



DOSSIER

ASOCIACIONISMO Y MOVILIZACIÓN FEMENINA. (SIGLOS XIX Y XX)

LA FRONDE 'S FEMINIST CHRONICLES. FEMINIST ASSOCIATIVE MOVEMENTS IN THE TURN-OF-THE- CENTURY PARIS*

Las crónicas feministas de *La Fronde*. Asociacionismo femenino en un París intersecular

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Recibido: 16-05-2019 - Aceptado: 30-09-2019

Cómo citar este artículo/Citation:

Jordi LUENGO LÓPEZ, "Las crónicas feministas de *La Fronde*. Asociacionismo femenino en un París intersecular", *Hispania Nova*, 18, 2020, págs. 486-516.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20318/hn.2020.5115>

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Resumen: *La Fronde* (1897-1905), fundada por Marguerite Durand (1864-1936), fue un proyecto donde sólo participaban mujeres que, con salarios análogos a sus equivalentes masculinos, se encargaban de su redacción, administración y distribución. Las temáticas que se trataban confluían en la mejora de las condiciones del colectivo femenino en la sociedad francesa y la sección "Chronique féministe" abordaba todas aquellas cuestiones relacionadas con la denuncia de las injusticias sufridas por las mujeres, la lucha por sus derechos y los proyectos de consecución de un estado de ciudadanía plena. Estas crónicas nos permiten, además, conocer qué asociaciones existían en ese París intersecular, así como el posicionamiento del diario feminista frente a éstas y otras habidas en el extranjero.

Palabras clave: *La Fronde*, feminismo francés, asociacionismo de mujeres, crónicas periodísticas.

Abstract: *La Fronde* (1897-1905) was founded by Marguerite Durand (1864-1936) as a women-only project in which women were paid the same wage as men, and were in charge of writing, managing and distributing it. The topics covered touched on the improvement of women's conditions in French society and the section "Chronique féministe" covered all topics related to reporting injustices suffered by women, fighting for their rights and helping women achieve full citizens' status. Moreover, those chronicles enable us to understand what associations existed at the turn of the century in Paris, as well as the positioning of the feminist daily towards them and others from abroad.

Keywords: *La Fronde*, French Feminism, women's associations, journalistic chronicle.

*On parle beaucoup du féminisme, et un groupe de femmes, depuis quelques jours, publie, comme nous l'avons dit, un journal spécial : La Fronde*¹.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FEMINIST CHRONICLES OF LA FRONDE

The quote with which we start this paper, taken from an unheard-of publication entitled *Univers-Monde*, not only shows the impact the feminist journal *La Fronde* had in the city of Paris, but it also underlines the project's exclusive nature, as it was fully run by a "group of women". Moreover, this initiative can be considered "special" as it was different to common practice or at least, to anything seen until then. Contributions made by anonymous male or female writers were more appropriate than what could initially be thought, as the writing, managing, printing and distribution of the daily was done solely by women, earning the same wage as men with equivalent duties². The publishing company was created and led by the remarkable French feminist Marguerite Durant (1864-1936), and it was located in 14 rue Saint-Georges, in a building characterised by its greyish walls and that had belonged to French actress Mlle Lange (1722-1825), the favourite of revolutionary politician Paul Barras(1755-1829)³. The most famous men and women of that period in Paris were seen entering and leaving the building, mixing with friendly complicity with the other workers dressed in light green. Thus, the greyish aesthetics of the place were confronted with the emerald dynamism of the feminist ideas and with the activities of a group of women who, in

* This paper was written as part of the R&D&i project of the Ministry of Economy and Business entitled *Género, Compromiso y Traspasión en España, 1890-2016* (Code: FEM2016-76675-P)..

¹ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1897, December 26), p. 4.

² ANONYMOUS, "La Fronde: the only daily newspaper in the world published owned edited and printed by women!!!", *The Seattle post-intelligencer*, 1898, p. 7; Jordi LUENGO LÓPEZ, *Teatro de Mujer. Jeanne Marni*. Castellón de la Plana, Universitat Jaume I, 2016, p. 23.

³ Annie DIZIER-METZ, *La Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand. Histoire d'une femme, mémoire des femmes*. Paris, Mairie de Paris, Direction des Affaires Culturelles, 1992, p. 10.

perfect harmony, were able to take forward a feminist daily without any help except for their desire to change the unjust reality they lived in.

La Fronde was created on the 9th of December 1897 and published daily until December 1903, changing to a monthly publication until March 1905, when it disappeared due to the drop on sales⁴. Despite that, it came to light again sporadically during the months of August and September of 1914 and, later, in a new phase, from the 26th of May 1926 until the 19th of June 1930. Despite the fact that there were several sections created and devoted to the dissemination of feminist ideals (*Notes d'une Frondeuse, Pourquoi?, On dit..., La Tribune*, etc.), they were not always the cover page of the publication, we could even say that it was seldom that case⁵, although that did not prevent it from becoming "a real home of French feminist culture" (*un vrai foyer de culture féministe française*⁶). One of those sections was *Chronique féministe*, whose title did make a direct reference to feminism and which informed about everything that had a direct link with the political movement.

Many of those chronicles were anonymous but, in general, they were signed by the *frondeuses* that worked at the newspaper's editorial department, led by Camille Belilon (1851-1930), from the 21st of December, 1897, and then by Clotilde Dissard (?), from the 1st of January 1899. Famous and combative women openly self-declared feminists and whose participation in *La Fronde* was one more thing to add to their intense activity in favour of achieving a state of full citizenship for women as a whole⁷. Camille Belilon was considered as a radical feminist, a pro-abortion militant and founder, in 1927, of the *Comité de propagande féministe*⁸. Sociologist Clotilde Dissard had been the founder of magazine *La Revue féministe* (1895-1897), and was known for

⁴ This research is based on the collection of *La Fronde publications located in the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand*, an entity attached to the City Council of Paris.

⁵ François CHAIGNAUD, *L'affaire Berger-Levrault: le féminisme à l'épreuve, 1897-1905*. Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009, p. 50.

⁶ Anne-Marie KÄPPELI, "Scènes féministes", Georges DUBY, Michelle PERROT (dirs.), *L'Histoire des femmes en Occident*, le XIX^e, t. 4. Paris, Plon, 1992, p. 581.

⁷ Marta POSTIGO ASENJO, *Género y Ciudadanía. El discurso feminista en la Ciudadanía Liberal*. Málaga, Servicio de Publicaciones e Intercambio Científico de la Universidad de Málaga, 2007, p. 46.

