

INHIBITION FACTORS OF FEMINISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AFTER THE 1989 REVOLUTION

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The 1989 revolution opened the frontiers, terminated the political and ideological isolation and enabled the people of Czech Republic to accept positively - even too positively - most inspirations and ideas coming from Western Europe and the U.S.A. - except from feminism. Feminism is being refused not only by men, but also by Czech women who are alleged to have "a low threshold of awareness of the feminine question"¹ similarly as the women of other post-communist countries.²

If any contemporary intellectual trend arouses a priori aversion, it is necessary to study this phenomenon and analyze it. I am personally interested in this phenomenon because of the fact that I studied the movement of the students left (or "The New Left") in the West at the end of the sixties and its struggle for human rights from which the second - according to some authors already the third - wave of American feminism developed. And that is the wave which has finally arrived in the Czech Republic at present.

In the struggle for human rights, and primarily for the minority rights, the American female students participating in this movement realized that they too were in the position of a discriminated minority³ and the struggle for human rights was extended to cover also the struggle for the rights of women.

In the former socialist (at present the so-called post-communist) countries human rights were systematically suppressed and the non-observance of the signed international treaties (such as the Helsinki Accord) represented one of the principal causes of the aversion to and subsequently the fall of the whole political system. In spite of this situation, the forbidden feminism, linking up with the struggle for human rights, has not aroused great response in this country and is not arousing it even at present, when the previously forbidden organization, churches, religious sects are resuming their activities and when the interest of young people in philosophy and alternative ways of life is rising to life again.

This distaste is particularly conspicuous in the Czech Republic, where the feminine movement had been strongly developed as early as in the last century and particularly before the Second War. This movement had not communist, but patriotic and democratic roots. In the course of the "building socialism", however, the past activities of women (e.g. Plamínková, Horáková) were concealed or misinterpreted⁴ and the continuity with both national and foreign women's movements was disrupted. In spite of all that feminism is not arousing great curiosity even at present. While in the West European and American universities the "women studies" or "gender studies" form an inseparable part of the curriculum, this discipline is "being born" very slowly in the Czech Republic - moreover only thanks to the assistance of various foundations and activities of non-governmental organizations. In spite of that it is possible to officially enroll in and study certain courses dealing with feminism and even pass examinations from them.⁵ Unfortunately, except for one specialized library and one documentation center for Gender Studies⁶ which has originated in Prague thanks to repeated foreign assistance, there are no centers which would monitor the whole scope of feminism as a discipline.

At the same time we know that speaking of feminism in singular is entirely absurd. Everyone who is interested in this problem knows that feminism can be considered as a

personal or group opinion, as a global term encompassing various trends of thought, philosophy, confession or differentness; as a political movement of a particular class and socially stratified group, as a psychobiological problem, as an alternative style of living and as socio-legal discipline or as a separate branch of sociology or as ideology of the emancipation of the woman and a specific form of approach to various social problems. In spite of that most people, scientists and specialists not excepting understand the term of feminism as a notion denominating a homogeneous, non-differentiated phenomenon and their reaction to it is mostly negative. For this reason I shall consider feminism in my analysis intentionally in singular and shall analyze the causes of the Czech "reserved attitude" to feminism which is coming to us and which has been perceived so far only as a single intellectual trend or uniform ideology.

Feminism, according to standard dictionaries, is a trend or movement endeavouring to liberate the woman from social discrimination and oppression by a change of social relations and so change the behaviour of the man and the woman. The most general definition of feminism could be formulated as "a differentiated approach to variable reality from the viewpoint of gender".

The term of "inhibition" means stopping, preventing, hindering or even damping of an activity and retardation of potential influence. In this paper I shall deal with the definition of the factors causing the damping of interest in feminism and their conditioning by our post-communist reality.

Inhibition factors of feminism in the Czech Republic have their roots in our specifically Czech tradition (in the history of our nation) as well as in our recent past (in the communist regime), in the specific features of the present transformation period (the transition to market economy) and the present influence of feminist ideology.

