

2. WOMEN AND WAGED WORK AROUND THE YEAR 1900

According to French law, the wife is no longer obliged to obey her husband and the woman has the right to vote. But these civil rights are abstract until the woman has become economically independent.

Simone de Beauvoir, 1949

The nineteenth-century gave men increased possibilities of work and education, opportunities that were not readily extended to women. On the contrary, according to conclusions by many researchers, this stands out as a century in which the conditions of women in relation to those of men in some respects got worse. An ongoing scientific and literary discourse was at that time conducted about differences between women and men, which could be given as a reason why women should be more protected than men. During the same period, the intensification of industrialism and its spread to country after country in Europe implied that many women, in a hitherto unknown and brutal fashion, were exploited as labor in industries and as domestics. To an increasing extent, women were forced to support themselves, which of course also provided opportunities for freedom and responsibility.¹ Industrialization contained two opposing tendencies for women in waged work; many women got stuck in subordinate and poorly paid jobs, while for a few it meant education, better jobs, and even professional positions alongside men during the close of the century. Some women managed to challenge the prevailing subordination by becoming self-supporting and achieving economic independence.

In Great Britain -- and in Belgium -- industrialization had begun earlier than in other countries. On the European continent it got underway while the railways were creating a network of communications. In the mid-1870s this dynamic process drew people from the countryside to jobs in growing cities and industries. The teeming cities were viewed both as disgraceful places in which

¹ Among others, see Pinchbeck (1930) 1969: Introduction; Kessler-Harris 1981; Hausen 1981; Davidoff & Hall 1987; Roberts 1988; Riley 1988; Clark (1919) 1992; Davidoff et al. 1999; Nilsson 2003.

crime and human greed could reach their pinnacles, and as places for success, new identities, good positions, and successful business deals.² The city gave an opportunity for social change: the industrious man could get rich, the wealthy man go bankrupt, the unlucky fail, and the diligent perhaps succeed. Women were eager to take advantage of the new openings. For women as for men, the city was an opportunity and a curse. At best, it could provide economic independence; at worst, total degradation through the commercialization that occurred on a large scale in the big cities. Women were living on their own in the cities, more often than in the countryside.

Urbanization transformed the pattern of how to survive as well as the formation of families. The function of homes was changing. For survival under the new circumstances, both men and women needed money. Each and every one became dependent upon waged work in some form, directly or through some intermediary. The negative aspects of this evolution were a matter for debate, which often discussed the woman's place in the family.³ Women's increased participation in waged work outside or even inside the home, was considered a problem by many discussants. Thus a rather ideological interpretation of the whole situation in society came to color the solutions put forward about women workers and woman's position.

Gender Crisis, Labor Market, and Family

The period of the late 19th century was one of great changes on the European continent. Everything was up for discussion and change. People demanded the right to participate in the organization and governance of countries in ways that had not been usual before; democratization was in full sway. Agitation, strikes, debates on the annihilation of the human race through degeneration were coupled with a hectic faith in the future and in progress. The period was charged with paradoxes when the labor market changed and nations slowly got democratized.

² For example Walkowitz 1992; Kalifa 1995; Svanström 2000.

³ For example Hausen 1981.

Scholars have spoken of a crisis of gender, or of a crisis of masculinity.⁴ The gender crisis got into the focus of debates when waged work for women became more and more prevalent. Here the problem seemed to be the biological differences in contrast to the diminishing differences of men's and women's job opportunities and salary levels. The crisis got worse during the economic expansion that began in the mid-1890s, because women were allowed more often to enter into new areas of work, so far monopolized by men. The fear of a return to the former depression was not yet forgotten and men wanted the jobs as family-men.

The view of woman's role in the family and outside it, was influenced not only by the economics swings but also by changes of cultural and social attitudes . The 1880s and '90s can be described as radical decades full of contradictions, when various forms of opposition were expressed. The "woman question" was included as an important facet of the general radicalism and was high on the agenda: in literary work, in the growing concern for "the social" and in the debates on liberty and equality. Thus the topic of my study, the prohibition of night work for women, became an important question in the efforts of the age to come to terms with social change and upheavals, for better or for worse. The issue of night work was connected to some hot points of discussion in this period. Were important social questions be solved by state and international regulation? What was the meaning of the increased demands for equality and citizenship for all and especially for women? What about the whole structure of society, would it be destroyed if women worked for money outside the home? Was the family going to change dramatically?

