

## **A free and equal labour market for women? European women at congresses in London and Berlin, 1899 and 1904**

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This is an article of the conservative turn in the international women's movement, from an earlier discourse of "equality" towards a discourse of "peculiarity"/"Eigenart"/"difference" and "motherhood" that took place around the fin-de-siècle of 1900. That turn *marginalised the question of women's equality in the labour market*, created a discourse for a gendered division of labour, and supported legislation that differentiated between men and women as workforce.

Two radical equality questions were important to the emerging women's movement all over the Western world during the last decades of the nineteenth century: the fight for women's *political* independence and the fight for women's *economic* independence. The stress on suffrage gradually pushed aside the question of women's economic independence among internationally active women. The process to marginalize the importance of economic independence and equality in the labour market inside the women's movement was parallel with the international growth of the women's movement and its division into organizations that concentrated on one question at the time, for example on temperance,

suffrage or peace.<sup>1</sup> The process drained the International Council of Women of radicalism, as it was aiming to involve more and more women's organizations and got a broad perception of women and emancipation. It also opened up for a consensus between politically active men and most organized women, that a gendered division of labour was consistent with women's emancipation.

This paper will focus on discussions and discourses at two congresses arranged in connection with the International Council of Women, in London in 1899 and in Berlin in 1904, to show the concepts, the historical interpretations and the visions women developed, when they tried to make a new platform for themselves in the changing society. What was woman's place? Had she any place in the labour market and in what capacity? What was woman's work to be in the future? What was woman's relation to man, especially in the labour market? Women's visions were extremely different -- in fact their only common feature was a critique of the prevailing conditions.

With respect to the two above mentioned demands of equality, the political and economic, the *International Council of Women* behaved hesitantly. The organization -- started in 1888 in Washington and restarted in 1893 in Chicago in the United States -- wanted to function as an international umbrella organization for women. It invited broad

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<sup>1</sup> . Cf Ulla Wikander, *Feminism, familj och medborgarskap. Debatter på internationella kongresser om nattarbetsförbud för kvinnor 1889-1919*. Stockholm: Makadam förlag 2006 see <http://ullawikander.se>. And also Ulla Wikander, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Jane Lewis (eds), *Protecting Women. Labor Legislation in Europe, the United States, and Australia, 1880-1920*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995; special thanks to Joan B Landes for suggestions that made the article better, as well as general support.

alliances between female organizations. Its strategies soon became occupied with uniting more than with standing up for controversial questions. Thus the Council frustrated and alienated some women. The two equality questions central to early female activists were more or less pushed out of this broad and rather unprogressive organization. First was the suffrage question.

In Berlin in the summer of 1904, the International Council of Women lost its possibility to become the important international forum for women's political struggle. Women created a new arena for that question. On June 4th, 1904 the foundation of the *International Woman Suffrage Alliance* took place, demonstratively some days before the third *Quinquennial Meetings of the International Council of Women* and its connected congress *der Internationale Frauen-Kongress in Berlin* (13-19 June).<sup>2</sup> IWSA was founded as a protest against the cautious politics of the International Council of Women. Susan B Anthony, 84 years old, had come over the Atlantic to take part of what a Swedish journalist called "the fulfilment of her life work",<sup>3</sup> to internationalize the suffrage movement. Women from the so called left wing of the German women's movement were gathered in the Bechstein-Saal at Linksstrasse this day together with some foreign representatives. German female social-democrats were critical and the majority of the German women's movement found the association too daring. Minna Cauer presided and

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<sup>2</sup> Dagny 1904: 271ff

<sup>3</sup> Dagny 1904: 271

Anita Augspurg gave the first speech.<sup>4</sup> The *International Woman Suffrage Alliance* consisted of a group of women pushing forward for equal conditions with men in the public sphere, a topic too hot for the International Council of Women. Now that topic had found a place in an organization for One Question Only, with several consequences for expansion and limitation of this question and its twin equality question.

The other question of equality, women's *economic* independence, was "left over" , neglected in the uncontroversial International Council of Women. Its place was as restricted as the one of suffrage had been earlier. The organizations had no commitment to it. In this article I will argue that women, who wanted *equality with men in the labour market*, (that is equal conditions) were left at bay, finding no active support for their ideas inside the International Council of Women. This was a new stage in the international women's movement, with farreaching consequences.

Women, who wanted equality with men in the labour market still tried to raise their voices inside the International Council of Women. They tried to formulate a discourse in the new public sphere for women, that such congresses constituted, because they still thought that such a discourse belonged there. The reason for this belief was that at several earlier international women's congresses held in Europe strong opinions had been heard urging more labour market equalities. Such opinions had been

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<sup>4</sup> Dagny 1904: 271ff; *Aftonbladet* 6.6.1904; This meeting had been in preparation since the *International Congress of Women* in London in 1899 (held in connection with the second *Quinquennial Meetings of the International Council of Women*).

backed by resolutions. Women with aspirations to become economically independent and to get the same rights as men in education and apprenticeship, women who wanted to work side by side with men, had been in the European forefront of *feminist international organizing* during the 1890s. They had been organizers of a series of international women's congresses held in Paris and Brussels (1878, 1889, 1892, 1896, 1897). At these an international union of quite another kind than International Council of Women had been discussed, focusing on *equality* in every aspect.<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, in this series of congresses the concept "feminist", as the name for women seeking political, economic and social equality with men, had been launched in an international context in 1892.<sup>6</sup>

Now, in 1899 and 1904, in contrast, the rhetoric claiming space in the International Council of Women was a new -- or in fact rather old -- vision of "the Woman" as complementary to man; a lot of discourse terrain got lost for women who argued for equality at work. But still the question was not really settled at the congresses of 1899 and 1904.

At the fin-de-siècle the majority of the international women's movement, with its representatives from western countries, came to approve of and even work for labour laws containing *special* conditions for women. This went together with discourses accentuating woman as a

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<sup>5</sup> Wikander, Ulla, "International Women's Congresses, 1878-1914. The Controversy over Equality and Special Labour Legislation" in Maud L Eduards m fl (eds), *Rethinking Change. Current Swedish Feminist Research*. Uppsala (HSFR) 1992 and "Some 'Kept the Flag of Feminist Demands Waving': Debates at International Congresses on Protecting Women Workers" in U W, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Jane Lewis (1995) my already mentioned book *Feminism etc* 2006..

<sup>6</sup> This group introduced the word "feminist" in the early 1890s as a name of their kind of aspirations for women, see for example the name of the congress in 1892, *Le Congrès général des Sociétés féministes*. Cf Wikander 1992 and 2006

Mother and a Wife rather than a Worker and a Trade Unionist. It was soon adopted by many women *also in the claim for suffrage*. In the beginning of the new century it became common to accentuate that women's "difference" ought to be seen as an addition to the political system and in no way as a competition to men's superior competences.

