

Tra carte e parole

I sentieri della ricerca storico-educativa
nell'area mediterranea

volume 2

a cura di **ANTONELLA CAGNOLATI**
e **TERESA RABAZAS ROMERO**



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The Vocational Education Project of Greek Interwar Feminist Organizations

Tracing National, Regional and International Encounters

by Katerina Dalakoura
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1. Introduction: Feminist Movement in Greece

The interwar period was a turning point for the feminist movement in Greece, as it also was in the Balkans and Central Europe, in terms of the emergence of women's mass movements, the shift in rhetoric and sociopolitical concerns, the primacy of political rights and suffrage, and the connection to the "political". During this period, various feminist organizations were established and became connected to different political and ideological orientations and groupings, thus presenting different versions of equality strategies and feminism with different political bases. Another crucial feature of the interwar feminist organizations in the Balkan and Central European countries was their association with international women's organizations, in most cases corresponding to the political versions of the feminism they represented.

Among the feminist organizations that emerged in Greece in the interwar period – all founded, as in the other countries of the region, on the basis of their political affinities –, the most active and largest were the Hellenic League for Women's Rights (HLWR), and the National Council of Greek Women (NCGW). The HLWR was founded in 1920 at the exhortation of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), a member of which it then became, while in 1923 it was one of founding members of the Little Entente of Women, a regional association of feminist organizations from four Balkan and two Central European countries¹. Within the Greek feminist movement

1. Little Entente of Women was founded in 1923 during the ninth conference of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), which took place in Rome (12-20 May 1923),

it represented so-called “radical liberal feminism”. The NCGW (first constituted in 1908) was reconstituted in 1919, expressing the positions of conservative liberal feminism and also participating in the international feminist movement; it was a member of the International Council of Women (ICW) and a branch of the International League for Peace and Freedom. A third organization, representing the socialist version of feminism, with a number of very active members despite its small overall membership, was the Socialist Women’s Group (SWG), founded in 1919, a member of the Socialist International of Women. The Greek feminist movement included two more organizations: the Feminist Association in Macedonia and Thrace (FAMTH), founded in 1928, which became a branch of the HLWR in 1933, and the Lyceum Club of Greek Women (LCGW) (founded in 1911), which was in line with the NCGW with regard to the version of feminism supported and was a member of the International Association of Lyceum Clubs².

In spite of the organizations’ differing political starting points, which marked their approaches to contemporary feminist issues, the dividing lines between the organizations were permeable. Celebrated feminists of the time participated in or worked for more than one feminist organization simultaneously. Athina Gaitanou-Giannou³, for example, the founder of the SWG, was for many years (1921-1932) the editor of the feminist journal «Hellenis»

by representatives of feminist organizations from Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, and two Central European countries, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

2. K. Dalakoura, *Feminisms and Politics in the Interwar Period. The Little Entente of Women (1923-1938)*, in «Aspasia. The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women’s and Gender History», 16 (2022), pp. 37-55 (48-49). For a detailed account on the Greek Interwar Feminism, see E. Avdela, A. Psarra, *Ο φεμινισμός στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου: Μια ανθολογία [Feminism in Interwar Greece: An Anthology]*, Gnosi Press, Athens 1985, pp. 13-97; see also K. Dalakoura, S. Ziogou-Karastergiou, *Η εκπαίδευση των γυναικών – Οι γυναίκες στην εκπαίδευση (18^{ος}–20^{ος} αι): Κοινωνικοί, ιδεολογικοί και εκπαιδευτικοί μετασχηματισμοί και η γυναικεία παρέμβαση [Women’s Education – Women in Education (18th-20th Centuries): Social, Ideological and Educational Transformations, and Women’s Interventions]*, Hellenic Academic Libraries, Athens 2015, pp. 290-299, <http://hdl.handle.net/11419/2585> (e-book).

