

7. BERLIN 1896: A CHALLENGE FROM THE LEFT

"And the result?" might be the question. I answer with another question. "What real results are congresses usually having?"

Lotten Dahlgren 1896

In Germany, during the end of the 19th century, there was an active liberal movement outside of party policy, which wanted to solve the social question by peaceful means. It wanted the state to intervene in the labor market. In Berlin this radicalism was prominent. Social reforms had a tradition there since the 1860s with for example soup kitchens for poor people. German universities were also part of this broad movement to promote state intervention to solve the social question; the so called Katheder Sozialisten constituted an active group. Since 1891 Germany had a night work prohibition for women in industry. It was accepted by the parliament/Reichstag with support of several groups, among them the Social Democrats. That legislation had its beginning in the recommendations of the conference for Protective Labor Legislation in Berlin in 1890. Nationally the question had been under discussion even earlier.¹

In September of 1896 Der internationale Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen was held in Berlin. As in 1889 in Paris, women in Berlin took the opportunity to organize an international congress at the same time as an exposition got people to visit the city. The industrial Fair, der Berliner Gewerbeausstellung, was the attraction. In the competition to arrange an Exposition Universelle / a World Fair Berlin had failed. This more modest exposition still managed to draw more than seven million persons during the summer of 1896.

Freiherr Hans von Berlepsch was the honorary president of the exposition. He was compelled to leave his position as the Minister of Trade earlier that year. He had not any longer the support of the emperor for his reforms in social policies, but he was kept as the figure-head of the fair. As other expositions, it wanted to contribute to public education and debates. No congresses were held

¹ Evans 1976: x; women in Berlin started many social reforms, see Dick & Sassenberg 1993:348; Schmitt 1995a: 91ff.

at the exposition but many scientific lectures by experts. None of them was about the woman question.²

During the 1890s women in Germany were organizing more and more at a time when women were leaving their homes for waged work. Since 1894 a radicalization was also taking place inside the bourgeois women's movement. One of the expressions was the so called Left Wing of der Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine.³ This wing stood behind the call for a congress in Berlin in 1896.

The congress had liberal as well as social intentions which were to expose the tensions in the German women's movement. Tensions depended also on differences between Berlin and other parts of Germany. At the congress we see an ambivalence concerning labor legislation for women even inside this Left Wing of the bourgeois movement. Protection of women was never an item on the program and thus never explicitly discussed. A special protection of women was only mentioned by a couple of speakers. Probably some of the socially concerned women behind the congress were positive to it. Others were hesitant or negative. Few wanted to disturb the vulnerable harmony between the women gathering at the congress. And also, the organizers had troubles with the broader bourgeois women's movement. The night work question was avoided in the hope to make the congress into a manifestation of women's unity.

But Social Democratic women had something else in mind. This summer they made the night work prohibition for women into the Big Question which was to mark the "clean cut" between them and the "bourgeois". Thus the socialists used the unsettled view among the Left Wing activists to demonstrate their socialist repudiation from the whole of the bourgeois women's movement. This successful attempt to polarize and distance themselves from the liberals was done with references to England. That country had been the first to introduce special protective laws for women which had opened for an articulated critic from the liberal women's movement.⁴ In Berlin this big meeting for women was arranged under restriction which were harder than in other countries. German

² *Die Frauenbewegung* (= FBw) nr 3 1896: 27; Berlin had grown quickly. From 700 000 inhabitants in 1866 to 1 677 000 inhabitants 1895. 1896 was not a good year. 120 days of 165 of the exposition were rainy. Economically the exposition was a failure. Still it had 7 415 000 visitors. *Berlin und seine Arbeit* 1898: 1-46, 76-101, 151-190.

³ Lüders, probably 1904; the radicalization of the women's movement went on until 1908. It had started when the anti-socialist laws stopped in 1890, at the same time as industrialism expanded, many work places opened up for women and the economic depression slowly was ending. Evans 1976:x.

⁴ "reinliche Scheidung", Weiland 1983:292; Lewis & Rose 1995.

women were forbidden to organize politically or to speak at political meetings. Implementation of this law was not at all consistent and had local variations but every gathering of women could be defined as political and then dissolved.⁵ Women had to be cautious.

A left bourgeois women's congress

The initiative to the woman congress in 1896 came from Lina Morgenstern, a 66 years old radical bourgeois author. She had started out as an ardent advocate of Kindergarten, that is day care centers for children. In 1866 she set up the Berliner soup kitchen for the poor, which in the 1890s were established as social institutions.⁶ In the 1870s she founded the Berliner Hausfrauenverein /the Association of Housewives in Berlin. The German word Hausfrau was a rather broad one. Thus the association might also be understood as the Association of Married Women. One of its early purposes was to organize the purchase of cheaper food. But it also supported woman emancipation. Its name can as well be seen as a cover for a political project in a time and place when women were forbidden to organize. Lina Morgenstern had launched her idea of an international congress early in 1896 at a meeting with this Association of Married Women.⁷

A local committee was started at once. 10 000 invitations with a program was sent out into the world. It was sent to all German women's associations: of course to the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine, but also to the Evangelical-Social women, to the leading Social Democratic women and to associations, more focusing on patriotism. The purpose was to gather all women because "the women's movement is not a question of parties, but is of concern for all females" according to the organizers.⁸

Minna Cauer, the other central person in the organizing, said that the meaning of the congress was to compare how far women's efforts had reached in different countries of culture. It was not meant to expose controversies. But in an article about the congress she was more offensively saying that social political tendencies could be seen as a red thread through the whole of the congress.

⁵ Frevert (1986) 1989: 116ff.

⁶ Weiland 1983: 173ff; Dick & Sassenberg 1993:283ff.

⁷ 1 januari, Berlin 1896: 1; *FBw* nr 3 1896: 27; two groups in Berlin organized: "Frauenwohl" and "Berliner Hausfrauenverein", *Vorwärts* 22/9 1896; *FBw* nr 18 1896: 165.

⁸ "...da die Frauenbewegung keine Parteisache ist, sondern das ganze Geschlecht angeht." Berlin 1896:2.

Cauer was the leader of the Left Wing inside the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine, BDF. She was detested by those of a more moderate leaning in the BDF, its majority. Cauer's wish was to cooperate with the proletarian women's movement was not at all appreciated.⁹ But Social Democratic women did not either like her welcoming invitation.