The woman question was hot in literature and art, as well as in politics and science.⁵ The views were sometimes misogynous: the woman was seen as the opposite of the man, and the man was seen as possessing all the good trait of character. This was far away from the positive view of men and women as different and complementary, which had been the common view of gender relations in the earlier Romantic era.⁶ The young Austrian author Otto Weininger presented an extreme example of such a modern image of Woman in

⁴ "Gender Crisis", Smith-Rosenberg 1986b; Mauge 1987; Le Rider 1990 (1993).

⁵ Jordanova 1989; Showalter 1992; *Fadershuset. 1800-talet* (The Father's House: The 1800s) 1993:328-569.

⁶ Hausen 1981.

his influential book *Geschlecht und Charakter. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (Gender and Character: A Basic Study) in 1903. He coupled his radical misogyny and antifeminism with an equally virulent antisemitism. Jews as well as women were The Other.⁷ Weininger influenced many, among them authors like August Strindberg and Franz Kafka. His book became a bestseller in the early 1900s but views like his had been voiced earlier. But it was not only individual ideologues who expressed opinions on woman's place in society.

Social Darwinism, as the new and modern natural science, exerted a strong influence. It was associated with social progress and became an appreciated model for the interpretation of change in society, thus also the relationship between men and women. Many a leading Darwinists, including Charles Darwin himself, were reluctant and even in opposition to women's emancipation, even if they were not hostile to women in general. They looked with concerned skepticism on women who wanted to take part in politics and waged work, which they considered to be men's duties. Influenced by Social Darwinism, modern medical science developed a tendency to see women as being "sick". The normal menstrual cycle became a medical problem, as did childbirth. The majority of women's diseases were believed to have their origin in women's female organs and their bodies. The neurological medicine of the 1890s saw women's illnesses as being associated with their female brains and psyche. Medical research thought that women, to a higher degree than men, were dependent on their bodies: they were weaker than men, and they were suited by nature to other occupations and activities than men. The interest in the psyche, further developed by Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung, made "womanliness" subjected to yet another normative frame of comprehension: the mental differences between women and men.⁸

The culturally influential Swedish author, Social Darwinist Ellen Key accused the women's movement of encouraging an "abuse of womanpower"⁹ when the movement asked that formerly male work areas were to be open to women. In two heatedly discussed lectures at the end of the 1890s, she maintained that there were "natural areas of work for women". The main thesis

⁷ Weininger (1903) 1905. Le Rider 1982.

⁸ For example, Johannisson 1994:33ff.

⁹ Ellen Key, "*Missbrukad kvinnokraft*" och "*Naturenliga arbetsområden för kvinnan*": tvenne föredrag. Stockholm 1986

of Key was that women should not compete with men in any work area on account of the biological differences. Women were suited for subordinate positions, while men were creative and made for leadership. She considered it dangerous if women did not accept and develop their "maternity"; if they did not, the harmonic balance of society would be damaged. Many more than Key were worried about the fate of children and the household, if women were not staying at home all day. The usual worry was that if, due to needs or only by choice, a woman worked outside the home, she would no longer have the time or desire to carry out her so called family duties.¹⁰

The old view of the family was also being threatened by new ideas on marriage and love. They were a hot topic for debates alongside the conditions at the labor market. Radical women were of the opinion that love, not economic considerations, should to be the basis for marriage. Love, liberated from the strict rules of tradition, prejudice, and marriage legislation, was to become a union between two humans respecting each other. Divorce was to be allowed; free liaisons as well as children born out of wedlock were to be accepted. Such ideas were not common, but were heard in public debates; they were frightening to a broader public. No wonder that the family, in its ideal bourgeois model, was perceived as being under threat.¹⁰

