 4) a ten-person committee is elected to administer the union”³². All of them were approved by the participants. The fourth resolution, however, raised stormy discussions because there were no criteria for election of women to the committee. Later a lawyer Petras Leonas wrote: “the atmosphere became hot, especially because the men, which division into trends was especially obvious, participated in the discussions”³³.

In 1908, the women’s movement split into secular and catholic trends.

³¹ Sofija Čiurlionienė-Kymantaitė, *Raštai*, (Vilnius: Vaga, 1988), 3.

³² Pranas Čepėnas, *Naujųjų laikų Lietuvos istorija*, Vol. 1-2, (Chicago: M. Morkūno spaustuvė, 1992), 475.

³³ Virginija Jurėnienė, “Steigiamojo Seimo išrinkimas: lygių politinių teisių įsisteisėjimas valstybėje”, 97.

Consequently, on 21 March, 1908 *Lithuania's Catholic Women Society* was established and progressive women were prevented from developing organized activity³⁴. The secular women organization continued its activity on the basis of the *Lithuanian Women Union* established in 1905 because the governor did not probate a second women organization. In this way, an organized women movement in Lithuania split and was led by the clerics and intellectual laywomen – just the same like in Poland.

The aims of both organizations Lithuanian Women's Union (Lietuvos moterų sąjunga) and Lithuanian Catholic Women's Association (Lietuvos katalikių moterų sąjunga) were similar. They aimed at the re-establishment of a Lithuanian state and the provision of political rights to women. This priority given to national aims makes the Lithuanian women's movement exceptional from other movements in e.g. Central Europe, as it shows women's greater involvement in national politics and arguably their maturity. The exceptional characteristic can be explained by the fact that members of women's organizations were also leaders in the established parties. Members of the Lithuanian Women's Union had liberal and social-democratic views and were public figures, teachers, writers and newspaper editors. The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Association directed its activities mainly towards catholic and rural women.

Both organizations actively cooperated with women's organizations in other states, particularly in Russia. Many educated women in Lithuania were graduates of higher schools in Russia and were familiar with the processes there. Lithuanian women supported the Russian laws of family and equality. Lithuanian women also cooperated with Latvian, Estonian, Belorussian, and Jewish women's organizations when sending petitions on granting political rights to women and the restriction of the sale of alcohol to the Russian Duma (Parliament). However, the interrelations between Lithuanian and Polish women were tense because Poles disapproved of the Lithuanian national movement and the re-establishment of the independent state of Lithuania

Issuing newspapers. The Catholic women trend expanded their activity in the country. The laywomen's trend also developed

³⁴ Pranas Čepėnas, *Naujųjų laikų Lietuvos istorija*, 475.

their activity but not that actively. The *Catholic Women Movement* was supported by the Catholic Church, and the secular trend did not have backing as it was persecuted by the tsarist government. Both the trends published women newspapers from 1910 to 1913. The Catholic newspaper *Lietuvaitė* (Lithuanian girl) regarded women education and raising their cultural level as its main objective. Meanwhile the aim of the secular newspaper *Žibutė* (Violet) was not only to educate women but also raise their awareness. Equal rights of men and women, full suffrage to women were frequently discussed topics in the newspaper. They were not approved by the majority of the society. *Žibutė* met great resistance and its publishing stopped in 1913. *Lietuvaitė* was published till the World War I.

Creating a women's party

In 1908, Gabrielė Petkevičaitė raised an idea about a women's party. Lithuanian women's party was established in 1995.

The third strategy – to have deputies in the parliaments (1920–1926, 1936–1940).

Tactics:

- participation in election to the parliaments and local councils,
- representation of women in parliamentary activities,
- preparation of relevant bills.

Measures:

- participation in election by means of active and passive rights,
- direct representation of women's organizations in Seimas,
- help from women's organizations for female participants of Seimas to prepare relevant bills by means of active participation in discussions.