Käthe Schirmacher, a German journalist living in Paris, had been at the international feminist congress in April in Paris that very year and there invited all delegates to come to Berlin. The congress was visited by persons from many countries in Europe and also from the USA. The printed protocol for the congress has, alas, no list of participants. Altogether 1700 cards for participation had been distributed and the open sessions were each visited by approximately 200 persons, both men and women.¹⁰

As the invitation had come from the Left Wing, which called itself radical, all other German women's organizations refused to take part officially, but did not forbid members as individuals to adhere. BDF as well refused to be among the organizers despite the fact that Lina Morgenstern was a member. Since its founding in 1894 the majority of the BDF had several internal disagreements with its Left Wing. Disagreements concerned how much and how openly the BDF should support the vote for women, how its strategy should be on getting regulation of prostitution finished. On top of this, there was disagreement about women workers in industries; should the Bund just support them or should BDF try to get in direct contact and cooperate with them? The Evangelical-Social

⁹ The committee consisted of 20 women: Frau Lina Morgenstern, Frau Minna Cauer, Frau Hanna Bieber-Böhm, Frau Eliza Ichenhäuser, Frau Roslie Schoenflies, Frau Stromer, Frau Lydia Schlesinger, Frl Agnes Bluhm, Frl Elvira Castner, Frau Jean Christ-Gutbier, Frau Hedwig Dohm, Frau Maria Gubitz, Frl Laura Hermann, Frau Bürgermeister Margarethe Kirschner, Frau Maybaum, Frl Marie Raschke, Frau Rosenheim, Frau Jeannette Schwerin and Frau von Witt. A supportive group of 29 more women took part. Quote: "da die Frauenbewegung keine Parteisache ist, sondern das ganze Geschlecht angeht." (2), Berlin 1896: 1f; Lina Morgenstern handled the agitation, Minna Cauer kept the contacts with the press. Margarethe Kirchner was responsible for social arrangements, *FBw* nr 13 1896: 128; "sozial-politisch" *FBw* nr 20 1896:177ff; Braun-Gizycki 1896: 3; Weiland 1983:61ff.

¹⁰ According to the Foreword, the following countries had representatives: Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary, Austria, and also Russian Poland, Russian Baltic and Russian Armenia. Berlin 1896: Vorwort; From Sweden probably only a representative of the Fredrika Bremer-Förbundet, Lotten Dahlgren. With reservation that they maybe was not present i person, only supported the congress, activists from many countries were mentioned by name, among them Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Helen Blackburn, both from England, Eugénie Potonié- Pierre and Mme Vincent, France, Eli Möller, Denmark, Alexandra Gripenberg, Finland, Thérèse Schlesinger-Eckstein, Austria, Marie Popelin, Belgium and Maria Montessori, Italy, Berlin 1896: Inhaltsverzeichnis and p 2; *Vorwärts* 22/9 1896; Schirmacher's report of the congress *FBw* nr 8 1896: 77f; invitation i *Le Jn des Femmes* nr 53 Mai 1896: 3.

organization, headed by Frau Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne, was likewise not willing to take part in the congress.¹¹

Social Democratic women refused to send delegates, with the motivation that "the woman question is only one part of the social question". Being witty they said that the congress was not even treating the whole of the women's question but only "the Lady question".¹² Clara Zetkin was quite happy with the split inside what she called the bourgeois movement. Her description of the organizers was of "a group eager to implement social reforms" which had very little influence inside the bourgeois movement. And Zetkin did not want any cooperation with the Left Wing. It was not sharing her socialist ways of analyzing society in terms of class struggle and capitalist oppression. Zetkin was upset about Social Democrats who saw something positive in the work for social reforms done by the Left Wing. Maybe so because, it was from the Left Wing that socialists could see a threat to their own women's organization? Clara Zetkin should, despite her all over criticism of the congress, take part and a couple of times talk at sessions which were open to the common public.¹³ But her intention with this was not to make cooperation easy, but the contrary.

The organizers wanted to raise the German consciousness about woman's emancipation and show other countries that Germany had a women's movement of some dimensions. The cause of the congress was formulated very low-key. Minna Cauer expressed, as editor of the journal *Die Frauenbewegung*, her disillusion and irritation with the coldness other organized German women showed the congress. That resistance as well as an unclear legal position for the congress diminished the organizers possibilities to launch their own radical ideas. The program had to be scrutinized by the police in advance. All this put its stamp on the congress, its themes and speakers.¹⁴ To be careful became the strategy. Confrontations should be avoided.

The organizers considered it as an official recognition, that they were allowed to use the City Hall of Berlin for their congress. That women could meet

¹¹ Berlin 1896:2; *FBw* nr 20 1896:190f; Weiland 1983:55; 273ff; about the Left Wing, Lüders 1904 especially 25 and 55 ff.

¹² "die Frauenfrage nur ein Theil der sozialen Frage /ist/"... "die Damenfrage", Braun-Gizycki 1896:3.

¹³ 1. *Beilage zum Vorwärts* 25/9 1896; according to *Vorwärts* the conservative *Kreuz-Zeitung* and the liberal *Vossische Zeitung* had also written about the congress; "sozialreformerisch angehauchten Gruppe" (767) *Die neue Zeit* 1897: 783ff; about "reinliche Scheidung" Schmitt: 1995:63ff; Weiland 1983: 108, 134, 292.

¹⁴ Berlin 1896: Vorwort, 6; Cauers articles in *FBw* 1896:165ff, 177ff, 190f; the program had been seen and approved by the police in Berlin. Schirmacher 1896:750; the Left Wing was also called "die Radikalen", Weiland 1983:273.

in the ceremonial rooms of the Red City Hall, a male arena for prominent occasions, should be taken as a good omen for women's liberation in the longer run, was the view of Minna Cauer.¹⁵ The congress used eight plenary rooms in which fifteen minutes long lectures were given on different topics. Eight to twelve speakers divided sessions of two or three hours. No resolutions were taken.¹⁶

Extra and beyond the closed meeting reserved for delegates, were three meetings to which an interested public was welcome. There debate was allowed. One of the open sessions was about reform dress and morality, another on pedagogy and a third about public education and the question of women workers /Arbeiterinnen/.¹⁷ At the last, special legislation for women got a certain attention.