The increase of prostitution in big cities was considered another threat to the traditional family. It was a consequence of the large migration into the cities, when young women and men arrived alone. The result was reduced social control of sexual contacts outside marriage and more so-called promiscuity. Thus a market for sexual services arose, which should be seen in the context of low wages for women on the one side and on the other side a view from men in the upper classes on working-class women as being sexually "fair prey". The end of the 1800s saw an enormous growth of a commercial sex market to satisfy men's urges. The commerce also created different moral codes for men's and women's behavior, going far beyond what had been common earlier. New differences were shaped between the two categories of women; loose women and family women. Prostitution and its regulation by police

¹⁰ Key 1896; Manns 1997:115ff; Melander 1994, 2001; Lagergren 1999:61–89; eg Davidoff et al. 1999.

made it clear how unequal society's resources were distributed; men had money and could buy sex and women were those who needed money and became the "sellers", the exploited. To get rid of the legal regulation of so-called prostitutes became a cause uniting socially concerned women. They perceived the regulation of prostitution as an insult to every woman. British Josephine Butler wrote in *The Constitution Violated* (1871) that the regulation revoked every woman's rights and turned women into serfs or slaves who could be treated outside the normal legal system. Women could be apprehended, doctors were allowed to examine them for possible sexual diseases, and they could be registered as prostitutes on the grounds of vague suspicions. Butler and her followers did not accept that it was possible to obtain a clear definition of "a prostitute".¹¹ The commercialization of sex affected the view also of women's waged work and implied risks the women were to encounter in the streets, especially at night.

In Nordic countries the so-called "sedlighetsdebatten", dealing with sexual morals, was on the agenda. Should free coexistence, even with exchange of sexual partners, be accepted before marriage? Or should everyone, the man as well as the woman, live up to the moral norm that women had had to live up to so far, a norm that allowed sex between a man and woman only within a marriage blessed by the church? Women were considered doing "wrong" more often than men, in a system undergoing change but still with strict norms regarding prostitution, curtailing the sexual freedom of women but not men. That is to say: men had sexual freedom as long as they stayed within the heterosexual sphere. Homosexuality for men was forbidden in some countries and then punished with imprisonment at the end of the century; strict new rules for men's and women's true masculinity and femininity were formulated.

In this turmoil of changing norms the family was the institution that was supposed to provide protection against the dissolution of norms. Most people believed that marriage was instituted by God. The husband ought to be the head of the family, with the right to rule over the family members. But man's authority was slowly being questioned. Married men, in keeping with custom as well as legislation, did not have to be faithful to their wives, while the opposite had been

¹¹ Svanström 2000.

necessary for women. Around the turn of the old century, such norms were shaken. Women had something to gain from the dissolution of the norm, but also something to lose.

When a woman married, she gave up her right to sexual autonomy and had to subordinate herself to her husband's wishes. She acquired the status of being legally incompetent, while unmarried women, on different terms, got opportunities for greater independence. When marriage in the bourgeois class no longer meant common work to support the family, then what did it mean? Critical women, like the English author Cicely Hamilton, stressed that it had become purely an economic institution. Hamilton compared married women to prostitutes: they sold their sexuality for lifetime sustenance. Marriage became the women's "profession". *Marriage as a Trade*, Hamilton called her book analyzing this, published in 1909. She was not at alone in her opinion of marriage. It was held by quite a number of radical women. In order to avoid the total subordination in marriage, unmarried women found increased possibilities to supporting themselves through waged labor, even if this was surrounded by obstacles and perils.

A dark side of the marriage norm was the lack of rights for single mothers. They became social outsiders at a time when, paradoxically, childbirth outside marriage was increasing. The demand that men should pay for their extramarital children came to an end in England during the late nineteenth century. In France, extramarital affairs had for long been no problem for men. Since 1804 the father of a child born out of wedlock never had to pay for his child because to speak the name of the child's father was legally forbidden. The father was assured anonymity so as to safeguard his official family. Since the family was seen as the foundation of society, its legal offsprings, according to this logic, must be protected from the consequences of the sexual escapades of the husband. The right to "search for the father" was of course high on the French feminists' list of demands at the end of the 1800s.