3. Athina Gaitanou-Giannou, a teacher, journalist and writer, was among the very active feminists of her time. On her biography see I. Avdi-Kalkani, *Μια αντάρτισσα της Πόλης στην ταραγμένη Αθήνα. Αθηνά Γαϊτάνου-Γιαννού (1880-1952)* [A Rebel of Istanbul in troubled Athens: Athina Gaitanou-Giannou (1880-1952)], Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA), Athens 1997; M. Bella, *Αθηνά Γαϊτάνου-Γιαννού (1880-1952): Μια πρωτοποριακή μορφή του φεμινιστικού κινήματος* [Athina Gaitanou-Giannou (1880-1952): A ground breaking figure of the Interwar feminist movement, <http://criticeduc.blogspot.com/2015/12/1880-1952.html>].

(Greek Woman) (1921-1940), the organ of the NCGW; Rosa Imvrioti⁴, a celebrated educator and headmistress of girls' secondary schools, while a member of the SWG, participated in the activities of the HLWR. Agni Rousopoulou⁵ was a member of the NCGW and also active in the HLWR. The sociopolitical processes aiming at a modernization of the Greek state based on the principles of political liberalism, the fluidity of contemporary political ideologies, and the frequent (and shifting) collaborations between the liberals and smaller political parties and groupings (socialists and radical "sociologists") in Greek politics provided a fluid political context, reflected in the relationships among the feminist associations⁶.

Furthermore, the express and recurrent – until the mid-1930s – engagement of the feminist associations with feminist struggles, which were given priority over their political differences, as a common strategy and basis for their practices shaped a largely common agenda⁷. All associations, for example, agreed on the significance of the struggle for women's suffrage; their differences lay in the strategies to be employed or in the argumentation provided, with the socialists arguing that women should first be given general and citizenship education and then claim the right to vote, a position matching that of the National Council bourgeois conservatives (the difference being the basis of the rationale), while the feminists of the League for Women's Rights supported the immediate concession of the right to vote to all women without exceptions⁸. Against this background, feminist organizations sought to have and maintain close relations with all governments, no matter which political party was in power. Prioritizing legislative reforms presupposed that feminists had to have

4. Roza Imvrioti (1898-1977) was among the well-known feminists of the interwar period; she worked as a teacher and headmistress in girls' gymnasiums, while being an author of educational and social works too. See E. Papastefanaki, *Η Ρόζα Ιμβριώτη και το παιδαγωγικό της έργο* [Roza Imvrioti and her Work on Education], MA Thesis, University of Crete, 2012.

5. Agni Rousopoulou (1901-1977) studied law in Athens, Leipzig and New York and worked as a lawyer in Athens. She was head of the legal department of the National Council of Greek Women, one of the most active members of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, and a member of Greek socialist groups.

6. K. Dalakoura, *Feminisms and Politics in the Interwar Period*, cit., pp. 47-48.

7. E. Avdela, A. Psarra, *Ο φεμινισμός στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου*, cit., pp. 27-28.

8. *Ibidem*, pp. 66-70; A. Gaitanou-Gianniou, *Γύρω από την Ψήφο: Προς τη νίκη* [On women's Suffrage: towards a Victory], in «Hellenis», 5, 6-7 (1925), pp. 133-134; A. Gaitannou-Gianiou, *Μας έδωθη η δημοτική Ψήφος* [We Have Been Given the Right to the Municipal Vote], in «Hellenis» 9, 6-7 (1929), pp. 140-141.

contacts and communication with all political forces to meet their goals. Nevertheless, there were political coalitions and “sympathies” for specific political parties or groupings – not openly expressed – reflected in the networks of political connections of the members of the feminist organizations⁹.

Although political rights and suffrage were a priority for the interwar feminist movements, the agenda was much broader including civil, labor education and individual rights, social welfare, and new legislation on family, marriage, maternity and child protection, while being related to the liberal modernization of the Greek society pursued by the liberal governments of the time. In this agenda education, and specifically women’s education, holds an important position¹⁰, as is demonstrated by the density and the range of their educational activities and interventions, such as *memoranda* on women’s general and vocational education, participation in debates on education reforms, initiatives of education institutions’ establishment, organization of various forms of non-typical educational, research initiatives etc.

