Political versus Economic Citizenship in the International Women's Movement the decades around 1900

earlier "Demands and Compromises: Strategies for (Political and) Economic Citizenship in the International Women´s Movement at the Turn of the 20th Century; or ' Le droit de travail est non moins indispensable à la femme que le droit de vote.' "

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In historiography about the first wave of women's history, a concentration on political citizenship -- suffrage -- has obscured women's struggle to obtain economic citizenship. For many the question of economic independence was an indispensable part of women's emancipation. This is clear if we study the international women's movement. Borrowing from the American historian Alice Kessler-Harris, I use the concept of "economic citizenship of women" when referring to women's struggle for economic independence and right to the same occupations as men. This article will focus on women's disagreements at international congresses around 1900 and how this contributed to the construction of a special female labour market. I want to argue that women's divergent discourses and opinions, influenced by and together with the practical consequences of an international convention, the so called Bern Convention of 1906, had a stabilizing effect on the gender division of labour in a longer perspective.[1]

In Bern in 1906 the first international convention for labour protection ever was taken. It forbid women to work at night in factories with more than 10 workers. The organisation behind the Bern Convention, was The International Association for Labor Legislation (Die internationale Vereinigung für gesetzlichen Arbeiterschutz, L'Association internationale pour la protection légale des travailleurs), founded in 1900. It had its bureau in Basel. It was a non governmental voluntary organisation trying to induce the states to agree over the frontiers to intervene to regulate the

[1] This article builds to a large extent on my book Feminism, familj och medborgarskap. Debatter på internationella kongresser om nattarbetsförbud för kvinnor 1889-1919 (Stockholm 2006). The book will not be published in English but chapters in my rather bad English will be put out on my website htpp:// ullawikander.se in due time. In English the title should be Feminism, family and citizenship. Debates at international congresses of a night work prohibition for women, 1889-1919. I will not refer repeatedly to this book,, which is dealing with the redefinition of women's rights and duties as workers taking place as discourses -- as well as implemented as an international convention of night work prohibition for women -- at several kind of international congresses, some dominated by women, others by men. An earlier version of this article was published in Christensen, Birgit, hg., *Democratie & Geschlecht/ Democratie et sexes.* (Interdisciplinäres Symposium zum 150jährigen Jubiläum des Schweizerischen Bundesstaates/Symposium interdisciplinaire à l´occasion du 150e anniversaire de l´État Fédéral) Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 1999: 53-72

labour market generally. The Bern Convention was not loved by all women but many women accepted it with praise. Discussions around the night work prohibition between women brought up the question of women as wage workers, as a controversial issue. It was a hot topic during all of the 1890s at international congresses.

Demands for economic citizenship for women as defined by demands of both economic independence and a gender integrated labour market were earlier in Europe than the demand for suffrage. The focus on suffrage distracted and even did away with, the interest in economic citizenship in the international women's movement and thus helped to stifled the process of integrating men and women at work, that was under way spurred by industrialization.

Women as an organised collective backed away from the movement's earlier demands on equal job opportunities and economic independence, to unite around suffrage and *only* suffrage. It might be said that theirs was a compromise, a voluntary choice, among equality demands. Suffrage was pushed forward as the demand that had a reasonable potential to unite more women than equality in the labour market, economic citizenship. In that process of contingency (that possibility-process -- Möglichkeitsprozess) women themselves undermined women's long-term possibilities for an economic citizenship by underlining women's difference and their motherliness, and concrete motherhood.

Women have got political citizenship today but it has not made all that difference. In some countries women got the political citizenship late, as in Switzerland. Also in France and Italy women got the vote rather late, not until after World War II. In Germany and the Scandinavian countries we got the right to vote in elections as well as to be elected from the period around World War I.

Some countries where women could vote early, have a large percent of women in the labour market, as my home country Sweden or Finland. But other countries with a background in early suffrage for women show a more traditional division of labour with a larger number of pure housewives during the 20th century, as Germany. There are also countries for example France where women for a long time have been working as wage earners in larger numbers but where the political citizenship was allowed late and the political participation still is surprisingly low in a European perspective.

My questions for further research is: what is the connection between political and economic citizenship? What have the connection historically been in different countries and does it still matter? Is political citizenship a necessary precondition for an economic citizenship for women but not the only condition? And vice versa - what does economic citizenship means for

women's legal and practical political citizenship? What is needed for a total emancipation of woman?

Alice Kessler-Harris[2] defines "economic citizenship" as "achieving economic equality, sometimes described as economic independence". She writes that, after World War I, when American women had got the vote, feminists "assumed that economic independence was to be the next step".[3] It was not. For me a definition of economic citizenship has to include a gender-integrated division of labour. Men and women have to do approximately the same jobs. Emancipation has to include economic citizenship and an equal citizenship is impossible to combine with a rigid gender division of labour; which history so far substantiate. But as we have to compromise all along, to accept a gender division of labour, might sometimes be a step forward as when women got the permission to become medical doctors with the understanding that they should mainly deal with female patients and female illnesses. But compromises might also, if not discussed as a strategy in feminist discourse, become a trap as it becomes part of a self-identification.