On 1 July, 1919 The Council of Lithuanian State addressed Lithuania's citizens pointing out that Lithuania was being built on the basements of freedom, democracy and equality. The address also stated that "all Lithuanian citizens have to equally fulfill all the state's duties the same as all must have equal rights notwithstand-

ing nationality, religion, language³⁵. This amendment was influenced by the new opportunities to women granted in the adjacent countries, e.g. Latvia, Poland, Finland, Russia. Women were elected to parliaments in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Austria.

The purpose of this address was to encourage patriotism in the population, which was affected by a complex political situation in the country due to the state of war that had at that time been lasting for two years. From the end of 1918 until the end of 1920 Lithuanians fought a war of independence against Poland and Russia. The armies of the both neighbouring countries had been invading the country with the aim of occupying it. All Lithuanian citizens protected the state either at the front lines or behind the lines.

The State Council's position towards women was changing also due to the society's pressure. In 1919 there was no hostility or indifference about women's rights remaining in the society. The reasons for this change could be sought also in parties positions and sophistication of the society. **At that time a lot of brochures about election and women's rights in the adjacent countries were published.**

The parties of *Lithuanian Christian Democrats* (LKLDP), *Social Democrats* (LSLDP) and *Lithuanian Peasants Alliance* (LVS) spoke for equality of women's rights for one reason or another, and the party of Lithuanian Social Democrats repeatedly emphasized the necessity of granting these rights in the press as early as 1918. On 11 September 1919 the Prime Minister Mykolas Sleževičius and the President Antanas Smetona appointed a commission to prepare the law on the election of the Constituent Seimas. The commission was chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs Petras Leonas. None of the commission members objected the idea that elections in Lithuania had to be conducted by general, direct, equal and secret vote.

Women **received suffrage on 20 November, 1919**, after the Council of Lithuania passed the law of the Constituent Assembly elections.

On 20 November, 1919 the Council of the State of Lithuania passed the Law of election to the Constituent Seimas. It guaran-

³⁵ "Lietuvos piliečiai", *Laikinosios vyriausybės žinios*, nr 8, 1919, 2.

teed the inhabitants the right and freedom to nominate and elect the desired representatives to the Constituent Seimas by general, equal and secret vote according to the principles of proportional system. By establishing and emphasizing the constitutional principle of general and equal voting, Seimas stressed the equality of both genders. By including the principle of citizens equality Lithuania followed the (constitutional) example of other states, especially the newly established Central European ones. The law of the Constituent Seimas built the basis for democratic election. With slight amendments the law remained valid when electing democratic parliaments in Lithuania.

It should also be noted that several states failed to grant female suffrage until much later in the twentieth century. By including the principle of equality for all citizens Lithuania followed the (constitutional) example of other states, especially the newly established Central European ones.

Constituent Seimas (Parliament). After the announcement of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the parties made their lists. About 30 parties and groups presented the lists of their candidates in the electoral districts. Most of the lists included women. Most often women were included into the second pentad, and sometimes into the second decade except one district where G. Petkevičaitė was the first candidate on the list.

The women candidates to the Constituent Assembly were educated; most of them single, with a high social status. Most of the women candidates were already active and well-known leaders in the women's movement. Another feature of the women candidates was their young age.

Even seven representatives were elected to Seimas. That constituted 7% of all Seimas' members. Six women from *Christian Democrats* block got places in Seimas by the list. These women were Magdalena Galdikienė, Emilija Gvildienė, Morta Lukošytė, Vida Mackevičaitė, Ona Muraškaitė, Salomėja Stakauskaitė. There was one woman from *Socialist Populist Democrats* and Peasants party, i.e. Gabrielė Petkevičaitė. On 22 January, 1921, when Gabrielė Petkevičaitė refused the mandate of parliament membership she was replaced by Felicija Bortkevičienė. No woman from the *Social Democrats* list was elected to the Constituent Seimas. The elected women were social activists, gymnasium and primary school teachers or their headmistresses.