The debate around night work prohibition and special legislation for women at the congresses of London and Berlin clearly exposed two different lines of discourse about women and work. A group of radical women were not willing to back away from earlier equality visions of the work place, when others were defending the complementary visions and strategies,<sup>7</sup> now perceived as "new" and modern.

Several of the influential female activists considered this question -- special legislation for women -- of utmost importance for the movement, for the future of women and for the direction of a new society with state interventions in the labour market. The antagonists of different labour legislation for men and women in the labour market as well as its defenders saw it as an important *principal* question.<sup>8</sup> This can be seen when Alice Salomon introduced a debate on "Arbeiterinnenschutz" (protection of female workers) in Berlin in 1904. She pointed out that, despite the fact that German women were united in wanting special

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<sup>7</sup>In 1911, some years after these two congresses, they even managed to create an international organisation of their own, *the International Correspondence*, which sadly disappeared in the turmoils of the First World War. See my coming book.

<sup>8</sup> Cf an estimation by a Swedish delegate *Dagny* 1899: 274-275

legislation for women,<sup>9</sup> it was a problem at an *international* women's congress, "and as such one of the most important for the whole of the women's movement. The view you take in regard to this question gives away your view of the whole movement and its final goal"<sup>10</sup>. Alice Salomon herself was an activist for women, especially as social workers, with a great concern for working women's conditions and an influential person in the German women's movement. She was *not* considered a conservative. She rather belonged to the left wing of the bourgeois women's movement in her country.<sup>11</sup> The antagonists to a legislation, among them Finnish, Dutch, English and French women, were also finding the question crucial.<sup>12</sup>

### **London in 1899**

From the discussions at the congress in London to the ones in Berlin, an altered main-stream opinion can be found.

*At the International Congress of Women* in London in 1899 a heated discussion on special labour legislation for women took place. Alice Salomon stated that most countries "try to protect the life and health of women in their special capacity as females and as mothers of the future

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<sup>9</sup> Stritt, Marie, *Der internationale Frauen-Kongress in Berlin 1904*. Bericht mit ausgewählten Referaten. Hrsg. im Auftrage des Vorstandes des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine von M. S. Berlin 1905. // = Berlin 1904 // thus Berlin 1904: 444f; *Handbuch für die III. Generalversammlung des internationalen Frauenbundes in Berlin vom 6.-11. juni 1904 und für den internationalen Frauenkongress in Berlin vom 12. - 18. juni 1904*. Herausgegeben vom Lokalkomitee. Berlin (Habel) 1904 // = Handbuch Berlin 1904 // thus Handbuch Berlin 1904: 87

<sup>10</sup> "...auf einem internationalen Kongress ist sie es (ein Problem UW), und zwar eines der wichtigsten für die gesamte Frauenbewegung. Denn in der Stellung hierzu offenbart sich die ganze Stellung zu unserer Bewegung, das letzte Ziel kommt hierin zum Ausdruck." Berlin 1904: 444f

<sup>11</sup> I am used the concepts of the actors at that time, cf Lüders, 1904 (brochure on the left wing)

<sup>12</sup> Cf an estimation by a Swedish delegate *Dagny* 1899: 274-275

generation."<sup>13</sup> This "special capacity" was her main reason for a differentiated legislation. It equaled motherhood with being a woman.

According to Salomon the other benefit with special legislation for women was that in the longer run it would reduce men's working hours as well. Such an argument was often raised by socialist, which she was not. She had no fear that such a legislation would reduce women's work chances. Behind her denial of such a limitation were doubts about special legislation exactly on such grounds. Salomon insisted:

"Women will not be worked out of the labour market on account of such restrictions, because employers cannot spare them anymore. Their peculiar skill in certain trades and occupations will compel the employers in many trades to manage their business according to the terms which the law appoints for the employment of women. Moreover, such legislation will produce for the labouring classes what we must struggle to attain for all classes of humanity - a division of work according to sex on account of special qualities; it will put, in place of a mechanical or organic division of work, a division according to characters and constitutions! Also the sphere of industrial work has space for the peculiarities of both sexes, and we hope that special labour legislation for women is one of the means for securing influence for these peculiarities in daily life"<sup>14</sup>

Her vision of a better society was thus *a more rigid gender division of labour* suited to the different "characters and constitutions" of men and women. The subtext talks about a hope that competition between men and women in the labour market would come to an end if women's

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<sup>13</sup> *The International Congress of Women, London, July 1899*. Edited by /Ishbel Maria Gordon/ Countess of Aberdeen. (6 vols) Vol 2 *Women in Industrial Life* London (T.Fisher Unwin) 1900 //London 1899 Vol 2// thus London 1899 Vol 2: ix & 36-40

"peculiarities" were taken seriously. Her ways of arguing leaves the reader in uncertainty whether she considered women's "peculiar skill" as biological or as acquired. Her remark that "we must struggle to attain" a gender division of labour shows her own insecurity (or her unawareness of the contradiction) and maybe a consciousness that social and cultural conditions had a role to play but had to be controlled. Thus she was not simplistic in her view of woman as a pure biological creature but had her firm opinion that a woman ought to be treated differently by law and segregated from men at work to keep her femininity, which was of value to all. How she at the same time could argue that the special legislation preferably ought to spill over to men is another remaining paradox in her argument. If women needed less hard conditions than men, why then hope for it to spread to men? Or were women always supposed to be one step ahead of men in being protected? What about the positive segregation then?

The next speaker was the Fabian socialist from England, Beatrice Webb presented as Mrs Sidney Webb.<sup>15</sup> England had special legislation for women,<sup>16</sup> and she defended it.

Her starting premises was that everybody liked general protective labour legislation. She first said that special protection for women should be seen as the first step to a general labour protection and that it was

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<sup>14</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 39

<sup>15</sup> She spoke under the title "Special Legislation for women on "the position with regard to factory legislation which is taken up by the English Factory Acts, supported by the trade unionists, both men and women, and now generally accepted by progressive public opinion", London 1899 Vol 2: 40

easier to get through Parliament. She gave textile industry in England as an example. On the other hand, protection of women was good in itself because "regulation positively improves the economic and social position of the persons regulated."<sup>17</sup>

"...so we progressive women are prepared to accept for our sex regulations which we cannot at present enforce on men. What injures women as a class in their struggle to obtain employment, is not their occasional competition with men, but their reckless underbidding of each other. It is this reckless underbidding of each other, as regards hours of work, conditions of work, and wages of work, which makes women-workers as a class underfed, overdriven, untrained and incompetent. And this, therefore, is why they find themselves, as a class, relegated to the inferior grades of work."<sup>18</sup>

She used the rhetoric phrase of "we progressive women" letting the audience identify her with a working woman, protected by law.<sup>19</sup> She included without hesitation *all women* in this inclusive "we". She implied thus a deep solidarity between all women and a common interest in the legislation. She implied that resistance to such special treatment would be to act against women's interests. In the next sentences she put herself apart from "women as a class", that is from working women, their bad conditions and their low wages. She underscored that women through their own stupid actions of competing with each other, had put themselves into the lowest of all classes. Interestingly enough, she again and again

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<sup>16</sup> Cf Rose, Sonya O, and Jane Lewis, "'Let England Blush': Protective Labor Legislation, 1820-1914", in Ulla Wikander, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Jane Lewis (1995)

<sup>17</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 41-42

<sup>18</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 42

used the expression "women as a class", evidently inspired by socialism to use the concept of class. On the other side, socialists did not usually speak about women as a separate class but rather as part of the working class. Webb seems to have considered women as a class with special problems and conditions, in an uncomplicated way seeing herself as the spokesperson of that class and without further arguments held the opinion that the problems could be solved by special legislation *for this female class*. This class of women was evidently not capable of a class struggle but ought to rely upon a benevolent state.