During the very last decades of the century, divorce became possible although not easy, in some European countries. A small improvement in women's sexual integrity occurred when marriage could be dissolved, inheritance rights changed, childbirth grew safer, and the regulation of prostitution at last was

ended in some countries. During this transformation of social structures and attitudes, more and more groups of women appeared in public with these demands and other. An important demand was economic independence; the right to one's own job, one's own money, equal inheritance and a possibility to control one's own money when married. These demands had been raised for quite a time and to launch them was seen as an offence against the modesty of women.

A prohibition of night work for women became one of the solutions to the perceived conflict -- the gender crisis. The demand for the prohibition should be seen in light of the fear of changes in the relation between the sexes, which the "woman question" brought about. The ban on night work can be regarded as a compromise between completely prohibiting married women to work for wages and the radical demands for equal treatment of women and men in the labor market. It was a compromise, designed by men but many women enthusiastically defended the special treatment they were offered. They accepted the new law because they thought it was to the advantage to women.

But many persons involved in the international women's movement, persistently and on grounds of principle, questioned the wisdom of introducing a *new* legislation that treated women differently. After all, women were trying to get all the rights that men already were entitled to, basing their demands on equality. With the new law, inequality was reproduced. The prohibition of night work became one of the fundamental questions for public discussion inside the women's movement, tied to the radical demands of equality before the law and to economic independence.

Organizing for Change

The structural and material changes paired with an ideological tendency to demands for equality, thus democratization, were forces working for improvements in women's position. Paradoxically, a deepening of the gender division of labor proceeded on a parallel with the opening up of education and occupations to women and as more and more women worked for wages. Increased equality between women and men could have been possible when new work processes were introduced at the same time as women left their homes to work and when many of them demanded a role in work and politics on the same

terms as men. But gender equality was not achieved. The obstacles lay in the renewed ideological construction of the gender division of labor, based on the old perception that women were to be subordinate to men. Now the subordination was to be at the new workplaces and implemented also legally.

During the decades around 1900, a broad democratic movement was underway. Trade unions, cooperatives, political parties, women's organizations, professional associations, temperance organizations, university associations, and all sorts of champions of social reform took part in public debates. They were passing out flyers, arranged public meetings, lectures, and demonstrations. Agitators set out on lecture tours. Newspapers and magazines were founded: brochures, pamphlets, and printed speeches were disseminated. New organizations saw the light of day. In the ideological conflict about the content of a new society, antagonisms developed; traditionalists were pitted against more modern solutions, which could be both right or left. "Revolution," "radical," and "freedom" became popular buzzwords as it became obvious that the gulfs between people and better people were increasing at the same time as expectations for a better life were aroused and maybe also realized. Within the middle class many philanthropists and others felt an urge to instigate reforms for the welfare of those of lesser means. They were sometimes appalled by the louder and louder demands from the most radical. Some spoke about class against class.

Discussions were prolific on how the so-called social question was to be resolved. The "woman question" was associated with the "social question" and with the "labor question". Whether and how these three questions were related to each other was aired in many debates. In ideological and practical terms, the woman question and the labor question were entangled. This caused problems both for the women's movement and for the labor movement. Women organized around their own demands, and male workers did so as well. They both belonged to subordinated groups in the labor market, but their interests coincided only in part. At the same time, their respective struggles for better conditions were dependent upon each other. All women had in common the fact that their entry into the labor market was more difficult than for men within their own class. A woman always had more difficulties to support herself as a single person than her brother. Working-class women often had deficient schooling and seldom any

education for qualified work. Nevertheless, they were often wage workers, at least during some periods of their lifetime. Some men from the working class had an education and from positions as skilled workers, they organized in trade unions. During the end of the 1800s, bourgeois women were slowly allowed into higher education, but their rights to practice the professions they had grades for, were still restricted, both legally and by tradition. Family and marriage legislation created different conditions for women and men.

