

## 10. PARIS 1900: THE RIGHT TO WORK, ACCORDING TO SOCIALISTS

What a paradox it is today, that it should be possible to affirm that the whole world has become feminist.

Marguerite Durand 1900

The World Exposition in Paris in 1900 was the peak of World Fairs, with great and contradictory manifestations. Internationalism was mixed with nationalism and colonialism and as causes they supported each other. Every exhibiting country had built a house of its own. Buildings of the most shifting character were placed along the Street of the Nations between Trocadéro and the bridge/pont des Invalides, as a synthesis of the world. A presentiment of upcoming conflicts gave the French pavilion of armament centrally placed with a view over the Street of the Nations.<sup>1</sup> With its enthusiasm for progress, the exposition in itself was a denial of the fin-de-siècle spleen, that simultaneously left traces in art, philosophy and literature. Among those believing in a better future were the socialists, even if they did not at all agree between themselves on how a new society should look or by what means to achieve it. French socialists were not yet united as a party. It consisted of groups and circles in constant flux.

Anti semitism and right wing nationalism seemed in the summer of 1900 to have backed away to give place for belief in the vitality of the still young Third Republic. The socialists recently got quite a number of representatives in the National Assembly. The radical forces had won the public battle in the so-called Dreyfus Affair, yet still without the last triumph. The not guilty Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus, accused of spying and wrongly condemned, had so far only been granted an amnesty. A coalition government had been founded in 1899. For

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<sup>1</sup> As usual there was a competition between nations of prices and attention. Regions within larger countries or part of empires marked their specificity in Paris; nationalism was under construction. Norway, a country still in union with Sweden had built a house of its own. So did Finland, part of Russia and the Austrian Bosnie-Herzegovina, *La Grande Revue de l'Exposition* 1900:125, 142, 201ff; *Rapport général sur les congrès de l'exposition* 1906:65; Duquesne 1991:17f; "... anhand historischer Zeugnisse zur Weltausstellung, als dem vielleicht wichtigsten Ereignis der Selbstdarstellung der führenden Industrienationen von damals." Kuchenbuch 1992:XIV; it is uncertain if "visiteurs" are visits or visitors. Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen 1992:132; Aimone & Olmo 1993:34f, 57, 303; Bennett and others 1994:1, 25 f

many reasons its unorthodox mix of persons was criticized. One of the ministers was the socialist Alexandre Millerand. He became the leader of the important Trade Ministry and was the first socialist ever, in the world, to sit in a government.<sup>2</sup>

The unification process of French socialists had internal fights, partly related to the Dreyfus Affair and to the new post accepted by the prominent Alexandre Millerand. In the young movement disagreement had started when Jean Jaurès publicly supported Dreyfus for the unfair juridical treatment of his case. The revolutionary socialists around Jules Guesde preferred not to take a stand, seeing the heated public clashes in journals and streets about the Affair as bourgeois in-fighting. The socialists ought to stand aloof, observing. The split was also about that Alexandre Millerand accepted the appointment to be part of a bourgeois government, including conservatives.<sup>3</sup>

Another problem for socialists was the Woman Question, but a minor one. The concept "feminism" had been a part of a radical socialist women's movement since the 1890s. Such feminism was still around. These socialist feminists, trying to connect feminism and equality with socialism, were permitted to arrange an official congress at the Exposition in Paris in 1900. It gave the organizers hope to be recognized widely also by socialist men.

### **The last important international congress with a socialist feminist agenda**

The International Congress of Women's Conditions and Rights / le Congrès international de la Condition & des Droits des femmes, have been considered the highest point of what some call "social feminism" in France<sup>4</sup>, a feminism trying to bring together women's demand for equality with men with a strong engagement for the new and growing socialist ideology. In this book the course is called socialist feminism. The word "socialism" was still vaguely defined and contested. The word had a positive ring and many groups attempted to use it and fill it with a content of their own. In Germany the revolutionaries had chosen to call themselves Social Democrats. In France the debates were still going on about the concept and its meaning. The congress of women's rights

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<sup>2</sup> Isay looks at year 1900 as the healing of the Dreyfus Affair, Isay 1937: 142; Not until 1906 Dreyfus was finally declared not guilty and thus free by a court. Reberieux 1975: 7ff, 28, 38; Derfler 1977: VIII, 170f.

<sup>3</sup> Orry 1911: 33 ff; Joll 1955: 82ff; Winock 1986: 186f; Réberieux (1994) 2004: 62f, 70ff, 134f.

<sup>4</sup> Sowerwine 1978: 75ff.

wished to do away with injustices between groups and classes of people. Iniquities were more and more exposed in big cities during the finishing decades of the 19th century. At the same time these women wanted emancipation on the same conditions as men. They demanded equality.<sup>5</sup>

Is it possible to call the women's congress in Paris in September 1900 socialist? It depends on the definition of "socialism". If we accept the concept as many of the delegates defined it, then indeed it was a socialist congress. At the same time, it is clear that the socialist feminists were struggling against opinions of other socialists, mostly men. But men were also fighting between each other to define socialism. The question was still to be decided: what kind of an ideology was socialism to be? Feminists wanted to have a say.

The French socialist movement had a conservative theory and an almost non-existing practice, when it came to the equality demands raised by feminists, according to Irène Jami, French historian of the press. But yet, women calling themselves both feminists and socialists were accepted as discussants about socialist analysis all the years up to the consolidation of French socialism.<sup>6</sup> Up until the year 1905 the relation between feminism and socialism was undefined, especially in the reformist groups. Thereafter, the Woman's Question was subordinated the class struggle, as it had been in Germany at least ten or rather fifteen years earlier.

The American historian Charles Sowerwine has defined the women's congress of 1900 as non-socialist. Sowerwine wrote that the International Congress of Woman's Conditions and Rights in 1900 had a profile of "social feminism". It is an anachronism. For him socialism was to be pronounced as revolutionary.<sup>7</sup> The definition of socialism, given by Sowerwine might also be typical for the 1970s, when Sowerwine wrote his book but not at all for the 1890s up until 1905. His research was on women inside the French socialism, using the definition it got after 1905, or had earlier around Jules Guesde.

At the women's congress in 1900 many women, as organizers and speakers, did call themselves socialists and were accepted as such in other

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<sup>5</sup> The use of the word "socialism", as well as its popularity and its interpretation was going on for a long time. An expression of its fluid value is a small brochure by Oswald Spengler *Preussentum und Sozialismus*, 1920.

According to him socialism was almost a national characteristic for Germans, not at all for French. The National Socialist, that is the Nazis, were also fond of the word. Its definition was uncertain, indeed.

<sup>6</sup> Jami 1981: 127.

<sup>7</sup> Sowerwine 1978: 75ff.

socialist circles. Also some prominent socialist men were present at the congress. It was the following up of the two former socialist feminist congresses held in Paris under the leadership of Eugénie Potonié-Pierre. These had had their roots in the congresses of 1878 and 1889 on women's rights.<sup>8</sup> The two congresses in the 1890s could, together with the one in 1900, be evaluated as attempts to get the divided but growing French socialist movement to integrate equality of women, and to launch such an understanding of socialism internationally. The ambition was high and should fail.