Lina Morgenstern expressed the idea of the congress as to "elevate our sex and give us a right and worthy position in the society of mankind".¹⁸ Women ought to be raised and educated and thus achieve a place that could be regarded as fair. She expressed several opinions, equally ambivalent. Her words might be interpreted as offensive: women had no fair position in society. They ought to get that! But they might as well be understood in a defensive way: women's positions were bad because they were not yet worthy of any better. First they needed education. Morgenstern did not criticize society for not giving women good upbringings and educations. She only indirectly confronted the state. Still it is probable that her inaugural speech challenged because it contained comparisons between men and women and mentioned rights that women did not have. Her cautious formulations must be understood as depending on the restrictions of women's freedom of speech.

¹⁵ Berlin 1896:3; *FBW* nr 13 1896:128 och nr 19 1896:177; Frau Kirschner was married to the maire of Berlin, a private alliance that must have had something to do with the possibility to use the Rote Rathaus (red was not a political color, but the color of the bricks of the house).

¹⁶ An evening of welcome was arranged in "the Englishes Haus" at Mohrenstrasse. 1 300 women turned up, only 600 were expected. Many journalists were there. The program the 19 September, consisted of a short speech of welcome by Lina Morgenstern, poetry reading and speeches by three guests, Mrs Meissner-Diemer, Austria, Mrs Elise A Haighton, the Netherlands and Mrs Elisabeth Saksjan, Armenia, Berlin 1896: Vorwort & Inhaltsverzeichnis & 4; about "Englisches Haus", a restaurant with lots of space, see Fontane (1860) 2002:87f; the social democratic daily *Vorwärts* reported that an opening ceremony had taken place, considered it badly organized, the hall crowded and the glamorous dresses irritating: "Zwischen den Seidenröcken und Brillanten fielen die schmucklosen Kleider der Vertreterinnen der erwerbenden und lernenden Frau, der Lehrerinnen und Studentinnen, gerade auf". *Vorwärts* 22/91896.

¹⁷ The Friday the 25th of September: "Volkserziehung und Arbeiterinnenfrage", Berlin 1896: Inhaltsverzeichnis.

¹⁸ "...unser Geschlecht zu heben, ihm eine gerechte, würdige Stellung in der menschlichen Gesellschaft zu geben". Berlin 1896:7.

The talk given by Morgenstern¹⁹ gives us a hint that the congress had a more radical aim than what was openly declared. A hidden message was probably equality between men and women. That can explain other women's organizations fear of supporting it. Morgenstern mentioned several times, with caution, legal equality in connection with the relation between men and women in the labor market but mostly when speaking about education and morals:

Only via a legal equality between the sexes, through a peaceful and equal work together, through possibility to freely decide over work and education, only via one moral for all, can in the future a happy brotherhood encompassing all mankind be possible.²⁰

The choice of words sounds radical. The content is abstract and open to interpretations. What was her opinion of regulations of women in the labor market? The most probable interpretation of Morgenstern is, that women and men should have equally important, maybe even the same, positions in the labor market and the same rights. If they also should include political rights was not expressed. She lived in a culture and a class where the married man ought to be and often was the family provider. When she spoke about that a woman herself should decide, she did not exclude that a married woman decided to stay at home as her life choice, on the contrary.

Morgenstern underlined that the congress was not hostile towards men. She wanted to make men feel welcome to work for woman's emancipation and that women should feel that they did not have to take a position against men. She wanted a common moral for men and women, in a time when debates were heated on double morals, on regulation of prostitution, and extra-marital relations as well as divorce. With only one kind of moral she and other women was demanding men to follow women's high morals, the norms women proclaimed, which was monogamy in marriage and celibacy outside of it.

After a beginning with a strong emphasize on equality between men and women, Morgenstern spoke to the aims of the congress. She did welcome all

¹⁹ It was held the 20th of September 1896 in the big hall in the so called Rote Rathaus (of red bricks) "... unser Geschlecht zu heben, ihm eine gerechte, würdige Stellung in der menschlichen Gesellschaft zu geben." (7) Morgenstern's speech, Berlin 1896: 5ff; Lüders 1904 especially 55ff.

²⁰ "Nur durch die gesetzliche Gleichstellung beider Geschlechter, durch friedliches und gleichberechtigtes Arbeiten in der Gemeinsamkeit, durch freie Selbstbestimmung im Rechte auf Arbeit, auf Berufswahl und Bildung, nur durch Anerkennung *einer* Moral, *einer* Sittlichkeit für alle wird dereinst eine beglückende Menschenverbrüderung ermöglicht werden." Berlin 1896:5.

women's organizations.²¹ Her resumé of the congress showed vague intentions and praised female differences. The woman movement put "the care and growth of the smallest, the children" high. A good family life should be grounded in the parents' equal legal rights, concerning the education of the children. The child was considered, but equality was mentioned in a context, at a time when the father was the sole guardian and the mother gave the practical care. Her view on this was radical.

Morgenstern qualified two questions as the most "burning": the question of equality in all respects and the question of working women's bad conditions and what to do about them. These two questions were provocative. Both were controversial in the German bourgeois women's movement and the cause of the split between the Left Wing and the majority of the BDF.²²

In Social Democratic circles the opinion was that Lina Morgenstern's long talk about equality for all had been without any real content: only chatter and empty words.²³ During the congress, Social Democratic women were going to join debates with talks about how differently they saw such questions. Social Democrats were to arrange an alternative congress, a counter congress.

The theme "Arbeiterinnen" / Women Workers invited the emotional discords, associated to the political controversies the congress was trying to hide. A night work prohibition for women had been introduced for women in industrial work in Germany in 1891 after several decades of discussions.²⁴ The participants at the congress almost neglected to mention the special legislation on night work even if working women's conditions were dealt with at two sessions.²⁵

Social Democratic women were looking for confrontation. So did Lily Braun, who had announced that she wanted to speak at the closed session on "Woman in trade, industry and handicraft". She was to present a contribution called "The

²¹ Berlin 1896:5f.

²² "...für die Pflege und Erziehung der zarten Menschenknospe, des Kinders..." "... mit den brennenden Fragen der Rechtsstellung der Frauen vor dem bürgerlichen Gesetz und der ebenso brennenden Arbeiterinnen- und Lohnfrage."(6) Berlin 1896:5ff.

²³ *Vorwärts* reviewed the speech shortly and disregardingly. On the other hand it referred in detail the following speech, when Marie Stritt presented the German women's movement. *Vorwärts* 22/9 1896.

²⁴ Schmitt 1995:19-108; Ayass 2000.