The relative cohesion and agreement between men and women in our lands, i.e. in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, has its foundations in the 19th century, when the Czech nation was formed as a counterpart of the German-speaking population of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The national revival of the Czech nation took place under external pressure and men and women of this country had a common enemy, a fact which increased the cohesion of all individuals who considered themselves Czech. For this reason men enhanced the education of women, their struggle for voting right, Czech women were allies of men in their struggle against the Habsburgh monarchy and the discrepancy between men and women, the so called patriarchy, was greatly reduced by this external influence.⁷ This model of man-woman relation, conditioned by our historical situation, was repeated in the next century, when it received a somewhat different historical dimension or period colour.

After the termination of the first World War, when women struggled for their civil rights all over Europe, the Czech women did not have to win their status by a confrontation with men. They were understood by men. The way to this understanding was prepared by a man of great authority, the first President of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, by his concept of equality of women.⁸ At that time T. G. Masaryk helped women to equality. However, from the viewpoint of the radical feminism of the present day, he actually complicated their identification. Masaryk put human and civic issues above national and particular issues, incl. the feminine issue, a fact some authors blame him for by right.⁹ Under fascist and communist rule the study of Masaryk's work was more or less forbidden and ideologically misinterpreted. At present T.G.Masaryk is being "rediscovered" and his non-confrontation ideas act as inhibitors of radical feminist attitudes and the new self-seeking of women. The reference to

Masaryk's authority represents at present for many people an adequate answer to the questions with arguments more than three quarters of a century old "does not matter" in most cases, as time in this country had a "long stop."

During the Second World War men and women in this country has a common enemy again and the fascism and the hardships of war, forced labour in heavily bombed Germany and the suffering in concentration camps were born by Czech men and women alike. Czech men were not called to arms, they did not provoke war and did not wage war; therefore they could not be blamed for it. The status of Czech men during the Second World War did not differ much from the status of Czech women. Both genders were civilians, both were in the rear, both were under the "protectorate" of a higher authority in the form of fascist Germany. Once again, all this made allies of men and women, And the situation was somewhat similar to that prevailing at the end of last century.

Real patriarchy could not develop in this country even after the termination of the Second World War. As early as in February, 1948, a coup d'état established a new political regime based on a highly simplified concept of Marxism which put class differentiation above particular interests in its ideology. Emancipation of women and feminism were considered a particular interest with no priority. The solution of this problem was expected as the result and a success which would come automatically after the victory of socialism. The politically conscious female members of the communist party, who knew Marxism, identified with the officially adopted ideology and considered feminism as a bourgeois ideology the aim of which was the disintegration of the uniform struggle of the working class against its class enemy and capitalism (and the retardation of the establishment of a new social order - socialism).¹⁰

Feminism was suppressed not only ideologically, but also economically - it lost its economic basis and social base. The communist totalitarian system performed a speedy and forceful restructuring of the whole society by the expropriation of the means of production (nationalization). Even the smallest shops and workshops were nationalized, including barber's shops and farmsteads, so that the man, the owner of property, was not the woman's employer for over forty years, not even of his own wife. Women worked longer than men, because they had to run the household, educate children, cultivate the permitted bit of field or garden, but man as patriarch did not exploit the woman, at least not in the meaning of economic law. They were both oppressed by the political system, the state administration, the regime personified by the omnipotent communist party. Ideological and financial preference was given to the so-called productive work for the public, state defense, heavy industry, while the work in the household incl. the education of children was considered by official ideology as the private sphere, "retarding" the development of society. The production was extensive. Heavy industry was developed everywhere. It was necessary to increase the labour force. The employment of women grew dramatically. What the western feminist had been struggling for such a long time became a fact almost overnight. Women were employed, they even were obliged to work. If they did not work and did not justify their absence from the working process by the intensive phase of motherhood or illness, they were punished and considered as parasites. While shortly after the Second World war women represented 22% of all working people, fifteen years later their quota jumped to 28,6%. In our republic 97% of all women who were able to work were employed, which was a world record. The regime of work was modelled exclusively from the viewpoint of the interest of the state and economy, although it dissatisfied the majority of the working people. "Sliding working hours, later start of work, part time jobs were exceptional. Creches and nursery schools did exist and were relatively cheap, but all working people (and consequently, also their children) were manipulated