Sowerwine, from his narrow definition of socialism, found only two real socialists at the women's congress: Elisabeth Renaud and Louise Saumoneau. According to him, they were interested in economy and not only in legislation. Elisabeth Renaud tried to construct a split at the congress between the "bourgeois" and the socialists, helped by a couple of men. She managed to initiate a heated discussion around the question of girl servants in private homes. Sowerwine evaluates that debate as the most important at the congress and declared that it was about different opinions of class. The French historians Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, researchers of the French women's movement, states on the contrary that all involved more or less agreed on regulations of the conditions of servants. The discussion was about the possibility, not the advisability, of inspections in homes. The criticism raised by Elisabeth Renaud was thus irrelevant. During the congress, Renaud had, according to Klejman and Rochefort, made several attempts to distinguish socialism as something alien from feminism.<sup>9</sup> Her contributions seem very similar to the ones made by Clara Zetkin and Lily Braun at the congress in Berlin in 1896. Renaud had less success; her attempts were made at a congress, which was entirely more to the left than the one in 1896 in Berlin.

Sowerwine pointed out, to strengthen his evaluation, that Marguerite Durand, editor of the feminist *La Fronde*, was the most influential person at the 1900 congress. In this he has a point, as well as that she was not a socialist in his definition of the word. She belonged to a reformist socialism and had initiated several trade unions for women. Sowerwine asserts that the five

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<sup>8</sup> Broschure "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes", 6s, calls these four congresses as well as the one in 1900 for the feminist international congresses "(d)es congrès féministes internationaux", Congrès 1900 - Paris, Dos 84, BMD.

<sup>9</sup> The two men were named Brunswick and Lefort, not very prominent. Paris Sept 1900: t ex 147, 148, 205ff, 255; Sowerwine 1978: 76f; Klejman & Rochefort 1987: 581ff.

socialists in the organizing committee of the congress had been selected by Marguerite Durand because they did not believe in the class struggle. So it might be. But were they otherwise following all of Durand's opinions? Who were the five? René Viviani was socialist and an elected member of the National Assembly. Marie Bonneviel, was secretary in a syndicate for female teachers and co-worker in *La Fronde*. She was active at the congress of the Second International held in Paris that year. Stéphanie Bouvard, was leader of a syndicate of flower- and plume-makers. Lastly Caroline Kauffmann and Mme Vincent.<sup>10</sup> The last two were activists, Kauffmann general secretary of a socialist-feminist group Women's Solidarity /Solidarité des Femmes, Mme Vincent since a long time a well-known feminist, socialist and activist.

These five called themselves socialists. Sowerwine denies them the right to be classified as such. He implies that they were depending on Marguerite Durand but he only gives one example. The syndicate of the flower- and plume-makers got financial support from Marguerite Durand.<sup>11</sup> If we look at a central question at the congress, the night work prohibition for women, these five had different opinions. Durand was in a court procedure accusing her of obstructing the night work prohibition. Still the members of the committee were not thinking of night work the way she did. Mme Vincent and Stéphanie Bouvard were interested in special legislation for women, which was well known from earlier congresses. Marie Bonneviel was not - as Durand - negative to the night work prohibition for women but she wanted it less strict. So not even the criticism of Marie Bonneviel as dependant, is valid, even if she was writing on a regular basis in Durand's *La Fronde*.

It is not probable that René Viviani, one of the leaders in French socialism, should be subordinated to the influence of Durand. It is right that he adhered to the reformist socialists. It has been said<sup>12</sup> that Viviani was the lover of Durand at the time. If that was the case, the question would be, who influenced whom? Maybe the relation, friendly or more intimate, was founded on common opinions of a political character? My summary is that all these five socialists were acting

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<sup>10</sup> Bonneviel, Vincent and Viviani and prof André Weiss were the vice presidents of the congress; Kauffman was part of the committee as well as Bouvard and 30 other persons. The honorary president of the congress was Mme Clémence Royer and Mme Féresse-Deraismes. All points to a continuity between the congresses of 1878, 1889, 1892 and 1896. Paris Sept 1900: V-VII; Bonneviel had her portrait as a delegate at the congress of the Second International 1900, on the front page. *PR* 2/10 1900.

<sup>11</sup> Sowerwine on socialist means to support class struggle first see. Sowerwine 1978: 75ff.

<sup>12</sup> Klejman & Rochefort 1989:242 call the relationship friendly; Rabaut 1996; McMillan 2000.

autonomously as reformists and that the congress with good reason can be called socialist of a reformist kind.

Of course a socialist congress put waged work high on its agenda. That a woman's economic independence was the basis of her emancipation was the message of the congress.<sup>13</sup> Thus it was a *feminist* congress according to the definition the concept had since the 1890s among those who started to use the word for themselves. The organizers proudly stressed, that it was the very first time that an *official* congress at a world exposition raised pure feminist questions.<sup>14</sup> In this they disregarded the congress in Brussels in 1897, which had been feminist but not even reformist socialist. The demands in 1900 were almost the same as at the congress in Paris in 1896 but now presented to a much larger audience.

The congress was publicly acknowledged by leading persons among French socialists. The Chief Editor of *La Petite République*, the independent socialist Alfred-Léon Gérault-Richard wrote a supporting article with the title "Féminisme". He described a woman as more exploited than a man: "she is more a slave, she is more oppressed, more humiliated than we". His opinion was that woman should be allowed to work to achieve economic independence. It was a socialist duty to help her to be freed from masculine egoism. The article was defending René Viviani's engagement in the feminist cause<sup>15</sup> in a way that makes it clear that feminism was provoking *inside* the workers' movement and among socialists.

But others than socialist feminists visited the congress. Pauline Savari wrote that groups with different agendas met and got united. She mentioned bourgeois women as well as workers, free-thinkers as well as religious, all united in the conviction that all human beings, including women, should have the same rights. Among them were of course suffragists and men supporting women's political rights. This congress, as the earlier in the 1890s, took a resolution in favor of the right to vote. Irène Jami sees the congress as representative of "republican feminism", was anchored in a broader French radicalism, according

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<sup>13</sup> *La Grande Revue de l'Exposition* 1900:257.

<sup>14</sup> "Pour la première fois, un congrès officiel va traiter des questions féministes", Printed pages, "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes (Paris, 1900)" (No 314): 1, F 12 4319, AN; on suffrage *La Fronde* 6/9 1900.

<sup>15</sup> "... elle est plus esclave, plus opprimée, plus humiliée que nous." PR 8/9 1900:1.

to her the same as expressed in *La Fronde*.<sup>16</sup> This seems for a long time to have been a usual way to categorize the radical feminism, which I prefer to call socialist feminism. Beside it, there was the more neutral feminism, which we have seen in action in Brussels in 1896 and a bit at an earlier woman congress in 1900.