Research and literature on the subject, available to date is very limited¹¹. Historians of women’s and gender history, like historians of feminism, have focused their attention on recording and analyzing the course of feminist activity and the growth of women’s demands, with emphasis on those having to do with political and labor rights, examining turning-points and the evolution of feminist/women’s movements, and analyzing the different feminist ideological currents in their historical development¹². So though there are references

9. E. Avdela, A. Psarra, *Ο φεμινισμός στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου*, cit., pp. 57-58; K. Dalakoura, *Feminisms and Politics in the Interwar Period*, cit., p. 48.

10. Furthermore, the education question features among the goals of some associations’ establishment; at the revised statute of the Hellenic League for Women’s Rights in 1927 the education question features among the revised goals of the association’s activity, see *Works of the Association*, in «The Woman’s Struggle», 37 (1927), p. 7.

11. Selectively: A. Boutzouvi, *Αύρα Θεοδωροπούλου: Δραστηριότητες, ιδεολογία και στρατηγικές της χειραφέτησης 1910-1922* [Avra Theodoropoulou: Activities, ideology and emancipation strategies, 1910-1922], PhD Thesis, Department of history and archaeology, Kapodestrian University of Athens, 2003; M. Bella, *Η Ανωτέρα Γυναικεία Σχολή (1921-1923): Ένα προδρομικό παιδαγωγικό και πολιτικό εγχείρημα του Δημήτρη Γληνού* [The Women’s High School (1921-1923): a pedagogical and political endeavor of Dimitris Glinos], Topos Press, Athens 2018; E. Papastefanaki, *Η Ρόζα Ιμβριώτη και το παιδαγωγικό της έργο*, cit.

12. E. Avdela, A. Psarra, K. Dalakoura, S. Ziogou-Karastergiou, *Ο φεμινισμός στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου*; M. Kyriakidou, *The feminist movement in Greece (1910-1936): From Gender to Feminist Consciousness and Politicization*, PhD, London, Department of Byzantine and modern Greek studies, King’s College – University of London, 2000; D. Samiou, *So Difficult to be Considered as Citizens: The History of Women’s*

to the educational concern of the interwar feminist organizations as well as to their connection with the international feminist movement, there is not much research and exploration of these subjects.

The paper presents the work of the Greek feminist associations on women's vocational education, focusing on the types of education and courses suggested, and the institutions established on their initiative. It aims to explore the extent of the international reference in the elaboration of a vocational school system for Greek women, and trace particular influences across Western European and Balkan countries, as a result of the contacts of the Greek feminist associations with the international and regional (Balkan) feminist movement, and the visits of Greek feminists to the countries of educational interest, charting the encounters with the "international"; convergences and divergences in the education projects of the Greek feminist associations, given their different political origins and versions of feminism they represented; and the entanglement of their work and practices with the education policy exercised or the reforms debated at the time. In my approach national, regional and international feminist organizations are considered as "entangled places" of ideological, political, cultural encounters, which reflect on the education projects suggested and the argumentation provided.

2. The Education Project of the Feminist Associations: Vocational Education

The exclusion of women from any form of public post-primary education provision and training and the absence of a coherent social policy and adequate social welfare structures in 19th century and interwar Greece constituted the necessary social conditions for women's associations social interventions and the undertaking of initiatives to meet existing educational and social needs. Thus the educational interventions of women's associations from around the middle of the 19th century until the end of the inter-war period included a wide range of educational activities (literacy structures for children and adults, schools for

higher and vocational education and training, submission of legislative petitions, series of public educational lectures and courses). Their most critical contribution, however, was in filling the gap in state provision for women's vocational education and training. In this field of interventions, there was a clear differentiation between the technical and vocational education organized and provided by women's charitable and education associations in the 19th century and that provided by interwar feminist organizations, both in terms of the type of education and the social origins of the girls to whom it was addressed – two parameters that were linked –, and the sociopolitical goals of this provision.