²⁵ Closed session: "Die Frau in Handel, Industrie und Gewerbe; Fachschulen" 23 Sept, Berlin 1896: Inhaltsverzeichnis & 191-233; Open session: "Volkserziehung und Arbeiterinnenfrage" 25 Sept, Berlin 1896: 388-409.

question of the women workers /Arbeiterinnenfrage". When she got the word, she used all of her limited time differently, saying that fifteen minutes was too short a time for her important topic; she needed and should have had more time. She used her allotted minutes to invite the delegates to come to two Volksversammlungen / People's Assemblies in the evenings. There should really free discussions be taking place, which were not possible at the congress. Braun stressed that the woman question had to be solved in a Social Democratic way. She insulted the bourgeois women's movement, saying that they did not do any important work for women workers. They were only thinking of themselves, to get the vote or a doctor's hat.²⁶

Lily Braun's discourse had been well prepared, so well that it was printed but not in the official protocol of the congress. The "People's Assembly" she invited to, was also planned in advance. Her attack on bourgeois ladies who only cared for the Lady Question belonged to a common Social Democratic tactic. Her appearance was met with acclamations and cries that she should shut up. The president Jeanette Schwerin, who wanted a cooperation for the good of the working women, herself working for social reforms, limited herself to a peaceful remark that she was sure that many women would respond positively to the invitation by Braun.

Later Minna Cauer wrote that Braun's invitation had been unnecessary because the same invitation had been received earlier by the congress. According to Cauer the effect of the speech was negative. After the attack the organizers had decided to boycott the socialist assemblies.²⁷ That boycott might be seen as a political victory for Lily Braun; her attention was to underline how impossible any cooperation was. The behavior of Braun might have many reasons. She did not belong to any of the three Social Democrats who had been especially invited to the congress. At the time Braun was rather new in the Social Democratic Party. The fact is that she had recently worked together with Minna Cauer, in starting the journal *Frauenbewegung*. There might have been many intertwined

²⁶ Braun's lecture was accepted for the closed session. The official protocol did not include what she said, although she seems to have used up all her 15 minutes. The protocol only comments that Braun was unwilling to give a speech because the time was too short. (202). Berlin 1896: 191-233; A brochure of 20 pages contains what LB-G said at the congress and her speech at one of the evening assemblies, was printed separately, "zwei grossen Volksversammlungen"(5) Braun-Gizycki 1896; *1. Beilage zum Vorwärts* 23/9 1896.

²⁷ *Vorwärts* 23/9 & 24/9 1896 & ("... Damenfrage ..." 3) Braun-Gizycki 1896; about Jeanette Schwerin see e.g. Schmitt 1995b: 140f.

reasons for Braun's action; maybe she felt a need to state her new engagement by attacking the bourgeois – and especially Cauer – and openly show her solidarity with the worker's movement.

Socialists from other countries attended the congress but the relation to socialism was tense. There was an expectation of misunderstandings. Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein was present as a representative of the equivalent to the BDF in Austria, (Allgemeinen Österreichischen Frauenvereins). Personally she was on her way to slide over into becoming a Social Democrat. During her first day at the congress, she was involved in an incident, which she meant was hostile towards socialism. When she presented the women's movement in her country, she was interrupted by the president Lina Morgenstern, just at the moment when she was to talk about the Social Democrats. Schlesinger-Eckstein got the impression that she was asked to shorten her performance because of its "socialist color", as the Social Democratic daily *Vorwärts* put it. She threatened to leave the congress without give a later speech on working women in Vienna. But Mina Cauer, vice president at the session, calmed her and persuaded her to stay. This intermezzo shows that tensions were high. Despite all Schlesinger-Eckstein reported in another session about an inquiry with 300 women workers in Vienna, which revealed starvation, exhaustion and prostitution. Her recommendations were state intervention and special legislation for women who were pregnant. She also wished for better factory inspections to get the night work prohibition for women, which existed in Austria since 1883, really implemented.²⁸

Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein was not the only foreigner who openly supported special legislation for women. Miss Florence Routledge from Women's Trade Union League in London was critical to middle class ladies, who were against labor legislation for women with the reference to equality. She disliked their defense of an abstract equality:

They see all laws for women, who are not including men, as a treachery against the theoretical equality, which is the focus of all their powers and wisdoms.

²⁸ S-E's speech: Berlin 1896:191-195; S-E wrote about this in her biography 15 years later which means that she was very offended Riemer etc 1983:97f, quoting Popp 1912:125ff; three other speakers were not even allowed to start because there was no more time. *Vorwärts* was supporting the view that socialists were badly treated. "...durch die sozialistische Färbung die Rede unberuhigt ..." *Vorwärts* 22/9 1896; Grandner 1995.

This was her interpretation of the polemic on equality in the labor market, that had been heard in England between "labor" and representatives of the women's movement such as Millicent Garrett Fawcett. But not even in England was there a clean cut between socialists and others, which discussions at a women's congress in London in 1899 was going to show. Routledge's talk was full of sympathy with men, who had to see their work places invaded by women and by this were forced to accept lower wages. For her, the most important mission of the trade unions was to hinder one sex to accept lower wages than the other.²⁹ Her analysis was that men had difficulties because of women; she put "women" against "workers" and "trade unions". Women were, in her discourse, not "workers"; only men were "workers" who deserved the help of trade unions.

Florence Routledge, as Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein, looked at special labor laws for women as good. The difference was that Schlesinger-Eckstein had been seeing the conditions from the perspective of the woman worker and wanted to solve her problems whereas Routledge was stuck in a general socialist rhetoric around the problems working women were causing trade unions and the wage levels of men.

Doktor Maria Montessori, pedagogue to be and woman activist from Italy, made a contribution that Minna Cauer saw as "... very socialist from a bourgeois point of view". What Montessori said could hardly be called normal German socialism but rather as an expression of feminism in the meaning French socialist feminists used. Probably that is exactly what Cauer here was defining as bourgeois socialism. Expressing it so, as Cauer did, was possible in a time when not any special political movement had managed to get a monopoly of the word "socialism". Maria Montessoris speech can be seen as a stern correction of the more ordinary socialist talk by Florence Routledges. Montessori was *not* thinking of – and she underlined this – leaving the women's movement to join the socialist camp. She was *not* going to talk about the Worker's woman and wife ("die Frau der Arbeiter") but about the *woman as a worker* ("die Arbeiterin").³⁰

²⁹ "Sie sehen in allen nur für Frauen und nicht auch für Männer erlassenen Gesetzen eine Verleugnung jener theoretischen Gleichheit, zu deren Verteidigung sie alle ihre Kräfte und Fähigkeiten aufgewendet haben"(200), Berlin 1896: 195ff; *Vorwärts* 22/9 1896; Lewis & Rose 1995: 104ff; the Austrian protective labor legislation was not implemented. Grandner 1995: 157ff; Caine 1997: 148ff.