This congress put forward demands of equality. They had to do with economic independence, equal wages and suffrage. All demands appealed to the state, begging it to alter its legislation. The unfairness in treating women as children was accentuated:

Suppressed by laws, the elaboration of which she had not taken part in, the woman is treated as a minor, disregarding what intelligence or ability she has, and she suffers from the bad place she has been allotted in society.<sup>17</sup>

The congress conceived women's conditions as worse than men's; it had an analysis of women as subordinated. Three arenas were important for a policy of equality; economic citizenship, which was put up first, then the daily practices of norms and mentalities which were or were not put down as laws, in sum the civil citizenship and then as the final, the right to vote and be elected, the political citizenship.<sup>18</sup> Changes had to be made at all arenas. The congress demanded economic equality for married women, co-education for boys and girl in schools to establish the principle of equality between the sexes, and the same moral for both men and women, and as a consequence of that a stop for regulation of prostitution. To this was added some special rights for mothers and children.<sup>19</sup> The last were the only few not formulated in direct connection to equality.

The International Congress of Women's Conditions and Rights took place in the Palace of Congresses. Eight hundred participants, among them five hundred delegates, most of them French, had been at the opening ceremony. The large

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<sup>16</sup> Klejman & Rochefort 1987:586f; the USAmerican researchers Hause and Kenny calls it "a congress of rights", not a socialist one, Hause & Kenney 1884: 31f.

<sup>17</sup> "Soumise à des lois à l'élaboration desquelles elle n'a aucune part, la femme, quelles que soient son intelligence et ses capacités, est traitée en mineure et souffre de la condition misérable qui lui est faite dans la société." Printed pages, "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes (Paris, 1900)" (No 314): 1, F 12 4319, AN.

<sup>18</sup> Printed pages, "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes (Paris, 1900)" (No 314): 1-2, F 12 4319, AN.

<sup>19</sup> Printed *Bulletin d'Adhésion*, Mapp: Congrès 1900-Paris Dos 84, BMD; *Les Droits de la Femme* nr 17, 8/9 1900:1.

congress hall was most of the time filled up.<sup>20</sup> Initiators were Maria Pognon together with the two editors, Maria Martin of *Le Journal des Femmes* and Marguerite Durand of *La Fronde*. That newspaper was during the congress week transformed from normally presenting a mixture of news to focusing on reports from the debates at the congress.<sup>21</sup> Diligent stenographers and hard-working journalists as well as printers must have been busy making a paper where every word mentioned at the congress quickly could be distributed and read.

Many women, who had been at the June Congress, were active at this congress as well. Among them were Maria Martin, Maria Pognon, Mme Vincent and others. The foreign delegates were fewer than at the earlier 1900 congress. All in all there were participants from fifteen countries. The official foreign delegates, presented at the opening, came from six countries: the USA, Mexico, Belgium, Russia, Ecuador and Romania. The German women's movement thought that the congress was too focused on French condition. Thus leading German women abstained from coming.<sup>22</sup> Maybe also the stress on equality and the pronounced feminism deterred them? They did not like the concept "feminism". The German women activists did not appreciate that the French still did not accept special legislation for women concerning night work, since they all had united around it.

<sup>20</sup> The congress was number 91 of 127 official congresses. Commission Supérieure des Congrès, Seances 15/3. & 10/6. 1899, F 12 4317 and printed pages "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes (Paris, 1900)" (No 314): 1, F 12 4319, AN; *Le Congrès internationale de la Condition & des Droits des femmes*, took place 5-8 sept 1900. *La Fronde* 3/9 1900; Paris Sept 1900:XX; *Exposition Universelle 1900*, 1991:40; Sowerwine 1978:77; Klejman & Rochefort 1987: 580; Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen 1992: 138.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Pognon was the president. After Maria Deraismes she was elected president of La Ligue française pour le Droit des Femmes; Printed *Bulletin d'Adhésion*, Mapp: Congrès 1900-Paris Dos 84, BMD; Marguerite Durand was the secretary general of the congress with help from Maria Martin. Paris Sept 1900:3; *Revue de Morale Sociale* (Savioz) Dec 1900: 510; 29 women and 18 men were in the organising committee. Paris Sept 1900: 3f; Honorary presidents were Mme Clémence Royer and Mme Féresse-Deraismes, sister to the late Maria Deraismes and also Léon Richer. Accountant was Mlle Harlor, *La Fronde*, "Programme" 5/9 1900; on basis of a calculation 98 columns about the congress were published in *La Fronde*, all together a length of 61,5 meter, *FBw* 1900:147; *La Fronde* was for a radical, socialist and religiously neutral state ("laïque"). Jami 1981:62,97.

<sup>22</sup> The congress volume has no list of participants or speakers, no calculations of the number of foreigners; the numbers are estimates. From the USA= Charles Henrotin, Chicago, Mrs Helen Campbell, Denver, Mrs Rebeka Kohut, New York, Miss Hannat Clarke, Virginia and Mary Hollowell Campbell. From Russia= Mlle Strélakoff, Mme Sémetschkine and M le baron J de Berwick (p11), from the Netherlands = Mme Schook Haver (p 318) there called the Dutch delegate. From Germany = Otilie Hoffman, delegate from Conseil National des femmes allemandes (p284); Lina Morgenstern had sent a report "L'Influence de la Femme sur l'Hygiène populaire" but does not seem to have been in Paris herself. (pp345ff) From England = Dora Montefiore (p188); From Italy = Mlle Flavia Steno, journalist and Mme Cecilia Meyer, Rom (pp191, 229, 287), Maria Pognon also spoke about persons from Bulgaria, Schweiz and Spain, in her inaugural speech (p21), Paris Sept 1900; *FBw* 1900: 146ff; Klejman & Rochefort 1987: 587.



The program covered education and legislation, both private and common law. Under questions of economic, moral and social character, women's work and special legislation came on the table. Every session was prepared in advance by a smaller group. Resolutions were then voted for after an open discussion of the suggestion from the preparatory group. In her introductory words, the president Maria Pognon had mentioned the conditions for women working in industries. To the view that women should not work out of the home, she replied that women needed an income and also and not the least that the country needed women's waged work. The number of working women in France was well over two and a half million, compared to the number of men who were approximately only one million more. This meant that if women were forbidden to work, the economy of France should be badly damaged. But women needed better work conditions.<sup>23</sup>

Marie Bonneval reported from the preparatory group at the session on women's wages, evaluation of women's work in the family, working hours and conditions. It suggested state regulation of wages. Minimum wages for women was already the fact in other countries.<sup>24</sup> From the demand on a regulation of wages, the step was not far to a demand to a regulation of working hours, and from there to a debate on night work prohibition/regulation. Long working hours were considered the reason for low wages. With a diminished work day, wages ought to increase because it created a lack of workers. The employers should be willing or forced to pay more, was the logic.