Early feminism and labour market

At early international congresses in Europe arranged by women -- some called "feminist" -- , resolutions were taken since 1878 to promote women's paid and equal work. Suffrage was also early on discussed in the fairly small circle of feminists on the European continent but was not put as high up on the agenda as demands for equality in education, work and marriages. This has sometimes been seen as less radical. But that is not a judgment that should be done too easily. Suffrage was, outspoken or not, evidently on the agenda in the demand for a total equality with men.

Women met at seventeen general international congresses, that more or less aimed at bringing up questions of all kinds concerning women and their conditions. This list of congresses excludes international women's congresses for special topics, such as temperence or peace or against White Slave Trade. In short, these women meeting at international congresses were trying to raise women's status but had different ways and goals. Some were explicitly striving towards equality, others were more concerned with recognition for their special feminine enterprises. Organising an international congress was for all of them a way, a strategy, to become visible and to improve women´s conditions.

List of general International Women´s Congresses, 1878-1914

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[2] Kessler-Harris 1996: 411-426

[3] Kessler-Harris 1996: 412

1878, **Paris**, *Le Congrès international du droit des femmes* (same summer as a World Fair), 25 July – 7 August
1888, **Washington**, *the International Council of Women*, congress with the same name as the following organisation, 25 March – 1 April
1889, **Paris**, *Le Congrès français et international du droit des femmes* (same summer as a World Fair), 25-29 June
1889, **Paris**, *Le Congrès international des œuvres et institutions féminines* (official congress at the World Fair), 12-18 July
1892, **Paris**, *Le Congrès général des sociétés féministes*, 13-15 May
1893, **Chicago**, *The World´s Congress of Representative Women* (International Council of Women ICW) (same summer as a World Fair), 15-22 May
1896, **Paris**, *Le Congrès féministe international*, 8-12 April
1896, **Berlin**, *Der Internationale Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen*, (same summer as an Industrial Fair), 19-16 September
1897, **Brussels**, *Le Congrès Féministe International de Bruxelles* (official congress at the World Fair), 4-7 August
1899, **London**, *The International Congress of Women* (connected to the Quinquennial Meeting of the ICW), 26 June – 5 July
1900, **Paris**, *Le Congrès international des œuvres et institutions féminines*, 18-23 June
1900, **Paris**, *Le Congrès international de la condition & des droits des femmes* (official congress at the World Fair), 5-8 September
1904, **Berlin**, *Der Internationale Frauen-Kongress in Berlin* (connected to the ICW), 12-18 June
1909, **Toronto**, *The International Congress of Women* (connected to the Quinquennial Meeting of the ICW), 24-30 June
1912, **Brussels**, *Le Congrès Féministe International de Bruxelles 1912*, 28-30 April
1913, **Paris**, *Le Dixième Congrès international des femmes. Œuvres et institutions féminines. Droits des femmes* (connected to the ICW), (official congress at the World Fair), 2-8 June
1914, **Rome**, *The International Congress of Women* (connected to the Quinquennial Meeting of the ICW), May 16-23

underlining = a feminist congress

It is evident that women from the 1870s up to World War I got an increasing recognition as citizens, if not yet as full citizens.[4] An example of

[4] In many countries women got involved in e g local welfare projects, could be elected to school boards, were allowed to handle their incomes etc, long before they were considered mature enough to get a full citizenship.

this is the integration of some women's congresses as official congresses at World Expositions (World Fairs). Eight of the women's congresses were held during such expositions and some were officially acknowledged. An organisational unity at the international level developed over time, with the increased adhering to the International Council of Women (ICW) even by groups, such as the Swiss and the French, that early and eagerly tried to found their own international organisations with more radical agendas.

This merger into the ICW was finalized in the melting together of the two kinds of French international congresses into one, under the umbrella in 1913. The merger meant less provocative demands and many compromises. It also meant that the congresses not any longer were placed at the same time and place as Expositions. Women became more independently organised and did not feel the need to get visitors via other attractions.

But the movement did not only try to unite; the other tendency was to split up, as historian Leila Rupp has showed. Out of the International Council of Women grew the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and from that again the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.[5] Differences in opinions on what to focus on, inspired the break offs and creations of new organisations. Discontent also resulted in foundation of an international organisation for women's equality in the labour market, The International Correspondance, in 1911. After the Great War its demand was taken up in Open Door International, founded in 1926.

Congress organisers tried to get women from many different countries to come, which was supposed to make a greater impression. It helped strengthening the spirit of the participants, who could bring home the message of a growing and organised movement. This was the good side of the unity and growth. A more problematic side of the growth was the wish to stay united, which limited radical demands. A large membership, unity and radicalism are not easily reconcilable.