Despite the start of her speech she argued that labour legislation never could become general but had to be concerned with special conditions. Sometimes those special conditions were connected to sex, sometimes with machinery or work conditions. When she demonstrated how sex was the condition, she brought up the argument of giving birth.<sup>20</sup> She did not seem to distinguish between two types of protective legislations for women, where the one was generally aimed at all women as potential mothers whereas the other was aimed at women as individuals, protecting them *if and when* they gave birth, *when* they actually became mothers. (Such a distinction was clear to other socialist

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<sup>19</sup> A Swedish woman even got the impression that Webb had worked as a seamstress herself. Lack of note - probably *Dagny*.

<sup>20</sup> "But there are exceptional cases in which difference of sex corresponds to so permanent a difference in needs that, in order to secure any real equivalence in the standard of life, the women-workers in those exceptional occupations must obtain regulations different from those to which the men are subject. Take the case of working immediately after the birth of a child." London 1899 Vol 2: 42

women, for examples to Danish and Swedish women at the Second International in Copenhagen in 1910.<sup>21)</sup>

Beatrice Webb said women and their bodies were more sensitive to certain poisons than men. She also said -- with rhetorically constructed "if"-sentences, that implied that what she said was rather facts and not hypotheses -- that "if" it was proved that women could not

"... habitually work in underground mines, or take the night-shift in a factory, without serious deterioration of health and character, whereas men can do so and yet retain a high standard of citizenship, it is not in the interest of women to insist that they should be free to do whatever the men do. I need hardly say that this principle applies both ways."<sup>22</sup>

What did she mean, saying that men but not women could "retain a high standard of citizenship" under certain work conditions? Did she have in mind different definitions of citizenship for men and women?. What kind of "citizenship" was hiding behind her way of talking? She also touched upon the question of "moral", so common in discourses in more conservative women's associations and cercles, but quickly left it. Still it was mentioned. She was talking about men as different from women and still did not mention that men and women were competing in the labour market. Yet she was not blind to men's struggle to keep higher wages

"It would be suicidal for the men compositors' trade, to allow their members to accept wages below a man's standard of life. We must, in fact, get rid of this idea of sex rivalry. Each distinct set of workers,

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<sup>21</sup> Ravn, Anna-Birte, "'Lagging Far Behind All Civilized Nations': The Debate over Protective Labor Legislation for Women in Denmark, 1899-1913", Wikander, Kessler-Harris and Lewis 1995: 210-234

<sup>22</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 43

whether men or women, or both together, must aim at enforcing the particular minimum conditions which their particular circumstances render necessary. These will differ from trade to trade, from age to age, and occasionally from sex to sex. Without the enforcement of such minimum conditions as will protect every set of workers, whether men or women, from physical and mental deterioration, the nation will not reach its maximum strength, and women, therefore, will fail to attain their maximum development "<sup>23</sup>

Mrs Sidney Webb defended men's fight to preserve higher wages because men and women had "their particular circumstances". Thus, she accepted men's higher "standard of life" as a norm for *men*. Webb's argument accepted the status quo as a result of some abstract "circumstances", which could not be changed. Her defence for these discrepancies was inconsistent and makes interpretation problematic. But it is evident that she sided with the *male* typographer, defending his rights. On the contrary feminists often used the printing industry as an example of how labour legislation was used to exclude women from well paid skilled work.

Mrs Webb objected to "this idea of sex rivalry" in the labour market.<sup>24</sup> Here she diverged from the ordinary socialist analysis which often pointed out that women competed with men, and thus lowered men's wages. Webb seemed eager to paint a brighter picture. Women only competed with women. Protection of women was of importance for themselves and for the nation. National strength was seen as coupled to women's health.

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<sup>23</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 43

<sup>24</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 43

Behind such a view, but here not openly expressed by Beatrice Webb, it is easy to spot wishes for a strong population, born by women, who were not worn out by their work thanks to a protective labour legislation. Images of the mother of the race, often raised at this period, were not far away.

Three women were totally against any form of special legislation for women only, Mme Camille Bélilon, France, Alexandra Gripenberg, Finland and Mrs Stanton Blatch from the United States and England. In different ways they all accentuated the lack of equality with men in the labour market as a hinder to women's emancipation.

Mme Camille Bélilon<sup>25</sup> confronted the class question. The increase of paid work had, according to her, made it more usual for *men of all classes* to try to exclude women from jobs. After a few examples from the higher classes she turned to the trade unions. Their policies were full of a misogynic spirit ("esprit misogynique"). In the case of typographers, she used the word "hatred"<sup>26</sup> to describe the feelings unionists had for women.<sup>27</sup> She put forward a theory of conspiracy according to which trade unions were behind demands for special legislation for women because of their "hate" of female competition. The meaning of the legislation of 1892,<sup>28</sup> which in France forbid women to work at nights, was to put a stop to such competition. Discourses of high death rate among children and the future of the nation, had paved the way for an understanding of the need

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<sup>25</sup> " Sur le Travail des Femmes" London 1899 Vol 2: 43-48

<sup>26</sup> "haine" London 1899 Vol 2: 44

<sup>27</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 43-44

<sup>28</sup> Cf Zancarini-Fournel, Michelle, "Archéologie de la loi de 1892 en France" in Auslander & Zancarini-Fournel 1995: 75-92 and

of a legislation,<sup>29</sup> in a France occupied with worries about its low fertility rate. The discourse of motherhood had moved the politicians. Bélilon hinted that they actually knew this argument to be a fake. Parliament neglected other dangers to the race, such as alcohol. No legislation was contemplated against heavy consumption of alcohol. She was believing in a unspoken alliance between men in Parliament and in trade unions, to keep women economically dependent on men.