The preparatory group wanted reduced working hours for everyone, men as well as women, to eight hours work a day in industry and trade, with a free time of 36 continuous hours per week. In this very topical question the women's congress stood up for the socialist demand, the radical and contested demand, of an eight hours work day. In this it differed from the earlier woman congress that summer and also from the congress at Musée Social on protection of workers. To shorten the work day so drastically was considered unrealistic at the time. It was

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<sup>23</sup> Printed pages: "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes (Paris, 1900), (No 314), F 12 4319, AN, Paris; handwritten protocoll: "Congrès international de la condition et des droits des femmes, (Paris 1900), Troisième Commission, Section de Législation", BMD; *La Fronde* this week in 1900: when nothing else is referred to, the debates are taken from those published in the paper, with back up from the printed protocol in a book. (= Paris Sept 1900). The paper has exclamation marks and remarks on calls etc which are not in the book version. Paris Sept 1900: 17f.

<sup>24</sup> Marie Bonneval summarized memos ("mémoire") written by the preparatory group. Paris Sept 1900: 27ff; jfr Klejman & Rochefort 1987:580. They are concentrated on a debate between "liberals" and "protectionists"; Wikander, Kessler-Harris & Lewis 1995:8, 94, 109ff, 310, 322ff, 338.

the demand of the Second Socialist International. The prep-group did not want any special work hours for women.<sup>25</sup> And it wanted a right to union activities. It stressed women's right to work, not only for family reasons, but for women to have an income of their own, which was a precondition for independence; everyone had a personality to develop.<sup>26</sup>

Marie Bonneviel did not stop at presenting these demands from the group, which were to be transformed into a resolution after discussions. She kept the word and let the audience listen to some even more radical opinions of her own. Personally, she admitted, she wanted man and woman to share all household work. She hoped for sharing of the education of children, and that the working day, with the help of technique could be shortened to four hours. She fancied it possible to earn money working in at home. She challenged traditional thinking on men's and women's duties and called the gender division of labor in question, also concerning unpaid house work. She made the audience laugh, drastically asking why the man could not cook at home, when he could do so in a restaurant kitchen. Or why should it be more humiliating for a man to arrange flowers in the bedroom at home than for an officer to clean his boots? Bonneviel painted an idyll of the future marriage. The one should not be a master, the other not a slave; man and woman should be comrades.

No work was humiliating, said Marie Bonneviel, but women's work was always *considered* inferior. Her explanation was the religious view on woman as full of sin. She demonstrated her republican free-thinking disgust for the influence of the Catholic church on education and its power over the relations of men and women. The view of the Catholic church had chased Bonneviel into exile when she was a young teacher; she had been forbidden to teach in France. The Republic had during the 1880s introduced obligatory and free schools without religious education. Bonneviel was back teaching in such a school.

Marie Bonneviel did not like workers' unions ruled by men and incited women to found syndicates *without men*. In some professions this happened because only women were employed. Many unions did not allow women to join, and in these cases a separate union was necessary. Bonneviel ironically spoke about "our most tender friends, the most affectionate, these fighters for the woman by the fireside, in the home" who attempted to exclude women from all

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<sup>25</sup> Paris Sept 1900: 34.

<sup>26</sup> "...c'est un moyen d'indépendance", *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 2 column 3; Paris Sept 1900:28-39.

good and well-paid professions and works. Many of them even wanted to forbid women any waged work. She wished a revision of the law of 1892, so as to allow women to work evenings although she wanted that night work for women remained prohibited.<sup>27</sup> Her vision of industrial home work with good conditions was often heard inside the women's movement, thus also here by a socialist feminist. The consciousness was strong that an income gave power and respect in the family.

Paule Vigneron had presented a similar vision of paid home work at the earlier women's congress that summer. Such a vision was contrary to the policies of most unions, which wanted to do away with all industrial home work. In this respect the feminists and the male syndicalists had different visions.

A recently founded "group of feminist socialists" was revolutionary. It asked the congress to formulate a resolution about unionizing. The suggestion was denied as superfluous; unionizing was allowed since 1884 in France. Disregarded as well was the demand by this group to ask for wages according to the slogan "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". Instead a resolution about equal pay for equal work was accepted,<sup>28</sup> a demand taken from the Second International.

Camille Bélilon, as an independent feminist, demanded equality without any special conditions. As a journalist she had a standing column in *La Fronde*: "Cronique féministe". The congress should not say yes or no to state regulation, was her point of view. That could split the movement. Her opinion as a feminist was that any solution was acceptable, as long as it stipulated the same conditions for men and women<sup>29</sup> Mme Vincent continued her long campaign for special legislation, as usual stressing the moral side. Not only prostitution was a danger for those working at night but also the enticement of sexual relations outside marriage. She worried that young girls be tempted into "small adventures"<sup>30</sup>, going home alone in the night.

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<sup>27</sup> "... nos amis es plus tendres, les plus dévoués, les partisans de la *femme au foyer*...", *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 2 column 3; Paris Sept 1900:28-39; About the school in France, Leduc 1991:151f; Fayet-Scribe 1990:33; Birnbaum 1992:162ff.

<sup>28</sup> Paris Sept 1900:42ff; "...chacun donnant ses efforts recevra selon ses besoins" *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 2 column 2ff; compare about "*le Groupe féministe socialiste*", Sowerwine 1975 & 1978: 77.

<sup>29</sup> *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 2 column 6; Paris Sept 1900: 47; Camille Bélilon wrote since the beginning of the paper in 1897 her "Cronique féministe". *La Fronde*.

<sup>30</sup> "... de petites escapades ..." *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 3 kolumn 1; Paris Sept 1900: 48.

Dutch Mme Schook-Haver lifted up the socialist feminist demand "... let us protect the father as we protect the mother". Her compatriot Wilhelmina Drucker thought the same, as she with irony accused the proponents of special legislation of not going far enough. If they wanted to protect women by legislation, they should include all women's work: household work, both paid and unpaid.<sup>31</sup> An Italian contributed by saying that men protected their own work by excluding women. Her solution was suffrage for women.<sup>32</sup>

Marguerite Durand, charismatic and influential, asked the congress to say no to any special legislation for women. They created troubles at all workplaces between men and women. Different laws and conditions gave women lower wages. With equal pay, women could no longer be accused of unfair competition. Durand did not want any restrictions; poor women should be able to take even the hardest of works to earn money. She supported the socialist demand of a work day of eight hours for everyone. It should make all work less though. She put forward as the most important principle of all for feminists: legal equality. She seconded the opinion of Bélilon that equality was the most important, but added immediately that labor protection for all would be the best solution:

I am talking about both woman and man, because the first principle of feminism is to oppose all special legislation. Please, introduce labor protection for all female workers in the workshops, limit their work hours, give them airy spaces, good hygiene, yes even good morals but introduce the same conditions for the male workers.<sup>33</sup>

If the laws were equal, the employer should hire the best. Durand as well as others pointed to the evidently, that equality included suffrage. She chose not to stay neutral on protective labor legislation even if she put equality above it. At this congress the socialist tendency was dominant and thus protective labor legislation for all was most appreciated.

Durand's speech was also about the power syndicalism gave. She lauded the organization of trade unions and surpassed the revolutionaries in her praise of syndicate activities.<sup>34</sup> As all the resolutions were to be addressed to the

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<sup>31</sup> ... "Eh bien, protégeons le père comme nous protégeons la mère." Paris Sept 1900: 47; *La Fronde* 6/9 1900; in *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 3 column 1 says "Brucker".