according to the interest of the economy and were forced to shift the beginning of their working hours in order to avoid e.g. the use of electric light and so economize electric power or not to load the means of transport excessively. In other cases, for pseudo-egalitarian reasons, civil servants, workers and doctors had to start working at the same hour which resulted in the worsening of the position of employed women who assumed automatically - as a result of our tradition - the duties connected with the children and the household. These and similar decisions, literally hostile to women, were mostly executed by men, who were significantly more frequently in managing positions; however,, men themselves considered themselves merely as executives of higher resolutions of a party organ, revolutionary Trade Unions or some other depersonalized power, devoid of "sexual" gender characteristics. In this situation men and women felt as allies against power which manipulated them, and often helped each other directly on workplaces. For instance men often "covered-up" for women who left earlier or came later because they had to take the children from or to the creches, but treated women rather as colleagues suffering the same oppression. The situation was different in the work of men and women in relatively separate, gender-segregated professions. However, it did not occur to women at that time to blame their difficulties on the "patriarchal system" - they blamed "the communist in power". For this reason the content of the term of "patriarch" is unknown to women, and if they encounter it in the arguments of western feminist, they regard it as an artificial construction. The reality of women's emancipation in the working sphere in this country has preceded the ideological reflection of this fact. For this reason in the discussions with western feminists, while using identical terms, we react to a different reality that which is expressed in these terms.

In the period of socialism at least two generations of women have seen for themselves that it was impossible to cope with parallel roles, i.e. to run the household and to be employed¹¹ which inspired a feeling of guilt and permanent frustration of women due to unsatisfactory performance of both activities. Creches and nursery schools were available, but other household services, incl. transport to work functioned unsatisfactorily and the women trying to cope with both roles did not attain equal results in their employment as men. The mass and forced entrance of women to the labour market did not fulfil their expectations in the region of professional self-assertion and social as well as personal satisfaction. On the contrary, many were "persuaded" they could not keep in step with men, as a result of which employment did not raise the self-confidence of women and did not provide the officially proclaimed justice and equality of men and women. Therefore, the women who have lived in and survived "real socialism" believe that western feminist overestimate the significance of women's employment and their own careers for the emancipation of women. The women of post-communist countries are projecting their experience into a different, western society, i.e. onto other women, who have grown in a different reality. The behaviour of western feminists is analogous and either party is surprised by the rigidity of thought of the other party. There are women on both sides, but they are women with totally different personal experience. And that is another inhibition factor. Women of the post-communist countries underestimate the endeavour of western women to have the women's requirements legally assured. They know from their own experience that the codification does not correspond with actual practice. The laws under socialist rule were not discriminating and yet even in the fields in which they had equal or even higher qualification than men women did not attain adequate appreciation either in salaries or in hierarchical positions.¹²

The western feminists of Marxist orientation, as stated e.g. by Claire Wallace in her excellent book on sociology with reference to gender,¹³ are convinced, that the oppression of

women is an integral part of the capitalist way of production and capitalism and patriarchy in their way of thinking merge. According to these feminists of Marxist orientation the woman will be liberated only when socialist society has been established. In the country in which the establishment of socialism was declared by the Constitution as early as 1960 and where this regime has just collapsed, such opinions, naturally, inhibit the interest in feminism, at least in the middle and older generations of women. For us it has a too leftist, dogmatic and naive ring. And in popular articles¹⁴ published in this country, which influence the public more than scientific debates, this leftist orientation and their emphasis on "political correctness" is often mentioned. We know next to nothing about feminism, but a few lines about the fact that American women feminists demand the rewriting of the Constitution because of the repeated use of the word "man" instead of "person" are remembered by everyone (men and women alike) similarly as the affairs about sexual harassment. We are being acquainted far more frequently (perhaps intentionally) with the extremes of feminism which often are naive, that with the whole breadth of feminism. In this way feminism is degraded in our eyes before we get really acquainted with it.