"And to make the woman dependent on the man, do they actually understand what it means? Of all unfair treatments, this is the worst! Yes, because if the inequality between the classes is unfair, the one existing between the sexes is at least as unfair. It is in the highest degree immoral, both in itself and because it invites immoral behaviour. Yes, it is not only an attack on the principle of freedom, it allows violence to get the upper hand over the law, and even more it disempowers woman and give the man all support. It is to put vice before competence and virtue. To force the woman to ask the man for bread, that is to introduce prostitution, or worse, it is to give the power to the prostitute. We really have had enough of this continuous abjection."<sup>30</sup>

Bélilon's indignation with its affirmative "yes's" and repetitions, is captured by the probably stenographed speech. She compared or even

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<sup>29</sup> "Seulement comme cette haine n'est pas un argument à faire valoir dans une assemblée législative, il a fallu chercher autre chose. Cette autre chose, les électeurs ouvriers l'ont trouvée. Ils ont exigé de leurs mandataires une loi forçant les patrons à remplacer les ouvrières par les ouvriers. En effect la loi de 1892 qui régleme les heures de travail des femmes et leur interdit de travailler la nuit a donné les résultats attendus." London 1899 Vol 2: 44

<sup>30</sup> "Faire dépendre la femme de l'homme, sait on bien ce que c'est? De toutes les iniquités, c'est la plus odieuse! oui, car si l'inégalité qui existe entre les classes est injuste elle n'est qu'injuste tandis que celle que l'on a établie entre les sexes est, avec cela, profondément immorale, et à part qu'elle est immorale, en soi, elle entraîne avec elle l'immoralité. Oui, ce n'est pas seulement un attentat contre le principe de liberté, ce n'est pas seulement la force primant le droit c'est encore la toute puissance de la femme par la faveur de l'homme, c'est le vice primant le mérite et la vertu. L'obligation pour la femme de demander son pain à l'homme, c'est le règne de la

considered the economically dependent woman as a repressed whore and interpreted the legislation as allowing a system ("règne"), which was deeply unfair to women.<sup>31</sup>

Without mentioning her name, Camille Bélilon attacked Beatrice Webb when she scorned persons, who both accused women for accepting low wages and promoted state interference. They supported policies which made women less attractive to employers. That men excluded women from jobs was the main reason for women's difficulties to support themselves..<sup>32</sup> It was ironic to call laws protective, which made women unemployed. No "feminist" could reason thus, according to Camille Bélilon. To feminists equality was the main principle:

"Faithful to our principle, we do not want to be for or against regulations of working hours. We will not abandon the feminist standpoint, but stick to the same freedoms for women as for men."<sup>33</sup>

Here Camille Bélilon -- not for the first time -- talked about *her* definition of "feminism" as consisting of *a pure equality* between men and women, all other circumstances unconsidered. This was feminism without any compromises, that could work with or without socialism. (In Paris during the 1890s the groups who arranged *feminist* international

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prostitution et ce qui et (est?) pis, le règne de la prostituée. Ah! nous avons assez de ce régime d'abjection."  
London 1899 Vol 2: 45

<sup>31</sup> She quoted some articles by Maria Martin about female typographers in *Journal des Femmes* in 1895 and 1896 about how 7000 female workers had gathered in Berlin to protest to the German protective legislation

<sup>32</sup> "On change les rôles: ce n'est pas la femme ainsi qu'on le prétend qui fait que le travail de l'homme est insuffisamment payé, c'est l'homme qui par suite de l'ostracisme dont il a frappé la femme est cause que celle-ci ne peut arriver à faire rétribuer le sien raisonnablement. Et pour conjurer le mal on redouble d'hostilités! ... On ne remédie pas à un mal en se servant de nouveau et à outrance de ce qui a amené ce mal. Il serait au contraire aussi rationnel qu'équitable d'ouvrir toutes les portes toutes grandes aux femmes et alors il n'y aurait pas plus de différence de prix que de distinction de sexe. London 1899 Vol 2: 47

congresses -- and introduced the word "feminist" -- had been eager to integrate feminism *and* socialism; they wanted equality between the sexes *and* equality between the classes.) The Bélilon-feminism, which had few followers in Europe, tried at some points, as here in Berlin, to build a bridge between socialist and bourgeois female activists or at least to unite a feminist movement between these politically more antagonistic groups. This project was radical and had no other political group to side with in practical policies. The larger group of "feminists" of the 1890's had been working for a melting together of social justice for workers and working women as well as women of other classes. Their brand of "feminism" was as manifestly connected to equality as Bélilon's but they wanted it to go hand in hand with the budding socialist movement, from which they in the end were firmly excluded.<sup>34</sup> As a matter of principle the very simple equation of "feminism" with "equality" is of great interest indeed. As we will see at the discussions, that was in some way the common grounds from which many women departed but they wanted to act in solidarity with social progress at the same time, wishing men included in good social reforms.

Alexandra Gripenberg<sup>35</sup> from Finland, "during all of the congress the darling of the public"<sup>36</sup> was considered the best speaker *against* protective

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<sup>33</sup> "Fidèle a notre principe, nous ne nous prononçons point au sujet de cette réglementation, nous abandonnons pas le terrain féministe et nous nous bornons à réclamer pour la femme la même liberté que pour l'homme." London 1899 Vol 2: 48

<sup>34</sup> I develop this further in my book *Feminism ...* 2006

<sup>35</sup> *Dagny* 1899: 275ff. Her speech is fully quoted in the journal *Dagny* for the Swedish audience as typical of the opinion of this side.

<sup>36</sup> "under hela kongressen allmänhetens gunstling" according to Swedish Gertrud Adelborg *Dagny* 1899: 273

labour legislation.<sup>37</sup> Equal rights and equal citizenship were her demands.

Women should not have any special benefits:

The idea of special labour laws for women, emanates from the principle that women have to have privileges, not rights, that they have to be protected instead of given power to protect themselves, that women are -- as the national economists put it -- `the most precious property of the people` instead of seeing women as belonging to the people.<sup>38</sup>

Women should be citizens on the same conditions as men not property- Gripenberg mentioned women's lack of power as the root of their dependency. She took up the topic of "sex rivalry" or the struggle between the sexes as an existing one. She even pronounced a hardly hidden threat that women's bitterness for being controlled by men could result in actions, maybe revolution, if nothing changed.<sup>39</sup> Her views could be compared to that of a reformistic socialist's, but transformed into feminist policies; she did not like violence but saw it as inevitable if women were not treated as equals.

Gripenberg had her own analysis of women's history and work, integrating paid and unpaid work; through industrialism, women had gradually been driven away from work areas they earlier dominated. *First* they had been driven away from their work in the homes into factories

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<sup>37</sup> Titeln på hennes föredrag var *The Drawbacks of Special Legislation*. London 1899 Vol 2: 48-50

<sup>38</sup> "Idén om speciella arbetarskyddslagar för kvinnor kommer från principen att kvinnor måste ha privilegier, inte rättigheter, att de måste beskyddas istället för att få makt att beskydda sig själva, att kvinnor är -- som nationalekonomerna säger -- `ett folks mest värdefulla egendom` istället för att utgöra en del av folket." From Dagny?

