

Bertil Björkenlid

# Kvinnokrav i manssamhälle

## Rösträttskvinnorna och deras metoder som opinionsbildare och påtryckargrupp i Sverige 1902—21

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### ABSTRACT

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The present thesis examines the attempts of the women's suffrage movement in Sweden to make public its principles and demands and its activity to influence politicians and the general public. Its work is described in the broader context of contemporary national organizations for women's suffrage and has resulted in a revised picture of the internal relations of the Swedish movement. The choice of methods applied is a reflection of political tensions within the movement. Direct political activity was made impossible by different political alignments with regard to political parties. The middle-class character of the movement, its cautious approach in general, becomes evident among other things by its reluctance to organize demonstrations. The restricted financial resources were mainly used for articles, brochures and speeches directed towards the individual. The organization had an asset in its many famous speakers and writers; lack of money, however, put a limit to the use of this potential. Acknowledging the importance of the press had as a direct effect the foundation of its own newspaper *Rösträtt för kvinnor* (Votes for Women) and a publication of a series of articles. The suffrage newspaper had a marked feministic outlook. Contrary to the activity of the British suffrage theatre the Swedish counterpart can on the whole be traced back to the work of one person, backed up by amateurs.

Selma Lagerlöf gave the organization her unrestricted support and contributed with her printed speech *Hem och stat* (Home and State) to the women suffrage abroad. Ellen Key's relationship with the movement was more complicated and tense because of ideological differences. Apart from Elin Wägner other women authors with sympathies for women's suffrage described the suffragist not as a stereotype but rather as an individual. In this way a protest was directed against the conception of "the third sex", a model characterized by repressive tendencies used against women with emancipatory aspirations.

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