³⁰ Cauer wrote: "sie sprach wie Frau Schlesinger-Eckstein sehr sozialistisch vom bürgerlichen Standpunkt vor." *FBW* nr 19 1896: 180; "Ich trete damit nicht aus dem Gebiete der Frauenbewegung heraus, um in das

Montessori's lecture was a mix of agitation, analysis and presentation of tables of statistics on wages; she accused the women's congress to have neglected millions of women workers. She attacked the family legislation for giving men all the advantages. Woman was raised to "subordination" ("Unterwürfigkeit"), not to support herself by work. But the day a man cannot support his wife, she is obliged by law to support him. The law gave a married man the right to abandon his wife, then come back years later and demand his legal right to all money and property his wife had gathered since he left. If a man killed his unfaithful wife, the law was mild. Montessori said that this led her to question if one law only, a labor protective legislation, should be able to make a positive change? Was such legislation meant to protect a woman? Her own examples from the Italian labor market showed that women since long ago had to do the hardest works for the lowest pay. She called these women "suppressed women". Their low wages were the proof of suppression. And she went even further in her feminist arguments when she asserted that women at the congress as well as women workers were suffering of "the suppressing inequality with men". She maintained the principle of rights: "equal pay for equal work".³¹

Montessori's analysis was near to the one made by French socialist feminists with equality as the goal of women's emancipation. It contained a strong distrust of men's legislation. And her speech was full of sympathy for the marginalized socialist reform ideology, that wanted to see reforms aiming at gender equality.

The conditions for women workers became a hot question at an open evening session. Its topics were public education and the question of woman workers. Minna Cauer was presiding. The session had as its aim a cooperation between organized women, bourgeois (in German "bürgerlich" was not pejorative, only a descriptive word) and socialist. Strong differences were expected. Cauer wanted "to prove , that there could be different opinions in a discussion, arguments

sozialistische Gebiet einzutreten, denn ich beabsichtige nicht von der Frau des Arbeiters zu sprechen, sondern von der Arbeiterin." Berlin 1896: 203.

³¹ Montessori's lecture: "Ueber den Lohn der Arbeiterinnen", Berlin 1896: 202-212. "Unterwürfigkeit"(203). "... auf uns allen die drückende Ungleichheit mit dem Manne lastet..."(211); "... unterdrückten Frauen ..."(211) "...bei gleicher Arbeit gleicher Lohn."(212); as no resolutions were allowed, there was no vote on this ending. Berlin 1896: 191.

could be full of facts and still the participants did not have to turn into enemies in the end".³²

Jeanette Schwerin, well known for her engagement to make conditions better for women workers, spoke first. She invited the Social Democrats to cooperation. As a reformist herself, she was trying to get women hired as factory inspectors; they were to make inspections at work places dominated by women. What she really said at the congress has been taken down in different versions, signaling a wish to downplay the question of night work. According to the printed protocol of the congress, Schwerin enumerated the fields for a cooperation: women's organizations ought to be able to unit for the demands to allow women as witnesses at courts; for women to sit in a jury; for women's employment as guardians for women in prisons. She proposed the election of a group to organize cooperation; different women's organization should send representatives to the group. This protocol version does not mention protective labor legislation.³³

A different report of the speech was written by Minna Cauer in her journal *Frauenbewegung*, in a number published soon after the end of the congress, and before the official book of protocols was out. Cauer perceived protective labor laws as central to Schwerin's talk. Cauer was clear about this; Jeanette Schwerin had spoken in favor of special legislation for women and children. She had pleaded five fields for cooperation: 1) the change from special schools for poorer children to a public school for all 2) the employment of women as factory inspectors 3) "a widening of labor legislation to protect women and children" 4) the use of women for local public assignments and 5) organization of women workers. The report by Cauer is probably the more correct as it is known that Jeanette Schwerin was positive to special legislation for women only. Two years after the congress she started a "Kommission für Arbeiterinnenschutz"/ Committee for protection av woman workers, inside the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine.³⁴ It is most possible that she spoke positively about special laws for women already in 1896. The official book of the congress was not published

³² The debate took place during the next to last day of the congress, Friday the 25th of March 1896, .Berlin 1896: 394ff, 403; "zu beweisen, dass man sich sachlich sehr scharf auseinandersetzen kann, ohne dass deshalb Feindseligkeit zu sein braucht." *FBw* nr 19 1896:180.

³³ Berlin 1896: 394.

³⁴ Berlin 1896: 393f; "die Ausdehnung der Fabrikgesetzgebung zum Schutz der Frauen und Kinder"(189) *FBw* nr 19 1896:180ff; Weiland 1983:28ff & 247ff; Schmitt 1995b:140f.

until 1897, put together by a group of assorted editors. They might have thought it more neutral not to mention Schwerin's view on protection of women?

Disregarding which version is most correct, Schwerin's attempt to instigate cooperation was not well received by the Social Democrats present: Clara Zetkin and Lily Braun. The answer by Zetkin was diplomatic but a repudiation. In her rhetoric she seemed sometimes to open up for a cooperation, only to deny its possibility in the very same sentence. Her speech had a soft tone even if it was clear in its refusal of cooperation. As an example, she could first agree that on the theme of a political equality, some coordination might be possible. But, she continued, it was Social Democrats who had lifted the question of women's right to vote for years and years, whereas the women's congress had not even had the courage to put it on its program. It is of interest, that Zetkin mentioned suffrage twice in her short contribution. She and her party were not against this reform inside the existing system, despite the opinion that bad social conditions would have to end in a change of the whole order of society, probably violently.³⁵ Clara Zetkin's speech gave No as an answer while the Left Wing organizers tried hard to get a Yes for cooperation in some questions.

Lily Braun proceeded to pronounce the incompatibility. She raised a critique of the English settlement movement, with houses and clubs for women in poor districts; they were centers of a conservative political propaganda. The negative influence of this movement showed that any cooperation over the class barrier should lead to conservative policies also in Germany. Lily Braun gave a positive hint on protective legislation for women, when she praised how Social Democrats in the German parliament/Reichstag had worked for the benefit of women:

We also work, since many years, in our way for the same goal, for women as Factory Inspectors, for an increase of protective labor legislation, etc. Our parliamentarians have, this is common knowledge, again and again supported every proposition to the benefit of women.³⁶

Finnish Alexandra Gripenberg argued her opposition to the special prohibition of night work. As young, she had been a delegate at the international women's congress in Washington in 1888. Since then she was a well known

³⁵ The printed protocols were edited by Rosalie Schoenflies, Lina Morgenstern, Minna Cauer, Jeannette Schwerin and Marie Raschke. Berlin 1896:393ff.