On 15 May, 1920, with a celebratory session at the Music Hall in the temporary capital Kaunas, the **Constituent Seimas** started its work. Its temporary presidium was dominated by women. Its chair was the oldest (60 years) person of the Constituent Seimas, a writer Gabrielė Petkevičaitė, and the secretary was the youngest representative, a teacher Ona Muraškaitė-Račiukaitienė (24 years). Such structure remained until the constant presidium was constituted. That was a great sensation in Europe. In the opening speech Gabrielė Petkevičaitė greeted the Constituent Seimas:

I am happy to do that as an old fighter for my nation's freedom, as a woman who gained the desired equal rights, as a society member who did not cease to fight against any enslavement of nations, social status, capital ... As representatives doing great work, let's do it not forgetting even for a moment that we are here only the ministers of our country people's will³⁶.

The group of six women from Christian Democrats bloc was called a women fraction in the Constituent Seimas though it did not separate itself from Christian Democrats bloc. The six were led by Magdalena Galdikiene³⁷. The Christian Democrats women were active participants in the work of commissions, prepared amendments to laws. The women mostly worried that while writing the Constitution of Lithuania and adapting the laws inherited from Russia to the new conditions they would not be left with narrowed rights.

While striving for the equality of both genders the women developed a maximum programme which was to be realized in the new state. The **programme stated**:

1. A family should be based on the equality between both genders. This principle will allow a family to develop on a new basis of humanism, not on slavery to each other.
2. The principle of equality should be realized in economics as well. It was noted that this had to be not only accentuated but that "really the same payment should be made for the same work, despite the gender."
3. It should be declared that woman's housework and education of the children "equals a man's earning in keeping

³⁶ Pranas Čepėnas, *Naujųjų laikų Lietuvos istorija*, 681.

³⁷ Zenonas Ivinskis, "Lietuvos Steigiamasis Seimas", *Jo kilmė ir reikšmė I Laisvė*, nr 50, 1970, 3-25.

the family.” This programme has remained actual up to these days.

They also indicated directions for Seimas to realize the programme³⁸.

The women prepared and proposed for Seimas reading the bills of the following laws: “Civil and Family Law,” **abolishment of prostitution regulations**; restriction and prohibition of alcohol distribution („The Dry Law”); revision of the definite articles of civil laws stating inequality of men and women; amendments to the law of “**Patients till.**”

In 1920–1922, women drew up “The Dry Law.” They demanded to ban the sale of alcohol by retail. It was to be included into the Constitution that was being prepared. This failed; however, Seimas adopted another law on lessons about the effects of alcohol on a person being included into the education programme.

Such law had been adopted in the U.S. Polish women’s organizations demanded “The Dry Law” for the country as well.

This issue was raised again in Seimas III demanding even more drastic restrictions on alcohol sale in the country. The law was dismissed as detrimental to the state budget.

In the second reading of article 84 of the Constitution project concerning defence of the territory of Lithuanian Republic, a referent proposed the following formulation of the article: “All Lithuanian citizens take part in defending the territory.”

Representatives of the Christian Democrats bloc discussed whether women should be involved in the country’s defence. The chair of the Constitution project Antanas Tumėnas generalized the discussion and responded to the proposals as follows: “Woman is so much different from the man ... that we cannot put this obligation on her. ... Everybody should do their duties properly, and not to dash into work where the duty to do it belongs to men”³⁹.

Felicija Bortkevičienė participated in the preparation of the bill of Patients till (Ligonių kasų) – social insurance in case of illness or maternity leave. The law was necessary because women started working in various fields. They needed the same legal guarantees as men in health sector. Women participated in preparation of other

³⁸ Steigiamojo Seimo darbai (Works of the Constituent Seimas), 1922 (March 2), Session 177, 13.

³⁹ Ibidem.

bills, their readings and passing them in the Constituent Seimas. In this Seimas women group lacked juridical education.