As noted by the sociologists Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier "collective activities on the part of women directed specifically towards improving their own status has flourished primarily in periods of generalized social upheaval, when sensitivity to moral injustice, discrimination, and social inequality has been widespread in the society as a whole."[6] Such were the times around 1900. Generally social movements consist of relatively independent organisations, with not totally consistent ideas, strategies, goal or

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Also single women in many countries got more citizen rights than married women, who were the last to be considered as individuals.

[5] Rupp 1994, 1997; Cf Tyrell 1991 for the history of the important first international women´s movement, which had the specific aim to stop the use of alcohol, The Woman´s Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1880.

[6] Taylor and Whittier 1997: 544

organisational structure. Most often such a movement has no central leadership and is held together by memberships to local groups, friendship networks and cooperation groups.[7] Such was the so-called women's movement at its beginning. It never became clearly defined but has been involved in ever expanding or contracting processes of changes since then. Parts of this broader movement organised for specific reasons, or for better visibility. The beginning of the organisation was calling together international congresses.

Despite its diversified characteristics, the movement succeeded in organising internationally during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The success built on compromises that were to linger on and become part of women's self-identity and societal positions in the 20th century. But to compromise is also to get certain advantages. It might also wet the appetite to get more. Women's positions have altered to the better in the Western world, but are still far from as good as men's in the perspective of control and influence in society. Lack of equality in the labour market and as wage earners are still hinders for emancipation. But demands for economic citizenship has long roots in the women's movement, even if not so called. Economic independence was a frequent demand, as well as right to earn money and learn occupations.

Maria Deraismes, an important French feminist, built her defence of women's emancipation at one of the international congresses in Paris in 1889 partly on equality and rights, partly on women's differences as mothers. But -- and this is important -- her arguments all underpinned her demand for equal treatment by the legislators. As a liberal she denounced all special legislation including as a matter of course a night work prohibition for women. Equal rights were the goal.

The individual, man or woman, should be equally free in the choice of his/her life. Deraismes was explicit about women's difference to men biologically, and equally explicit that the women's movement was in opposition to the fact that women were oppressed (she used the French word "oppression"[8]). The oppression by law stood in the way of the free development of the female nature.[9] She can be defined as a dissatisfied essentialist believing in legal equality to achieve free development of still unknown capacities.

In the 1890s, two congresses held in Paris showed a double ideology of feminism and socialism, *Le Congrès général des sociétés féministes* in 1892 and *Le Congrès féministe international* in 1896. They launched the word "feminist" in the international women´s movement, with its direct

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[7] Taylor and Whittier 1997: 550
[8] Paris June 1889: 3
[9] Paris June 1889: 3ff

connotation to equality. The congresses followed the earlier French equality line of the congress in 1878 in their demands. The 1896 congress agreed to the resolution of "Egalité des deux sexes devant la loi et la société"[10]. Thus it included suffrage and was specific on the question that no special legislation should burden women in the labour market.

Socialism, trade unionism and waged work for women

The international Social Democratic Women's Movement was another kind of international women's organisation. It organised as a branch of the party, from 1907, under Clara Zetkin. Her journal *Gleichheit* / Equality / became the voice of the movement, which ideology and demands were influenced by the male dominated German Social Democratic Party. The socialist women's movement was called "international". As managed by Clara Zetkin it had very German views on women and work. It had since the 1890s a positive view on special labour legislation for women.

Socialist women in France on the other hand had to stand up against the views held by leading men in the trade unions. The French Auguste Keufer can be seen as typical. He was a so called humanistic positivist, a follower of Auguste Comte and his teachings of positivism. As the general secretary of La Fédération du Livre, where typographers were organised, was he not a revolutionary socialist. He thought that women belonged in their homes, not in the labour market, in the same way as Comte, the father of sociology, and as Pierre Joseph Proudhon, the father of anarchism, an other person with a strong influence on French trade unionists. As a trade union leader Keufer worked to keep women out of work as typographers and defended legislation that restricted women's work hours.[11] Thus in Frances radical socialist and feminist women wanted integration in the labour market, whereas radical socialists, or rather socialists of all sorts, and almost all men, thought that women rather belonged in the homes or at the most, in especially feminine occupation, in the labour market.

The difficulties of resistance and the compromises socialist (and also other) women were induced to agree to, because of the widespread negative views on women as waged workers, were rather openly exposed in Zürich in 1897. At *The International Congress for Protective Labor-Legislation/ Der Internationale Kongress für Arbeiterschutz* many representatives were of similar views as Auguste Keufer. The congress can be defined as a mix between congresses of the Second Socialist International and a male dominated congress for protective labour

[10] *Le Journal des Femmes* No 52 Avril 1896
[11] Compère-Morel 1924; Sowerwine 1978: 18-19, 157-158

legislation.[12] It was a unique, not reoccurring congress, consisting of both Social Democratic and Catholic trade unionists.