³⁶ "Wir arbeiten seit vielen Jahren auf unsere Weise auch für dieselben Ziele, für Anstellung weiblicher Fabrikinspektoren, für Erweiterung der Arbeiterschutzgesetzgebung u.s.w. Die Abgeordneten unserer Partei sind bekanntlich diejenigen, die immer und immer wieder alle Forderungen der Frauen einmütig im Reichstage unterstützen."(400) Berlin 1896:399f.

profile inside the International Council of Women. She painted a bright picture of cooperation over class barriers in Finland. In her homeland a group of woman workers had abandoned their trade union to join a politically mixed women's organization.³⁷

This was all said about special legislation for women in this debate. It soon took another turn, lifting up a much tougher political controversy. Anita Augspurg was a German activist for suffrage and peace and beside Cauer a leading figure in the Left Wing. Her wish was cooperation about political rights for women. She said that women's congresses in both Chicago and Paris had lifted demands of political rights on to the agenda and that bourgeois as well as socialist women had been in accordance. Then Augspurg introduced a sharper tone, speaking about changes in society. She dissociated herself from an eventual socialist upheaval, which would not take place without violence and blood. As a pacifist Anita Augspurg saw revolutions as well as war as devastating. Lastly she tried to cover up her harsh critique by declaring her respect for the ideals that were prevalent in Social Democracy. After her, several other speakers felt the need to attack socialism. Minna Cauer tried to regain a calm atmosphere and bring the debate back to the topic of "women workers".³⁸ It was not an easy task. The session stirred up heated emotions. The air was thick and loaded even after the session.

After the congress, Minna Cauer declared the importance of that very day for the congress. As a president, she had tried to be as neutral as possible. But she hinted at her exasperation with Lily Braun, finding her "repeating her attacks on the bourgeois women's movement ...". That Cauer's irritation should fall on Braun, not on Zetkin, is quite understandable, knowing their common background as founders of *Frauenbewegung*. That Lily Braun soon after the foundation had joined the Social Democrats and left Cauer alone with the editorial responsibility, could not be easy for Cauer to look at neutrally.³⁹

The Social Democratic refusal of any cooperation with the radical Left Wing stopped common actions. The hopes from the beginning of the congress were crashed. The vivid attacks by the bourgeois public at socialism, had not given

³⁷ Berlin 1896:396f.

³⁸ Berlin 1896:401ff; *1. Beilage zum Vorwärts* 26/9 1896; Weiland 1983:38ff.

³⁹ "...wiederholt die Angriffe auf die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung,..." *FBw* nr 19 1896:180f.

signs of an eagerness for such cooperation among the majority of the participants.

The congress had been vague on labor laws for women. Bourgeois women had avoided the question, except maybe Jeanette Schwerin. Taking into account how openly the question had been discussed at several women's congresses in Paris, this might be taken as a sign that protective legislation was controversial inside the Left Wing. The unclear position was used by the Social Democratic women to point out that they were on the side of women much more than the congress. And Clara Zetkin and others underlined that a "clean cut" between the two was urgent.⁴⁰

Socialist women's Volksversammlungen/People's Assemblies

Three Social Democratic so called Volksversammlungen must be seen as a critical comment to the congress. More than a dialogue it was to show that Social Democracy was influential and different; the assemblies wanted to display a socialist profile and show it to the world using the media around the bourgeois congress as well as the presence of foreign delegates. Political tensions had been smouldering during the congress. Social Democratic women were eager to show also the German "Damen/Ladies" their strength and views. But the Volksversammlungen/People's Assemblies were also a way of tightening the movement inwards; the impossibility of cooperation was to be demonstrated to loyal women workers.

In Marten's festival room at the beer Hall in the worker's district Friedrichshain in Berlin, people were already jostling for places half an hour before the opening of the meeting. People were standing in the passages to the rows of chairs or at the back of the room. On the platform beside the panel of speakers, were two men representing the police seated, who however never interfered with the proceedings. The meeting developed calmly.⁴¹ From the congress several foreign delegates were present. No genuine debate was heard.

⁴⁰ Quataert is wrong about this .See Quataert 1979:40; Later Sabine Schmitt has showed that around 1900 most of the German women's movement had accepted special legislation for women. Schmitt 1995a; This unity was also put forward by women at the time, see Alice Salomon in *The International Congress of Women, London, July 1899*. Edited by /Ishbel Maria Gordon/ Countess of Aberdeen. London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1900, Later = London 1899.

⁴¹ Volksversammlungen were held Wednesday 23 sept (starting 20.30), Friday 25 sept and an extra Sunday 27 sept; the socialist daily *Vorwärts* – which is my source plus Schirmacher – gave very long reports. Lily Braun's speech was printed, Braun-Gizycki 1896; Schirmacher 1896:737-754; Braun & Zetkin (1899) 1979.

Clara Zetkin spoke about the bourgeois and proletarian women's movements. She pointed out that these were two separated phenomena. While the bourgeois spoke about "sex-slavery", the socialists pointed to "class-slavery". The class interests were more prominent, always first, according to Zetkin. She saw a greater harmony between the individual woman and man in the working class. Men in the upper or middle classes were hindering women to get education and to get into paid work because they wanted to keep work and money earning to themselves. In that class there developed an antagonism between women and men, which had its ground in an egoistic fight about advantages. On the contrary, in the working class, women themselves had recognized that they were used as "dirty competitors" against men; employer were putting women against men. For these women it was all about a capitalistic exploitation and not about men asking for advantages vis à vis women.⁴²

Another speaker continued the theme of class struggle, accusing women married to salaried employees to grab work opportunities from working class women and thus lowering the wages overall.⁴³ Her solution – even if not explicitly told – could only be that middle class women ought to be supported by their husbands. Waged work should thus be left to women of the working class, because their men earned so little. Also under her way of reasoning was a critique of employers, who did not pay working class men good wages, so that they could support their wives. Behind it all was a wish for a so called family wage.