The activity of the charitable (as well as educational) women's associations, reflecting the perception of charity as a preventive and 'corrective' social intervention, aimed to provide qualifications that could address poverty and moral hazards caused by it, and to integrate the 'needy' in society through transmission of the bourgeois morals of labor, industriousness and honesty¹³. It addressed the lower social classes, the poor and 'needy', providing training in "female" crafts such as sewing, embroidery, cooking, weaving, domestic work, along with basic literacy and provision of employment. This training was provided in orphanages or in a kind of informal 'training schools' based on apprenticeship, set up and maintained by the associations¹⁴.

Feminist associations of the interwar period implemented a further comprehensive program for education and women's education in particular, which included interventions in three interrelated aspects of the education question: state educational policy, by submitting studies and *memoranda* on the issue to the respective ministers; range and diversity of the school network, with the establishment and operation of educational institutions; and in labour legislation, with the aim to remove legislative gender barriers, thus linking the vocational education proposed and implemented – to a certain extent – with the labor market and employability of female professionals.

The main pillar of their educational program, as mentioned above, was vocational and technical education of women. It was organized in the context of

13. E. Kanner, *Φτώχεια και φιλανθρωπία στην ορθόδοξη κοινότητα της Κωνσταντινούπολης (1753-1912)* [Poverty and Charity in the Orthodox Community of Istanbul (1753-1912)], Katarti Press, Athens 2004, pp. 177-206, 254-280.

14. K. Dalakoura, S. Ziogou-Karastergiou, *Η εκπαίδευση των γυναικών – Οι γυναίκες στην εκπαίδευση (18ος-20ος αι)*, cit., pp. 282-286.

the economic development and expansion of the labor market emerging in the 20th century, and addressed to both the urban and the rural population. As early as 1924 articles and essays on women's vocational education, particularly on the countryside women, featured in the feminist periodicals of the period in frequency¹⁵. They presented corresponding provisions in Western and Central European countries, such as France, Germany, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and argued for the great necessity of such an education provision in Greece; up to that time there had been an absolute lack of vocational training for women in rural areas, while they represented the majority of the female population in Greece and their illiteracy rate was very high (66% in 1930s).

From 1926 to 1929 the Hellenic League for Women's Rights (HLWR), the most active Greek feminist association of the time, submitted a series of *memoranda* to the Ministry of Agriculture on women's agricultural education. In 1926 submitted a *memorandum* on the lowest tier of agricultural education for women and its necessity, while in 1927 a comprehensive study on agricultural education for both, girls and boys, was sent to the Committee, which had been set up by the Ministry to work on the issue and prepare the Bill which was to be introduced to the Parliament¹⁶. Again in 1929 in the occasion of the overall education reform implemented by the government that year, the same study with slight changes and additions in the economic and administrative session was re-submitted. The form of education proposed was the so-called "agricultural and domestic science education". It addressed women in rural areas with the aim to provide professional agricultural education along with education on domesticity. It provided for all education tiers, suggesting various types of institutions depending on the place and time period of operation: schools established in certain towns/villages and/or "travelling" schools, full year and seasonal schools¹⁷.

The project was presented in detail with references to courses, teaching staff training, education objectives, school network geography, administra-

15. Ch. Evelpidis, *Η Τεχνική μόρφωση της γυναίκας στα χωριά* [Technical Education of Village Women], in «The Woman's Struggle», 9-10 (1924), p. 6; Hellenic League for Women's Rights, *Πρόγραμμα γυναικείας μορφώσεως* [A Program for Women's Education], in «The Woman's Struggle», 6 (1924), p. 2-3.

16. *Λογοδοσία για τη δράση του Συνδέσμου το έτος 1926* [Report of the HLWR Board on the Association's Activity in 1926], in «The Woman's Struggle», 44 (1927), pp. 3-4; *Η γεωργικο-οικοκυρική μόρφωση* [The Agricultural and Domestic Education], in «The Woman's Struggle», 53 (1927), p. 6.