Current realization

1. Abolition of the regulation of prostitution – in 1940 it was forbidden.
2. Restriction and prohibition of alcohol distribution – only from 2016.
3. The law on compulsory primary education was adopted in 1922; however, in reality it was implemented only in 1928. Secondary education was made compulsory in 1976.

In Seimas I, II, III (1922–1927) a jurist Social Democrat Liuda Purėnienė was active. In Seimas I, II, III the number of women was smaller. They comprised 5% of the Seimas members. After the Constituent Seimas a tradition to elect the same women to Seimas was formed. The reasons for the phenomenon were the following:

1. the elected women were active and well-known public figures;
2. their election was determined by their social status as well;
3. the viewpoint of the parties towards women participation in politics.

Quite often parties would enlist women in the second decade of their election lists. In Seimas I, II, III the number of women was smaller. They comprised just 5% of the Seimas' members.

The state President's post (1926). A new III Seimas needed the President. *The candidates were Felicija Borkevičienė, Kazys Grinius, Gabrielė Petkevičaitė, Antanas Smetona.* Kazys Grinius received 50 votes, Antanas Smetona – 2 and Felicija Bortkevičienė with Gabrielė Petkevičaitė – 1 vote each. Women's attempts to run for president are to be considered as the peak of Lithuanian women movement of the first half of the 20th century (Jurėnienė 2006, p. 120).

After Antanas Smetona's imposed authoritarian regime in the state in 1927 women did not participate in political life. They were left with a possibility to act in the sphere of culture and charity.

Other initiatives in Seimas III:

1. Writing of women's surnames (1926), adopted in 2009.
2. Civil matrimony (1926), adopted in 1945.
3. Men must support families (1926), adopted in 1964.

When the authoritarian regime was established in Lithuania in 1927, the issue of the women's political rights became especially acute as their political rights were restricted. They could not be elected to the Seimas or the municipal councils. It should be noted, however, that under the President A. Smetona's reign from 1926 to 1940, the Seimas elections were not organized at all in the period of 1927–1936. It was but the year 1936 when the Fourth Seimas, in which there were no women, was elected. The President explained such a situation by claiming that the most important goal of a woman was her family.

Women's Participation in the Councils of Municipalities. As has been mentioned above, Lithuanian women's participation in the state government was problematic: women entered the central government only in 1920, when the Constituent Seimas was called. This was a paradoxical situation because women had been participating in municipal government since the reestablishment of the state, i.e. since 1918. The paradox was a result of the complicated political situation due to the war of independence and to flaws in the laws in the country.

In 1918 the institutions of local municipalities were elected by democratic principles of the state organization because the general principle of election was observed. On 17 December, 1918, in the circular note of the Home Office called *On the Municipalities in Lithuania* the principle of general election was clearly established. By this circular note the state recognized partial political rights for women.

Despite the relatively progressive nature of the political rights granted to Lithuanian women after 1918, the influence of the Catholic Church on the largest of the women's organisations, the Lithuanian Catholic Women's Association, and on society in the rural areas where the majority of the population lived, ensured that traditional attitudes to women were retained.

The fourth strategy – equal positions of women in everyday life and the labour market (1901–1940).

Tactic – to participate in the activities of parliamentary parties, women's organizations and trade unions.

Measures:

- creation of women's or mixed trade unions;
- organization of meetings to discuss women's rights in the labour market;

- education of society by showing the importance of women having a profession as well as men;
- encouragement of women to take up business.

Labour market. The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Association was the largest of the women's organizations. In 3 December 1922, in the meeting of catholic women associations a union of catholic organizations called *Lithuanian Catholic Women Highest Secretariat* was established. Its goal was not only to unite organizations but also to coordinate the activity of catholic women. In 1933 the representatives of the Highest Secretariat participated in the *International Social and Public Union Congress* in Paris where the question of women's work in industry was discussed. In 1933 the Secretariat invited the decade congress in Kaunas where the resolution was made to fulfill the implementation of full equal rights for both sexes in the family and the economic independence of married women.