Emma Ihrer – who had been together with Clara Zetkin in 1889 at the Second International in Paris - spoke about how German women workers had managed to organize during the period when this had been forbidden. Her way of looking at the history before 1890 was to acknowledge that the socialist organization had depended on bourgeois women. This was still a living memory inside the Social Democracy. Emma Ihrer mentioned that Lina Morgenstern in 1881 had contributed to the publication of statistics showing the low wages earned by working class women. She admitted that the first association of women workers in Berlin had been founded by Gertrud Guillaume-Schack, noble by origin. That association made investigations and wrote petitions, which

⁴² "Geschlechtssklaverei" or "Klassensklaverei", "Schmutzkonkurrentin". *1. Beilage zum Vorwärts* 25/9 1896; Braun 1901:482f; Zetkin was known for this way of differentiate between men and women of different classes, Hunt 1996: 64f.

⁴³ *1. Beilage zum Vorwärts* 25/9 1896.

resulted in that other political parties started to show some interest in women workers. But the association came to an end, closed because it was political. It became Social Democratic and worked underground until legality in 1890. What Emma Ihrer did not mention was, that Guillaume-Schack had organized big meetings of women workers protesting that they were excluded from some works; they had been against special labor legislation for women. At that time, in the mid-1880s, Ihrer had worked with Gertrud Guillaume-Schack. Ihrer must have remembered their protests; Ihrer and Guillaume-Schack had shared the critique of special legislation then. Pointed out as a foreigner, a Swiss, Guillaume-Schack had been exiled in 1886 as a political agitator. She settled in London. Emma Ihrer had to pay fines for her activities at that time but could stay because she was German. But now it was the middle of the 1890s. The opinions were different.

Emma Ihrer was now on the way of being squeezed out of influence in the party. Yet she spoke at this meeting. Many German socialist women had during the 1880s been reluctant to special labor laws for women, including Clara Zetkin herself. After the 1896 congress, Ihrer was going to be at odds with Zetkin because Ihrer wanted to cooperate with bourgeois women.⁴⁴

At the second of the assemblies Lily Braun started her talk by flattering the international congress as a step forward for the German women's movement. Maybe she could be more generous among her own group, maybe she just wanted to get a hearing from the congress delegates who had come to Friedrichshain? But she repeated her attack on liberal women in Great Britain. These ladies had shown how little they understood of the question of women workers when they were against special labor legislation for women. Their argument had been that such legislation was diminishing women's liberties. For Braun England was a frightening example of what cooperation with bourgeois women could lead to; it put special labor laws for women in question.⁴⁵

Lily Braun did not give any explanation to her audience as to why she considered labor laws for women good. Did she find it obvious? And she did not

⁴⁴ 1. *Beilage zum Vorwärts* 25/9 1896 (and quoted word); Braun 1901: 471 is also praising Gertrud Guillaume-Schack without mentioning her resistance to the night work prohibition for women; Weiland 1983: 134f, 278; Schmitt 1995a: 24.

⁴⁵ Braun-Gizycki 1896; *Vorwärts* 27/9 1896.

mention, either, that a night work prohibition as well as other special laws for women were, since quite a time, the rule in England.⁴⁶

At the last meeting, on a Sunday morning, the bourgeois ladies were many but the women workers fewer than before. Ottilie Baader, a leading person in the Social Democratic women's movement, gave a well argued speech. At last the arguments for special treatment of women were explicit. Baader pointed out that a special protective labor legislation for women was the policy of Social Democrats. She accused the congress for avoiding protection of women, which was of concern for five and a half million women workers. These, who had to work both at home and in a factory, had no forces left to organize, in trade unions or politically. Because they were mothers of the coming generation, they needed protection by the state. Bodily destroyed women could not give birth to sound children. The protection that Social Democrats so far had managed to introduce, among them the night work prohibition, was far from enough because the mortality rate among small children was still high. In addition to the night work prohibition, Baader wanted paid leave for mothers when giving birth, a prohibition to use women in dangerous work, and a limit to how many hours women could work daily. An eight hours work day should, to start with, be introduced for women only. Of course, she wanted better factory inspections, to supervise it all.⁴⁷

Baader regarded the night work prohibition as one of many in a long line of labor laws that were needed. Some of her demands were of legislation for women only, to begin with. They were to be seen as the first step and ought to be widened to include men later on. Other demands were about specific situations in the life of a woman, as being pregnant and giving birth. From her speech it is not clear, which laws Ottilie Baader considered for all workers and which were meant to go on, being for women only. But from her arguments it is evident that she did consider *all* women in need of special kind of protection, because they might become mothers. She spoke as if it was only thanks to Social Democrats the legislation against night work prohibition for women had passed in the Reichstag/parliament in 1891, despite the fact that she must have known

⁴⁶ *Vorwärts* has probably reported this meeting on Friday night; it should be in a Beilage of 26 sept which I have not located. ; Zetkin's speech, probably the whole of it was in *Vorwärts* 27/9 1896 and also in Braun-Gizycki 1896; "... Damen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ..." (7) Braun-Gizycki 1896; there is no doubt about that Lily Braun knew about the resistance among socialist women. Braun 1901:478.

⁴⁷ Title: "Der gesetzliche Schutz der Arbeiterinnen" 2. *Beilage zum Vorwärts* 29/9 1896; Ottilie Baader was in the beginning of 1900 one of the leading women in her party. Zeisler 1978:38; Schmitt 1995a:98ff.

that the party had not been alone to get it accepted. Behind the prohibition were the social policies of the new emperor and a recommendation by the Berlin conference of 1890, which the emperor as well as other groups had liked and supported it, Catholics among them.

The important role of the Social Democratic counter-congress, the so called People's Assemblies was: to underline a distance to the so called bourgeois congress and the women there, who wanted cooperation; to accentuate that Social Democratic women stood behind socialist practice and ideology and, last but not least, to point to concrete achievements for the welfare of women workers that Social Democracy were doing. The last point was elevated by the example of the night work prohibition.

Social Democratic women were not negative to any special questions raised by the Left Wing at the congress; they refused cooperation because the bourgeois women would not verbally accept a violent overturn of society. It was a matter of principle.