At this odd congress, we can understand the complications of the Social Democratic Weltanschauung in relation to women's waged work and its relation to the Catholic trade unions. Social Democrats had to shape the party policies on women and family in a contradictory mixture of pressures. Inside the movement many men wanted to get rid of competition from women and from the outside the Catholics accused socialism to threaten the traditional family. Social Democrats had to unite its own members as well as try to keep them from joining the competing kind of trade unions; women as a group became the object of a compromise. In Zürich, thirty (30) women were delegates or guests, together with more than five hundred men.[13]

The debate did not focus on work places or qualifications but on the importance of the family in society. The debate swiftly went from regulations of women's night work to the question of totally forbidding women - especially married women - paid work outside their homes. The future of the family was a cause near to the heart of the Catholics. The socialists were obliged to answer defensively because of the ambivalence among socialists concerning the question of married women's waged work.

The Catholic spokesperson Carton de Wiart was convinced that the consequences of working women would be the breaking up of the family and a threat to society.[14] Social Democrats as Lily Braun, Clara Zetkin and August Bebel defended women's right to work, especially in industry.

The socialist women had a clear mission in the debate; they should – and wanted to – defend both women's right to economic independence and her special role in the family. Lily Braun answered the attack on women´s work by saying "Die Frau ist doch nicht in erster Linie Frau, wie der Mann nicht im erster Linie Mann ist, sondern Mensch, und hat die Berechtigung, als Mench zu leben. Das könne sie jedoch nur dann, wenn sie ökonomisch selbständig ist."[15] In the words of my analysis, Braun demanded "economic citizenship" and brought up equality ("Mensch") but still accepted special labour legislation.[16]

Clara Zetkin argued differently. Experience of direct capitalist exploitation would make the working woman class-conscious more than if she stayed at home (was ”Nichts-als-Hausfrau”[17]). As Braun, Zetkin thought

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[12] Several congresses on protective labour legislation took place, after the International Conference on Labor Legislation in Berlin in 1890
[13] Zürich Aug 1897: 261ff
[14] *Musée Social Bulletin* B No 14 1897: 421
[15] Zürich Aug 1897: 207.
[16] Zürich Aug 1897: 207f
[17] Zürich Aug 1897: 210

a happy family life demanded an economically independent woman. But Zetkin was eager to add that socialists were not fighting for a mechanical equality between men and women, but favoured a harmonious individual development of women as wives and mothers. The complementarity of the sexes was to be supported by woman's economic independence.[18] Zetkin demanded economic citizenship for men and women at the same time as she underlined women's essential difference, which meant a natural and rigid gender division of labour in the family as well as in the labour market.

The Social Democratic majority of the congress did not agree to the Catholic attempt to forbid married women to work outside their homes.[19] But as a matter of course, the congress accepted the resolution demanding special protective labour legislation for women in a most extended way: in big and small factories, in workshops, in trade, transport and communications, even in home industrial work. Thus women were explicitly treated as different to men as workers.

Only one person at the congress objected to special treatment of women and demanded equality in the labour market as a feminist principle. Her name was Marie Bonnevial, a French socialist and the representative of a teachers´ union. She belonged to *la Ligue pour le Droit des femmes* and had been active at Parisian congresses for women. She was also an active socialist in circles dominated by men. Alone at this congress, she raised the voice of feminism.[20] The first time she spoke, she was ignored and the second she was corrected and ridiculed.[21] Neither men nor women backed her up.

This overwelming support of special legislation for women in the labour market, opens up for questions. Can special treatment of women as workers be seen as the compromise Social Democratic women had to accept, if they were to be allowed to stay in the labour market? This hypothesis has been raised by Sabine Schmitt in her dissertation on protective labour legislation in Germany. Was the positive support of the night work prohibition, the price female socialist activists had to pay, to go on working for a better society together with their male comrades as wage earners? Clara Zetkin for one had totally altered her position from a support of equality in the labour market expressed at the congress of the Second International in 1889 to a position strongly in favour of protection in 1893. Gertrud Guillaume-Schack, an early organiser of Social Democratic women in Berlin had on the contrary

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[18] Zürich Aug 1897: 210-13.
[19] Zürich Aug 1897: 220, with 165 votes against 98.
[20] Zürich Aug 1897: 261ff ??
[21] *Musée Social Bulletin* B No 14 1897: 414; Zürich Aug 1897: 220

not altered her opinion, but had no more influence in the movement. For political activities she had to live in exile and stayed in London since 1886.[22]

Was it a consciously decided strategic compromise by the German socialist women or were they just being swept away by the "Zeitgeist" when they changed their discourse towards motherhood and the family and supported policy planning based on the complementarity view on the relations between men and women? I would support the analysis of Sabine Schmitt and say that it was a necessary compromise that was done by the German socialist women, if they wanted to go on having a say in the growing party. But is was also a new time, with a new understanding on how to look at women – and men.

Motherhood, suffrage and women's movement: a new accent

Inside the international women's congresses the discourses on motherhood increased as well as the interest in demanding suffrage for women when the new century was approaching.