The process of establishing *The Lithuanian Council of Women* (LCW) started on 16 September, 1928 when the women elected an Organizing Committee from various women's associations, the tasks of which were to prepare the statutes for the establishment of the Women's Council. The established organization united twenty women's associations⁴⁰. The Lithuanian Council of Women consisted of the organizations that belonged to the liberal and social-democrat branches of the women's movement.

There were no legal opportunities in the labour market achieved. The situation became especially difficult in the labour market with the global economic recession (1929–1933). Women were fired from work despite their competencies because the society, even though becoming more modern, remained traditional. In national politics, the 4k (as defined in German in Germany's political context) became valid in the context of women (kitchen, children, church, clothes). This went on in Lithuania until the occupation of the state.

The unemployment in the country was quite high, and women who were studying did not require job places. It would have been more difficult if the government and the women's council had not dismissed women from their work places, and had looked for

⁴⁰ Virginija Jurėnienė, *Lietuvos moterų judėjimas*, 166.

other ways to solve the problem. Therefore, an acute social and economic issue, such as women's redundancy in the labour market disregarding their qualification was not issued.

The LCW protested against women's redundancy by writing the memoranda. In 1931 LWC presented the government with a memorandum where it was required to sustain equality of both sexes when firing people from work. In 1933, May 2, the ministers in the attempts to balance the state budget decided to fire state officials from 1 July. LWC was quick to react to this decision and demanded to cancel it. The government had to take into consideration the feelings of a great part of the society because women work were solitary. In the end of the year 1935 the situation in Lithuanian work market became even more complicated when the government issued *New Industrial Workers Employment Decrees* that forbade women to work night shifts from 10 p.m. till 5 a.m.

In 1935, the chair of the Lithuanian Women's Council Vincenta Lozoraitienė suggested:

1. To establish crafts schools for girls.
2. To encourage women to buy only Lithuanian products.
3. To support Lithuanian factories so that national production prevails in the market.
4. To encourage female outworkers to cook in an artistic and marketable way⁴¹.

E. Gimbutienė's gave a presentation "Woman's Economic Household in Lithuania" (1937, II Women's congress). She pointed out that a woman's work was not appreciated as much as men's; therefore, it was necessary to aim for equal pay for equal amount of work. One of the requirements – when appointing or employing, to regard a person's abilities rather than his/her gender. Moreover, women need to pursue a profession, learn crafts, encourage women's activities in economics, promote cooperation, fight for an equal stand with men in crafts, trade, industry⁴².

Until the occupation of the state in 1940 women movement did not women employment, women's professional unions, active women's organizations, etc.

⁴¹ Vincenta Lozoraitienė, "Atsiminimai iš kongreso Dubrovniko (Reminiscences from the Congress in Dubrovnik)", *Naujoji Romuva*, nr 47(307), 1936, 947.

⁴² "Jubiliejinis moterų suvažiavimas", *Naujoji Vaidilutė*, nr 1(148), 1938, 53.

The fifth strategy – international cooperation

Lithuanian women took an active part in the majority of the international events organized for women. The Lithuanian women's organizations learnt much from the experience of various women's organizations in other European countries where the women's movements were much stronger and influential. At the beginning of the decade, the most active were the representatives of the liberal and Catholic branches of the Lithuanian women's movement.

In 1928 the liberal and social-democrat branches of the Lithuanian women's movement founded the Lithuanian Council of Women which united twenty (mostly liberal) women's organizations. However, the social-democrat branch was too weak to represent Lithuania on its own and take an active part in the International Social-democrat women's movement. In 1929, the Lithuanian Council of Women became a member of three international organizations – International Council of Women, International Family Education, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Since then its representatives regularly attended the venues of these organizations. The Catholic branch of the Lithuanian women's movement took an active part in the international movements in the 1930s. Since 1922 it was represented by the Highest Secretariat of the Lithuanian Catholic Women which was particularly involved in the events organized by the International Union of the Catholic Women.

