

## 16. STOCKHOLM & BRUSSELS 1911 & 1912: A FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL?

You must realize that there is not only the struggle for woman Suffrage, but that there is another mighty, stormy struggle going on all over the world, I mean the struggle on and near the labour market.

Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema 1911

International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) became effective because it concentrated on one question only. The Alliance (it will be the short word for the IWSA) wanted to show a combatant and forceful image. It was of importance to have many followers and members. Inside the Alliance, there was no room to discuss other aspect of women's citizenship, only the political. This made it possible for women who did not want to change the prevalent gender division of labor to become supporters. The period saw an increase of the ideology about femininity and maternity, also prevalent in the suffrage movement. But some activists did not stop placing a high value on the question of woman's economic independence, on her economic citizenship. They wanted a more comprehensive emancipation because they believed in overall equality. Some of these feminists took, in Stockholm in 1911, the initiative to a new international woman organization. As IWSA once had been planned at an ICW-congress (in London in 1899) they wanted to try a similar break-out-strategy.

IWSA held its sixth international congress in June in the Swedish capital. It gathered 1 200 delegates.<sup>1</sup> The organization, founded in opposition to the shallow enthusiasm for suffrage inside the ICW, was once started by radical women who wanted equality with men. Suffrage became a hot topic in Europe, when men in one country after another at the end of the 19th century organized to get or increase their voting rights. Only men in France and Switzerland had full political citizenship, since 1848. The facts about suffrage could also be formulated in another way; since long *men* in Europe - *only men but not all men*

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<sup>1</sup> 12-17 juni 1911, Catt 1911: 7; Daily papers wrote a lot on the congress, see for exemple *DN* for June and a journal for women devoting a whole number to the congress *Iduns kongressnummer* 1911.

- had full political citizenship. All European women were excluded until 1906, when women in Finland, as a government in tsarist Russia, got the right to vote on an equal footing with men.

During the 19th century, since the French revolution, several ideologies containing the concept equality spread. Together with an economic development which produced more and made some very rich, new groups of people seriously demanded to have a say in policy making. Family, property, fortune and income had earlier been the basis for citizen rights for men. Those who were not included in these upper classes in society, got even more opinionated in the decades at the end of the century. The process of democratization was push forwards by new groups. Also by women. Lack of income or property had denied many men their political rights, but not ever their sex. For women, it was different; during that century (with some regional or local exceptions) the biological sex was forever excluding a woman from political citizenship. Added to this denial were legislations, rules and traditions discriminating women everywhere: in the labor market and in private lives, married women most of all. A few unmarried women could, because of diligence or chance get an income or property, some could reach certain political influence locally. Unique women had managed despite difficulties - to manoeuvre through the fine web of discriminations and rules - to create a relatively large economic independence for themselves. But nowhere had women a say about the affairs of the nation. For women, their sex was the definite obstacle.

After the year of 1900 women's impatience grew. They saw men organizing for suffrage but their striving for suffrage was not as a matter of course including women. National woman suffrage organizations were founded. They internationalized by joining the IWSA, founded in 1904. Among women for suffrage, opinions on the gender division of labor, women's waged work and other economic questions of importance, the opinions varied, from relatively conservative to extremely radical. Questions of economy and work were put aside, rather not mentioned, in the quickly growing organization. They could be dealt with later on was the most common view.

The influential Swedish author Ellen Key's book *The Century of the Child*, was published in Swedish in 1901 and soon translated to the great western languages. It contains an eloquent defense for the night work prohibition for women; she brings up arguments such as heard so many times before, that a

mother should stay at home and raise her children. Key was of course for suffrage for women. Also in that question she brought up the motherhood. It was woman's peculiarity, her "Eigenart", that was to be added to the benefit for society. She compared the state with a family, where the duties were to be traditionally shared between the parents:<sup>2</sup>

The woman should get the right to vote and to enter all the arenas of the life of a citizen, because society needs mothers as well as fathers.<sup>3</sup>

Key's view was probably prevalent at the suffrage congress in Stockholm in 1911, as they were appreciated all around the world by many women. Opposing this kind of opinions an international network was organized at the congress, in the hope of a revision of the new discriminating international convention in the labor market, the night work prohibition. The president of the IWSA Carrie Chapman Catt was early on informed about the plans by Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema.