⁸ Jenny WIIK, "Vers une homogénéisation des identités professionnelles des journalistes", Béatrice DAMIAN-GAILLARD, Cécolène FRISQUE, Eugénie SAIITA (dirs.), *Le journalisme au féminin. Assignations, inventions et stratégies*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010, p. 114.

being in favour of a family feminism that extolled the role of mothers, as well as the complementarity and solidarity between genders⁹. Both women met in the international feminist congress held from the 9-13 of April of 1896, organised by the *Ligue française pour le droit des femmes* and headed by its president, socialist feminist Maria Pognon (1844-1925). Odile Welfel , in her PhD thesis of 1982, indicated that it was in that congress where the idea of the *La Fronde* project was first planted, as Marguerite Durand was the person in charge of making sure that everything that was said in the different sessions held at the congress was taken down. This is ratified by the fact that one year later, in the feminist congress that took place in Brussels, the future director of *La Fronde* considered that French feminist women had to group together under a single banner to demonstrate the unity of feminism¹⁰. Months later, the first issue of the project, thought of two years earlier, was published in the city of Paris and had the collaboration of the women who attended those congresses.

The chronicles openly complained about the abuses committed against women, informed about association initiatives, notified about the actions carried out by feminism as part of the national and international scenario and published letters by militants, amongst other vindications made in writing. All those topics were presented by and for women, however, in certain rare, uncommon occasions, we can find amongst the *La Fronde* pages articles signed by men. That is the case of "Un f ministe", who sent his thoughts on the situation of women to section *Chronique f ministe*, and it was published fully by Clotilde Dissard with a brief introduction to the letter in question. She divided the text by the anonymous feminist into several sections - the man had probably sent in his name but the editorial board decided not to include it. In a first section he spoke about what women could have achieved had the men allowed them to do so, and the education between both genders. Without a doubt it is worthwhile presenting here a fragment of that letter, whose opinion and feeling show that the feminist movement,

⁹ Gisela BOCK, Pat THANE (eds.), *Maternidad y pol ticas de g nero. La mujer en los estados de bienestar europeos, 1880s-1950s*. Madrid/Valencia, Ediciones C tedra/Universitat de Val ncia/Instituto de la Mujer, 1991, p. 224.

¹⁰ Odile WELFEL , "F minisme et Journalisme. La 'Fronde' (1897-1905). Histoire d'une entreprise de presse", *Positions de Th ses soutenues par les  l ves de la promotion de 1982 pour obtenir le dipl me d'archiviste pal ographe*, Paris, Thesis  cole Nationale des Chartes, 1982, p. 183.

even as an association initiative, needed the support of men as they were aware of a radical change in citizenship:

Personne ne peut savoir, mieux que moi combien il serait facile à chaque homme de mérite d'élever intellectuellement jusqu'à lui accorder son estime, son amitié et lui permettre d'entrer un peu dans son cercle d'affection. Malheureusement, le manque de générosité de l'homme, la non compréhension du vrai bonheur, lui font dépenser toutes ses facultés et tout son esprit à des fadaises ou à des arrière-pensées galantes, ce qui ne sert qu'à abaisser un peu plus chaque fois l'homme et la femme¹¹.

Dissard, in a previous chronicle of *La Fronde*, mentioned that many men, stating even that the number was increasing as time went by, shared this opinion. However, the sociologist suspected that the true intent of this unusual support from men to women was most probably only real in the case of very few men, who rationally declared themselves as feminists. According to Dissard, many times they stated their support to feminism merely because they wanted to have intimate relationships with the women that were part of the movement. She called this attitude “show-off feminism” (*féminisme de salon, féminisme de surface*), given that when faced with situations where those women had to clearly face those injustices, all of them stopped being feminists and returned to their true patriarchal nature¹².

In turn, Clotilde Dissard, in another chronicle published the day after in *La Fronde*, stated that just like she was extremely surprised with the existence of feminist men, she was as much surprised with the fact that there were some women who did not adhere to the ideals of the political movement, and that were even against it. She saw this as an abdication of their gender and of their own desires that went beyond serving their homes and citizenship. The chronicler mentioned that feminism did not aim to revolutionise, but to raise awareness amongst men and women, given that it was the product of a social state that was half way between barbarism and civilisation.

Notre vie sociale n'a su réaliser pour les femmes qu'un alliage monstrueux d'esclavage et de liberté, elle en fait tour à tour une reine adorée ou une servante méprisée. C'est la roue de la fortune qui tourne et retourne. Qu'elle soit au sommet ou qu'elle soit à la base, au coin de sa lèvre un pli ironique se montre stigmatisant

¹¹ Un FÉMINISTE, “Chronique féministe. La femme nouvelle”, *La Fronde* (1899, November, 1), p. 4.

¹² Clotilde DISSARD, “Chronique féministe. Les hommes féministes”, *La Fronde* (1899, January 16), p. 3.

*toutes les fantaisies, tous les caprices, tous les travers masculins, c'est le féminisme*¹³.

All women should sympathise and be activists in the feminist cause, regardless of the social class they belong to or the interests that they had as women individuals. That is why it was so necessary to organise themselves in order to make collective action effective, as Marguerite Durand clearly realised in that feminist congress held in Brussels. This was the only way to abandon this state of unfinished citizenship in which they all were and that, unfortunately nowadays, despite the achievements obtained in France and in other European countries, is still smouldering.

FEMINIST ORGANISATIONS WITH A CLEAR SOCIALIST TREND

One of the objectives of the feminists from *La Fronde* was to fight for the improvement of the working situation of women, especially in terms of wages, and making sure that they received the necessary training to carry out the so-called liberal professions. To this purpose, the *Ligue française pour le droit des femmes* was created in 1882 with the motto "*Le droit prime la force*", promoted by the free thinker and Freemason Léon Richer (1824-1911) and that had as honorary president the famous writer Victor Hugo (1802-1885). The Ligue was made up of men and women, it was secular and influenced by the free-thinking movement, openly championing feminist principles. Years earlier, on the 16th of April 1870, there was a similar organisation, also founded by Richer, *La Société pour l'amélioration du sort des femmes*, headed by Freemason and *femme de lettres* Maria Deraismes (1828-1894), known by the name of *Association pour le droit des femmes*, that broke up in 1875, although it resurfaced two years later.