The resistance to women's emancipation was extensive. It had both a structurally material side and an ideological one. The reproduction of new human beings -- childbirth and child rearing -- had no given place in the new factory-based division of labor that located more and more salaried labor outside the home. As a matter of fact, the children, especially the smallest ones, were "left behind" if all the adults left home. Compulsory schools were often established for those somewhat older. The resistance to women leaving their homes to work for wages founded its arguments in the ideology of the family as the most important cornerstone of society. Its hierarchical structure with a *pater familias* and his subordinate wife was seen as the basis for a well-functioning society. Women's wish for an equal position with men was perceived as a threat to men's taken-for-granted position as the privileged gender, established in many laws. The disagreements about women's position as wage workers can be formulated as a question of whether women's economic citizenship should be allowed to be the same as men's.¹²

Internationalization

Internationalization -- which has been advanced furthest by multinational companies -- has characterized the project of modernity. When all parts of the world can be reached by means of communications, cooperation appears to be necessary. Colonialism was at its peak. Simultaneously a power struggle between mighty nations in the world appeared. Acute crisis of power might be solved either by war, by other forms of violence, threat, or superior forces or through compromise, mediation, diplomacy or even transnational agreements and conventions. Between states, peaceful solutions nowadays take place within the framework of internationally recognized systems of rules

¹² For example Hausen 1981; Kessler-Harris 1996 & 2001. See also the finishing chapter about economic citizenship.

and conventions. Increased formalization of international cooperation has developed during the 20th century. It already begun during the second half of the 19th century. At the end of that century, the internationalization of labor legislation got started.

The internationalization occurred not only within international corporations and between states. Concurrently internationalization occurred from below. The labor movement assembled internationally, in the International Working Men's Association, the so-called First International (1864–1876). The very words "international" and "internationalism" belong to the 19th century, and were used earliest in French. "The International" for a long time was linked to the organization of socialism and its rallying song.¹³ The congresses of the Second Socialist International, starting in 1889, became important up into the next century.

Women also organized internationally. The first attempt was in Geneva with Association Internationale des Femmes (1868-1872). Another beginning was the convening of an international congress for women held in 1878 in Paris as well as many to follow. Women's congresses were also organized from below, or perhaps the phrase "from outside" would fit better, since many of the women activists came from bourgeois background (which also, by the way, was the case of the male organizers of the Socialist International). The industrialization and imperialism/colonialism through the 19th century fortified both negative and positive tendencies toward internationalization. International congresses and world expositions were one of many expressions of internationalization during the second half of the 19th century. Today the tendency is called "globalization". States, companies, and nonprofit organizations participated, then as now. Nationalism, which can be regarded as the other side of internationalism, grew simultaneously, then as now. It is important to see nationalism and internationalism as interwoven parts of the same development when looking at the ideological means to understand the world.¹⁴

Arranging so called World Fairs or Expositions Universelles was part of the raise of a peaceful internationalism. International congresses were more and

¹³ Holthoon-Linden 1988; *Le Petit Robert* 1990; *Nationalencyklopedins ordbok* 1996.

¹⁴ Girardet (1966) 1983; Gellner (1983) 1997; Hobsbawm 1990; Rupp 1994, 1997.

more connected to them.¹⁵ At some such congresses, prohibition against night work was to come up for discussion.

The first international exposition was held in London in 1851; they become more frequent in the 1880s and after. The older colonial power, Great Britain, reduced its commitment, while France and the United States became leading organizers. Up until the First World War, between eighteen and thirty-two world expositions were held during a period of sixty-five years.¹⁶ None of those arranged later during the 20th century were able to compete with the Paris exposition of 1900. With its grand arrangements and 50 million visitors, it constituted the culmination of the phenomenon.