<sup>32</sup> Emilia Mariani. *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 3 column 1-2; Paris Sept 1900: 50.

<sup>33</sup> "Je dis de la femme et de l'homme parce que le premier principe du féminisme est de s'élever contre toute loi d'exception. Protégez le travail de l'ouvrière dans des ateliers, limitez le temps de ce travail, placez l'ouvrière dans des ateliers bien aérés, veillez à son hygiène, même à sa moralité, mais faites de même pour l'ouvrier." *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 3 column 2.

<sup>34</sup> Paris Sept 1900: 50ff.

legislators, Marguerite Durand did not propose a resolution about unions; they were already permitted.

The final resolution on the regulation of work became a plea for equal protective laws for all:

(The congress demands) that all special legislation about women's work conditions are abolished.

With an addition:

and that they are replaced by protective legislation for all workers without any regard to sex.<sup>35</sup>

With this the congress joined the double kind of resolution, which had been demanded by socialist feminists before. As socialists, they rejected a free labor market and asserted at the same time the feminist principle of equality before the law. As well as equal protective laws, the congress wanted equal wages. About the wages, as in the question of protection, the feminists were consequent even if their demands might be harming women in the short run.

The leading women kept to their plan of a policy of possibility. With their demands, they turned to the legislators of the Third Republic. They had faith in the government and the National Assembly, thinking that they were near to attain a public recognition.<sup>36</sup> The delegates from other countries were bringing home the same demands. The feminists had decided on a pragmatic strategy with equality between men and women at the center. Without diminishing their radicalism, they hoped for many followers and acceptance. Their socialism was manifested in several ways, for example in the demand of an eight hours work day for everybody.

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In Berlin in 1896 the night work prohibition had been decisive in *constructing* a conflict, putting equality feminists as opposed to a real socialism, to German Social Democratic party policy. A split was marked; "the clean cut" was the split between bourgeois and socialist women, preached by Clara Zetkin and others. In Paris no such "cut" was achieved even if tempts had been made. Still the delegates, both men and women at this congress, tried to integrate ideas from

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<sup>35</sup> "Que toutes les lois d'exception que régissent le travail des femmes soient abrogées", the first demand of the congress got the addition "Et remplacées par l'application à toute la population ouvrière et sans distinction de sexe, d'un régime égal de protection", *La Fronde* 6/9 1900: 3 column 3.

<sup>36</sup> The radical French women were not as frustrated as the English or American sisters. They thought they were getting a hearing, says Goldberg Moses 1984: 229.

socialism with feminism, to assimilate two kinds of equalities. At the banquet at the end of the congress, a toast was raised to the socialist René Viviani, who had officially stood up for suffrage for women. He was hailed as "the capable and very eloquent defender of the cause of feminism".<sup>37</sup>

In the finishing speech by Maria Pognon, tensions were despite this exposed, between revolutionary and reformist socialists, as well as between bourgeois and socialist women. The conflict was complicated and not directly connected to equality at work or the night work prohibition. But it points to that socialists and bourgeois in France, as in Germany, attempted to find if there was room for cooperation or if a clean cut was better. Pognon told that she had been irritated by, time and again, being called "bourgeois" during the congress, when she had underlined that women should be better off if they cooperated disregarding social position.<sup>38</sup>

Marie Bonneviel was one of the many socialist feminists at the congress. Among them she set the tone. She saw it as her duty as a socialist to mix with women of other views to spread interest in equality. If women organized separately from men, in a "feminist party", it had the purpose of creating a happy coming together later, in a society without exploitation.:

When we have conquered our rights, there will not any longer exist an enemy. Man and woman will be as they were meant to be, two equals, two comrades, created to walk together in life. And when there is no exploitation any longer, then ... there will be only one class. But to achieve their rights, women must organize in a party, in the same way as workers organize in a party. When women have achieved total justice, then there will only be one party, the party of humanity.<sup>39</sup>

Her words were pointing to brighter future. Did they even imply a political party of feminists or did she speak symbolically? Bonneviel was well aware of that feminism could not melt into socialism as early as in 1900. And feminism did not become a united political movement, even less a political party. The

<sup>37</sup> "M. Viviani, le vaillant et très éloquent défenseur de la cause féministe." Paris Sept 1900:311; Hause & Kenney 1884:31f.

<sup>38</sup> Paris Sept 1900:290f; Viviani (*Justice* 22/9) 1900; Sowerwine 1978:78ff takes the episod from the speech of Pognon as an evidence for his interpretation of history. For the interpretation that Renaud was the leader of provocations, see Klejman & Rochefort 1989:139ff.

<sup>39</sup> Viviani 1900; "Quand nous aurons conquis nos droits, il n'y aura plus d'ennemis. L'homme et la femme seront ce qu'ils doivent être, deux égaux, deux compagnons faits pour marcher ensemble dans la vie. De même quand il n'y aura plus de spoliés, que tous travailleront sous une forme quelconque pour avoir droit à la vie et à leur part légitime de jouissance, il n'y aura plus qu'une classe. Mais pour arriver à conquérir ces droits, il faut que, comme les femmes s'organisent en parti féminin, les travailleurs s'organisent en parti de classes. Quand ils auront conquis la justice complète, il n'y aura plus qu'un grand parti, le parti de l'humanité." *La Fronde* 13/9 1900; Paris Sept 1900: 548.

movement split in different directions and socialism became much stronger than feminism as a political force during the 20th century.

After the congress in 1900 and the ever-repeated ideological conflicts with the revolutionary socialists the radicals in the women's movement, including the socialist feminists, looked for other alliances. The support of René Viviani and other politicians was not capable to pave the way and give women economic and political citizenships. Viviani took a resolution from the congress on suffrage for women and presented it to the National Assembly but to no avail. French women did not get the vote then and had to wait many decades for that right. In 1900 no one thought suffrage was further away from French women than from other women in Europe, on the contrary. Ever more women, as already pointed out, put their hopes on suffrage. The belief was that the right to vote and get elected, to get the political citizenship, should open up for an equality between men and women in all other respects. In the struggle for emancipation, the economic citizenship was more and more put aside by the emphasis on the vote and the organizing to achieve it. Still at this congress many women were occupied by the unfair conditions in the labor market.

The "militant socialist" Elisabeth Renaud<sup>40</sup> and some male socialists had at this congress marked hostility against the equality feminism connected to reform socialism. Their attitude, their line, was to become the only one when the French socialism united in 1905. The woman question was to be subordinated to the class struggle and women continue to be subordinated to men.

### **The Second International and special legislation for women**

The object of socialism was to gather the workers of the world in a common struggle against capitalism. Internationalism was built into its ideology. To implement it in practice was no easy task. But the 1890s saw the growth of a more organized transnational socialism.