The group of women who did not identify with the political regime in socialist period, one again was united with men in the shared aversion to those in power. In the last two decades of the existence of socialism women played a particular significant role in the opposition, the so-called dissident movement. Women were the signatories and the speakers of Charter 77, they formed an absolute majority in the VONS (Committee for the Defence of Unjustly Prosecuted) and were judged in political trials. They wrote, translated and typed political articles which were subsequently published by samizdat and exile publishers. Via foreign broadcast their texts influenced political situation in Czechoslovakia. This high cohesion of men and women in dissent was determined not only by the necessity of conspiracy, but also by the subordination of these activities to the common goal. If in last century the rivalry of men and women was diminished by the interest of the Czech nation, one century later men and women were united, once again, by the common struggle for human and civil rights considered superior to particular interests. Police oppression was so heavy that Czechoslovak dissent has never undergone such differentiation as that of the New Left in the USA in spite of the fact that superior attitudes of men to women appeared also in Czech dissent. Women primarily typed, retyped, translated and generally did the "black work", while men - dissidents - drafted programmes and proclamations.¹⁵ In the then oppression, however, it was an unsubstantial, subtle pseudo-problem of which they made fun when they spoke about the "women's brigade" in the dissent. The former speaker of Charter 77, Dana Němcová, Deputy of Federal Assembly of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic after the revolution, expressed it as follows: "... in the period of Charter 77, when our activities and subsequent oppression drove us into a single host, I could not even imagine that I could consider men my rivals. Even later in practical politics, I have never felt less free than men. I think that the consideration of men as competitors whom I am trying to overcome, or as oppressors who are forcing me into some sort of role, is on principle the manifestation of the non-sovereignty of the woman".¹⁶ The opinion of these women and their experience cannot be "rubbed out of memory" speedily also because these women have represented, and still represent, a sort of "moral capital" of our hectically transforming society. Some scientific papers have revealed that similar reaction is shown also by women - dissidents in Poland and Hungary.¹⁷

Women who were not interested in politics then are not interested in it now and they certainly are not interested in feminism. Under socialism these women, similarly as all non-political citizens, defended against the totalitarian system primarily by their "retreat into the

family" as the only relatively state-uncontrolled entity. Under socialism the family was not the place of oppression; on the contrary it was a place of relative freedom, the place of privacy, the place of the manifestation of "gender identity". Because people did not and even could not realize themselves in the often meaningless work for the state or society, their personal relations were more significant for them than it was the case of western countries. This is testified to both by the high marriage rate and the high divorce rate, sexual promiscuity and the still prevailing tolerance to extramarital sexual relations, infidelity, abortions and divorces which manifests itself, quite paradoxically, as inhibition factor of feminism. "Why do the western women make such a hue and cry about the woman's right to sexual life of her own, sex before marriage. etc. .. when in our country it is a matter of course?" And that is why a politician's career in the Czech Republic cannot be threatened by marital infidelity or divorce, to say nothing of sexual harassment.

In socialism it was primarily up to the woman and her ability to manage the household finances, to have friends in the right places, to provide the required foodstuffs, to see how the members of her family would live, how they could make both ends meet, whether they would or would not have a decent holiday. The care of the family and the state enforced dual role burdened and stressed the woman extremely. However, the fact that she was able to cope parallel with both "professions" enhanced her self-confidence. Many western feminists cannot understand where the self-reliance of the women in post-communist countries comes from, when these women do neither reflect their specific needs nor their feminine difference and identity. This could be one of the possible explanations.

In socialism women have verified directly in practice that they could do the same as men, and simultaneously they have lost the illusion which many women in the west still cherish that all women's problems will be solved by their integration in the process of employment, i.e. their economic independence.¹⁸ Moreover, in socialism women's work for society for which people were paid often was meaningless, unnecessary, and as we see today even harmful for society (see the projects of socialism, armament industry, opencast mines, dams, et.). In comparison with it the work in the family - the women's domain - was of unquestionable significance which nobody could doubt. The family was the place of retreat of both genders, an asylum created primarily by the woman. For this reason the family was on the top rung of the value scale, for this reason it was overloaded by feelings and otherwise, and that is why the divorce were more frequent than today, when the aspirations of the members of our society can spread to a greater breadth and many needs may be sublimated e.g. by personal career, money-making or success in business.