<sup>39</sup> "... Har inte detta att stå under ständigt förmyndarskap, så som kvinnor tvingats leva hittills, resulterat i en så stor bitterhet att den som tycker om kvinnor borde ta sig i akt innan han understödde sakerna nuvarande tillstånd på något som helst sätt." From Dagny?

and workshops. *Now* they were driven away from these new workplaces. Every new regulation made it harder for women to keep a job and get a decent pay.<sup>40</sup> She accepted the analysis of a competition at work between men and women as a problem of the turn-of-the-century. Gripenberg wanted more education for women, more job training, more apprenticeship for skilled work. She also saw the importance of better protective measures at workplaces, for *both* men and women. Equality was her repeated demand, legislative equality and equality in the labour market. Special laws for women made them redundant.<sup>41</sup> She did not as much as Camille Bélilon mentioned men's interest in the labour market as being contrary to women's, but such a view was still presupposed. She sounded less antagonistic than Bélilon towards men and spoke more of longer historical developments. Equality came first and if men were *not* protected, women should not be that either. Her concern for equality seemed higher than her concern for better conditions for all. The next speaker would even more pronounce a good-will towards men, the *injustice* to men that went with special benefits for women, even if all three of the speakers against special labour laws for women had a similar interpretation of the negative consequences for women of a gendered division of labour.

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<sup>40</sup> "... Women were driven away from home work when factories and workshops took up the greatest part of the manufacture hitherto carried on at home. Now they are being driven away, slowly but surely, from the factories and workshops. For every new restriction and regulation concerning women's work makes it more difficult for working women to get employment with decent wages, because it is always the less skilful workers who suffer first when the employers are burdened with all kinds of rules and restrictions concerning them." London 1899 Vol 2: 49

<sup>41</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 50

Mrs Harriot Stanton Blatch,<sup>42</sup> U S A , since 1882 living in Great Britain, spoke about factory legislation.<sup>43</sup> She was the daughter of Elisabeth Cady Stanton, a known leader in the American women's movement and a radical even in her old days. Stanton Blatch herself was a struggling activist for women's emancipation.<sup>44</sup>

Labour legislation for women had had several bad consequences women, children *and* men according to Harriot Stanton Blatch. They had a) "handicapped the evolution of women's economic position" <sup>45</sup> b) meant an increase in the hiring of children c) led to an "indifference to the interests of men, and helped to destroy the balance in the numbers between the sexes."<sup>46</sup>

Women had been obliged to leave certain jobs; she mentioned bleaching and printing. Where men and women were treated as equals the number of working women increased.<sup>47</sup> Regulation were hinders and

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<sup>42</sup>She is wrongly called "Black" instead of Blatch in the printed protocols but she was one of the nine conveners of the session on industry and legislation and her name is spelled in the right way on the list of convenors. London 1899 Vol 2, no page number; Her full name was Harriot Eaton Stanton Blatch, born in 1856; she lived since she married in 1882 in Basingstoke west of London. Susan B Anthony, the leader of the American delegates to the meeting, lived at her place during the congress. Griffith, Elizabeth, *In Her Own Right. The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*. New York and Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1984: 181, 214, 229

<sup>43</sup>In England protective labour legislation were gathered in the Factory Acts, also called the Factory Legislation.

<sup>44</sup>DuBois, Ellen Carol, "Working Women, Class Relations, and Suffrage Militance: Harriot Stanton Blatch and the New York Woman Suffrage Movement, 1894-1909", Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L Ruiz (eds), *Unequal Sisters. A Multicultural Reader In U.S. Women's History*. New York & London (Routledge) 1990: 176-194; and more ref.

<sup>45</sup>London 1899 Vol 2: 50-54

<sup>46</sup>London 1899 Vol 2: 50-54

<sup>47</sup>"Before women's hours were limited there were employed in bleaching and dyeing establishments 49,000 men and 20,000 women, while a few years after legal limitation of hours the numbers stood 57,000 men and 18,000 women. Again, in printing offices of daily papers, women in any number cannot be employed, forbidden as they are to work Sunday, Saturday afternoon and at night. I agree with Sidney Webb when he speaks of these regulations as 'obvious disadvantages'.

It is often argued that there are so few women in highly skilled trades that their exclusion is a matter of no moment. Probably the reason they have advanced so little, during the last two decades, in skilled trades in which they are protected, is because the law is partial in its application. With the spread of education, women must be more capable of skilled work, and in pursuits where regulations are equal between the sexes, we do find rapid growth in the number employed." London 1899 Vol 2: 51-52

education necessary. She joked about what she called the prevalent "invalid theory of woman's emancipation". That theory supposed that a woman was invalid as a worker, weaker and less competent than a man. The theory had as a result that women were not evaluated as highly as men in the labour market. She denounced the whole theory as "invalid". Women could cope *with every work* if they were accepted under the same laws and conditions as men. "The invalid theory" saw women as weak and yet, women were cleaning, scrubbing and washing, caring for sick people, all work that demanded real strength<sup>48</sup> and in reality proved the theory as nonsense.

Harriot Stanton Blatch said, that the fact that women lived longer than men was another way of proving that "the invalid theory of women's emancipation" wrong. The legislators concentration on women had meant a disregard for youth, children and men and led to a neglect of a good work place. She echoed Gripenberg's demand for better hygienic conditions at work *for all*.<sup>49</sup> She rephrased the demand for special labour legislation for women into a demand for such legislation for all workers, turning the light to the common interests of men and women: "... the principle reason for making legislation equal is that men need legal

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<sup>48</sup> "What reason is there to doubt that women would have made rapid strides in every skilled pursuit had they been under the same law as men? The usual answer to this question involves what might be called the invalid theory of woman's emancipation. This theory demands that, on account of their innate weakness, we should regard some trades as women's, others as men's; but in the division the advocates of invalidism pass over to women scrubbing, charring, night sick-nursing, which do indeed demand exceptional strength." London 1899 Vol 2: 52

<sup>49</sup> "It was always said that protection for women would lead to legal protection for men; but there is no practical talk even yet of limiting their working hours, except in trades where they are free from competition of women." London 1899 Vol 2: 533<kolla<

protection as much as women."<sup>50</sup> *This had been the feminist demand at several international women's congresses in Paris during the 1890s, all taking resolution on labour protection but being negative to special conditions for women.*

At last she coupled the question of equality between workers to the nation and its needs, a theme always taken up by defenders of special legislation for women:

Can any woman doubt that the nation is leading a saner life, a better life, where the balance between the sexes has not been destroyed by protecting one half of the race, and leaving the other half exposed to every danger?<sup>51</sup>

By mentioning the race, she made her contribution to the debate of the day, inspired by Social Darwinism and pointed to men's health. Men were also sexual creatures -- could they maybe be called fathers of the race? -- and had to be protected if their children were to be good for "the nation". Thus her final words were for those who always connected the race, the woman as a mother, the nation and special labour legislation for women.