The world expositions gave expression to and helped to create the self-image of modern nations. The West's mission in the world and the achievements of industrial nations were incorporated in these projects, which were to report on progress. Some major industrial countries competed on arranging world expositions. The city of Paris often became the setting.¹⁷

The expositions was to combine business with pleasure. New forms of communications and transportations were often presented for the first time. At the exhibitions one could check out the telegraph, automobiles, dirigibles, moving sidewalks, telephones, and motion pictures, to mention a few of the most spectacular attractions. Entertainment drew the masses of spectators. The large audience wanted to amuse itself, while the organizers and exhibitors wanted to inform, educate, and make new products known.¹⁸

International congresses became an integrated part of world expositions at the end of the 19th century. But international congresses as a

¹⁵ *Mil neuf cent* 1989; Rasmussen 1992.

¹⁶ A very good book of world expositions is presenting a "Liste sélective des expositions internationales et universelles", and in connection with this discussed the difficulties of deciding which expositions could be categorized as international/universal, Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen 1992: 9ff, Annex A: 238; and a more superficial study will not either take a clear position as to what expositions are to be seen as international (sw. "världsutställningar"). Instead it gives us an extensive list "Chronologie des expositions industrielles et internationales de 1755 à 1915", Aimone - Olmo, *Les expositions universelles: 1851-1900*, 1993. See also Rasmussen 1992; Allwood 1997.

¹⁷ *La Grande Revue de l'Exposition* 1900: 40ff, 76ff, 144; Cornell 1952; Ory 1987 & 1989; Greenhalgh 1988: 14f, 47; Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen 1992: 58, 112, 121 & Annex A: 238; Aimone-Olmo 1993; Ekström 1994.

¹⁸ Duquesne 1991:15f; the original sources as well as literature about the world expositions is enormous. Just to pick a few, see for Ekström 1991, 1994; Bennett m fl 1994: 3ff, 45ff, 53 ff; Smeds 1996 about Finland at the expositions; The most important is Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen 1992, giving a generous list of basic information as well as were to find more on every exposition!

phenomenon were established also outside of expositions. The socialists had made a first attempt as early as the 1860s. They returned to start a Second Socialist International in 1889. The congresses of the women's movement highlighted its demands for emancipation. The world's very first international women's congress was arranged in 1878. Both these congresses took place in Paris during exposition summers, but none of them was held officially within a world exposition. International congresses became forums for "intellectual exchanges" with great significance in a time when lectures and group discussions were still a central feature of education and opinion making.¹⁹

During the end of the 19th century international congresses more and more often became formal parts of a world expositions. The ambitions of the international congresses as opinion makers grew at the same time as the daily newspapers and journals had their great breakthrough in the 1880s. This was when literacy in Europe was more generally dispersed.²⁰

Official congresses at world expositions became frequent in Paris in 1878, 1889, and 1900. The newspapers reported from the congresses and made them well known. Paul Greenhalgh, an art historian who has studied world expositions, ranks them highly as opinion makers: "...conferences were among the least noticeable but most influential of elements at exhibitions".²¹ Their growing numbers say something about their importance. From 1880 to 1884, 148 congresses were arranged at world expositions. The number was almost doubled during the next five-year period and was up to 602 congresses during the five-year period 1900–1904.²² In these numbers are not included the independent congresses arranged in connection to but outside of the world expositions, neither independent congresses organized on completely different occasions.

Congresses at world expositions were held with a limited number of participants in special houses or halls. Serious discussions were conducted away

¹⁹ *Congrès international du droit des femmes, ouvert à Paris, le 25 Juillet 1878, clos le 9 Août suivant. Actes. Compte-rendu des séances plénières.* 3me livraison. Paris: Auguste Ghio, u à Later = Paris 1878; Goldberg Moses 1984: 209; Les congrès, lieux de l'échange intellectuel 1850-1914, *Mil neuf cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle* 7, 1989.

²⁰ Dzeh-Djen 1934; Wolgensinger 1989.