In socialism the woman occupied a significant position in this unofficially so highly valued family which feminism, by the devaluation of the significance of household work, is actually taking away from her. As a result of this part of women, often unconsciously and without reflection, is refusing feminism a priori. The women involved in this situation are middle-aged or in the early old age at present. And it is they who represent the greatest opponents of feminism and refuse to discuss it at all. These women united by generation feel subconsciously that feminism, with its ideology, is devaluating their "privilege" to be the martyrs of the household, to be the "better ones" in the relation of both genders.

The aversion to feminism results also from inter-generation relations, the relations of daughters toward mothers. The present generation of women was the first to live its childhood in the fifties in the very imperfect creches and nursery schools (when the generation of their mothers entered employment, more or less involuntarily). At present these women are

mothers of relatively small children and they want to differ from their own mothers, they do not want to copy them. And in this way the usually inter-generation conflict of mothers and daughters acquires in this generation (which is still significantly influencing public opinion) also the character of political aversion against what their mothers used to foster. They manifest this attitude verbally by the statements of the necessity of being better mothers than their mothers used to be, the necessity to take care of their children personally and, naturally, by the refusal of any ideology recalling the old situation (and, consequently, also of feminism). The inter-generation conflict of mothers and daughters, consequently manifests itself also as an inhibition factor of feminism.

Women who have tried all possible social roles in socialism, want today _ to the horror of western feminist _ to stay at home and take care of their children.¹⁹ Those are merely verbal proclamations. In spite of that, however, some political parties in Czech Republic and in other post-communist countries have incorporated in their programmes the statement that the role of the woman is to be mother and to take care of the family and that they will grant them this "wish", if they are elected. Strange to relate, these parties did not succeed (at least in the Czech Republic) in the elections - probably also thanks to the women who did not vote in their favour. The proclamations of our women (that they want to devote their time to their families) are at variance with their behaviour. At present, when many women could stay at home, they are not doing so.¹⁹ The quota of employed women in our country has not dropped significantly. Women still represent 43,2% of all working people (in 1988 it was 46,1%) and only 13% of them agree with the opinion that in case of unemployment the woman should give up her job in favour of men.²⁰

Another inhibition factor is the leftist orientation of western feminism and some of its formulations evoking our recent past. Socialist society was - if we abstract from the group of prominent party functionaries - a socially more or less homogeneous society. The class struggle doctrine was converted into phrases and so exploited ideologically as to lose entirely its meaning. To women in post-communist countries the discussions of western feminist, whether women are or are not a social class, and whether sexual or social inequality is primary, appear quite unsubstantial and meaningless. To the citizens of these countries such discussions recall the "newspeak" of the recently collapsed regime. For this reason the statements of western feminists that "the struggle of the of the gender is a never ending revolution" provoke both derision and aversion. The statements and formulations of the type "women are class in an antagonist relation to men, because they are exploited by them" or the statement quoted by Claire Wallace²¹ on the "inducement of feminism ideology into the ranks of ignorant women" or the statements of the type "we must convert gender differences into class differences" and "conquer power from men " arouse the aversion. Even if such statements were based on accurate foundations and signed by Wittgenstein, they cannot be accepted in this country and in this time. They have a much too leftist sound which inhibits the adoption of feminism. Also the excessive rhetorics of western feminists their craving for global solution, their teleological character and feminist eschatology according to which the change to antagonist discrepancies of both genders will change the whole world jar upon our ears. Our aversion is not a reaction to only feminism, but primarily a reaction to our own recent past. Today we know that only certain feminisms are characterized by this leftist verbosity. (Because we do not actually know genuine feminism, we cannot even defend it effectively). The opponents of feminism, particularly from the ranks of men, emphasize these and similar formulations, thus arousing a priori aversion against this ideology. The feminist and historians of feminism, concerned with the problems of Eastern Europe on long-term basis, such as Nanet Funk, Barbara Einhorn,

Valentine Maghadam, Marilyn Rueschemeyer, Hilda Scott and others, understand these specific features, reflect them and explain them knowledgeably.²² Their books, however, exist here only in one or two copies for the whole republic.