One of the speakers in the following debate, Mrs Charles M' Laren, said that a women's congress had no cause whatsoever to discuss how to hinder women to work. It ought to concentrate on "... the extension of women's work, and the means of their becoming skilled labourers by

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<sup>50</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 54

<sup>51</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 54

higher technical education."<sup>52</sup> Mrs Dora Montefiore, a socialist from England, reformulated the feminist view already raised by Stanton Blatch, telling that "she was in favour of restrictions upon all, but asked for no restrictions which did not apply equally to the men and women in the same trade."<sup>53</sup>

Others, Miss Emma Brooke, Mrs J R MacDonald and Miss Clementina Black supported the prohibition and the reasons were that because *all* protection was good, selective protection could not be bad.<sup>54</sup> No consensus could be reached between the protagonists and antagonists. In this session, the outcome was uncertain between the two groups. The discussion would continue five years later in Berlin with partly the same persons but with a somewhat different bias.

## **Berlin 1904**

Women and industrial work was one of the themes going through *Der Internationale Frauen-Kongress in Berlin*, 13 - 19 June 1904. Whenever it was discussed Alice Salomon was there, most often as the chairperson.<sup>55</sup> In one session, Henriette van der Mey, Amsterdam pleaded for protection of women *and* their organization in trade unions:<sup>56</sup> Her opinion was a rather frequent and accepted socialist analysis.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 56

<sup>53</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 58

<sup>54</sup> London 1899 Vol 2: 54-58

<sup>55</sup> Berlin 1904: 177; Handbuch Berlin 1904: 81

<sup>56</sup> "Was die holländischen Arbeiterinnen, wie ihre ausländischen Schwestern, an erster Stelle zur Hebung ihrer Lage bedürfen, ist ein ausgiebiger gesetzlicher Schutz und eine feste gewerkschaftliche Organisation." Berlin 1904: 188

<sup>57</sup> Schmitt, Sabine, *Der Arbeiterinnenschutz im deutschen Kaiserreich. Zur Konstruktion der schutzbedürftigen Arbeiterin*. Stuttgart, Weimar (J B Metzler) 1995

A German factory inspector, Dr Marie Baum, Karlsruhe, Baden, put -- in a consistent analysis -- women's worse conditions in the labour market in direct relation to men's better. She commented on women's high skills, which were always underevaluated and never allowed to be more fully developed by education. Her references to special legislation were vague<sup>58</sup> but probably she was positive, as it was her duty as an inspector to care for its implementation. However, she did not put the laws central in her analysis and thus seemed to support the antagonists of the special legislation, in so far as she saw the mechanisms of men getting the better job. She developed a structural analysis. Three other contributors were positive or neutral to legislation, during this session.<sup>59</sup> The discussion was not focused on legislation or hardly on women's gendered work in a stricter sense, more concretely dealing with child care, with the eight hours day and with welfare programs at work places.<sup>60</sup> At the end on this first session on women and work Mrs Schouk-Haver, Amsterdam, asked for suffrage for women; only if women had a say in the legislating process, could women's work be regulated in a way that was right.<sup>61</sup> By this she pushed the question of women in the labour force aside and saw it as a consequence of women's political subordination. She meant that the question could be solved by introducing political equality. This will be the opinion of a lot of women, an attitude which collapsed the two equality

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<sup>58</sup> Berlin 1904: 188-195

<sup>59</sup> Miss Margaret G Bondfield, England , Rosika Schwimmer, Budapest and Mrs Lydia Kingsmill Commander, USA. Berlin 1904: 195-197; Handbuch, Berlin 1904: 81

<sup>60</sup> Berlin 1904: 195ff

questions into only the political one and united women in a struggle for suffrage during the coming years. But the two questions are different, despite their common aspirations of equality with men. The political question of equality is a question of form. It only brings up in what form women were to partake in society. It did not address the question of content of the policies and said nothing about labour market or women's rights and duties. In a way, uniting around suffrage could be a way of *avoiding* taking a side in the "burning" debate of women and work.

The great debate on special protective labour legislation for female workers ("Arbeiterinnenschutz") took place June 15th, with Alice Salomon again in the chair.<sup>62</sup> Two speakers had been asked in advance to prepare contribution to trigger a discussion. Fräulein Helene Simon, Berlin was *for* such legislation and Mrs Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema, Rotterdam was *against*.

Helene Simon, Berlin, had two heavy arguments *for* protection of women: it was strategic -- possible to implement -- *and* women were weaker and different because they were mothers. Her arguments were very near to the ones presented by Beatrice Webb in London five years earlier. She defended the rights of male workers and said they were not asking for less work hours for women "...to harm female workers, but only with the outspoken wish to shorten their own working day".<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> "... forderte das allgemeine Wahlrecht für die Frauen, weil allein durch eine Gesetzgebung, bei welcher Frauen beteiligt sind, die Frauenarbeit in richtiger Weise geregelt werden kann". Berlin 1904: 197

<sup>62</sup> Berlin 1904: 444ff

<sup>63</sup> "...wie man ihnen vorwirft, um die Kolleginnen zu schädigen, sondern in der offen ausgesprochenen Absicht, damit auch den eigenen Arbeitstag zu kürzen." Berlin 1904: 447

One part of her speech is well worth to look closer at because it mentions the relation between men and women but still did not draw the conclusions some other women did, about a competition in the labour market or a "sex rivalry". Helene Simon wanted to stress that the question was not about whether "woman was less worth than man and not about if she was weaker than man; she was more overworked than he, because she had to serve two Masters at the same time, the duties in the workplace and in the household."<sup>64</sup> She actually used the loaded expression "two Masters" ("zwei Herren"). But it was alien to her to associate the two masters with real men as the husband and the employer. Instead she spoke of abstract concepts; the "two Masters" were two kinds of "duties". The woman was not serving two concrete men but she executing *her own* two duties, at work and at home. Thus Simon avoided to personalize the situation and left real men out of her analysis. In her opinion it was self-evident that woman had a responsibility for her "duties" . The "Two Masters" were only *a symbolic image for woman's duties* and not a description of a real work situation. Helene Simon did not in any way questioned that woman had these double duties to do, she only used them as an explanation of why women were overworked. Remarkably enough, for someone living today, she managed to disregard men, even as she used a concept as "Master" . Now, a hundred years later, her choice of the words "two Masters" makes most readers think of

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<sup>64</sup> "Nur manchesterliche Verblendung kann sich der Einsicht verschliessen dass allein der Staatsschutz hier abhilft. Ich wiederhole: nicht um eine Minderwertigkeit handelt es sich hierbei, nicht enimal um die Frage, ob

relations between men and women, of a problematic power relation. It would be to misinterpret Helene Simon to believe that she had any such understanding.<sup>65</sup>

Helene Simon pleaded for a gender division of labour and saw protective labour legislation as a way to come nearer to that. Only if such laws were implemented

„wird allmählich eine Arbeitsteilung zwischen Mann und Weib bewirken, auf dem die Frau nicht mehr ihrer Billigkeit und Willigkeit halber, sondern wegen ihrer Leistungen Beschäftigung findet. Nicht Benachteiligung bedeutet deshalb der gesetzliche Schutz der Frau, sondern bei voller Wertung der natürlichen Aufgaben ihres Geschlechts den einzigen Weg zur gewerblichen Gleichstellung mit dem Mann.“<sup>66</sup>