17. *Η γεωργικο-οικοκυρική μόρφωση της Ελληνίδας: Το υπόμνημα* [The Agricultural and Domestic Education of the Greek Women: The Memorandum], in «The Woman's Struggle», 88 (1929), pp. 3-4.

tion, and funding sources. Emphasis was placed on courses addressing the type of agricultural economy that women could better develop such as gardening, plowing or canning, while it was argued that teachers of both genders should be specifically trained either abroad or in the state middle and upper agronomic and agricultural boys' schools, thus challenging government's schedule to employ primary school teachers for this type of schools, particularly for the seasonal ones. It was suggested that particularities of the areas, as well as high and low seasons in the 'farming year' should be taken into consideration, when planning the curricula and defining the 'school year'. The lowest tier of the agricultural and domestic education was pointed out as being of a great importance, while "travelling schools" were suggested as the school type which could best serve Greece, due to its low cost operation, and to the fact that could serve more than one region¹⁸.

In addition to the vocational education proposed for the countryside women, and countryside population in general, feminist associations established and run vocational schools in the urban areas too, with the aim to fill in urban school network gaps and modernize Greek education system, provide for higher professional qualifications, and respond to economy and labor market requirements¹⁹. Besides, their initiatives aimed at shifting women and youth to new professions and economic sectors with prospects for economic advancement, while supporting in practice their claims addressed to the state, such as provision of professional qualifications, abolition of gendered barriers in recruitment of civil servants and advancement in the professional hierarchy.

Among the institutions they set up, the *Evening Vocational School for Women Employees*, the *Professional School of Toys and Decorations*, and the *Skyros Plant Dye School* are quite indicative cases of the type of urban vocational education pursued by the Greek feminist associations. The *Evening Vocational School for Women Employees* was founded in 1925 by the HLWR and provided two-year studies in commerce, accounting, Greek and foreign language typing, and shorthand.

18. *Ibidem*. M. Svolou, *Γεωργική οικοκυρική μόρφωση* [Agricultural and Domestic Education], in «The Woman's Struggle», 31 (1926), pp. 3-5; A. Theodoropoulou, M. Svolou, *Το υπόμνημα του Συνδέσμου για τη γεωργική εκπαίδευση* [The HLWR Memorandum on Agricultural Education], in «The Woman's Struggle», 45 (1927), pp. 3-4, 6-7.

19. A. Stamatellatou, *Ειδικές και συμπληρωματικής μορφώσεως επαγγελματικές σχολές* [Specialized and Supplementary Education Providing Vocational Schools], in «Hellenis», 9-10 (1935), pp. 195-197.

In 1926, the HLWR succeeded to have the School officially recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade and Industry as a professional school and thus provide acceptable and state-recognizable professional qualifications and employment rights. In 1930-1931 the years of studies extended from two to four and the school became officially equivalent to public commercial schools. Thus, women could be able to improve their professional position or pursue senior positions in the public administration hierarchy – provided that appointment to such positions was permitted by labor legislation. In addition to professional education, the *Evening Vocational School* intended to educate women as citizens, including in its curriculum courses of political economy, labor legislation, public law, in its curriculum²⁰.

The *Professional School of Toys and Decorations* was established by the same association, HLWR, in 1928. Initially it provided two year studies, extended to three years in 1930. The same year the school was renamed *Papastrateios Municipal School of Toys and Decorations* in honor of its benefactor. The school aimed to generate and train new professional groups, namely specialists in material decorating techniques such as batik, stamps on fabrics, leather and other; craftsmen in manufacturing of toys using wood, paper or fabric, as well as other professionals (decorators, carpenters), thus to contribute to the development of new branches in the craft industry. Both schools, the *Evening Vocational School for Women Employees* and the *Professional School of Toys and Decorations*, were financially supported by the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Education as well as by a wide circle of donators, highlighting the strong political and social network of the liberal feminist associations of the time²¹.