It is striking that those associations with a clear feminist nature were founded by a man. We can find the reason for that in a statement written by Edmond Potonié (1829-1902), partner of Eugénie Potonié-Pierre (1844-1898), who was the secretary of *La Société* and founder in 1891 of the *Fédération française des sociétés féministes*, a

¹³ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Les femmes non féministes", *La Fronde* (1899, January 17), p. 5.

trade unionist and socialist association led by Aline Valette (1850-1899)¹⁴, and mentioned by Clotilde Dissard in one of her feminist chronicles. In the chronicle, the writer stated that Léon Richer was born in L'aigle, in Normandy, and started studying to become a notary public, but at the age of twenty-four, after the death of his father, he had to go to Paris to make a living as a clerk to a notary (Clerc de notaire) and to pursue his studies as he could. A while later, his mum was taken ill and Richer returned to L'aigle to look after her and his little sister, given that, to the already difficult situation, we have to add the fact that they could hardly survive on their own. After his mother's death, he moved for good to Paris with his sister, who started working in a trading house in exchange for a miserable and unfair wage compared to her male counterparts. Influenced by the harsh experiences of his mother and sister, Léon Richer started giving conferences in 1866 about the dim situation women had to face in the job market and in April 1869 he created the magazine *Droit des femmes*¹⁵. The feminist awareness that Richer had in principle was the direct consequence of the close bond he had with his mother and sister, as well as the strong empathy he felt about the cruel circumstances that surrounded their lives. Thus, the French thinker openly criticized in his writings the sarcasm with which the press attacked women, and demanded that they were accepted by universities to be educated appropriately and thus hold professions, such as doctors or lawyers.

The *Ligue française pour le droit des femmes*, had as members women such as Freemason Maria Pognon (1844-1925), who was the president between 1882 and 1904, and also Marguerite Durand who openly intervened in all the discussions held by the association. The chronicles of the feminist daily included the participation of its famous director in the issues raised, as stated by Camille Belilon, when she asserted how Durand responded to those who believed feminism was advancing at a very low pace by answering that it was increasingly more frequent to find legal cases in which women intervened. Moreover, the *frondeuse* stated that it was time to forego the prejudice that existed against women and to understand that women could be even

¹⁴ Anne COVA, "La maternité, un enjeu dans le premier XX^e siècle", Eliane GUBIN, Catherine JACQUES, Florence ROCHEFORT, Brigitte STUDER, Françoise THÉBAUD, Michelle ZANCARINI-FOURNET (dirs.), *Le siècle des féministes*. Paris, Éditions l'Atelier / Éditions Ouvrières, 2004, p. 197.

¹⁵ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Le féminisme de Léon Richer", *La Fronde* (1899, July 5), p. 2.

more intelligent than men¹⁶. Likewise, Clotilde Dissard mentioned, referring to the Ligue, that the organisation reported on the fact that women were given the more difficult and unpleasant jobs, denying them the possibility of holding political positions because they did not have the necessary education to hold them, even though they were never prepared for such, quite the opposite¹⁷.

Solidarité des femmes was created in 1891 by Eugénie Potonié-Pierre, aiming to improve the situation of female workers. It proposed paying for maternity as a social function, as well as creating an aid fund to help all those women who needed it¹⁸. Camille Belilon announced in one of her feminist chronicles the feminist manifesto voted by the majority of the members of *Solidarité des femmes*, which is worthwhile reproducing in its entirety:

Desideratum

- *Réorganisation sociale.*
- *Droits égaux pour l'homme et pour la femme.*
- *Entente Internationale des travailleurs.*
- *Substitution progressive de la propriété sociale à la propriété capitaliste.*
- *L'enfant à la charge de l'État (sans préjudice de l'éducation dans la famille).*
- *Conquête des pouvoirs publics.*
- *Séparation de l'Église et de l'État.*
- *Suppression du Sénat.*
- *Représentation du peuple par le peuple, avec nomination au service public de délégués responsables devant la nation.*
- *Réduction du service militaire à deux ans, en attendant la transformation des armées permanentes en milices nationales.*

Question économique

¹⁶ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, June, 10), p. 4.

¹⁷ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Les femmes dans les Ministères", *La Fronde* (1899, August 2), p. 4.

¹⁸ Anne COVA, *Maternité et droit des femmes en France (XIX^e – XX^e siècles)*, Anthropos, Paris, 1997, p. 78.

- *À travail égal, salaire égal.*
- *Accès des femmes à toutes les carrières libérales, administratives et autres.*
- *Budget de la maternité (dès longtemps demandé par le groupe).*
- *La journée de travail de huit heures au maximum sans distinction de sexes, avec un minimum de salaire basé sur le taux des loyers et des objets de consommation.*
- *L'impôt progressif et proportionnel sur le revenu.*
- *Abolition de l'héritage collatéral.*
- *Suppression de toute taxe sur les objets de première nécessité.*
- *Diminution des gros traitements.*
- *Transformation des monopoles en services publics.*
- *Rectification obligatoire de l'alcool.*
- *Limitation du nombre des débits proportionné au nombre des habitants.*
- *Restaurants municipaux (dès longtemps demandés par la Solidarité).*
- *Caisse de retraite pour la vieillesse. L'âge fixé à 50 ans sans distinction de sexes.*
- *À tout vieillard de 60 ans n'ayant pas mille francs de rentes, une retraite de cinq cents francs, et à tout travailleur ou travailleuse malade, un secours de 1 fr. 50 par jour, avec la gratuité du médecin et des médicaments.*
- *Nul être humain abandonné en le dénuement, de façon à risquer de périr de froid ou de faim.*
- *L'Assistance publique transformée en institution de solidarité nationale, dont les emplois seront répartis entre les deux sexes.*
- *Électorat et éligibilité des femmes aux conseils de Prud'hommes.*
- *Éligibilité des femmes aux Chambres de commerce.*

Question civile

- *Tutelle et droit, pour les femmes, de faire partie des conseils de famille.*
- *La puissance maternelle égale à la puissance paternelle.*
- *Atténuation profonde de la puissance des deux parents.*

- *Le jeune homme et la jeune fille de dix-huit ans pourront se marier sans le consentement des parents.*
- *Suppression de toute formalité, eu égard au mariage, sauf la production de l'acte de naissance.*
- *Réforme des lois de mariage dans le sens de l'égalité.*
- *Le divorce obtenu par consentement mutuel, en cas de maladie secrète.*
- *En somme, réforme absolue des unions entre l'homme et la femme (donc abolition de la prostitution réglementée).*

Question politique

- *Électorat et éligibilité politiques et municipaux pour les deux sexes.*
- *Réforme de l'éducation classique ; réforme des livres classiques ; diminution des heures d'étude.*
- *Recherche et étude du travail attrayant.*
- *Laïcisation réelle et complète des écoles.*
- *Réforme de la justice.*
- *Les femmes admises aux jurys.*
- *Abolition de la peine de mort.*
- *Refonte complète du Code civil et du Code pénal.*

Pour le groupe

E.P.P. Secrétaire¹⁹.

In her chronicle for *La Fronde*, Belilon stated that, at the very latest, what *Solidarité des femmes* aimed was to "make women worthy of that name"²⁰. This goal could only be achieved by giving women the necessary education to emancipate by exercising liberal professions, grasping the sense of dignity that any individual should

¹⁹ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, January, 26), p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

have and demonstrating that they all had their own intelligence that should not be subject to male fantasies or evil passions ²¹.