What kind of equality that could be reached with a rigid gender division of labour is not evident in her speech. Clearly “equality” /“Gleichstellung” / is still considered a goal despite her mentioning “natural occupations” and thus natural differences. She spoke in a social context, in a discourse where a concept as “equality” /“Gleichstellung” / was considered positive and she can still in the same sentence ask for protection of women's special needs. She had no feeling of any contradiction of those two visions hoping they could be united in a future. Without doubt she wished women to get better pay for their work and she thought it also alright that they worked outside their homes - to what

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die Frau an sich schwächer sei als der Mann; sie ist überlasteter als er, weil sie zwei Herren zugleich dienen soll: gewerblichen und häuslichen Pflichten.“ Berlin 1904: 448

<sup>65</sup> It is today not long ago that the expression “women’s double burden” was frequently used in a similarly unconscious way.

degree and in what occupations she avoided to specify. Some form of a gendered division of labour was appropriate, but the one in existence was not the best one. Motherhood was important. The *woman with child/ren* became equal to all women.

Mrs Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema, Rotterdam, spoke against labour legislations directed *only* to women, with concrete examples from her own country, Holland as well as from Germany and France. She gave vivid examples, for instance from the printing of papers, of the firing of women since the night work prohibition had been legislated (In Holland in 1889, in Germany in 1891 and in France in 1892). Her speech was, in the printed protocols, summerized into one page,<sup>67</sup> while Helene Simon's paper was printed over five pages, probably in its totality.<sup>68</sup> In the book with the printed protocols some interventions are lacking because there were no manuscripts to print. This cannot be the reason for the short summary of Rutgers-Hoitsema, since her entire talk was published in 1904 in *Dagny*, the journal of the Swedish women's movement. It had been translated to Swedish from the original manuscript. In print it covered six pages.<sup>69</sup> The exclusion is rather a sign of censorship by the editor, Marie Stritt. Stritt was also the head of the international congress in Berlin and was and is known as a rather "progressive" leader of the German women's

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<sup>66</sup> Berlin 1904: 449-450

<sup>67</sup> Berlin 1904: 450-451

<sup>68</sup> Berlin 1904: 445-450

<sup>69</sup> *Dagny* 1904: 377-383

movement. Her great concern was suffrage<sup>70</sup>, and her interest in equality in the labour market was evidently not comparable to her urge for political equality. We have to leave the question unanswered as to the precise reasoning behind the exclusion of Rutgers-Hoitsemas eloquent defence of the continental feminist equality demand.<sup>71</sup> As German women from left to right did agree on protective labour legislation being positive, was it considered a Non-Question? No, not internationally according to Alice Salomon. Why only publish one defence of it? Was Helene Simon a more important person than Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema? Certainly in Germany. Did Stritt find it more appropriate to concentrate on suffrage and not to introduce other controversial questions for the German public or other readers of the book? A positive answer to the last question will suit my view that the question of suffrage "sucked in" and neutralized the other equality question for women, the one about economic equality.

Two persons with contrary views had been chosen to introduce the "burning question" of labour legislation for women. The audience got a possibility to discuss. Several were supporting Helene Simon. Fewer were against, according to the protocols, which are not reliable as we have seen.

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<sup>70</sup> Weiland, Daniela, *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation in Deutschland und Österreich. Biographien. Programme. Organisationen.* Hermes Handlexikon Düsseldorf (ECON Taschenbuch Verlag) 1983: 261f

<sup>71</sup> Her demands were divided into four points, 1) equal labour protection for men and women 2) a maximum daily work time 3) more protection for women giving birth including pay during the legal leave 4) state nurseries for children to female workers, *Dagny* 1904: 383

A longer contribution by Dora Montefiore, London, found its way into the printed protocols.<sup>72</sup> She wanted to elevate the discussion from concrete examples to the principles and presented four points that ought to guide the women's movement:

I. We should define more exactly than we do now what we mean by the State, and by State Protection.

II. Women in Industry should *always* be protected *as adults, never as children*.

III. Any such proposed legislation should be examined and tested by women, as to whether it is inspired by spurious sentiment, or by the self interest of others.

IV. The ideal we should set before working women should be *self-protection* on the same lines as men, first through Trade Unionism, and secondly through the *Parliamentary vote*.<sup>73</sup> (her underlinings)

She argued further on every one of these points. The summary of the third paragraph was the feminist view on equality in the labour market:

Again, as humanitarians, we would not desire to legislate for women at the expense of men, but recognising the solidarity of moral and of economic interests of the whole race our aim should be, where restrictive legislation is necessary, to protect men, as well as women.<sup>74</sup>

It goes without saying the her speech was *against* "Arbeiterinnenschutz". By not confronting it more directly than this, she managed to get her opinions printed, which was more than Rutgers-

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<sup>72</sup> Berlin 1904: 451-455

<sup>73</sup> Her speech is printed in English in the protocols, Berlin 1904: 451-452

<sup>74</sup> Berlin 1904: 453

Hoitsema achieved. Her final point contained the hope and belief that suffrage should be of help to solve the question of woman in the labour market, thus as economically independent.

Alexandra Gripenberg, Helsingfors, spoke, as in London, *against* special protection. To her equality argument<sup>75</sup> she added her fear of an extension of exclusions of women. She saw such a tendency in the new labour market conditions:

Has not experience thought us, that men usually has taken over the biggest part of formerly female work areas when industry has developed.?<sup>76</sup>

She mentioned especially typographers as a group already excluded in many countries.

Mrs Leonie Steck, Zürich praised the good influence of labour legislation for women in Switzerland. Miss van der Mey, Amsterdam, questioned the picture painted by Rutgers-Hoitsema.<sup>77</sup> Miss Margareta Bernhard, Berlin said women were weak and future mothers, thus needed special laws. Miss Else Lüders, Berlin, agreed and added that a lot of mistakes had been done by feminists: *"She pointed to the problems that the earlier too far pushed equality demands by feminists had led."* (My underlinings, UW) Lily Braun said protection was giving women better working conditions.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "...weil man nicht gleichzeitig gleiche Rechte und Vorrechte fordern könne." Berlin 1904: 455

<sup>76</sup> "Hat uns nicht die Erfahrung gelehrt, dass die Männer allmählich mit der Entwicklung der Industrie den grössten Teil der früheren weiblichen Arbeitsgebiete annektiert haben?" Berlin 1904: 455

<sup>77</sup> Berlin 1904: 451

<sup>78</sup> "Sie wies auf die Fehler hin, zu denen das zu weit getriebene Gleichheitsstreben der Feministen führe". Berlin 1904: 456-457

In these special discussions the feminist opinion, that protection was good but had to be equal for men and women, had been rather watered down and squeezed out from its former centrality. Even between London 1899 and Berlin 1904 there is a clear difference in focus. In a longer perspective, as I draw in my book *Feminism, familj och medborgarskap ...2006*, the change during these years becomes even more evident.