In a letter Catt agreed with Rutgers-Hoitsema that "woman's need and her right to labor at fair pay and under fair conditions is a greater question than the suffrage, we will all agree". But in the same letter she warned Rutgers-Hoitsema that the opinions about this were shifting inside her organisation.<sup>4</sup> Catt was well aware that many agreed with Ellen Key's reasoning for giving women the right to vote. As the president, she saw questions about the labor market as more complicated than the suffrage; women who worked for a political citizenship were not always interested in an economic citizenship. But her own position was for equality in all respects.

In her opening speech Carrie Chapman Catt made it clear that she was for equality also in working life without making a big thing of her remark. She referred to the negative consequences of special legislation, when she was talking about changing conditions for women in industrial work:

Everywhere paid less than men for equal work, everywhere discriminated against, they are utterly at the mercy of forces over which they have no

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<sup>2</sup> Key's book contains a quantitatively large defense for special legislation for women in the labor market and especially about the night work prohibition, Key 1900 (1911-1912, Engl 1909a), several German editions, 14th ed in 1908; Manns (1994) 2001; Melander (1994) 2001; Note that Ellen Key earlier had attacked the women's movement several times, especially its attempts to get work for women in earlier so called male professions. Key 1896, and that she wrote a book continuing this critic of the movement, 1909b, in English 1912 & 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Key 1896:55; Karlsson 1995.

<sup>4</sup> IWSA Report...1911; Letter fr Rutgers-Hoitsema t Catt 26/4 1911, letter fr Catt t Rutgers Hoitsema (quote), Stockholm 12/5 1911. Mapp 12 Coll R-H IIAV.

control. Law-making bodies, understanding neither women nor the meaning of this woman's invasion of modern industry, are attempting to regulate the wages, the hours, the conditions under which they shall work. Already serious wrong has been done many women because of this ill-advised legislation.<sup>5</sup>

Chapman Catt wanted, it seems, a labor market without regulations as she did not mention the socialist feminist standpoint. Moreover, she maintained that the wide-spread prostitution and the so-called "white slave trade" depended on the unequal conditions in the labor market. If nothing was done, venereal diseases were going to increase; the effect would be "deteriorating the race". Chapman Catt did not consider attaining suffrage as the end of women's demands. Her wish seems to be to alter the system of society.<sup>6</sup> But suffrage was the first step to take.

Her oration contained, on the one hand a belief that women were more keen than men on the "the ultimate welfare of society", on the other hand a demand that women should get the same conditions as men in policy making and in the labor market. It was a usual mixed view on women as different to men and a demand for equal legislation. But the references to biology were more and more common. There is an echo of Social Darwinism in Catt's speech, as when she said that "we are defending the highest good of the mothers of our race". Such a choice of words could weaken a demand for legal equality in the labor market. When Carrie Chapman Catt said that woman was different to man, she could strengthen the opinions of women who liked the special legislation. But Catt did not make a case for separate treatment from her arguments of women as caring, on the contrary.<sup>7</sup> As a president of a large organization she had to be a unifying voice. She went far uttering the words about regulations of the labor market and its bad effects on women.

After this congress, no book was published with its program, its speeches and contributions. The official report from the congress in Stockholm is a number of reports, published before, from each country, about what had happened since

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<sup>5</sup> The title: "Is woman suffrage progressing?" IWSA Report ...1911:58-71.(Quote p 69f)

<sup>6</sup> "White Slave Traffic" IWSA Report...1911:69f (Quote p 70); Catt believed in an evolutionism similar to the one Perkins Gilman developed, that meant that women's potential had to be used, if humanity was to be progressing. Fowler 1986: 56ff.