Socialism got 47 seats in the National Assembly in the 1898 elections in France. But between them they were not agreeing. Jules Guesde was the leader of the revolutionaries. He and his followers wished for a collapse of the bourgeois state and with it the fall of the Third Republic. Other socialists constituted a reformist group. Jean Jaurès, Alexandre Millerand and René Viviani

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<sup>40</sup> Paris Sept 1900: 293; Elisabeth Renaud was a teacher, and socialist since 1896.

were among its leading men.<sup>41</sup> They wanted to take part in and respect the parliamentary process and were for this reason called "the participants". They supported the young Republic, believed it could be altered in a peaceful way, and feared a return to civil war and revolution. They accepted the broad coalition government of 1899, established to stabilize the Republic still under threat from the right as well as from the left. For the sake of peaceful reforms Alexandre Millerand had agreed to, as the only socialist, sit in the government. As already remarked, it deepened the split between socialists in France. That Millerand became a minister was world news and as a consequence it also caused a serious schism inside the international socialism around the question to cooperate with a bourgeois state or not.

When socialists met internationally, there were often heated discussions. The biggest fights were over whom would be included, that is which groups and organizations among socialists and syndicated groups could be delegates and thus have a vote. Behind these internal disputes, which could take days of the limited time of a congress, lay of course disagreements of the ideology of socialism. What was the socialism to be spread all over the world?

The overall question for the Second Socialist International was how to change society. During the earlier years the split had been between a more political and a more economic and anti-national wing. Simplified the dispute was how to "fight", how to act; on the one side politically, by building a disciplined party organization, demanding suffrage and getting into power that way (and if necessary take the power by revolution) or on the other side to act by use of economic means, via actions such as manifestations, strikes, boycotts, sabotages and equivalents. Anarchism recommended the latter activities, in sum called "direct actions". It had a tradition on the European continent. But anarchists were as a principle poorly organized and made themselves infamous by series of political murders, made to destabilize the bourgeois state during the 1890s. Many of these anti-state attacks took place in France. This revolutionary syndical wing had once and for all been excluded from the Second International at the London congress in 1896. The extreme leftist wing was left outside the international organization of socialists.

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<sup>41</sup> Seilhac 1904: 12f; The daily paper of the participants was *La Petite République*, Chief Editor was Gérault-Richard, Winock 1980; Winock 1986: 93ff, 186f; Garrigues 1992.



Now in Paris, there was another split: between reformists and revolutionaries. The latter said that the class struggle had to end in a revolution, probably a civil war and the working class get the power with more or less violence. Workers should take over the state and the revolution should spread to become worldwide. On the contrary, the reformist believed in a slow but steady and peaceful parliamentary way to the top of the state for socialists. They were in France stronger than the revolutionaries because they could see an increase in their possibilities to reform via elections. At the international Paris congress in 1900, these reformists were not so well seen. They were too much to the right of the middle among the delegates. The influential German delegation was verbally keen on revolution. They preached its theory. This opinion was to a great deal dependent on the rather small political power the Social Democrats could exert in their own country, despite its large numbers of members, its good organization and its unity. Since 1890, free to act, they had built the greatest Social Democratic party in the world. In 1900 they were well represented in the Reichstag, but the dilemma was that it was a weak institution with low impact on policy making. The emperor Wilhelm II, his chosen ministers and associates had the real power. The Germans were thus combining their revolutionary rhetoric with a cautious practice at home, which has to be understood in the perspective of that they had been forbidden to organize or agitate recently, between 1878 and 1890.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, the French socialism seemed to be better integrated in a representative system in the new dynamic Republic. As long as the Third Republic was existing, the reformist socialists hoped to have an influence and felt its power increase legally. The reformists inside the French socialism saw that participation did pay off.

The German paradox between verbal theorizing but not so much its different practice was transmitted into the international cooperation. In the capital of France, the quarrels and fights between revolutionaries and reformists were expected, and connected to the French political scene.<sup>43</sup> Had the time come to get rid of the more moderate reformist wing in the international socialism? Should further exclusions diminish the force internationally?

The congress in 1900 was to be characterized by the different opinions exposed openly since Alexandre Millerand had accepted to be Minister of Trade

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<sup>42</sup> Joll 1955: 3; Evans 1976:4f; Winock 1980:11ff.

<sup>43</sup> The congress convened in "salle Wagram, avenue de Wagram", *Histoire ...* Tome 13 45.

and Industry in the government Waldeck-Rousseau, dominated by bourgeois. To it belonged the general, marquis de Galliffet, who was ill famed for his actions at the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871. One of his nicknames was "the butcher of the Commune". The violence during the course of events, cruelty between compatriots, the heavy penalties afterwards were still in living memory among French socialists. Some had just managed not to be killed, many had lost relatives and dear ones, others were for years living as deported or in voluntary exile. No wonder of the dismay and consternation among socialists when Alexandre Millerand, a man they considered one of their own, choose to work together with the person who had been the leader when French soldiers were attacking French citizens in the fight over Paris.

"The congress is the congress of the Case Millerand!" Dutch Émile Vandervelde is said to have exclaimed. Was it possible for a socialist to compromise and politically cooperate with the bourgeois was the question? For the French, it was of immediate importance. The two wings of French socialism did air their national split in the international arena.<sup>44</sup>

Karl Kautsky, German and appreciated as the best theoretician in the international socialist movement, managed to solve the almost impossible question. Diplomatically, he said that both sides, both wings, were right. The revolutionary French group was right in principle. There should be no cooperation with the bourgeois. But, added Kautsky, it is not always possible to adhere to principles. In practice cooperation must be allowed and thinkable, in cases where it was motivated. The authority of Kautsky personally was such, that the conflict could be lifted away from the agenda. Those criticizing him gave his solution the name "the Kautschuk motion" because it had the flexibility of rubber, bending to pressure.<sup>45</sup>

Alexandre Millerand stayed away from the congress. Activists, supporting him, were Jean Jaurès and René Viviani. Yet Millerand was present in his absence in several ways. His political position had let loose emotional feelings. In another question his influence was also obvious but without being put in question. As minister he had influence on legislation on protective labor legislation. And he

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<sup>44</sup> Vandervelde 1939: 147; Rebérioux 1975: 28; Document from the congress are far from good. It was also badly organized. Winock 1980: 11ff.

<sup>45</sup> Vandervelde 1939: 151; Winock 1980: 13f; Eric Hobsbawm calls Kautsky "chief theoretical authority" of the Second International. , Haupt 1986: xv.

wanted such legislation to be spread internationally. Of course all socialists were well aware of this view of his. Millerand had stood up for them only some months earlier at the congress of protection of workers.<sup>46</sup>

Even if the rhetoric was revolutionary at the Second International, all the resolutions were as a rule directed to the state, with demands of reforms to secure rights for workers and work conditions. The demands were those that might be implemented inside the frames of the present situation.<sup>47</sup> There was no doubt about it, the congress should ask for protection of workers, which in France was to turn to the ministry led by Alexandre Millerand.