With the turn of the century, on the 2nd of January 1900, Clotilde Dissard informed in one of her chronicles about the creation of several groups of socialist women in the French capital. The *frondeuse* mentioned that the purpose of the women from that association, whose name was not mentioned at any point, was not to set up a female trade union, or a production cooperative, but to create a socialist group that prioritised above all the workers' claims, the economic emancipation of women, as well as to champion the crystallisation of any social prerogative in favour of women: “*nous pensons que cet état de choses ne saurait durer et que tous les efforts doivent être tentés pour arracher la femme à cette passivité dégradante pour elle et dangereuse pour le triomphe des revendications socialistes*”²². A victory of socialist feminism that was not materialised until the legislative reforms proposed by the political movement became a reality.

Nevertheless, this was not the only group created in Paris to disseminate socialist ideals, there were other initiatives with the same intentions. A clear example of this is the *Union des femmes socialistes*, founded in 1880 by Léonie Rouzade (1839-1912), which ended in 1905²³ and which held a meeting on the 19th of February 1899 in number 46 of rue Balagny, belonging to the Maison du peuple, and that invited women from the districts 17 and 18 of Paris and whose objective was to inform those women of issues related to socialism and, especially, to the ideas included in the work *Idées socialistes* by Mme. Renaud. It also aimed to promote the intellectual emancipation of female workers, promoting an ambience of participation and social commitment between genders - the association also invited socialist men to join the actions conceived by their female comrades. Thus, the association urged women from the

²¹ Camille BELILON, “Chronique féministe”, *La Fronde* (1898, January 8), p. 4.

²² C. D., “Chronique féministe. Un groupe féministe socialiste”, *La Fronde* (1900, January 2), p. 2.

²³ From this period of the *Union des femmes socialistes* came the idea of the *Ligue socialiste des femmes*, founded by Marie-Rose Astié de Valsayre (1846-1939), which was short-lived given that in 1889 *Solidarité des femmes* appeared, Christine FAURÉ, *La démocratie sans les femmes: essai sur le libéralisme en France*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985, p. 15.

districts above mentioned to join them each Sunday to talk and present solutions to problems of a social nature²⁴.

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS FOR A PROMPT LABOUR IMPROVEMENT

One of the main precepts of the socialist feminism's ideology was the improvement of women's labour situation. Trade unions had a significant influence on the financial and moral conditions of working life, which were favoured by the creation of cooperatives and mutual insurance. Nevertheless, female workers had been systematically excluded from those unions, and saw how their absence from those had a direct impact in their wages, which were not only minimal, but also laughable when compared to their male counterparts. To this we have to add the little inclination by company owners to improve their working conditions, and the lack of regard by their colleagues who removed them from industrial action, strikes and demonstrations, when the fight for the achievement of workers' rights should have been made jointly. Given all those circumstances, Clotilde Dissard questioned in one of her feminist chronicles if it was worthwhile creating a trade union that was mixed or exclusively female-based²⁵. After a brief analysis of the situation, the *frondeuse* reached the conclusion that, although many injustices had been made by male trade unions towards women, this did not mean that men should be denied from this potential association²⁶. Some trade unions, aware of the gradual advancement of the feminist movement, thought it was time to consider women in their fight, but most of them still did not take into consideration their participation.

In turn, Camille Belilon informed in one of the feminist chronicles that she had received a letter from a reader who mentioned that, given the decision by many trade unions not to include them as members, women should have the right to create mutual aid entities that were exclusively for women. Belilon stated that there was no law that

²⁴ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Réunions féministes. Union des femmes socialistes", *La Fronde* (1899, February 19), p. 3.

²⁵ Dissard questioned this once again on the 19th of January 1899, when the *Comité d'Organisation de l'Exposition Universelle* of 1900 made a calling to all workers' organisations to know what should be the labour prerogatives of such a project. Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Les syndicats féminins à l'Exposition de 1900", *La Fronde* (1899, January 20), p. 3.

²⁶ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Syndicats féminins et syndicats mixtes", *La Fronde* (1899, January 22), p. 3.

prohibited the creation of trade unions exclusively for women, but that it was known that not having a man amongst them would undermine their strength. And that was the reason why trade unions rejected accepting women in their fight for their rights and the promotion of their labour interests. The *frondeuse* informed of how the *Société de prévoyance et de secours mutuels pour les dames et demoiselles du commerce et de l'industrie* had to accept being headed by men for their demands to be heard²⁷. The prejudices faced by women such as their inability to lead any association other than a charity association, was strengthened by those exclusion actions themselves, and this was known by women, as proven by the complaint made by Belilon. However, this reality did not stop women from joining trade unions, as demonstrated by the fact that shop assistants, cashiers, stock women, etc., quite a large number just in Paris, created a *Société de secours mutuel* to safeguard their rights and demand better working conditions for women, without the need for any men to be part of it²⁸.

There were similar associations to the above mentioned of a unionist nature that also aimed to improve the working conditions of women. *Alliance féminine*, created at the end of January 1899, was one of the associations that, gathering on the 29th of January of that year in the hall of the *Union des Sociétés régimentaires*, took stock of its six first months. During that time it had helped fifty four women, thus satisfying the premise of the fraternity program that Mme de Longchamps, one of its members, recalled at that meeting: "*Aidons-nous, aimons-nous, faisons le bien*"²⁹. With this purpose and on behalf of another member, Mme Henry Butaud, the above mentioned presented a project to set up a nursery to look after the babies and young children of working women. However, this initiative was not exclusive to *Alliance féminine*. It had already been presented in other neighbourhood associations, such as *Œuvre de Porche-Fontaine*, whose founders were the wives of poet Eugène Manuel (1823-1901) and editor George Charpentier (1846-1905)³⁰, as well as by *Œuvre des crèches du seizième arrondissement*, whose president, Mme Périer, took the opportunity on the 20th of December 1897 of the recent inauguration of a nursery in rue François-Millet in

²⁷ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, October 1), p. 4.

²⁸ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, January 11), p. 4.

²⁹ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. L'alliance féminine", *La Fronde* (1899, July 30), p.4.

³⁰ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Les syndicats féminins à l'Exposition de 1900", *op. cit.*

Paris, to stress the importance of building those types of premises because it would allow female workers not to interrupt their work, with the entailed risk of being fired or their wage reduced. Ultimately, the goal of those associations was for women to advance in achieving their economic independence that was, without a doubt, one of the key goals of feminist ideology for female emancipation, without abandoning their obligations as mothers³¹.