<sup>7</sup> IWSA Report...1911: 69ff (Quotes pp 70f)

the last congress in London<sup>8</sup>. Only one of these reports had a remark on protective legislation. It was from Norway.<sup>9</sup> Mrs F.M. Qvam, president to the National Suffrage Association (Landstemmeretsforeningen) expressed her relief that the woman movement in her country had hindered a night work prohibition:

L.K.S.F. (the Norwegian woman suffrage association) has always used its influence when legislation concerning women have been treated in the parliament. Thus, as an example, we managed, when worker protection was up to decision, to introduce a woman Factory Inspector and that no legislation will prohibit women's night work.<sup>10</sup>

At this time Norway and Finland were the two Nordic countries to reject the Bern Convention. Finland was the first country in Europe to give women political citizenship in 1906. In that land the government and legislators in parliament could not neglect women's voices. Anna Lundström from the Finish Woman Association the Union (Kvinnosaksförbundet Unionen) told that the women representatives in the Finnish parliament were negative to special legislation for working women. An official inquiry among industrial women workers on the night work prohibition had been made and the government had after that rejected the proposition from Bern of the Convention because the women workers concerned had been against it.<sup>11</sup>

The Finnish parliamentary member and Factory Inspector Vera Hjelt spoke at a open meeting for all interested at the People's House, presided by Anna Lindhagen. It was held in the arena for the workers' movement. The language was Swedish. It continued during one day and gathered a broad audience of interested. Vera Hjelt spoke on social and political cooperation between men and women in Finland. As an example of this she mentioned the inquiry, that had shown working women's negative attitudes to any limitations in their right to work. More than 64 percent of the answering women needed their income, because they were widows, divorcees or simply abandoned. Only 13 percent of the consulted were positive to such a special legislation. A majority thought that legislation should deprive them of the freedom to choose a work, take away

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<sup>8</sup> I suppose that more information might be sampled about the congress from daily papers and reports in women's journals in different countries. Such research is still pending.

<sup>9</sup> "Reports of countries affiliated", *International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA). Report of Sixth Congress*, Stockholm, Sweden, June 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 1911. London 1911:72-137, hereafter = IWSA Report ... 1911.

<sup>10</sup> IWSA Report ... 1911:120.

<sup>11</sup> Denmark should not accept the legislation. Hagemann 1995; Ravn 1995; Wikander 1994: 51. Initiative to the inquire came from the woman association the Union. IWSA Report ... 1911:92ff.

the better paid works and direct them to low paid home industrial work, if any work at all. They considered that a night work prohibition should make their working conditions unsecure. Working women

on the one hand did not wish their freedom at work to be limited by such a legislation and on the other hand been reluctant if the "protective legislation" was for them and not instead should exclude them from better paid and regulated factory work and make them dependent on unsecure, temporary work.

The Finnish women's organizations had followed the debates abroad. Vera Hjelt referred to the feminists, who already at international congresses in the 1890s had pointed to the negative effects of a legislation, because it should diminish women's freedom and force them into less remunerative work. Here we can see the direct influence from the congresses on the European continent into the Nordic debates, giving strength to the resistance. Activist women had an international network. The Finnish parliament had taken the decision to, as far as possible, forbid night work for both men and women, a decision liked by Vera Hjelt. Some years before Hjelt had spoken against a protection of women calling it a "policy of force".<sup>12</sup>

Through her presentation of the Finnish inquiry Hjelt wanted to help the strong opinion among Social Democratic women in Sweden against the night work prohibition, despite that it was already accepted by Swedish legislators. Her intention was to demonstrate what use women could make of suffrage. Maybe Swedish women could, with the help of the vote, later change or cancel the acceptance of the Bern Convention in the Swedish parliament ?

In the long run suffrage might make change possible. But to wait until later was not the intention of all women. The frustration with the Bern Convention was alive among some of them. They wanted it annihilated as soon as possible and were willing to act on it.