The image of feminism in our country is created by newspapers articles, often written by Czech men who have stayed in the USA universities for a short time and who exaggerate and ridicule the problems of sexual harassment and ideological features of feminism²³ without mentioning the fact that the university campus always and everywhere differs from current society. Really serious problems, solved by West European feminism, are often interpreted as general social problems (such as employment and unemployment of women, violent treatment of women in the family, sexual symbolism in mass media) or as psychological problems (such as psychological and psychosocial problems) such as the apprehension of women to accept a management position in employment, fear of earning more money than their husband, being successful, having publicity incl. the reflection of the fact that the women's care of children is not a matter of course, the social construction of the role of motherhood and the women's fear of losing their influence on the children, etc. (These and similar issues contained in feminism are interpreted in public as psychological or philosophical problems while feminism is reduced in our media only to the ideology and emancipation of women. This reduction, too, is an inhibition factor of feminism, as at present we are passing through the phase of aversion to any ideological proclamations and political organization.

The acquired freedom is understood as the freedom not to be organized anywhere. Women behave in this respect in the same way as any "normal" citizens of all age groups, only they are in a sharper focus than men. Women's organizations are unpopular also because the only women's organization permitted by the totalitarian regime, the Association of Czech Women (formerly the Association of Czechoslovak women)⁰ which characterized itself as "the prolonged arm of the Communist party" was not abolished, has retained its house, property and publishing house, while the newly originated women's organizations literally have "no roof over their head". Formerly this central women's organization lead all women to socialism, made them attend meetings and manifestations, etc. At present the Women's Association teaches women with equal vehemence to embroider, crochet, do make-up, purchases knitting machines for local organizations and takes their members for a trifling sum to jumble sales to neighbouring countries. Those are its activities which maintain its membership.

Western feminist do not know all that. On the contrary, the Women's Association impresses them, because it has its own offices, telephones, faxes, money, varnish, paid functionaries capable of preparing for western feminist a conference, congress, press conference or meeting. Many representatives of western feminists prefer this nationwide organization to small, ever originating and extinguishing women's organization, often quarreling and influencing one another. This insensitiveness to newly originating women's organizations is another inhibiting factor of feminism in this country.

In uncertain present, when all are learning again to be citizens and to decide our own affairs, the idea of paradise is often located in the future. The present, therefore, is considered, once again, as a transitory phase which we must "survive" somehow, because it is a bridge to the future, to the dreamed-of functioning market economy and democracy. For this reason also the possible discrepancies in the relations between men and women are subordinate even today to a higher target - the transformation of society. The pattern of our thinking has come back again. Once again we believe - this time in the omnipotence of market

economy, for a change. Once again we want to believe that the change of economic base will solve all other problems incl. the relations between men and women. The criticism of western, i.e. capitalist society makes us uncertain and we do not want to hear it for the time being. That too inhibits feminism at present.

Another paradoxically inhibiting factor of feminism is our relatively good economic situation and the so far insignificant unemployment rate. Economic motivation for left-oriented feminism is missing for the present.

Czech society is not very religious, either, and the churches are relatively tolerant to divorces and abortions. The Parliament has adopted a liberal abortion act. Decision about abortion is made only by the woman, the abortion fee does not attain even 50% of the mean monthly pay, contraceptives are financially accessible and after the 1989 political change also sufficiently promoted. That has manifested itself already in a drop of the number of applications for artificial abortions. The traditionally high tolerance to different sexual behaviour does not activate feminism even for the requirements of lesbians. The lesbians organize, nobody hinders them in it, nobody is condemning them, and their periodical even has obtained State subsidy. Where there is no resistance, there is no militancy.

While in the West the feminism is promoted by minorities, primarily racially different ones, in the Czech Republic even this chance is minimum. National minorities represent only 4% of the population and the most important among them, the group of Rom women, is not interested in feminism. Even the best educated Rom women proclaim a high cohesion of the whole family and subordination to men.

West feminists blame Czech women that they are not represented in the Parliament and in the Government or in the leadership of political parties and instigate them to demand the system of quotas. Once again they are unsuccessful, because this system was certainly discredited in the totalitarian regime. Women behave in Czech politics as a newly establishing minority. They do not declare themselves as feminist and they do not want to be identified with a group which has an inferior social status and was formally preferred by the ancient regime. Successful women, writes, artists, politicians, want to acquire recognition primarily in their referential professional group - and that is the group of men for them. That is also the reason why only a few (sic!) Czech writers and artists subscribe to feminism. That however, is a banal statement which can be found in every textbook of social psychology. Therefore, even this attitude of Czech women to feminism should not be surprising for anybody.