One association that gave special attention to the situation of working mothers and to the social context in general was the *Société pour l'amélioration du sort de la femme et la Revendication de ses droits*, created as well by Maria Deraismes in 1863, with the support of Léon Richer. Clotilde Dissard, in one of her chronicles, stated that her honorary secretary Charlotte Duval had asserted that, out of all the important rights women should have, and therefore demand, was the right to raise and educate their children appropriately, having at all times guardianship over them. This was even more relevant in the case of girls, given that a man, father or male guardian, although may be sympathetic with the feminist cause, could never educate a girl as her own mother would do: "*Confiez donc une fillette de 12 à 14 ans à la tutelle d'un homme trop vert qui ne deviendra pas aveugle quand elle aura atteint ses 18 ans*"³². And thus appeared the problem of family-work balance, although not directly presented as such at the time, an issue that is still a hot topic today and that can be hardly extrapolated to men.

Feminist associations also looked after young single women without children who arrived at the French capital in search of domestic work and who had nowhere to go. One of those associations was the one mentioned by *Le Temps* (1861-1942), on the 14th of June 1898, and that was mentioned by Camille Belilon on one of her chronicles for *La Fronde*³³. That association, whose name was not mentioned but was considered by its members as a feminist group, looked after young women who had just arrived to Paris to guide them, give them advice and if possible place them somewhere where they could do a decent job and not be exploited. The feminists' concern had to do with the real danger that many of those girls would end up in a hiring

³¹ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1897, December 21), p. 4.

³² Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. La tutelle des enfants", *La Fronde* (1899, January 21), p. 3.

³³ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, June 15), p. 4.

agency that run an underground prostitution network. Georges Moreau asserted in 1899 in *la Revue Universelle* (1890-1905)³⁴ that, after tricking them, those agencies placed them in procuring houses in charge of a madame³⁵ or were sent drugged to Buenos Aires, caged in huge wooden boxes with the word Fragile on them, as told by the novel *La Trata de Blancas* (1891-1892) by Eduardo López Bago (1855-1931), which reported human trafficking with women who came from France, crossed Spain and went to the Argentinian capital³⁶. That is why this feminist association not only aimed to place them in a house where they could work without being at risk, it also insisted on the need for a follow-up so that no one took advantage of them.

FEMININE ASSOCIATION FOCUSING ON EDUCATIONAL PARAMETERS

Associations of governesses and their feminist demands

The improvements in the working conditions extolled by feminine trade unions also included women receiving the same education as men. During the Third Republic (1870-1940), the time when *La Fronde* appeared in France, women were still pushed aside from having the same education as men. They were kept separate from an early age, proof of which was that when calculus and grammar were eliminated from primary education in 1884, boys were offered complementary lessons whereas girls could not have access to them³⁷. This practice extended to the other levels of the French educational system, although this did not prevent women, despite all the obstacles, from working on their education and academic training to carry out liberal professions. Years earlier, on the 9th of August of 1879, the Paul Bert law obliged each department to create a normal school for girls and another one for boys no later than in a period of

³⁴ Georges MOUREAU, *Revue Universelle. Recueil documentaire universel et illustré*. Paris, Larousse, 1899, p. 575.

³⁵ Gallicism referring to a woman who manages a brothel.

³⁶ Eduardo LÓPEZ BAGO, *La Trata de Blancas. Carne importada (Costumbres de Buenos Aires)*. Medical-social novel Administración, Urbano Rivero "La Maravilla Literaria", Buenos Aires, 1891-1892, p.8.

³⁷ Marianne THIVEND, "De l'école au métier... et au ménage: les cours de dames de la Société d'enseignement professionnel du Rhône (de 1864 à la veille de la Première Guerre Mondiale)", Carole CHRISTEN et Laurent BESSE (dirs.), *Histoire de l'Éducation populaire. Perspectives françaises et internationales*. Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2017, p.190.

four years, and that is when girls started being trained to become governesses³⁸ even though in 1863 there were normal schools in France that did so³⁹.

As for secondary education, recalling the principle of equality between genders, as was the case in other western countries such as Germany or the United States, on the 21st of December 1880 the law Camille Sée was passed and the *Lycées de jeunes filles* were created. Despite that, those establishments were reserved for a minority of young women from the bourgeoisie who were offered a public and secular, but not free, education, which served the monopoly of religious centres. This meant for those girls new educational opportunities to achieve a better and more effective path into the labour market, as it included subjects such as Greek or Latin, with the latter being compulsory to access university. However, it maintained subjects such as sewing, gymnastics, or history of art, considered to be at the time a necessity for any educated lady. As it can be imagined, all that education excluded most humble working women, although some of them managed to train as governesses. It is of that last group that *La Fronde* spoke about in its feminist chronicles with special interest.

Governesses also created associations to improve their working conditions, especially to disseminate and defend their rights having as pillars the feminist cause. *La Fronde* mentioned some of those societies in its feminist chronicles, thus showing the importance of the education-work binomial as one of the key pillars on which female emancipation was grounded. Nevertheless, contrary to the associations mentioned before, whose headquarters were in the city of Paris and that the writers of the feminist daily mentioned to their fellow country women, the activities of governesses normally took place abroad. One of those foreign associations was located in number 50, Devonshire Road, Greenwich, London, where the *Société Française d'Institutrices* had its headquarters, and whose founders had called it *Bon Accueil*. This association was created on the 13th of May 1894 by Mme Da Costa-Tallon, and was chaired in 1899, time when *La Fronde* talked about it, by Mme Da Costa-Tallon and co-chaired by Mlle

³⁸ Caroline DARNAUX, "Le pensionnat de Dohem (Pas-Calais) et la formation des institutrices. Un modèle d'éducation chrétienne de 1814 à 1914 ?", Jean-François CONDETTE (ed.), *Éducation, religion et laïcité (XVI^e-XX^e s.). Continuités, tensions et ruptures dans la formation des élèves et les enseignants*. Lille, Institut de Recherches Historiques du Septentrion. Université Charles-de-Gaulle. Lille 3. CEGES (Centre de Gestion de l'Édition Scientifique), 2010, p. 126.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.120.

Constant.⁴⁰ Even though the headquarters were in London, there were subcommittees and associations that depended on it, but also in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Greece, Denmark and even France itself. *Frondeuse* Clotilde Dissard stated that the purpose of the society was altruist and patriotic at the same time. Thus, on the one hand, it aimed to disseminate the influence of the French language and culture in those places where there it was possible to do so, whilst, on the other, it aimed to place governesses in a good home, under the premises of sincere affection and a fraternal selfless aid. It also tried to strengthen ties amongst French governesses. The good organisation of the Society meant mums of bourgeoisie families or boarding school headmistresses that requested their services could be sure that they would have the best French governesses. The daily *Le Trait d'Union*, published by the society, spoke of the project's motto:

Le Trait d'Union est appelé à créer des relations à celles qui n'en ont pas, à resserrer les liens qui doivent unir toutes les institutrices, à donner à chacune le désir d'aider sa voisine, à permettre aux Directrices de pensions de faire des échanges d'élèves, à indiquer aux parents les bonnes pensions et aux personnes que cela peut intéresser les familles recommandables disposées à recevoir des pensionnaires. Le Trait d'Union fera enfin connaître à tous la Société Française d'Institutrices, ses vues philanthropiques et patriotiques, pour que les jeunes filles viennent se mettre sous notre protection, et que les mères s'adressent à nous pour le choix de celle qui doit les remplacer auprès de leurs enfants⁴¹.