Many of the delegates at the suffrage congress in Stockholm, had been at woman congresses before. Maybe it is not strange at all that the night work

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<sup>12</sup> IWSA Report ... 1911: 9f. See Anna Lindhagens correspondence with Marie Rutger-Hoitsema and her resistance to the night work prohibition. Vol 20, ALs Saml. SSA; Hjelt 1909 (quote p 3); Hjelt 1911:8f (quote p 8); *Actes du Congrès Féministe International de Bruxelles 1912*, publiés par les soins de Mlle Marie Popelin, docteur en droit, secrétaire générale de la Ligue. Bruxelles: Impr. Scientifique, 1912: 58, later = Bruxelles 1912; "Det kvinnliga nattarbetet", in *Wasabladet* 27 May 1911; About Vera Hjelt: Hjelt-Cajanus 1946; Karlsson 1995.

prohibition turned up unofficially in Stockholm in 1911. It had done so in Copenhagen the year before. The Berne Convention had met organized resistance from women in all of the Nordic countries and it was still on the political agenda. At home, Swedish women had protested forcefully against the acceptance of the Berne Convention. Decisions had recently been taken at the sessions of parliament in 1908 and 1909. From 1911 the night work prohibition was to be implemented in Sweden, surveyed by the Factory Inspection.<sup>13</sup> Of course there was still an indignation stirring.

Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema gathered information on the opinions against the legislation during her stay in Stockholm. She prepared to organize a broad resistance against the night work prohibition for women and to obstruct other new international conventions, which she and other women did fear was to be suggested. To Stockholm she had come as one of eleven substitutes in the Dutch delegation. She was active in the suffrage movement in the Netherlands and since long an activist against the night work prohibition. Before the congress Rutgers-Hoitsema had written about her plans, not only to Carrie Chapman Catt but also to selected European contacts, to Marie Bonneviel, France, Dagny Bang, Norway, Maikki Friberg, Finland and Louise Neergaard, Denmark to get their support and help. She ended her round-letter to them all with a sentence that sounds like a motto: "The right to work is as indispensable for a woman, as the right to vote."<sup>14</sup>

Rutgers-Hoitsema began by gathering interested women in a conference room at the Grand Hôtel, which was the center of the congress. She presented an outline of a new international organization, with the aim to get rid of the night work prohibition for women and introduce gender neutral conditions in working life. She suggested the foundation of an organization called the International Woman's Labour Association<sup>15</sup>. The basis of the constitution should be that "men and women being born equally free and independent members of the human race, ought to be equally protected by the labour legislation". She was thinking of establishing national committees. One part of their activities should be that members joined the national organizations of the new International

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<sup>13</sup> Karlsson 1995; Åkerblom 1998.

<sup>14</sup> "Congrès 1911 – Stockholm" Dos 41, BMD; "Le droit de travail est non moins indispensable à la femme que le droit de vote". Letter ( a round-letter) 11/3 1911 fr MHW Rutgers-Hoitsema. File 12, Coll R-H IIAV; IWSA Report ... 1911:18.

<sup>15</sup> Cf the International Workingmen's Association (1864-76) that is the First Socialist International.

Association for Labor Legislation, which was behind the Berne Convention. From inside the IALL they should strive to annihilate the night work prohibition for women. This should be the first task. The notice to attend the meeting had been open to all. Few came. The suggestion was met with devastating criticism from the German Else Lüders and the American Maud Nathan.<sup>16</sup> The meeting dissolved without any foundation of an association. But Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema did not give up.

Two days later, there was a new meeting, gathering only those positive to an equal regulation of the labor market. These few women founded an organization called the less offensive name, in three languages: Correspondance Internationale/ International Correspondance/ Internationale Korrespondenz. Its secretary and all-in-one was Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema, who had taken the initiative. Her aim was to create an international organization between "feminists" in all countries, *who were positive to worker protection but not for women only*. Thus the foundation was laid for an international organization taking as its platform the idea of socialist feminism: an economic citizenship for women, equality in a labor market with worker protection for all workers.