In August 1897 *Congrès Féministe International de Bruxelles* was meeting. It was an official congress at the World Fair held in Brussels. The radical feminist Wilhelmine Drucker from Amsterdam was worried by the new tendency of seeing women as foremost mothers. She was convinced that the right to vote and the right to work were connected:

> L'affranchissement total de la femme dépend de deux choses: sur le terrain politique, du suffrage des femmes; sur le terrain social, du travail payé. Ces deux points essentiel de la liberté des femmes ont leurs adversaires, mais le premier beaucoup moins que le dernier.[23]

Drucker was convinced that suffrage would be easier for women to get than the right to paid work, despite the fact that women had neither political nor economic citizenship in Europe at the time. Suffrage was not seen as the most burning questions for female activists. Drucker´s view that the vote should be fairly easy to get was maybe astonishing to her listeners but she gave her reasons clearly. She analysed male resistance to women's waged work, which was to be found in all classes, with words that can remind us of analyses made by feminists in the Second Wave of the Women's Movement during the 1960s and 197's. Men as a group could profit from women´s work, the better if it was not paid. Suffrage as such was not a real threat to men's interests:

> C'est à comprendre; le suffrage de la femme n'atteint pas les intérêts pécuniaires de l'homme; le travail payé, au contraire. Qui tient la bourse,

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[22] Schmitt 1995
[23] Bruxelles Aug 1897

> est le maître; l'homme, par instinct plus que par calcul, le comprend assez bien et ne veut pas que la femme entre dans le domaine qu'il s'est réservé. A son point de vue personnel, il a tout à fait raison; parce qu'en même temps qu'il voit payer toujours son travail - plus ou moins bon, c'est vrai - il tient à sa disposition un autre travail, qu'il n'a pas besoin de récompenser. C'est un double profit.[24]

Power, thus control, was connected to control of the family income and of money in general. Men were not going to give up their better earning position very easy. And women being dependent on men had to serve them.

Wilhelmine Drucker had also - beside her own experience as seamstress - a historical understanding of women's work behind her pessimistic view of the future. She stressed that women had always worked, in both paid and unpaid work. Drucker pointed out that women had earlier had more qualified jobs than they were allowed to have at the end of the nineteenth century. Legislation had recently been used against women's qualified waged work which was contrary to Drucker´s belief that economic liberty was the very base of woman´s emancipation: "Je considère que la base de l'affranchissement de la femme est sa liberté économique."[25] The value of economic independence was not news to the women at the congress. Many had heard it before. But here it was joined to a warning to treat suffrage as something that might alter women's situation.

But the warnings from Drucker and some other women were not accepted. Suffrage became more and more important for feminists. It was definitely an equality question, a fact attracting the most radical of women. Tensions inside the women's movement became visible at a congress in London in 1899, when the International Council of Women arranged *the International Congress of Women*.[26]

Because the ICW wanted to gather all women´s organisations for cooperation under one umbrella, it l had chosen not to take a position on suffrage.[27] A meeting that supported suffrage for women had to be arranged outside of the congress by a local suffrage group, partly in opposition to the cowardice of the ICW. The meeting was a success! Later

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[24] Bruxelles Aug 1897: 71

[25] Bruxelles Aug 1897: 74

[26] Malmberg 1899: 216; Hainisch 1900: 9; London 1899

27 In 1899 the Board of ICW consisted of, The Countess of Aberdeen, President; Mrs May Wright Sewall, Vice President; Baroness Alexandra Gripenberg, treasurer, Miss Teresa F Wilson, corresponding secretary and Mme Maria Martin, recording secretary (represented by Mme Oddo Deflou, and at her request the Council appointed Mrs Willoughby Cummings, Canada, as temporary recording secretary). ICW London 1899: VII; In London a new Board for the next five years was chosen: Mrs May Wright Sewall, President; Lady Aberdeen, Vice President; Frau Schwerin, treasurer, replaced by Helene Lange, Berlin; Miss Teresa Wilson, corresponding secretary and Mlle Vidart, Geneva, recording secretary. ICW London 1899: 320; ICW Berlin 1904 vol 2: 171-174; *Dagny* 1899: 223, 271, 274, 311; Rupp 1997: 21f

on Anita Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg from Germany gathered a small group of women to prepare the foundation of an international organisation for suffrage.[28]

Many radicals abandoned questions around work and the labour market and choose to gather around suffrage. Why? Maybe radicals thought -- as Wilhelmine Drucker -- that it should be easier to get the vote? It was One Specific Question to organise around. It was a clear case of equality. On top, it was seen as a shame that it had not had a place of honour in the growing ICW. It also seemed wise to concentrate on one question and as men in many countries pushed for votes, women felt it important to go into that struggle independently, so as not to be left behind.