The *Skyros Plant Dye School* was established at the initiative of the National Council of Greek Women (NCGW) in May 1930, on the island of

20. Α. Theodoropoulou, *Η Εσπερινή Σχολή του ΣΕΔΓ* [The HLWR's Evening Vocational School], in «The Woman's Struggle», 24 (1925), p. 2; Hellenic League for Women's Rights, *Επαγγελματική Σχολή Γυναίκων Υπαλλήλων* [Vocational School for Women Employees], in «The Woman's Struggle», 35-36 (1926), p. 2; Α. Stamatellatou, *Η Βραδινή μας Σχολή και η υποχρεωτική συμπληρωματική μόρφωση* [Our Evening School and Mandatory Supplementary Education], in «The Woman's Struggle», 143 (1931), pp. 4, 6.

21. *Η Παπαστεράτειος Σχολή Παιχνιδιών και Διακοσμητικής* [Papastrateios Municipal School of Toys and Decorations], in «The Woman's Struggle», 159 (1932), p. 8; Α. Theodoropoulou, *Η Σχολή Παιχνιδιών και Διακοσμητικής* [The School of Toys and Decorations], in «The Woman's Struggle», 143 (1931), pp. 1-3.

Skyros already known for this specific dyeing technique. The purpose of the school's establishment was to help maintain this traditional technique, to spread the use of the technique through the employment of the graduates and thus strengthen the economy of the island. The NCGW contributed financially to the establishment of the school and helped find clients for its workshops²².

3. Tracing National, Regional and International Encounters

A close examination of the primary sources which the above presented vocational education project of the Greek Interwar feminists was based upon, along with a comparison with girls' vocational education in Europe in the same period can trace a strong international as well as a regional reference. The publications on the issue in the feminist press, the studies and *memoranda* submitted to state authorities, the vocational education suggested and the schools established as well as the argumentation provided all reflect vocational education systems and practices already implemented by then in various European countries. In the sources, extensive and frequent references are made particularly to French, German and Belgian vocational education systems, while references are made to some Central European and Balkan countries, as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Serbia, too²³; the latter are usually mentioned, when particular choices in the project were to be additionally justified. Greek women feminists – at least those dealing with the issue of education – seemed to be well informed about the education systems in a range of Western countries, including the USA, as well as those of the Balkans²⁴. Also they draw examples on their experience of participating in international congresses on the topic of education, organized by the International Women's Associations, whose branches the Greek feminist associations were. E.g. feminists, members of NCGW had participated in the 14th International Congress in Bucarest in 1929, where the agricultural education had been discussed, as well as in the

22. *Σχολή Βαφικής Σκύρου* [Skyros Plant Dye School], in «Hellenis», 10 (1931), pp. 201-202.

23. *Η Επαγγελματική μόρφωση στη Σερβία* [Vocational Education in Serbia], in «The Woman's Struggle», 38 (1927), p. 3.

24. M. Svolou, *Γεωργική οικοκυρική μόρφωση*, cit.

in the Balkan Exhibition of Popular Art in Belgrade in 1931, publishing their reports on their return to Greece²⁵.

The HLWR's suggestion to the Greek Ministry of Agriculture that girls' agricultural education should include domestic education too as well as the very term "agricultural and domestic education" adopted reflect the model of vocational education provided for countryside women in France, Germany, Belgium and the USA. The organization of the schools into tiers (upper, middle and lower tier schools), and the specific educational objectives imposed per tier, also draw upon the same education models; e.g. French Education Act of 2/8/2018 introducing the tier-structure of the schools was presented in the feminist journals, while similar references to legislation in Germany, Belgium and the USA also featured in women's press²⁶. The teaching staff training, scheduled to be provided in the agricultural or agronomic Greek schools, is again based on the standards of the same countries, with France providing a rather preferred model (and not only for this aspect of the vocational education system)²⁷; in France higher agricultural education was provided at the Higher National Agricultural Schools and the Agronomic Institute, while no higher agricultural education was provided for countryside women in Germany; middle education at three schools particularly organized for it, the Coetlogon, Kerliver, and Monastier schools, and in Germany in six such schools, called *landpflegesschulen*, providing though only domestic education; and last, lower education provision was made available by 25 "travelling schools" in France, the *écoles ménagères ambulantes*, and in Germany by 54 established schools in certain places and 168 travelling schools²⁸. The same applies to other aspects of the proposed feminist project, which range from the structure of the curriculum (the 'semeines agricoles féminines' was one of its elements) to the financing model of this educational system, although adaptations were made to the specificities, mismatches and constraints of the Greek education system, both financial and infrastructural.