The Societé did not just look for a placement for French governesses in appropriate places for the ideal development of their duties, making sure their welfare and dignity did not suffer, it also ensured that that was so for the whole duration of their placement.

La Fronde also informed about other associations of that professional group, such as the *Société d'Institutrices*⁴², created in 1894 in Turin by an Italian feminist of German origin, Paolina Schiff (1841-1926), who also founded the *Société d'Études*⁴³ to

⁴⁰ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. La Société des institutrices françaises à Londres", *La Fronde* (1899, March 17), p. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² *La Fronde* translated directly the name of the association from Italian into French.

⁴³ Also translated by Clotilde Dissard

help female workers who wanted to receive an education⁴⁴. She also set up in 1880 in Milan the *Lega Italiana di Libertà, Fratellanza e Pace*, although it did not last long due to the Franco-Prussian war⁴⁵. Thanks to those initiatives by feminist associations, as stated by Clotilde Dissard in one of her chronicles, some Italians such as Mme Amadori and Mme Mariani were able to be witnesses in civil acts, were tutors of their children and they could manage their own assets and their own business⁴⁶. Since 1893, according to her, Italian working women could be part of the councils of those senior judges in charge of lawsuits between workers and business owners (*prud'hommes*), not just as voters but also as candidates.

Governesses also helped clearly in the dissemination of feminist ideology and did so not just by mobilising, but also resorting to what we call today "gender mainstreaming". Dissard wrote about how in some places governesses taught their students the history of women, their rights and feminist demands in general, thus contributing to the change in the social and citizens framework: "*Les institutrices sont dans leur rôle et accomplissent leur mission en initiant leurs élèves aux transformations profondes qui s'accomplissent à ce point de vue, dans les mœurs et dans les lois*"⁴⁷. Unfortunately, as the chronicler stated, there were still many fathers and mothers who were reluctant to educate their children in terms of equality, and less so to show them those hidden fields of knowledge where women were the protagonists.

The teaching of feminism by female associations

The importance of teaching the values of feminism, the history of women's struggle to fight for their rights and their subsequent emancipation, was part of the feminist ideals from the beginning. That is why some associations focused on that activity in order to raise awareness amongst women and to make sure it lived on in

⁴⁴ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Le mouvement féministe en Italie", *La Fronde* (1899, May 6), p. 6.

⁴⁵ Sandi E. COOPER, *Patriotic Pacifism. Waging on War in Europe (1815-1914)*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 215.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Le féminisme par l'école", *La Fronde* (1899, February 28), p. 3.

future generations. One of those was the *Alliance féministe immortaliste*, also created by a man, occultist and Freemason from Lyon, Joanny Bricaud (1881-1934). This association was grounded on the principle of what this bank employee called *Humanité intégrale*, which is based on the fight for feminist demands from the perspective of immortalism⁴⁸. Feminism under the precepts of this current sought the end of violence, universal peace, gender equality and, ultimately, universal harmony.

Although feminist governess Anne Lampérière (1854-¿?) did not agree with the immortalist current, she proposed promoting the practice of giving her speeches from the theoretical perspective of women's situation⁴⁹. And with that purpose she founded the *Groupe d'initiative pour l'éducation sociale* that, in turn, in a meeting held on the 14th of January 1898, in 29 rue Richelieu, prepared the creation of the *Société d'études féminines*. *La Fronde* informed of the program of this new society, which had the goal of disseminating the ideas of the political movement amongst the female population, and highlighted the following articles:

Art. 2. La société a pour objet l'étude des questions qui concernent la préparation de la femme à un rôle social précis et défini, et la propagande en faveur des idées qui peuvent assurer à la femme dans la société sa véritable place d'organisatrice, en dehors de la concurrence avec le travail masculin.

Art. 4. La société poursuit son but principalement par les moyens suivants :

1° Publications et conférences de propagande;

2° Fondation d'une école des hautes études féminines;

3° Création de groupes et d'organisations sociales pouvant fournir des emplois à des femmes.

Art. 5. Toute personne adhérant aux présents statuts peut être membre de la société; chaque membre fixe lui-même le montant de sa cotisation annuelle, qui ne peut être inférieure à un franc.

Art. 7. La société est administrée par un comité d'action composé de cinq membres, élus par l'assemblée générale.

⁴⁸ Immortalism is based on the desire to live forever, for everything to be eternal or, at least, for human beings to be. Ben BEST, "Algunos problemas con el inmortalismo", AA.VV., *La conquista científica de la muerte. Ensayos sobre expectativas de vida infinita*, librosenred, 2008, p.164. In this sense, defending feminism from the principle of immortality not only strengthens it, it also opens new and hopeful future prospects.

⁴⁹ Anne R. EPSTEIN, "Anna Lampérière, solidarité et citoyenneté féminine sous la Troisième République", *Genre & Histoire. La revue de l'Association Mnémosyne*, 3 (2008), s.p.

Art. 11. L'assemblée nomme également, sur la proposition du comité d'action, ou sur la présentation de cinq ou moins de ses membres, des personnes composant un conseil général chargé d'encourager et d'assurer le perfectionnement de l'œuvre⁵⁰.

Without doubt, the most striking article is number 4, specially its second item, which anticipates the creation of a *École des Hautes Études Féministes*, proving that the feminist ideology always included the wish to create exclusive education devoted to women. Despite that, this project never saw the light, although other initiatives that agreed with the purpose of *Société d'études féminines*, without having such a well-organised structure or relevance in the national scenario, did. In *chroniques féministes* we find one of those associations, *Club d'art social La Montagne*, which was located in rue Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, in the Parisian Rive Gauche, which tended to host meetings to discuss feminism⁵¹. Regardless of the size of the association, whether national or at district level, all of them agreed on the conviction that not only should women be educated under the same equal conditions as men, but that it was also imperative for them to receive a real knowledge about their lives, history, emancipation demands and rights they deserved as citizens.