In a letter to Norwegian Dagny Bang, who had supported the preparations, Rutgers-Hoitsema told that only the Swedes Anna Lindhagen and Frida Stéenhoff had been present at the foundation, except for some Dutch women, not mentioned by name. But many more had declared their interest. Anna Lindhagen became the Swedish corresponding contact. Lindhagen, Rutger-Hoitsema herself and Norwegian Dagny Bang were the core group of the new organization. This is a demonstration of the bonds between socialists and liberals in Nordic countries; Dagny Bang was a liberal medical doctor. Vera Hjelt, a supporter, was not a socialist, but must be called a feminist.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Invitation" to the meeting ("room next to Congress Hall") 15 juni 1911 kl 4 ½ (half past four) was printed on a paper with the printed head "Nationaal Comité Inzake Wittelijke Regeling van Vrouwenarbeid" founded in 1903; it was signed by M.W.H. Rutgers-Hoitsema, W Drucker, Marina Kramers, Dr Aletta H Jacobs and J.C van Lanschot Hubrecht. It was available in versions in English, French and German. File 12, Coll R-H, IIAV, also in Vol 20, ALs Saml, SSA; Bruxelles 1912:60-61; "Constitution of the International Women's Labour Association", with the summoning to the meeting "men and women being born equally free and independent members of the human race, ought to be equally protected by the labour legislation". Mapp 12 Coll R-H, IIAV; printed copy of article "Internationale Frauenbewegung und internationaler Arbeiterinnenschutz" in *Berliner Politischer Tagesdienst* 21/6 1911 (which refers to *Soziale Praxis*), i 10 412, Pre-ILOArchives Unit of ILO; letter fr MWH Rutgers-Hoitsema t Dr Bang, 9/7 1911, File 16 Coll R-H IIAV.

<sup>17</sup> The 17th of June in 1911 a program of principle and an action plan was decided upon. "Abschrift. Internationale Korrespondenz gegründet in Stockholm, 17 Juni 1911. Letter fr MWH Rutgers-Hoitsema t "Dr Bang och Fräulein Lindhagen" 9/11 1911. ALs Saml. Vol 20. SSA; three persons in every country should be the link to Rutgers-Hoitsema. Hilda Sachs should join the other two Swedes. From Finland Vera

Rutgers-Hoitsema was to introduce and spread knowledge about the new association at the international woman congress in Brussels the following year. The interested were still few and the association in a sensitive starting phase. At the suffrage congress, it had only been a very small incident, not had any success and was hardly even perceived by the majority of the delegates. Dagny Bang commented later on the antagonisms at the foundation by expressing her disgust with the "protection fanatics" and her despair that women were so hard to unite.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of April in 1912 Le Congrès Féministe International de Bruxelles started. It was to be the last congress calling itself feminist for a long time. It was not a congress arranged inside the International Council of Women, but yet by a detour connected to it.<sup>19</sup> The congress tried to be in tune with the new times. The main organizer and general secretary was, as usually in Brussels, jur. dr. Marie Popelin, feminist of the old school. She tried this time to balance her congress between an older feminism and the new one with its focus on suffrage. She deplored the absence of English suffragettes who were imprisoned and could not come at the same time as she asked more moderate suffragists welcome.<sup>20</sup> Some men, especially university professors, were on the list of honorary members of the congress, among them also the socialist lawyer and prominent parliamentary member Emile Vandervelde.<sup>21</sup>

Speaking at the opening ceremony the Belgian socialist parliamentary member Hector Denis praised his homeland for guaranteeing "the freedom of work" and said that the congress wanted to "unite civil rights with economic rights" for women.<sup>22</sup> Marie Popelin thanked him and the socialist leader Emile Vandervelde for their support in parliament for a worker protection of children. But she did not comment on the positive views on protective labor laws for

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Hjelt, Tekla Hultin and Maikki Friberg, from Denmark Frk Th Daugaard, Louise Neergaard and Julie Arenholt, from France Mme Léon Brunschvicg and Mme Compain, from Hungary Rosika Schwimmer, from England Cristal Macmillan and Eva Gore-Booth. From Germany no one was interested. Letter fr MWH Rutgers-Hoitsema t Dr Bang, 9/7 1911. File 16 Coll R-H IIAV; korr i Vol 20, ALs Saml. SSA.

<sup>18</sup> "Schutzfanatiker", letter fr Bang t Rutgers-Hoitsema (not dated but marked: "Antword op de brief van 9 Juli 1911") File 16 Coll R-H IIAV.