The foundation of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) took place in Berlin in 1904 (June 4) some days before the opening of the International Council of Women's *Der Internationale Frauen-Kongress in Berlin.* Of course it was as a provocation but also done for efficiency. Interested women could visit one gathering of women after the other. The famous American Susan B Anthony, 84 years old, had come over from the United States for the occasion. She was vividly applauded and hailed by enthusiastic participants when the regulations of the new Alliance had been accepted. The Suffrage Alliance became a big and important women's movement under the leadership of the American Carrie Chapman Catt.[29]

The women´s movement under the umbrella of the International Council of Women had a fairly uncontroversial view on women, seeing femininity as complementary to masculinity. But also such a way of organising had its benefits. Maybe because of proceeding cautiously, *Der Internationale Frauen-Kongress in Berlin* became important for the establishment in wider circles of the women's movement in Germany.[30]

Important at the congress was to show women's view of themselves and to present what women were able to do. The tendency was similar, but on a much larger scale than it had been at the congresses with a focus on philanthropy, which had taken place in Paris in 1889 and 1900. Despite their unprovocative programs these kind of congresses were important as arenas for women. Here women could speak in a semi-public environment, especially important in Germany where women were forbidden political activities. Without too radical demands women could foster a sense of responsibility for questions concerning themselves and the society, which was not something the state or most men supported. Just to arrange a congress or to visit it, was a way to demonstrate. But simultanously this

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[28] Carrie Chapman Catt, president of U.S. National American Woman Suffrage Alliance, planned since 1901 for an international organisation.Rupp 1997: 21f

[29] *Dagny* 1904: 271f (quote 271), 277ff; Rupp 1997: 21f

[30] Congress 13-19 juni 1904, ICW Berlin 1904: XXI-XXV; Berlin 1904: V-VIII

kind of congresses accepted – even underscored and made official -- that women had different duties in society and turned the back to demands of equality in front of the law or in the labour market.

Typical for the least conservatives at the Berlin congress was Alice Salomon from Berlin and her view on night work prohibition. Salomon was becoming an important person in socially concerned circles at the turn of the century, dealing with the "social question".[31] She had been active in opening homes and clubs for female workers i Berlin och tried to establish social work as paid work for women. In 1900 she was elected to the board of Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine, where she worked for the acceptance of special labour legislation for women,[32] called protective legislation by its proponents. Since the end of the 1890s she had propagated such legislation, in Germany and abroad.

Alice Salomon's quite radical view was that women could and should earn money and be economically independent, at least the ones who were unmarried. But women should preferably not work side by side with men but in special occupations and on special conditions. She regarded -- as male trade unionists often did -- women as competitors to men for work. She had the wish that women should be able to support themselves and at the same time the opposite namely that women with children should be able to take care of their offsprings without working for wages. In an article in *Die Frau* in 1900 she hoped that women's different opinions on protection of mothers should be solved if women got the vote, seeing questions around motherhood as important for asking suffrage for women.[33] She was dissatisfied with the fact that women's biological difference was not evaluated as a positive force in society and meant that married women had other duties in society than not married.

Alice Salomon thought that working women suffered a twofold suppression (”...Unterdrückung ...”): by sex and by class.[34] This led her to the view that women needed special protection, because of their special situation. She made an interesting division between two groups of activists in the women's movement and pointed out their different views on women and the meaning of suffrage. She defined one equality-group and one difference-group. Salomon said that the equality-group, was one "who look upon our movement as a fight against wrongs inflicted on women by men." To them the disqualification of the female sex is rather due to things such as differences in education carried on through centuries, to suppression..." [35]

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[31] Jeanette Schwerin (1852-1899), see Weiland 1983: 247-248

[32] Alice Salomon (1872-1948). She founded a school for social work in Berlin in 1908 and became the secretary of International Council of Women in 1909. See Weiland 1983: 235-237

[33] Salomon 1900: 612

[34] Salomon 1900 ”...unter den doppelten Abhängigkeit vom Mann und vom Arbeitsgeber zu leiden haben ...”.

[35] ICW Toronto 1909: 212-213

The other group, the difference-group, which Salomon herself preferred, "believe in the difference of capacities and gifts of men and women."[36] The two groups had different arguments for demanding women's political citizenship. The first group wanted "equal rights in every department of life" and "equality".[37] The other group wanted the vote to contribute with "the production of unique and new powers for public life that can never be given by men ..." Alice Salomon pointed out that the first group was getting smaller and smaller.[38]

Suffrage was important for both groups; for the difference-group, which did not want to hear about "wrongs inflicted on women by men" or "suppression" but rather thought of harmony, balance and complementarity could even be seen as more radical. Women's difference promised qualitative improvements of society if women became political citizens whereas the equality-group could not promise that. The equality-group was told that it represented women's special interests (for justice) when the difference-group argued that it wanted to make the whole society better. Arguments of women's difference could thus be seen as responsible for the whole of society. At the same time already established personal relations between men and women were not at all put in question.