When participating in the international women's forums, the Lithuanian women's movements, raised the important issues concerning foreign affairs and other state policy. Moreover, when participating in the international congresses, the organizations belonging to the Lithuanian women's movement raised and discussed the issues that were very acute in all Europe, such as unequal payment for the same job to men and women; the problem of women's citizenship; legal inequality of illegitimate children and the problems of hygiene, education, prostitution, etc.

Women's movement initiative:

1. Issue of disarming. International issues must be solved by way of diplomacy (1928).
2. Domestic violence (1932). Adopted in 2012.

Conclusions

1. The Lithuanian women's movement starting from the 2nd half of the 19th century to 1940 highlights four strategies that had their tactical actions and anticipated measures to implement them. The first strategy encompassed the period from the 2nd half of the 19th century to 1905. Its aim was to establish a women's organization. This was a breaking point when the women's movement transformed from non-organized into organized. This strategy was implemented fully. The women's movement during this period was intertwined with the national movement and did not raise separate aims.

2. The second strategy – suffrage rights of women (1905–1918? or 1919?). This strategy did not have a clear ending because the historiography of Lithuania had an established notion that this was 2 November 1918 when the first Lithuanian Temporary Constitution was adopted: “Citizens, no matter which gender ..., are equal in the face of the law.” Previously published studies stated that this meant granting suffrage rights to women; however, having carried out a linguistic (composition and structure of sentences of that period) analysis of the text in the Constitution, it was discovered that the legal text had been interpreted incorrectly. It should be interpreted in a way that states that both men and women will be responsible for the crimes committed, will have asset management rights, will pay taxes equally, etc.). Therefore, it can be said that suffrage rights were granted to women in Lithuania only on 2 November 1919 when the law on the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania became official and the second Lithuanian women's strategy was implemented.

3. The third strategy deals with parliament-democratic period of the Republic of Lithuania (1920 – April 1927) and parliament yet non-democratic period (1936–1940). During the latter period, women do not have their representatives in the parliament and do not take part in the formation of the state's interior and foreign policies. The first parliament democratic period was very active and significant in the implementation of the women's strategy. The most important works by female members of parliament were carried out during 1920–1922 in the Constitutional Assembly of Lithuania and 3rd Seimas when two women (Petkevičaitė and Bortkevičienė) ran for president. This would have been a second global sensation had one of them been elected as the president of

the Republic of Lithuania. The first sensation occurred on 15 May 1920 when the temporary presidium of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania were led by two women: chairwoman Petkevičaitė, and secretary Muraškaitė-Račiukaitienė.

4. The fourth strategy – international activities and representation of the women’s movement in international organizations. This strategy was implemented.

Bibliography

- Aleksandravičius, Egidijus, Kulakauskas, Atanas. *Carų valdžioje Lietuva XIX amžiuje*, (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1996).
- Akmenytės-Ruzgienės, Vilma. *Rinkimų teisė ir moterys 1920–1940 m. Lietuvos Respublikos Seime*, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=37727&p_k=1.
- Birmontienė, Toma, Jurėnienė, Virginija. “Development of Women’s Rights in Lithuania: Striving for Political Equality, Aftermaths of War”, in: Blanca Rodriguez-Ruiz and Ruth Rubio-Marin (eds.), *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe*, (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012), 79–95.
- Bortkevičienė, Felicija. Straipsniai iš Varpo ir Ūkininko redakcijos archyvo, Vilniaus universiteto Rankraščių skyrius, (The Department of Manuscripts of Vilnius University), 1–423, 269, 1905.
- Butėnas, Julius. *Istoriografo užrašai*, (Vilnius: Vaga, 1974).
- Čepėnas, Pranas. *Naujųjų laikų Lietuvos istorija*, Vol. 1–2, (Chicago: M. Morkūno spaustuvė, 1992).
- Čiurlionienė-Kymantaitė, Sofija. *Raštai*, (Vilnius: Vaga, 1988).
- Dambrauskas, Aleksandras. “Keli žodžiai apie apšvietimą mergaičių”, *Tėvynės sargas*, nr 10/11, 1900, 30.
- Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė, Vanda. *Lietuvos Steigiamasis Seimas*, (New York: Lithuanian National Foundation, 1975).
- Gaigalaitė-Beleckienė, Ona. *Tiesos ir meilės tarnyboje: Lietuvių katalikų moterų draugija 1908–1933*, (Kaunas: Kauno Kardas: 1933).
- Gustainis, Vladas. *Nuo Griškabūdžio iki Paryžiaus*, (Kaunas: Spindulys, 1991).
- Ivinskis, Zenonas. “Lietuvos Steigiamasis Seimas”, *Jo kilmė ir reikšmė į Laisvę*, nr 50, 1970, 3–25.
- Jurėnienė, Virginija. *Lietuvos moterų judėjimas XIX a. pab. – XX a. vidurys*, (Vilnius: Vilnius University Press, 2006).