<sup>19</sup> Bruxelles 1912; Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles, Dos 43, BMD; Lefaucheux 1966: 350.

<sup>20</sup> *La Française* 19/5 1912; "Le congrès féministe internationale" *L'étoile Belge* 29/4 1912; Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles, Dos 43, BMD.

<sup>21</sup> For example Oddo Deflou, Avril de Sainte-Croix, Maria Vérone and Isabelle Bogelot. Bruxelles 1912: 25f; Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles, Dos 43, BMD.

<sup>22</sup> Hector Denis var socialist sen 1875; "...la liberté du travail..." "...lie le droit civil au droit économique..." Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles, Dos 43, BMD.

women held by both Vandervelde and Denis. Was their view on women not of any importance to Marie Popelin, because a night work prohibition was not of immediate interest for women in Belgium? Was the silence on this point the price to pay for other support for women in the parliament, by the socialists?<sup>23</sup> Denis' mentioned "economic rights" for women. But socialists used to express themselves so, even when they were positive to a night work prohibition and other special legislation.

When women's economic conditions were treated, the special legislation came up. The formulations were all about equality. Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema, Wilhelmina Drucker and Marie Bonneval were the three most important speakers and all of them spoke on equality at work.<sup>24</sup>

Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema gave a short historical overview of industrialization, which she saw as an increase in the state's interference with work. First child labor was regulated, later it was totally forbidden, then the working hours for youth were regulated irrespective of sex. Finally the laws "called protective" was expanded to adult women but not to men. She informed the audience about the protests in Norway, Finland and Denmark against this last regulation (without mentioning them in Sweden, maybe because there the protest had been in vain), against the Berne Convention to forbid women night work. She criticized the International Association for Labor Legislation and said that it was planning a new international convention, which was to shorten the work day to 10 hours but only for women.<sup>25</sup>

As a possibility to put up a resistance, Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema presented her darling, the International Correspondence; according to her it was the "the first international feminist organization".<sup>26</sup> That means she did not count the International Woman Suffrage Alliance or the International Council of Women as feminist. These were organizations she knew well. For her there was no feminism without demands on equality in the labor market. The aim of the new organization was:

<sup>23</sup> *L'étoile Belge* 29/4 1912, Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles, Dos 43, BMD; Hilden 1993: 316ff.

<sup>24</sup> The title was "Conditions d'infériorité de la femme vis-à-vis du travail; lois dites de protection; admission des femmes à tous les emplois et professions; égalité des salaires et traitements à travail égal; travail domestique des gens de maison; syndicats féminins", Bruxelles 1912: 55ff & 62ff; Drucker was editor of *la Revue féministe néerlandaise*, according to *La Française* 19/5 1912; "Le congrès féministe" *L'Etoile Belge* 30/4 1912, and other material in Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles, Dos 43, BMD.

<sup>25</sup> Bruxelles 1912: 56ff; Rutgers-Hoitsema sent her speech to Anna Lindhagen in a letter, fr MWH Rutgers-Hoitsema t AL 10/5 also with comments on the congress. Vol 20, ALs Saml. SSA.

<sup>26</sup> "...pour autant que je sache, la première organisation féministe internationale...". Bruxelles 1912:61.

to make connections between women, or rather between feminists in different countries, who, even if they think that protective legislation is a necessity, are against a special legislation only for women's work, because that will harm women workers.<sup>27</sup>

The formulation was that of socialist feminists: protection for all but no special legislation. Six countries had so far joined the International Correspondence: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands and Belgium. France, Great Britain and Finland considered membership.<sup>28</sup>

Marie Rutgers-Hoitsema sounded full of hope when she described how feminists should unite to give women the power to together fight for the right to work and for "total emancipation". Her rhetoric was full of inspiration from socialist propaganda and ideology. Women were to unite, to march forwards in tight rows, to fight for common ideals:

Our hot desire is that feminists in all countries, so far struggling alone, and probably thus without great progress, should join together in the future. Unity gives strength.