25. E. Papandreou, *Από το 14^ο Διεθνές Γεωργικόν Συνέδριον του Βουκουρεστίου – Γυναικείον Τμήμα* [Report on the 14th International Agricultural Conference in Bucharest – Women's Session], in «Hellenis», 8-9 (1929), pp. 179-183.

26. Ch. Evelpidis, *Η Τεχνική μόρφωση της γυναίκας στα χωριά*, cit., p. 6.

27. A. Theodoropoulou, M. Svolou, *Το υπόμνημα του Συνδέσμου για τη Γεωργική εκπαίδευση*, cit.

28. *Ibidem*.

The vocational education institutions established by the interwar feminist associations in urban areas and presented above – being the most emblematic ones for the interwar feminist approach of vocational education – do not seem to draw upon corresponding European ‘model institutions’. The aim of the vocational education provided, as already stated, was to meet the requirements the 20th century economy and labor market, providing women with higher professional qualifications; therefore the type of schools to be established was critically determined by these parameters. However, for the administration of vocational schools, the development of new training courses and new sections in the already established and run schools, vocational institutions in European countries served as exemplars and places for teachers’ and school directors’ further training. Anna Stamatelatou, e.g., an active feminist associated with the HLWR, in one of her 1935 article in the journal «Hellenis» suggested the organization of a new cycle of professional studies for girls in the *Evening Vocational School for Women Employees* school: professional studies for shop assistants and shop window decorators. To justify her suggestion she referred to a very successful, as she stated, vocational school for training shop assistants in Berlin, which had been established in 1911 and which she had visited in 1931, when she was director of the Evening Vocational School, where she studied the curriculum of the Berlin vocational school and observed all the work done with the students in and out of the school premises²⁹. Also the director of *Vocational School for Toys* planning to establish a new section for training professionals in creating puppets made reference to “civilized countries such as Czechoslovakia, Germany, France and Russia”, where the theatre for children had been already very much developed.

4. In Conclusion

Until the end of the 1920s, and more specifically until the reform of the Greek educational system in 1929, there was no public provision for the vocational education of women. This gap was filled to some extent by the initiatives of women’s charity associations in the 19th century, the feminist circle of Kallirroï Parren since late 19th century, and the feminist organizations in the interwar period. The lat-

29. A. Stamatelatou, *Ειδικές και συμπληρωματικής μορφώσεως επαγγελματικές σχολές*, cit.

ter's approach to vocational training differed radically from that of the charitable associations. This is because labor was no longer considered only as a means of survival and coping with the (moral) risks of poverty. It was also seen as a means of self-realization and accessibility to employment for all. Thus the educational provisions organized or proposed to state and educational authorities by the feminist organizations promoted individual professional development and improvement of economic living conditions, as well as new professional skills and specializations. The forms of vocational training proposed were taken into account environmental and living conditions (urban – rural areas), as well as employment opportunities (new professions in the urban and agricultural economy).

In these proposals on professional education, adapted models from various European countries, had been integrated, with which Greek feminists had become familiar through their participation in the international feminist and pacifist movements and in regional feminist collaborations such as the Balkan conferences and the Little Entente of Women, a fact that is reflected in the multiple references to educational examples from the Balkan and the Little Entente countries.

Greek feminist organizations do not seem to have had any substantial differences in approaching the 'vocational education issue'. The different versions of feminisms they represented are rather reflected in the type of educational initiatives they undertook and the professions they promoted: professions rather linked to tradition in the case of the NCGW, contemporary and rather modernizing occupations those the HLWR was provided for. However, drawing conclusions on differences and similarities of Greek feminist associations when addressing vocation education, and on transfers and 'borrowings' from other countries requires further research.

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