- Jurėnienė, Virginija. „Steigiamojo Seimo narės ir jų veikla įteisinant lygiateisiškumą 1922 m. Konstitucijoje (Women Members of the Constituent Seimas and Their Activity to Legitimize Equality of Rights in the Constitution of 1922)”, in: Aigustė Bartkutė and Andrius Vaišnys (eds.), *Mūsų konstitucionalizmo raida (Development of Our Constitutionalism)*, (Vilnius: Valstybės žinios, 2003), 96–109.
- Leonavičius, Juozas. *Petras Leonas – Lietuvos sąžinė*, (Kaunas: Technologija, 2002).
- “Lietuvos piliečiai”, *Laikinosios vyriausybės žinios*, nr 8, 1919, 2.
- Lietuvių konferencija Vilniuje 1917. Organizacinio komiteto lietuvių konferencijai sušaukti, Protokolas, VU RS, 1–405.
- “Lietuvos moterų taryba”, *Lietuvos aidas*, nr 2, 1940, 2.
- “Lietuvos moterų tarybos veikla 1934–1938 (pirmininkės V. Lozoraitienės pranešimas visuotiniame susirinkime 1938 XI 24)”, *Moteris ir pasaulis*, nr 11(21), 1938, 2.
- LMT protokolas Nr. 5. S. Čiurlionienės pranešimas apie moterų konferenciją LMA RS, f.181-34, l. 45.
- Lozoraitienė, Vincenta. “Atsiminimai iš kongreso Dubrovniko (Reminiscences from the Congress in Dubrovnik)”, *Naujoji Romuva*, nr 47(307), 1936, 947.
- Mašiotienė, Ona. “Tarpautinės moterų tarybos 8-asis penkmetinis kongresas Vienoje”, *Moteris ir pasaulis*, nr 123(904), 1930, p. 4.
- Mašiotienė, Ona. *Moterų politinis ir valstybiniai – tautiškas darbas 1907–1937 m.*, (Kaunas, 1938).
- Marcinkevičienė, D. (eds.). *Ižymios Lietuvos moterys: XIX a. antroji pusė – XX a. pirmoji pusė*, (Vilnius: Vilnius University Press, 1997).
- Pikčilingienė, Pranciška. „Jubiliejinio moterų suvažiavimo organizacija”, *Moteris ir pasaulis*, nr 10, 1937, 5.
- Steigiamojo Seimo darbai (Works of the Constituent Seimas), 1922 (March 2), Session. 177, 13
- Sujungto LMT ir AMB, MS valdybų posėdžių protokolai. LMA RS, f. 181-34, l. 5.
- Trumpos Steigiamojo Seimo narių biografijos*, (Klaipėda: Seimo kanceliarija, 1924).
- Voverienė, Ona. *Žymiosios XX amžiaus Lietuvos moterys*, (Kaunas: Naujasis amžius, 2005).
- Žukas, Konstantinas. *Žvilgsnis į praeitį: žmogaus ir kario atsiminimai: medžiaga istorikams*, (Chicago: Terra, 1959).