When the International Council of Women congress in Toronto in 1909 demanded suffrage, most speakers based their arguments on differences between men and women. Stressing difference made it natural to accept a rigid gender division of labour and to ask for suffrage at the same time. By such a division, competition was avoided and a harmony kept. A gender segregated division of labour was in the difference perspective highly appreciated.[39] A discourse of political citizenship for women thus often went together with a wish for female jobs in a segregated labour market. Women's duties were above all in the homes. Suffrage could be combined with refusing an "economic citizenship".

Arguments for suffrage went from equality and justice to difference and motherhood. In that process, equality in the labour market was forgotten or turned into an acceptance of different male and female occupations. Motherhood was often referred to as common to all women, in a time when a fairly large proportion of women never married or got children.

Helene Lange held a significant final speech at the congress in Berlin in 1904, where the changes in discourse are evident and a critic of the early women's movement explicit. Lange criticized the women's movement for the

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[36] ICW Toronto 1909: 212
[37] ICW Toronto 1909: 212-213
[38] ICW Toronto 1909: 212-213
[39] Cf here some to the speeches of Alice Salomon.

too simplistic program it had launched in its beginning. She mentioned "...dem Dogma der vollen Berufsfreiheit auch gegenüber den dringendsten Forderungen des Arbeiterinnenschutzes...".[40]

In summary Lange wanted a strict gender division of labour, together with a higher evaluation of femininity and maternity. Those who wanted could read between the lines that she was positive to suffrage but her stress was on more waged work for women in areas such as care and education of children.[41]

Motherhood and suffrage after 1900

Discourses about motherhood and its implication for work, also industrial work, were increasing after 1900. Resistance to special labour laws was not as frequent as earlier and was defended by fewer influential women.

The suffrage movement grew in the beginning of the new century. Earlier differences between groups about what women's emancipation was about, cristallized in a consensus of female difference of an essentialist kind. Difference turned into different treatment, maternity was honorary and all women potential mothers. Maternity was supposed to structure the labour market; women should have special jobs and conditions. It became common in the women's movement to accept and even to insist on differences in legislation with reference to women's biology and to the future of the race.

Even earlier feminists and female activists had spoken about women as different to men, bodily and mentally. The view that women were superior to men morally was widespread. No one ever spoke about "equality" as meaning being the same biologically. Focus had earlier been a wish to be treated equally. The early organisation had consisted of fewer persons with a greater urge for change. When the movement grew in the beginning of the 20th century the dream of an equality for women transformed into a fight for *different* conditions in the labour market.

The movement grew around the question of suffrage, where legal equality was the demand. An international womens movement grew, which prioritized to unite around political citizenship while the debate on and vision of an economic citizenship became marginalized. This tendency was a matter of scale as well as of other factors. Inside the suffrage movement, many different views about women's work and duties could exist side by side; suffrage could unite those for and against a rigid division of labour. The energy of the radicals could be concentrated to the fight for suffrage

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[40] Berlin 1904: 609
[41] Berlin 1904: 614

and left, for some probably as an not expected bi-product, plenty of place for inequality in the labour market.

Many radicals thought that economic independence and related questions could wait and later on be decided in parliament. The aim was to try to present a united movement, inside the one-question-movement on suffrage or in the more vague International Council of Women.

The women's movement had started out to validate woman as an individual, as equal to man, but more and more often pointed to her as part of the family, as wife and mother. This change has to be understood in a wider context politically, economically and socially. It had some of its background in feelings fostered during the long economic depression until the mid 1890s and the misogynic backlash, which the First Wave of Women's Movement triggered. It was strengthened by the modern social darwinist view on women with its scientific understanding of an increasing and natural difference between the sexes as society evolved.[42]

The debate on sexuality was vivid and an increased interest of the psyche instead of for the soul, meant that not even the mental was free of being sexed. The debate on "Sex in the Brain" was everywhere.[43] Women were part of their own time and female activists among the best informed. The new difference views and social darwinist tendencies became integrated into the women´s movement.

The women´s movement´s turn away from the question of equality in the labour market had long time consequences. That turn away might be interpreted as a compromise or as a choice. The compromise was made under the pressure of discourses and ideologies according to which women ought to stay at home; held by many women but especially often expressed by men, in the trade unions, by employers, academics and politicians. A choice was gradually made by the majority in the women's movement to see women as very "different" and that women's different biology also ought to constitute a basis for different positions at work.

But history is never simple. A contradictory tendency was inherent in the development of the economy and many women also choose the possibility, when given, to earn money. There was also always a living discourse on the positive aspects of such a development, even if it was not the main trend.

[42] For example Blom 1987; Jordanova 1989; Eagle Russett 1991; Johannisson 1992

[43] Cf eg Helen Gardener speech on ”Sex in Brain” at the international congress in Washington in 1888. ICW Washington 1888: 369ff

Persistance of demands for equality in the labour market

There were still women demanding equality in the labour market even up until the First World War. But after 1900 the opinion was less and less held in esteem in the international women's movement. An example is found in the printed book of proceedings from the Berlin congress of 1904; the resistance to night work prohibition was less fully quoted than the defence of such a legislation.[44]

The persistence of the idea of equality in the labour market lingered on and were expressed in some groups, insisting also to be called "feminists". Many of them could be labeled bourgeois, but there is not such an easy class-difference to be made. Resistance came from radical groups, not easily defined in class terms, some were clearly workers.