²¹ Greenhalgh 1988: 21

²² Baldwin 1907; *Mil neuf cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle* 7, 1989; Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen 1992: 18; Ferenczi 1993.

from the teeming crowds of amusement seekers. The congresses could be cultural, scientific, political, or just of general interest. A congress usually lasted four to five days. Widely differing subjects were discussed, such as mountaineering, library science, electricity, inexpensive housing, navigation, music, popular traditions, technology education, and homeopathy. Questions of labor legislation and women's questions were also discussed.²³

Power and Gender Division of Labor

In Europe during the decades around 1900, power was not only exerted by parliaments, laws, politics, and politicians. The royal houses still had great power over politics. There were other elites with significant powers. Business was having great influence; it grew and changed during this period, when national and international corporations were flourishing as colonialism and trade grew. Administrative state power was a stabilizing factor in nations with popular upheavals. The military had a significant influence. Even cultural and religious groups could exert power over the social order. The Vatican was an independent state. The Catholic and Reformed churches had influence, not least on education, in many countries.²⁴ During the years around 1900, all these institutions and groups were in the midst of transformation. There was an increase of power, organized or not, coming from below in a process of democratization. More or less established groups could and tried to affect the question of women's economic citizenship, not only states and trade union organizations. Democratization was tied to new phenomena, such as a free opinionate press and political pressure groups. The women's movement itself was a growing cultural, ideological, and not least, political power. The same -- to an even higher degree perhaps -- was true for the labor movement, as it got more and more power as organized socialism or as a trade union movements, influencing parliamentary structures. In southern Europe, trade unions with a religious orientation were important.

An economic recovery was underway in Europe after the long depression since the mid-1870s. It had showed different level of seriousness. France had been especially hard hit. During the depression a job shortage had

²³ File: F 12 4318, AN; Loliée 1900: 5ff; *Rapport général sur les congrès de l'exposition 1906*: 809f; Greenhalgh 1988:21.

²⁴ Charle (1991) 1994:179.

prevailed, and many companies had closed down. The new companies that grew up after the mid-1890s often combined new technique with modern organizational ideas.²⁵ The need for workers thus grew in the mid 1890s. Women as cheap and compliant were more and more in demand. The lack of workers in certain quarters resulted in women being allowed to do work formerly reserved for men, at the same time as there was a growing division of labor. Women could be employed in new work areas with no former strict gender division of labor. Despite the economic upswing, wages were as much as possible held low. Employers were happy to find new categories of workers, women with low demands.

Men were the majority as workers. The gender division of labor could change when there was a lack of skilled workers. That women entered into new workplaces or got better positions were not met with any enthusiasm by men. Were such women taking jobs from men? Did they compete with men in new conditions? The ideological construction of a real femininity was intensified in these new circumstances. Who would get to do which job and on what conditions, became an issue of debate. Employers opened new and old jobs for women, who learnt new skills. One such trade was the tradition-bound field of typography. Especially among printers, the presence of women as competitors, would result in tensions that became manifest during the discussions at international congresses on women's night work.

With better economic times, from the mid-1890s forwards, women became more and more commented upon as they stepped out to do paid work. With the new economic situation employers did dare to try women, where they had been reluctant earlier. Some women could improve their incomes. Many men felt that the balance of power both in the home and at the workplace was being threatened. Many a man – and not so few women -- were worried about the women's "intrusion" on the labor market. Among the discontented were those who vowed to safeguard the bourgeois family, as well as large portions of the trade union movement. Male workers could be horrified by women's waged work. As they saw it, without the women workers, a lack a workers would have forced employers to raise wages for men. The discontent with working women

²⁵ Printing houses expanded despite the depression. Newspapers and journals multiplied. Wolgensinger 1989: 67-85; Marchand 1993:126ff .

was also based in earlier notions of women as primarily belonging in the family. Such notions had been deepened during the long business downturn when the labor movement was getting established.²⁶

Gender segregation in the workplace may have been the employers' answer to the organized workers' demands not to have to face competition? Gender division of labor was made possible through an increased division of industrial work into piece work, introduced easily with mechanization and large-scale production. Women got the jobs, which were considered easy, while men's work was designed as more complicated and thus the better paid ones. There was also, for moral reasons, a desire to separate men and women in the workplaces. Parallel to this development was the ideology of women as mothers needed in the home or at work categorized as caretaking.