INTERNATIONAL FEMALE ASSOCIATIONS

Women's associations in Europe

La Fronde's chronicles also included explicit references to international feminist associations as a model to follow and to have empathetic understanding with, given the problems arising from women's situation, or simply as a mean to demonstrate that the political movement spread to other European countries and to the United States, thus strengthening the sense of the importance of impregnating the demands of their ideology in the collective and citizens' imagination.

In Belgium, the main protagonist was Julia Van Marcke, who demanded equal civil rights between men and women before the National Congress, not just on her name, but on the name of all the feminist associations she represented. In 1892 she founded the *Revendication des droits féminins*, the first feminist body in Belgium in

⁵⁰ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, January 15), p. 4.

⁵¹ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1897, December 28), p. 4.

favour of peace and feminism. A year later, in 1893, she created the *Union pour la Solidarité*, whose program made a calling to all Belgian women to demand their political rights, which in turn was part of the international network *Union pour la Solidarité féminine*. Clotilde Dissard reproduced in her feminist chronicle the constituent articles of the program of this association:

ART. 1.

- a. *Instruction obligatoire et gratuite.*
- b. *Les écoliers nourris par l'État.*
- c. *Accès des femmes à toutes les professions libérales et autres, pour lesquelles elles sont reconnues capables.*
- d. *Bourses d'étude pour femmes au même titre que pour jeunes gens.*
- e. *Encouragement pour la femme aux concours des prix officiels.*

ART. 2.

- A.⁵² *Seule et même morale pour les deux sexes, car ce qui est réputé crime ou défit pour la femme ne peut devenir chose licite pour l'homme.*
- B. *Admission du principe de la recherche de la paternité.*
- C. *Punition sévère pour tout homme qui aura séduit ou déshonoré sa compagne de travail.*
- D. *Imposer à l'homme le respect envers la femme.*
- E. *La limite de protection des jeunes filles doit être étendue jusqu'à l'âge de 21 ans.*
- F. *Abolition de la prostitution.*
- G. *Suppression des formalités du code civil, qui sont de nature à entraver la prompt conclusion du mariage.*

ART. 3.

- A. *Obtention des droits intégraux pour les femmes; droits politiques, civils, sociaux, intellectuels, etc.*
- B. *Droits pour la femme de jouir intégralement du produit de son travail et de son bien personnel.*
- C. *Protection de la femme contre les abus de la puissance maritale.*
- D. *Droits de la mère égaux à ceux du père.*
- E. *Autorité absolue de la veuve sur ses enfants.*

⁵² It goes from enumerating the articles in alphabetical order and in lowercase to doing it in capital letter.

F. Révision de la loi sur le divorce : les causes du divorce doivent être les mêmes pour chacun des deux époux.

G. Révision des dispositions du code pénal, réprimant l'adultère.

H. Le devoir de fidélité doit être le même pour chacun des deux époux.

ART. 4.

A. Droit libre de l'épargne.

B. Diminution d'heures de travail pour les femmes.

C. Augmentation de salaire et des appointements des femmes.

D. À travail égal, rétribution égale.

E. Gagne-pain assuré par la procuration des métiers accessibles aux femmes, envers toutes celles, auxquelles on veut défendre le travail, la nuit, et dans les usines considérées comme dangereuses pour leur santé.

Art. 5.

A. Organisation de caisses de retraite pour les femmes n'étant pas en état de travailler.

B. Augmentation de pensions accordées aux retraitées.

C. Rétribution par l'État à la mère de famille empêchée de gagner sa vie pour remplir ses devoirs au foyer.

D. L'état de ménagère dorénavant élevé au rang de profession et rétribué au même titre que les autres fonctions économiques et sociales.

E. Guerre à l'alcoolisme.

F. Abolition de la guerre⁵³.

Van Marcke was also vice-president of the Belgian section of the *Union Universelle des Femmes d'Angleterre* and secretary of the *Ligue universelle du Bien Public*, founded in Paris by Edmond Potonié. *La Fronde* praised the intense activity of the Belgian feminist in favour of women's emancipation and the fight for their rights, as well as her ability to spread her energy amongst several associations, presenting her as an example of activism in favour of the feminist cause.

Also moved by this dual goal of peace and feminist were other associations in Europe also mentioned by the *La Fronde* chronicles such as: the *Union des femmes progressistes*, founded in Denmark by the famous suffragist and pacifist Johanne

⁵³ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Julia Van Marcke", *La Fronde* (1899, 6 July), p. 2.

Meyer (1838-1915); the *Ligue néerlandaise des femmes pour le désarmement international*⁵⁴ in the Netherlands, that shared headquarters between Rotterdam and Winterswijk, and the *Association des femmes de Suède pour la paix*, whose activity was based on the publication of a series of pacifist leaflets, the creation of a library to lend books for free to women who needed it, the organisation of conferences on pacifism and feminism in the student's societies of Lund and Upsala, and the publication of several articles focused on those same topics in important Swedish newspapers⁵⁵. *La Fronde* mentioned all those associations due to the mobilisations that some women led in England against the Boer wars, that took place between 1880 and 1902 in South Africa between the British Empire and the Dutch-origins settlers. In the comment made by Clotilde Dissard in her chronicle there is no mention of any English association, but it mentions the names of some feminist women such as Lady Carlisle or Miss Peckover⁵⁶.

La Fronde also mentioned the *Union des Droits de la Femme* from Denmark when mentioning the activities organised in the Scandinavian neighbourhood of Christiania, located in the city of Copenhagen, in honour of the seventy years of Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). With occasion of the celebration they presented the work of the Norwegian playwright, who, moved by the attention given by the Union made a toast in honour of its members, stating that women were society's most powerful pillar and that the greatness of a people was measured by the value they gave to women⁵⁷. Camille Belilon applauded the initiative by the members of the *Union Droits de la Femme* to render tribute to the writer whilst alive, given that it was fair and commendable to acknowledge the work any individual made in favour of women's freedom.

With the same goal of disseminating the principles of feminist ideology in Switzerland, Belilon informed about a group of Italian women who had got together to inform women from the Italian canton and other fellow female residents about the rights they deserved. Thus, they asked the question of whether they wished for their

⁵⁴ Please note that the names of the foreign associations mentioned in *La Fronde* have been mostly translated into French.

⁵⁵ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Les femmes et la paix", *La Fronde* (1900, April 2), p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, June 4), p. 4.

daughters to live in a society in which they were constantly subject to men's will or, contrary to that, whether they wished them to be free⁵⁸. The *frondeuse* praised the diligence of those women, encouraging other women to organise themselves, inciting them with passionate slogans. “*Voilà, assurément, d'excellente besogne, et il serait à souhaiter de voir les femmes de tous les pays prendre une semblable initiative*”⁵⁹.

Although the name was not mentioned, just like in other cases in France and all over the world, there were many examples of female associations carried out by women in favour of the acknowledgement of their right to full citizenship.