One group consisted of Swedish and Danish Social Democratic women, representatives of their national organisations, at the Second Socialist International. At a female precongress met in Copenhagen in 1910 these women tried in vain to raise a demand on equal treatment in the labour market, opposing different night work legislation for men and women.. They were silenced effectively by the other female representatives with Clara Zetkin as the leader.[45] The oppositional Scandinavian women, several well-known leaders in the trade union movement, went so far as to cooperation with bourgeois women to resist the legislation[46], something almost unheard of in socialist circles on the European continent at the time. Socialist women used to obey the Party run by men.

The following year in Stockholm, in 1911, an attempt was done to give the demands for equality at work an international platform. It might be seen as a bourgeois initiative to change an emerging bourgeois male institute, the The International Association for Labor Legislation. But also representatives of labour organisations took part. It was done at the international congress arranged by the *International Woman Suffrage Alliance*.[47]

The Dutch Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema gathered a few interested women and presented her idea of an international organisation with the main purpose to annihilate the night work prohibition and introduce equal gender neutral conditions at work. Rutgers-Hoitsema wanted to found ”the International Woman's Labour Association” but the less provocative name

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[44] Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema, Rotterdam, spoke against protective labour legislation for women and was summarised in one page, whereas Helene Simon got her speech in extenso over 6 pages. The Rutgers-Hoitsema speech was on the other hand published in extenso translated in the Swedish women´s movements journal *Dagny*. Berlin 1904: 450-451; *Dagny* 1904: 377-383

[45] Ravn 1995

[46] Karlsson 1995; Ravn 1995

[47] 1 200 participants in Stockholm, June 12-17 1911, Catt (in the foreword by Ezaline Boheman) 1911: 7

"International Correspondence/ Correspondence Internationale" was chosen.

The starting point of the organisation was that ”men and women being born qually free and independent members of the human race, ought to be equally protected by the labour legislation”. Abolition of the night work prohibition, the Bern Convention, by trying to influence its proponents in the The International Association for Labor Legislation in Basel was to be the first mission of the organisation.

The aim was to create an international network between "feminists", who were positive to general protective labour legislation but *against such legislation for women only* [48]; to gather women internationally around economic citizenship and equality in the labour market.

Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema saw the International Correspondance as the first genuinly *feminist* international organisation: "...pour autant que je sache, la première organisation féministe internationale...".[49] thus not counting either the Council or the Alliance as "feminist". In 1912 six states belonged: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands and Belgium.[50]

Rutgers-Hoitsema was full of hope of uniting feminists in the whole world for women´s emancipation: the right to work was essential:

> Nous souhaitons ardemment que les féministes de tous les pays, qui jusqu´ici ont lutté séparément et par cela même probablement sans beaucoup de succès, s´unissent à l´avenir. L´union fait la force.
>
> Que, pour les féministes du monde entier, la Correspondence Internationale soit le point de départ d´une marche en avant, en rangs serrés, à la poursuite du même idéal: la complète émancipation de la femme. N´oublions jamais que pour atteindre ce bel idéal, le droit au travail nous est indispensable. Aidez-nous à le conquérir. [51]

Despite the main stream of the women´s movement going another and easier way, women remained who saw economic citizenship as the lost equality question and who were going to raise it again and again. It is important to remember that the question of economic citizenship has been glowing in the women's movement since its beginning.[52]

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[48] Bruxelles 1912
[49] Bruxelles 1912: 61
[50] France, Great Britain and Finland were contemplating to join as members. Bruxelles 1912: 60; Correspondence in Files 14,15,16 Coll R-H, IIAV
[51] Bruxelles 1912: 61; This was reported also in for example *L'étoile Belge* as well as in Druckers raport. *L'étoile Belge* 30.4.1912, File: Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles Dos 43, BMD
[52] E g Frangeur 1998

In Paris in 1913 Maria Vérone from the new generationen of feminists in France[53] pointed out that the principle of equality had to include economic equality:

> …au point de vue féministe nous réclamons l'égalité, tant au point de vue politique qu'au point de vue économique, nous ne pouvons pas, en même temps, réclamer l'égalité et des privilèges, sans quoi ce ne serait plus l'égalité.[54]

One of her roundletters from the new International Correspondance to national representatives, Rutgers-Hoitsema finished with a sentence that sounds like a modern decrea which we still have to get on the same conditions as men:

> Le droit de travail est non moins indispensable à la femme que le droit de vote.[55]
>
> (The right to work is not less necessary for woman than the right to vote)

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[53] Klejman & Rochefort 1989: 161f
[54] Paris 1913: 517
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