In the transformation society women have not realized their particular interests so far. The whole society has not realized them, either. The specific interests of women will emerge and crystallize parallelly with the endeavour of our society to be or become a capitalist society. Only then the situation will arise which will accentuate the interests of women and will liken their requirements and problems with the situation the women in Western Europe and North America are in now. Only then also a higher interest in feminism and its ideology can probably be expected.

Czech society, however, must attain this stage first and then it must have time and space for the quest for its orientation, the selection of its programme and the discussion of these problems. Women in post-communist countries must realize their difference and the value of this difference and reflect it. Only then they will become interested in a different solution, in feminism which will appear here. However, it will not be merely an adoption of some western "standard", but will be based on our tradition and our experience. Post-communist countries were "homogenized" by socialism for some time but still differ profoundly from one another.

Therefore also the feminism which will appear and be generated in these post-communist countries will differ mutually. They will differ also from western feminism because this feminism has originated as a reaction to patriarchy, while feminism in our countries will be influenced by our experience with state paternalism. What will originate from the confrontation of these two women's experiences, will enrich not only feminism, but perhaps also Europe, and will represent a contribution not only for women, but for humanity as a whole.

NOTES:

- 1 M. Vodrážka: Before the big Exodus... in: *Aspekt*, 1994, č.2, pp. 46-48
- 2 Elzbieta Matynis: Women After Communism: A Bitter Freedom. In: *Social Research*, Vol.61, No.2, pp. 251-277.
- 3 Ruth Rosen: Ein Brief an J.Šiklová - Ruecklich auf die Frauenbewegung im Westen - in: *Die neue Gesellschaft, Frankfurter Hefte*, 38. Jahrgang, No.11., November 1991, pp. 1020-1026.
- 4 Katherine David Fox: Czech Feminists and Nationalism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy, *Journal of Women's History*, Vol.3, No.2, 1991
- 5 The department of Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, Prague, opened the course on the "Social issues from Gender Aspect" in the Autumn semester, 1992. The course was repeated also in the years to follow. In the school year of 1994/1995 it was expanded and is taught also at the Masaryk University in Brno and the Palacký University in Olomouc. The lectures can be realized with the support of the Prague Centre for Gender Studies. In the summer semester of 1993 and 1994 a similar, but more theoretically oriented course was taught at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Prague.
- 6 The Centre for Gender Studies in Prague, operating since 1991 in Prague (at present at the address: Praha 2, Legerova 39) is simultaneously a library and a study and coordination centre with a vast network of contacts in other countries. The Centre organizes discussions and language courses primarily for women's organizations from post-communist countries, prepares anthologies of the most interesting articles concerning the women's problems. It is supported financially by the foundations Frauen Anstiftung from Hamburg and the East-West Women Network from New York.
- 7 See note No. 4.
Alena Wagnerová: The Women's Emancipation and Industrial Society. In: *Collection of Translations from European and American feminist sociology II (in Czech)*. (Editor Marie Čermáková, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Prague, 1993, pp. 7-19.
- 8 H. Gordon Skilling: T.G.Masaryk: Against the Current, 1882-1914, Chapter 8, Defender of Women's Rights, str. 114-128, Macmillan, Oxford, London, 1994.
- 9 M. Vodrážka: Before the Great Exodus: The Root of Czech Antifeminism, paper presented at Conference at Berkeley and Stanford, Summer 1993.
- 10 J. Šiklová: Women in Politics in the ČSFR", John F.Kennedy Institute of Government, published paper from the conference in Berlin, Germany, 1992.

- 11 A. Vodáková: On the Philosophy of Women's Dual Working and Life Role (in Czech). *Filosofický časopis* No.5, Vol.40, 1992, pp.769-780
Hilda Scott: *Does Socialism Liberate women?* Beacon Press, Boston, 1974.
Mita Castle-Kanerová: *Superwomen and the Double Burden*, pp. 97-124 in: *Women in the Face of Change - The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China*, ed. Shirin Rai, Hilary Pilkington, Annie Phizacklea, Routledge, London, New York, 1992.
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- 23 See Note No. 14.