Mentions to US female associations

As it was the case with association initiatives in Europe, *La Fronde* also informed about those created in the United States. Although their women were considered to be new to feminist activism, though enthusiastic and innovative, the chronicles never ceased to acknowledge the merit of the actions they carried out, in many occasions greater than those developed in the European continent.

In this sense, Clotilde Dissard highlighted the *Clubs School Mothers* and *Mother's Congress*, associations that offered young mothers the necessary training to educate their children appropriately⁶⁰. The genesis of those clubs could be found in Detroit (Michigan) in 1894, where a governess called Harriet A. Marsh, director of the Hancock school, who published in 1896 a book entitled *Child Study in the Mother's Club*, followed a very strict program, calling mothers and governesses to a room in the school in order to talk about the children's health and education⁶¹. The *frondeuse* presented them as real mutual maternity schools, where mothers and governesses shared the same interest: offering mothers the educational and intellectual resources necessary to improve the lives of their children and themselves and to become full-right individuals.

⁵⁸ Camille BELILON, “Chronique féministe”, *La Fronde* (1898, February 13) p.3.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ Clotilde DISSARD, “Chronique féministe. Les associations des mères en Amérique”, *La Fronde* (1899, April 25), p .3.

⁶¹ Elvira V. LÓPEZ, *El movimiento feminista. Primeros trazos del feminismo en Argentina*. Buenos Aires, Biblioteca Nacional, 2009, p. 221.

In 1899 those clubs already had their own daily, *The Pedagog's Paper*, which announced their meetings, described the discussions had and organised conferences where to present the results, as the one held in Utah in May 1897 and in Washington in May 1898, under the leadership of Mary C. May. Marsh summarised the object of all this activity in one of its speeches, translated by *La Fronde* in one of its feminist chronicles:

*La petite flamme qu'on vient d'allumer dans le foyer contient beaucoup de bois vert, elle est dirigée par des doigts inexpérimentés. Mais lorsque le craquement des brindilles qui se tordent aura cessé, et que les premiers nuages de la fumée se seront envolés, nous espérons qu'une flamme puissante se développera avec les années, communiquant sa brillante chaleur à la plus chère et à la meilleure de toutes les constitutions, l'intérieur américain*⁶².

Clotilde Dissard commented that all those works deserved to be done also in France, and that in a conference organised by *the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes* in Rennes, Mlle Saffroy had openly presented them with that purpose⁶³.

Nevertheless, there was a relationship between some associations of both countries, given that in number 31 of rue Francœur in Paris there was a branch of the *National Council of Women of the United States*, founded in 1889 and which in just one decade reached a total of 700,000 members, with branches in a considerable number of countries⁶⁴. Camille Belilon presented in one of her chronicles the main principles of that association:

1° À travail égal, salaire égale;

2° Réformes des lois sur le mariage et le divorce;

3° Étude de tout ce qui concerne l'habillement tant au point de vue hygiénique qu'à celui de l'élégance et de l'appropriation;

4° Éducation civique;

5° Science domestique;

⁶² Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Les associations des mères en Amérique", *op. cit.*

⁶³ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁴ Camille BELILON, "Chronique féministe", *La Fronde* (1898, June 10), p. 3.

6° *Paix et arbitrage ou création d'une Ligue internationale ayant pour mission de trancher pacifiquement les différends entre les pays et d'écarter les sujets de conflit*⁶⁵.

Of all those goals, the most striking one is decency in their clothing, although another US feminist association, the *Association des Droits de la Femme*, had presented a bill condemning kisses as immoral and contrary to hygiene, stating that, through those kisses all types of diseases spread⁶⁶. Despite that, although some of those ideals were also included in the feminist ideology - except for the issue of clothing and kisses - Belilon mentioned that, without knowing the results reached by the US associations, French women still had a lot of work to do to make things real, especially their demands regarding labour and educational issues.

CONCLUSIONS

Besides the articles that *La Fronde* devoted to several organisations created in Paris at the end of the century, and at the beginning of last century, feminist chronicles mentioned them constantly during the period they were published. Those sections offered a reliable map of the female and feminist association movement in the French capital, but also showed how that movement was spread all over France and could be seen with the same strength in other western countries. Although each had their own idiosyncrasy, the ideals of all those associations were mostly similar, focusing mainly on the framework of labour and education rights.

The two *frondeuses* in charge of the chronicles, at least during the first four years of the feminist daily, were Camille Belilon and Clotilde Dissard who, as well as mentioning the events the associations were hosting, sometimes provided the program of some of them. And that is what Belilon did with *Solidarité des femmes*, the *Société d'études féminines* or the international *National Council of Women of the United States*, or Dissard with the Belgian association *Union pour la Solidarité féminine*. This allows us to delve into the organisational dynamics of those associations, as well as enables us to know the priorities of their ideologies and what differentiated one from the

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ Clotilde DISSARD, "Chronique féministe. Contre le baiser", *La Fronde* (1899, March 16), p. 2.

other, such as in the case of the US society mentioned above or the *Association des Droits de la Femme*, from that same country and that gave special attention to hygiene.

The analyses performed conveys the special relevance of governesses, who developed their activity both in France and abroad, as in the case of the *Société Française d'Institutrices* located in London, and their focus not only on education, but also on the dissemination of feminist ideals. We must recall that governesses even resorted to what is now called gender mainstreaming, promoting the foundation of a *École des Hautes Études Féministes*. As for the latter, it had the involvement of national associations, such as the *Alliance féministe immortaliste* or the *Société d'études féminines*, and neighbourhood ones, as the *Alliance féministe immortaliste* or the *Société d'études féminines*. Moreover, the association spirit created in Parisian districts could be seen in other slogans, such as the improvement of the situation of working mothers with the references to *Œuvre de Porche-Fontaine* and the *Œuvre des crèches du seizième arrondissement*.

It is odd that despite being a mainly female project, the feminist chronicles reiterated the need for men to intervene and participate in the associations' actions set up by women. Here, men participated in female associations not just as members of it, but also as promoters of several initiatives. That was the case of Léon Richer with the *Ligue française pour le droit des femmes* or Edmond Potonié for the *Ligue universelle du Bien Public*. Men were also present in the creation of female trade unions, as is the case of the *Société de prévoyance et de secours mutuels pour les dames et demoiselles du commerce et de l'industrie*, and it was strategically necessary for them to participate in order for women's demands to be heard.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the *La Fronde's* section that we have analysed is the only one to be called "feminist". Although it is true that it may be considered redundant, as the whole publication in itself is an assertion of the political movement and of the theory derived from it, the truth is that the feminist chronicles played a key part in the Parisian daily. This is due to the fact that this section was the one readers looked for and paid more attention to in order to know the evolution, impact and future of what feminism would be.

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