Women's participation in waged work came up against two different ideologies of equality. One of them, socialism, was based on a class perspective, and the other, feminism, was based on sex. Some women activists made an attempt to unite both these "equalities" into one political vision, presented at international congresses. They were the feminists and the socialist feminists presented in this book.

Socialist men often considered that the married woman ought to work for her own family in the home. Such a vision was part of socialism's dreams of a good future. With a decent salary for the family breadwinner, the dream became a possibility in the so-called labor aristocracy. In trade union and socialist circles, it was considered important to strive for a wage that would make it possible for every man to support his wife, a family wage. In this perspective a demand for shorter workdays, protective labor legislation, and special legislation for women became important issues for trade unions.

Given the power structure of politics, women's social duties during the 1890s and during the first decades of the 1900s were defined almost completely by men. Men had priority in interpretation and access to opinion making to a far greater extent than women. But during these very decades, women succeeded in creating a number of public fora such as open lectures, newspapers, books,

²⁶ Engels (1845) 1952; Prodhon!

and congresses in which they questioned established truths. Women, like men, organized in order to be heard in the process of democratization. Women had organized earlier, often around specific demands. Since 1860s some radical women had demanded equal rights with men.²⁷ During the two last decades of the 18th century and in the beginning of the next women organized for rights in ever increasing numbers, more and more visibly. Organizations were formed, congresses were assembled around resolutions, and international organizations were created. A diffuse movement found organizational forms in order to manifest women's own interests. By this the great variety of women's ideas became easier to distinguish.

The national organizing of women was followed by internationalization. The initiatives for such came from several quarters. During large portions of the 19th century, relations between individual women across national boundaries had prepared the way for international cooperation. There are researchers who had called these early networks between the countries, in which the Swedish Fredrika Bremer played a significant role, the first international women's movement.²⁸ During the last decades of the century, it was expanded and resulted in international congresses and organizations. The first organization was the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which had an American base nationally and became international in 1876, in conjunction with the World's Fair in Philadelphia. This temperance union grew to be very large. Even though it was a one-issue organization, it became also strongly committed to woman suffrage. By voting, women would be able to influence the policy on alcohol. The organization became influential especially within the English-speaking world.²⁹

In Paris, as mentioned above, the first ever international women's congress was held in 1878, when Maria Deraismes, important in the French women's movement, together with Léon Richer, convened *Le Congrès international du Droit des Femmes* (the International Congress for Women's

²⁷ See article Marilyn Boxer & Ulla Wikander "Women and Social Movements International: 1840 to Present" at <http://wasi.alexanderstreet.com>

²⁸ Holm 1993; McFadden 1999; Anderson 2000.

²⁹ Tyrell 1991:18ff & Ch. 10.

Rights). It had over 200 delegates and 600 were following the sessions.³⁰ The focus of the congress was woman's emancipation in a broad sense. Influential North American activists attended as well as activists from other countries. At the end of the congress, plans were drawn up for ongoing international cooperation, and a committee was appointed to ensure its continuity. It included, among others, Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone, Theodore Stanton, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, plus prominent persons from nine European countries. The committee was to arrange contacts between the countries through correspondence and reports. In addition, it was to be responsible for organizing a new congress. Léon Richer, Paris, was to be the central contact person.³¹ However, Richer didn't manage to complete the assignment. In France the 1880s was a politically stormy period during which the new Third Republic was threatened and the women's movement met with difficulties.

³⁰ Paris 1878 (25/7 – 9/8); *Le Rappel* 28/7, 3/8, 5/8, 8/8, 9/8, 11/8, 12/8 1878; Stanton 1884:248; Goldberg Moses 1984:207ff; Klejman & Rochefort 1987:255ff, 1989:54ff.

³¹ The committee consisted of three persons from every land: representatives were chosen from France, England, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Russia, Roumania and the United States of America. Paris 1878: 191f.; Young Theodore Stanton, the son of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, did not mention the committee and the planning of more congresses in his book that came a couple of years later. He mentioned that Mary A Livermore was present, not Lucy Stone. On the whole he is very positive to this, as he called it: "the first International Woman's Rights Congress." Stanton 1884:248