In a resolution the eight hours working day was again repeated. It was raised already in 1889. Would it be appropriate to ask for minimum wage, was an other discussion? Somewhat surprising the question of a night work prohibition for women entered into that debate. Luise Zietz from Germany brought it up. Her speech will be scrutinized because it contained all the opinions that were about to be established in the international socialism on the woman's question, seen via the prism of protective legislations. It shows the values and the accepted arguments and how loosely they were put together. The daily *La Petite République*, medium for the reformist socialists, remarked that the contribution by Luise Zietz had been short but brilliant. Three more or less official versions of her speech exist.<sup>48</sup> All three of them show the new place of special legislation for women, especially the night work prohibition, in order of importance among questions of worker protection. It demonstrates a shift in the Second International on how the view on women could be formulated. Equality was not any longer used. The shift was probably a result of the congress of trade unions in Zurich in 1897, as well as of national opinions and debates.

The longest version of Zietz's speech was published in *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. It is said to be the most reliable. Its structure is near to spoken

<sup>46</sup> *Die Frau* Juli 1900: 610ff; Derfler 1977:178ff.

<sup>47</sup> George Haupt has pointed to the practical tendency of the International after 1900, text Haupt 1986: 98; Hobsbawm quoting Haupt says that Kautsky at this time defined the German SPD - the most influential - as "a party which, while revolutionary, does not make revolution", Haupt 1986: xiv.

<sup>48</sup> About Zietz see Weiland 1983: 294ff; *PR* 26/9 1900; Haupt 1964:172; The 3 versions are 1) *Cinquième congrès socialiste international tenu à Paris du 23 au 27 septembre 1900. Compte rendu officiel. Paris* 1901 2); "Compte rendu sténographique non officiel de la version française du cinquième Congrès socialiste international... Paris 1900/1901", which more in detail was published in the journal of Péguy's *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* and 3) "Internationaler Sozialisten-kongress zu Paris..." Berlin:Vorwärts, 1900, all in facsimil in *Histoire ... Tome 13* 1980: 78-79, 228-23, 378-381; Comment UW: Winock 1980:14 judges the official protocol as "most inadequate" and the protocol of the French journal as the best. I have not found otherwise and use mostly *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, sometimes complemented with the daily *PR*.

language and exposes all the arguments, that were used to motivate special legislation for women. The protocol seems to have been printed from a text taken down in shorthand. The structure of the speech is impressive, held by one of the best female agitators in the party. Luise Zietz came from a working class family in Hamburg and worked since 1898 tight with Clara Zetkin in *die Gleichheit*. During the end of the 1890s she had become an important agitator, organizing women, industrial workers as well as servants.<sup>49</sup>

A close reading of her speech brings us into the paradoxes socialists had started to weave around protective legislation, motherhood and women's waged work. A consequence of this web was that women's economic citizenship was and ought to remain different from men's. Luise Zietz mixed freely demands on a general shortening of the working day, demands on special legislation for women and the right to start trade unions. It became an ideological package; to want special legislation for women was the same as supporting all kinds of worker protection. The contrary was also proclaimed; those against special protection of women only, were said to be against all protection of workers. The ideology ignored the socialist feminists' middle way between these positions.

Zietz announced that she spoke for all German Social Democratic women. First she denounced those who saw labor as something that principally should not be regulated. For her "freedom of work" was a need for workers' protection, including special legislation for women:

The German socialist women are positive to regulations of work, because they think, it is the guarantee for intellectualism and for all progress for the working class. They are sure that when the day is here, when the whole world works only eight hours per day, then all the political and economic freedoms will not be far away, after this the first triumph of the proletariat over the European capitalism. (Applauds)<sup>50</sup>

Zietz supported the demand for a shorter working day for all. She mentioned women as positive to general "regulation of work". From this Zietz talked about equality between men and women. Wishing equality, she concluded

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<sup>49</sup> Zeisler 1978: 36ff.

<sup>50</sup> "La citoyenne Sitz (Allemagne). - Au nom des citoyennes allemandes, je me déclare en faveur du principe de la limitation légale de la journée de travail. On parle maintenant de travail libre; il n'y en a pas s'il n'y a pas de liberté économique du prolétariat. Les femmes socialistes allemandes sont partisans de la réglementation légale du travail, parce qu'à leur point de vue, c'est la base de toute intellectualité, de tout progrès de la classe ouvrière et qu'elles sont certaines que le jour où, dans le monde entier, le travail serait légalement fixé à huit heures, toutes les libertés politiques et économiques ne tarderaient pas à suivre ce premier triomphe du prolétariat sur le capitalisme européen. (Applaudissements) " This quote and the following are taken from the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, i *Histoire* ... Tome 13: 230f.

that legally a difference had to be made between the sexes. Her thought must have been to compensate women legally for their subordination in society, which Zietz called "social inequality". The principle of equality was helped if women, already legally subordinated under men, got new special legislation of a positive kind to hinder capitalist exploitation. As women in Germany could not yet organize politically, legislation should give them such treatment as they otherwise could have got by their unions.

Despite the principle of an equality between the sexes, or maybe rather the principle of a social equality, we have to demand an increased and more efficient protective legislation for the woman than for the man. The reason that woman is subordinated man is because she is legally subordinated. And because of this, she is also easier to exploit by capitalism. When she won the economic freedom to work in industry, she only changed master, instead of being under her husband, she passed under the atrocious yoke of capitalism, exploiting her still harder, she who is humble and filled with maternal love.(Applauds) <sup>51</sup>

Motherhood and class were central. The mentioning of women's modesty and maternity rendered applause. These characteristics were appreciated by socialist men, the majority in the audience. Zietz spoke about "woman" in the singular, suggesting one proper handling for all women. The analysis of woman's subordination, partly by the husband, partly by capitalism sounds courageous. Zietz perceived that a subordination moved from the husband and over to capitalism. She did not see it as co-existing, inside the family and at the work place simultaneously. The socialist feminist version with a demand of a protection for all but without special legislation for women, was absent from her speech. Neither did she make any difference between married or unmarried women; somehow all women had a "husband".

Conclusions, maybe spiteful, of Zietz's opinion was, that despite all it was better to be subordinated in the home, and the paradox that if both wife and husband worked in the industry, this made them equal at home. The gender division of labor in the family was not made visible nor was it of any importance when the woman was exploited by capitalism. In essence this was a critical view

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<sup>51</sup> "Malgré le principe de l'égalité des sexes, ou plutôt à cause du principe de cette égalité sociale, il faut demander une protection plus large, plus efficace pour la femme que pour l'homme; parce que la femme se trouve vis-à-vis de l'homme dans une situation inférieure, quant à sa position légale, elle est plus que l'homme sujette à l'exploitation capitaliste. Par le travail industriel, en conquérant sa liberté économique, elle a seulement changé de maître : au lieu de la férule du mari, elle est tombée sous le joug honteux du capitalisme, qui l'exploite plus durement encore, dans sa modestie et son amour maternel. (Applaudissements)" *Histoire ...* Tome 13:230f.

on all waged work by women. Against the special exploitation of women, a state protection was needed, as the protection by the husband did not reach into the work place.