We hope that the International Correspondence will be the start for all feminists in the world in a march forwards, in tight rows, to achieve one common ideal: woman's total emancipation. May we never forget that to achieve this beautiful ideal, the right to work is necessary. Help us to conquer that right.<sup>29</sup>

For Rutgers-Hoitsema the right to work was still not achieved, as it had limitations. Without the same rights as men women were to remain subordinated. Waged work for all women was the way to emancipation. A sub-text also wanted an end to the gender division of labor and that all profession should be open to women.

Wilhelmina Drucker backed Rutgers-Hoitsema up by criticizing the consequences of a night work prohibition in detail. Women had been excluded from tailoring, dairying, laundries, potteries and from post & telegraphe

<sup>27</sup> "...de former un lien entre les femmes, ou plutôt entre les féministes des divers pays qui, quoique considérant la législation protectrice des travailleuses comme nécessaire, s'opposent à une législation spéciale sur le travail de la femme seulement, à cause du préjudice qui en résulte pour les ouvrières elles-mêmes" Bruxelles 1912:60.

<sup>28</sup> Bruxelles 1912: 60; Corr. i File 14,15,16 Coll R-H, IIAV.

<sup>29</sup> "Nous souhaitons ardemment que les féministes de tous les pays, qui jusqu'ici ont lutté séparément et par cela même probablement sans beaucoup de succès, s'unissent à l'avenir. L'union fait la force. Que, pour les féministes du monde entier, la Correspondance Internationale soit le point de départ d'une marche en avant, en rangs serrés, à la poursuite du même idéal: la complète émancipation de la femme. N'oublions jamais que pour atteindre ce bel idéal, le droit au travail nous est indispensable. Aidez-nous à le conquérir." Bruxelles 1912: 61; This contribution was printed in for example *L'étoile Belge* as also Drucker's report *L'étoile Belge* 30/4 1912, File: Congrès 1912 - Bruxelles Dos 43, BMD.

employments; their works had been taken over by men. The special legislation stopped women from professions and they became a burden to the employers. Moreover, psychologically women were harmed by a law that stated that women were considered as immature as a boy of 16 years. Her final words were forceful, with allusions to the well-known authors Olive Schreiner and Thorstein Veblen. She said that the gender division of labor had created the passive upper class woman; now the same kind of "parasitism" was spreading into the working class via the legislation.<sup>30</sup>

Women in the higher classes become more and more parasites. Protective legislation forces women in the lower classes to become that as well. The consciousness - even if not clear to all - about this degradation have shaped the feminist movement. The very foundation of feminism is the struggle against the enforced parasitism. (Applauds)<sup>31</sup>

Drucker's arguments seem to emanate from the neutral feminist perspective, as she did not demand a protection for all workers. Marie Bonneval supplemented her by arguing for a protection for both women and men. Bonneval got applauds when she lifted the demand, which socialist feminists used to raise and which Danish and Swedish Social Democratic women had tried to get a hearing for at the Second International one year ago.

In Brussels, according to the program, there was critic of the special legislation for women and no space given to defenders of it. Popelin used her power over the congress - as always - to lead the congress in an authoritarian style and decided how it was presented afterwards. No resolutions were allowed and almost no debates. Marie Popelin, editin the final book of the congress, did not report of any defense of prohibition from the audience. About the special legislation for working women, she had only allowed feminists to speak supporting equality. She had invited some socialist men to talk, even if she personally disliked the ideology but they spoke on other topics. She had realized that some of them might be helping woman emancipation, especially if they were members of parliament. The times were changing.

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<sup>30</sup> Veblen 1899; Schreiner 1911.

<sup>31</sup> "La femme des classes élevées descend de plus en plus au rang de parasite. Les lois de protection obligent la femme des classes inférieures à le devenir aussi. C'est l'impression consciente, ou inconsciente, de cet abaissement qui produit le mouvement féministe. Le féminisme est au fond la lutte contre le parasitisme forcé. (Applaudissements)"(70) Bruxelles 1912: 68ff ; Applauds are not noted in the book printed with the protocols but they came here according to *L'étoile Belge* 30/4 1912.