The discourses at these special sessions of women and work have to be seen in the context of the whole congress in Berlin. The speeches starting and finishing the congress are revealing as to the change of discourse taking place.

The inaugural speech in Berlin was given by Marie Stritt, who sharply underlined that the women's movement did not had the intention to destroy "the female peculiarity" ("die weibliche Eigenart"). On the contrary it wanted to ennoble this "peculiarity" by emancipation and bring it into society. "It is not because she wants to be similar to the man ("dem Manne gleich"), that woman asks for the rights to decide over herself, but because she wants to become more and more herself ("ganz sich selbst")"<sup>79</sup> It is evident that Marie Stritt was fending off accusations that women in the women's movement were unfeminine and that she was trying to establish an image of the opposite. But when she defended

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<sup>79</sup> "Vor allem aber wird dieser Kongress eine nachdrückliche Berichtigung des alten, tausendfach widerlegten, aber immer noch tausendfältig wiederkehrenden Irrtums erbringen, dass die Frauenbewegung, indem sie erweiterte Rechte und erweiterte Pflichten für die Frauen anstrebt, die weibliche Eigenart beeinträchtigen, ja zerstören würde. Es wird vielmehr alle, die hören und verstehen und sich überzeugen lassen wollen, davon überzeugen können, dass gerade durch die Emanzipation der Frau - und nur durch sie - ihre weibliche Eigenart veredelt, erhöht, in der Familie wie im weiteren Gemeinschaftsleben, in Gemeinde und Staat, erst zur richtigen Geltung gebracht werden wird. Nicht um zu werden, sondern um mehr und ganz sich selbst sein zu können, fordert die Frau das Recht der freien Selbstbestimmung auch für sich ..." Berlin 1904: 5

women's right to be "themselves" ("sich selbst") she at the same time acknowledged the accusation that some women ever had wanted to be "similar or equal" ("Gleich" the German word has not the double meaning the English "equal" has, so "similar" is the better choice I think) to men, when equality, meaning equal rights and possibilities, was what Bélilon, Gripenberg and others asked for. At the same time as Marie Stritt promised that the women's movement was no threat to the differences between men and women, she stressed that women had to define their "womenliness" themselves, without pressure from outside. Still she was convinced that women were not to become as men or not even did they were to take men's positions. Her speech shows all the paradoxes for the self-definition of woman's place and woman's identity that are evident in a highly gender segregated society, with a core definitions about strong differences between men and women. Women, according to Stritt, promised not to do or want what men did or had.

Helene Lange, Berlin, spoke at the end of the conference, with a clear conservative bias. Her premise was woman's high moral standard as compared to man. She cited the famous critic of the French revolution, Burke, as having a perception of human nature near to her own, being sceptic to rationalism and science. Women had been carrier of the other aspects of human nature. Women were, in her subtext, naturally irrational.

Hindrances for women's emancipation came, said Helene Lange, from science but also from women themselves, who had launched much too

simple solutions of women's problems, as *"...the dogm that a total freedom in the labour market would be better than the most needed labour laws for women ..."*<sup>80</sup> (my underlining UW) At the same time as she connected women with nature, she worried over the loss of control of instincts that the tendency to "an estetical individualism" had brought to the women's movement lately.<sup>81</sup> She saw the movement going in zigzag from one side to the other and wished it would be able to take responsibility for "... the full consequences of /women's/ femininity, their peculiarity, in all the different aspects possible in the whole of society".<sup>82</sup>

The pointing to woman as different, as having an "Eigenart", was repeated again and again at this congress. Women's equality in the labour market was not favoured in the leading women's speeches. Woman was the mother, ought to be a Mother and not work in the labour market.

Therefore the most important social policy task, would be to get women away from the terrible toil of industrial work back to her work as a mother, through a delicately implemented protective labour legislation for women. Otherwise would we all generally loose a part of the female influence /in society/ which cannot be gotten from any other sources or brought back in any other way.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> "...dem Dogma der vollen Berufsfreiheit auch gegenüber den dringendsten Forderungen des Arbeiterrinnenschutzes..." Berlin 1904: 609

<sup>81</sup> "...jener ästhetische Individualismus, wie ihn Ellen Key in die Frauenbewegung eingeführt hat" Berlin 1904: 610

<sup>82</sup> "...die volle Wirkung ihres Frauentums, ihrer Eigenart, auf alle Lebensäußerungen der Gesamtheit." Berlin 1904: 611

<sup>83</sup> "Deshalb bleibt es natürlich doch mit die wichtigste sozialpolitische Aufgabe, durch einen den Verhältnissen vorsichtig angepassten Arbeiterinnenschutz die Frau aus der ungeheuren Tretmühle der Industrie für ihren Mutterberuf zurückzugewinnen. Sonst würde hier allmählich ein Stück weiblichen Einflusses verloren gehen, das an keiner anderen Stelle zu ersetzen, auf keine andere Weise wieder einzubringen wäre." Berlin 1904: 612-613

According to Helene Lange, protective labour legislation was one of the most important means of getting women back into the homes. That would be a benefit to the whole of society and a great loss if not achieved. Complementary between men and women was praised.

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I would argue that the changing discourse in the growing women's movement, was to the detriment of women's equality in the labour market. Many influential female activists raised their voices for a gendered division of labour, in paid work and in the homes. The discourse about equality in the labour market was lost. All the forces were for some hectic decades in the beginning of the twentieth century gathered around the struggle of political independence. To get as many persons as possibly, male as female, positive to the fight -- and no doubt that it was a fight that needed united forces -- the lid was put on debates on equality with men at work. Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor has showed<sup>84</sup> that protective labour legislation went on being an unsolved problem, eternally raising discussions, inside the women's movement even after the First World War. Women have in most countries today reached political equality with men, that is they have gotten their formal political citizenship. Alice Kessler-Harris raises in a coming book the question of women's "economic citizenship".<sup>85</sup> What about it? What does it mean? Has women had it? With

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<sup>84</sup> Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor "Feminist Internationalism in the Early Twentieth Century: The Construction of a Collective Identity" article to the first European Social Science History Conference in Amsterdam (ESSHC) May 1996

<sup>85</sup> From a seminar given in Uppsala, June 1995, in connection with Alice Kessler-Harris being awarded the degree of honorary doctor at the faculty of Social Sciences at Uppsala university.

the development of the women's movement and in the course of developing what Rupp and Taylor calls a "collective identity" the importance of such an "economic citizenship" was wildly underestimated and only fostered in smaller groups. The positive view of a gendered division of labour that developed inside the international women's movements leading circles probably has its counterparts on the national levels although in lesser or higher degree. The outcome can never be evaluated with certainty but must have contributed to the rather meak resistance from women to the organization of the labour market according to gender and in women 's disfavour during our soon finished century.

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