The ambivalent view socialists had to women's waged work is exposed in the speech. "Economic freedom" alternatively "freedom of work" for the woman worker became in the interpretation of Zietz not the economic independence praised by the socialist feminists. Zietz freedom of work was that a man should have the right to choose an education, a training and a profession, an occupation and also have the right to unionize. but that another interpretation of freedom of work was given for women. "Equality" should be achieved by unequal treatment, for women.

Ottillie Baader and Clara Zetkin had argued similarly at the Social Democratic "Volksversammlungen" in Berlin in 1896; special treatment of women in the work places should increase equality with the help of the state. Luise Zietz presented variation on the theme:

Through an efficient protective legislation a woman should become conscious of herself, her duties and her human rights. The more encompassing the protection was, the more should woman's consciousness grow and her power to fill her duties should be strengthened.<sup>52</sup>

Women should be conscious of their "duties" via special protection. Women first had to learn about the special duties they had as mothers and wives, and secondly their duties to the class struggle and waged work. Duties and rights were different for men and women. Zietz did not hide that it gave men also advantages:

To demand protection at work for the woman, is not only done in the interest of the woman but in the interest of the whole working class, because it will prevent the woman to land in an unfair competition vis-à-vis the man.<sup>53</sup>

Zietz put "/t/he interest of the whole working class" in opposition to "the interest of the woman". The French trade union leader August Keufer had, in a similar way, put woman's interest against the interest of the father in the family, during the earlier congress for workers' protection that summer. The analysis

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<sup>52</sup> "Par une protection législative efficace, on rendrait la femme consciente de soi-même, de ses devoirs et de ses droits humains. Plus la protection sera grande, plus la conscience de la femme et la force de remplir tous ses devoirs seront grandes." *Histoire ...* Tome 13: 231.

<sup>53</sup> "En demandant la protection de la femme, on n'agit pas seulement dans l'intérêt de la femme, mais dans l'intérêt de la classe ouvrière tout entière, parce qu'on empêche la femme d'entrer en concurrence déloyale avec l'homme." *Histoire ...* Tome 13: 231.

expelled women from the working class, which had only one sex. It was male. Women's waged work became a disloyal act, if women entered in competition with men. It was a plea for a strict gender division of labor. Feminists called it a protection of men's work.

Zietz spoke only about special legislation for women, not to forbid them all waged work. Another reason to treat women differently was motherhood.

The danger is that there might be yet another generation before the proletariat can harvest the fruits of the movement against the capitalist exploitation. The proletariat must be able to fulfill its historical task to liberate the working class and the whole of humankind. For this the proletariat has to be sound and healthy, body and soul and of a good character. A woman, bent by the economic and capitalist yoke, can not give birth to children, who are strong and efficient for this honorable fight. (Vivid applause)<sup>54</sup>

Every time woman as a mother was mentioned, there were applause, according to the detailed article in the French journal *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. As a mother woman was valuable in the longer fight of the working class. This way to think was well in tone with others at the time, with its fear for degeneration of mankind and for children of poor quality. Also socialists were influenced by modern science, of Social Darwinist thoughts on race and capacity for reproduction. A mother should stay at home and take care of her children. Zietz wanted strong children because the class struggle may turn into a revolution, and then not a symbolic one. A revolution needed fighters, that meant children growing up to become men.

Protective laws against night work might be seen as a compromise; it was necessary for women to work to earn a living. But Zietz sounded as if she did not want any mother to work. Married women with children should not leave their homes. About other women she had nothing to say. Even if it was hardly of any relevance for the motherhood question, in the end of her speech, Luise Zietz reminded of the importance of women's unionizing.

Thus we do not only demand a protective legislation about work hours but also an efficient legislation protecting the right to start and belong to trade unions. We demand that the laws already existing to be followed. These

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<sup>54</sup> " Il y a encore une autre question plus importante; il faut craindre que nous ayons besoin d'une autre génération pour que le prolétariat recueille les fruits du mouvement qu'il a commencé contre l'exploitation capitaliste. Pour qu'il puisse remplir le grand rôle historique de l'émancipation de la classe ouvrière et de toute l'humanité, il faut un prolétariat sain de corps et d'esprit et beau de caractère. Or, la femme courbée sous le joug économique et capitaliste ne peut donner naissance à des enfants qui soient forts et prêts pour cette noble lutte. (Vifs applaudissements) " *Histoire ...* Tome 13:231.

wishes have already been raised and voted for at national and international congresses. We want these demands to be implemented, because they will contribute to the final victory for the whole proletariat, if the working woman will be granted protective labor legislation. (Prolonged applause).<sup>55</sup>

So far the commented account of Luise Zietz's speech in the longer format, published in *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. The official German protocol is shorter, stresses even more motherhood and that women themselves like to be protected in a special way.<sup>56</sup>

At the congress, Luise Zietz was the only one to bring up women. She did so in the midst of a debate demanding an eight hours working day. She must have been given the opportunity there, because she was not silenced, on the contrary. Zietz underlined that her demands had already been accepted at earlier congresses. No voting followed, no debate. Luise Zietz's speech was taken as a confirmation of earlier decisions, even if the support for special legislation for women never ever before had been presented with such a great number of arguments. Marie Bonneval, who in 1897 obstinately had tried to defend equality at the congress of trade unions, and who had discussed it at the feminist congress in the summer, did not any longer raise her voice even if present.<sup>57</sup> She had changed her line of resistance to defending the right to rest during the night, as recently at the women's congress, and she wanted it to involve men as well.

The socialist movement – except the small group of socialist feminists – agreed that special protection of women was a good thing. In the same way as the bourgeois workers' protection congress, the socialist congress chose not to listen to or remark on the socialist feminists' critique of the consequences of separate treatment. These feminists had not successfully created for their point of view inside a male dominated group with influence over policies.

The construction, the understanding, of a femininity, which had as its most important role as mother in a family and as to be such a complement to

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<sup>55</sup> "C'est pour cela que nous ne demandons pas seulement la protection législative au point de vue des heures de travail, mais une protection efficace au point de vue de la liberté syndicale; nous demandons que la loi ne reste pas lettre morte à cet égard. Ces desiderata ont été déjà énoncés et votés par plusieurs Congrès nationaux et internationaux; nous demandons leur mise en vigueur, car ils contribueront à la victoire définitive du prolétariat tout entier, en assurant la protection de la femme travailleuse! (Applaudissements prolongés)" *Histoire ...* Tome 13:231.

<sup>56</sup> *Histoire ...* Tome 13:379.

<sup>57</sup> "... votés par plusieurs Congrès nationaux et internationaux"(231) *Histoire ...* Tome 13:228ff; Marie Bonneval took part in the congress PR 27/9 1900: 1f and at a drawing together with Arthur Rozier there, PR 2/10 1900:1.



masculinity, was accepted by most of the socialists, irrespective of gender. The main arguments raised concerned married women as mothers. From that perspective, all women were measured and judged. Women as workers were seldom admired, often deplored.

But the discussion on equality at work and economic independence had not been totally silenced everywhere. At a congress in London the year before, in 1899, several variations of women's views on the night work prohibition had been heard. Then the congress was not a socialist one even if many participants were socialists.