During the Party Days in Gotha in October that same year, Clara Zetkin again pointed to her dissociation from the bourgeois women's movement. She asserted the importance of a "clean cut". This was far from the view by all Social Democratic activist women at the time. But there was a unity about labor legislation for women. And, as a matter of fact, such a protection was already viewed positively by many of the bourgeois women in Germany. Only a couple of years later all of the German bourgeois women's movements recommended labor legislation for women. Clara Zetkin knew in 1896 that it was more important to have the backing of the mighty Social Democratic Party than to open for alliances with a weak bourgeois women's movement. She spelled it out:

And it should be silly if we, who behind us have the solid power created by Social Democracy, should want to join the bourgeois women, who have no social power behind them at all. ⁴⁸

She acted as a pragmatic politician. Her utterance give us doubt that all women in the party were happy about the clean cut. Zetkin spoke to convince

⁴⁸ Berlin 1896: 173; "Und es wäre töricht, wenn wir, hinter denen die kompakte soziale Macht der sozialdemokratie steht, uns den bürgerlichen Frauen, hinter denen keine soziale Macht steht, anschliessen wollten", from Sauer 1975: 3 who refers to "Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands ... Gotha vom 11. bis 16. Oktober 1896"; Weiland 1983: 108, 134, 278, 292; "Reinliche Scheidung" Schmitt 1995a: 24 & 1995b: 63ff; Hunt 1996: 66.

those who were not really sure, when she argued that it was best to join the strongest. Henrietta Fürth was one of the Social Democratic women who would have liked cooperation with bourgeois women, others were Emma Ihrer and Lily Braun. But for Clara Zetkin class was put before sex, and she was loyal to the Party when it came to policies about women. It is in the light of this, that her total change in the question about special labor legislation for women must be judged. Zetkin, for a long time, was to decide formally about the policies of the German Social Democratic women's organization. Her influence would also be extended to other countries through the Second International.⁴⁹ Policies were controlled by the leading men in the Party. Women were politically subordinated inside the Party.

Zetkin wanted to create respect for women's participation in the Social Democratic Party, which was heavily dominated by men, sceptical to women as trade unionists, and even as wage workers. The next year, in 1897, trade union men's negative attitudes towards working women was to be discussed in a remarkable congress of trade unions, Social Democratic as well as Catholic, in Zurich.

The Social Democratic Party in Germany wanted two contradictory things concerning women: the one mainly in theory, the other in practice. The Party theoretically wanted to treat women as equals; in the long run no women's question existed and inside the Party there already did not exist any such question, not in its organizations and not between individual men and women in the working class, all according to this principle. All persons were equally good and also equal in front of capitalism. This was a dogma. Between men and women of the working class there was – theoretically and ideologically – harmony.

But at a non-ideological practical verbal level, inside the Party there was talk about "women" as a group, with special characteristics: they competed with men; they were difficult to organize; they were accepting too low wages thus causing lower wages all over; they ought to be better mothers and wives etc.

It must have been hard for women to find a logical coherence in socialist theory of equality, that was in accordance with the practice of the Party and the views Party men had on women. The Party was willing, almost eager, to inside

⁴⁹ E.g. Hunt 1996: 63ff.

the capitalist system treat women differently, with the help of state legislation. Night work prohibition was one such question. In the 1880s and still in the beginning of the 1890s Social Democratic women were against special laws for women. Their protests were silenced. In a later analysis such protest were seen as sign that women's views earlier had been formed "much under the influence of the champions of bourgeois woman's rights."⁵⁰ Of the women who stayed on as active and in front positions in the Social Democratic Party in Germany, some did not at all care about women's questions, as Rosa Luxemburg, or gave it the vaguely analyzed place it got in Bebel's influential book on *Woman and Socialism*. To the latter belongs Clara Zetkin, who in the woman question did not differ from the views of her male comrades. She abandoned, so it seems, without remorse or doubt her own analysis on equality in the labor market from the congress of the Second International in Paris in 1889. From the beginning of 1890s she went out in a quite opposite campaign for special protective legislation for women, with arguments of woman's different biology and motherhood. This was formulated in a series of articles in her journal *Die Gleichheit*. Inside the German Social Democratic Party the principle of equality between women and men had been pushed away by discourses and acts regarding women as foremost potential mothers. Women who wanted to keep their political position, had to alter their views to fit in.⁵¹

Bourgeoisie, socialism and the neglected night work prohibition

The way to talk about night work prohibition, that had started to be formulated at international feminist congresses, that is to say to demand protective laws for all but no special legislation for women only, was not at all heard in Berlin in 1896. Such a view could be interpreted as held by Maria Montessori but her speech was too full of her aversion to men's laws generally, that her analysis of the antagonisms between men and women became the overall theme. In Berlin in 1896 we miss the voices of the socialist feminists, which were constructed on socialism as well as a distinct equality ideal between men and women. The radical left, the Left Wing kept quiet and the Social

⁵⁰ "...was much under the influence of the champions of bourgeois woman's rights." *Reports to the first International Conference of Socialist Women...1907*: 10, Callesens Samling ABBA; Schmitt 1995a och 1995b.

⁵¹ *Die Gleichheit* 1891-1911; Henrietta Fürth (1861-1936) continued to defend a cooperation. Weiland 1983 also 113ff; Schmitt 1995a:43ff.

Democratic women turned against equality when arguing for a night work prohibition for women. For them it was a protection, not a prohibition. The Left Wing was afraid of a split also among themselves and most eager to establish any form of cooperation between all organized women. The Social Democrats wanted to show a distinct distance to "bourgeois" women and pronounce their solidarity and wish to stand side by side with men of their own class. Social Democratic women turned the debate to focus on woman as a mother and on the needs of the still not born children. The woman was often seen as a part of the family. Maternity was also very much in favor with the majority in the broad German women's movement, as well as what was called the "societal maternity".⁵²

At the congress of 1896 facts on working women were not in focus but the shaping of a "clean cut", pushed by the Social Democrats, between socialist and bourgeois women. Social Democrats managed to exploit the opportunity given by the congress. This was even more accentuated when all organized German Women agreed on supporting the special legislation for women only, some years later. A German national consensus of organized women was reached on this around 1897/98. To achieve this Jeanette Schwerin had been active. She had a close coworker, the young Alice Salomon, who was to promote this view in the wider international field, eventually also as a secretary at the International Council of Women.⁵³ She and Clara Zetkin became the German spokeswomen for special legislation for women outside of their own country. They both did much to implement it internationally. They indeed coworked on this question, without any agreement.

After 1898 the night work prohibition for women was not any longer a controversy between women in Germany. But it continued to be discussed vividly on international women's congresses. Not even all Social Democratic women in other countries were happy with the opinion of Clara Zetkin.

⁵² E.g. Stoehr (1983) 1987; Taylor Allen 1985; Melander 1994.

⁵³ Braun 1901:472f; Weiland 1983:235ff; 247f; Schmitt 1995b:141.