

Chapter 7

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## SOCIALISM AND SINGLENESS

Clara Zetkin



*The Frauenüberschuß* (female surplus) is a concept that simultaneously describes a predicament and calls for a response. Advocates of women's rights used the notion of the female surplus to demonstrate the impact of the economic and social changes that they believed had left many women with no choice but to take on new roles. Capitalism's advance explained and defended the rise of female activism and gave moderate reformers a mechanism by which to eschew polemics in favor of maternalist advocacy. The mainstream women's movement led by Helene Lange, Gertrud Bäumer, and Alice Salomon demonstrated the displacement of bourgeois women from the home, but the movement did not challenge the capitalist epoch at the source of that domestic rupture.<sup>1</sup> Most moderates accepted the prevailing economic, social, and political system as immutable reality. Maternalist ideology reified the importance of marriage and the family while questioning neither the dominance of capitalism nor the implications of class stratification.

The agenda pursued by the *Bund für Mutterschutz* (BfM) also identified economic causality as the catalyst for the women's movement.<sup>2</sup> But Helene Stöcker's new ethical system sought moral change based upon a philosophical justification. Capitalism played a key role in creating what the BfM saw as the corrupt moral standards of modernity, but the BfM's agenda nonetheless could have been realized under the existing political order. The work of reformers Ruth Bré and Lily Braun addressed how economic change had wreaked havoc upon marriage and the family. But Bré's social criticism lamented the state of the economy without pointing a way out; her focus on single motherhood did not allow for broader social analysis. On the other hand, the socialist Lily Braun wrote fervently about

the exploitation of the proletariat. But “Braun’s purview was the present”<sup>3</sup> and her gifts lay in describing the pathos of contemporary life and conveying the urgency of change. Though she wrote about a broad array of targets, Braun’s advocacy was too widespread and at times too whimsical to be consistently political.

Yet as both moderates and radicals assessed and sought to change female single life (be it through opening professional avenues, redefining motherhood, or subverting marriage), they inevitably raised questions about the viability of the extant culture. Was capitalism not indicted by the despair of bourgeois women who had been forced outside of the comforts of home by the industrial mode of production? Taken to its furthest extreme, might the existence of a surplus of unprotected and aimless women provide evidence of capitalism’s inevitable fall? The rhetoric surrounding the female surfeit also exposed a malaise that plagued bourgeois marriage: its perceived ties to cash.

In 1905, sociologist Robert Michels (a socialist and SPD member until 1907) wrote about the impact that capitalism had had on the view of marriage held by the average middle-class man: “In the struggle for existence which he must go through, a whole number of years generally elapse before he can come to a high enough salary or earnings in order to support wife and child, be it as a civil servant, businessman or member of a free profession.”<sup>4</sup> Delayed marriage and a lack of nuptial enthusiasm among bourgeois men had created a female surplus. Old maidenhood thus ran rampant: “That army of aging girls who the cruel vernacular loves to define as ‘*alte Jungfer*’ [old maid] belongs to the flags of our bourgeoisie in all of whose strata and substrata we find them, closed off from almost every meaningful pleasure in life. But this phenomenon is limited to the bourgeoisie.”<sup>5</sup> Social class dictated the terms of the *Frauenüberschuß* and the contours of the old maid.

Maria Lischnewska, an executive board member of the BfM, employed the dialectic in her description of a historical process resulting in the debasement of marriage. After the domestic economy had been transformed by the arrival of consumer goods, “the woman lost the ground under her feet that connected her firmly to the national economy. She became in the eyes of the man a luxury article.” Like so many commentators of her era, Lischnewska eschewed investigation of statistical realities in favor of a simple assertion of the reality of delayed and scarce marriages:

From this arise the late marriages ... The male dread of marriage and above all the immoral institution of the bought marriage are based on these economically-altered foundations of marriage. “What has she?” That is the question, i.e.: How much economic value does she bring with her into communal life? If one regards the situation with a real sober sensibility, then one cannot reproach the man. Whether judge or policeman, officer or corporal, teacher or physician or tradesmen—the man sees the most difficult deprivation before himself if the woman is without means. It is just an economic fact of the modern time: *one* person cannot support four or five other people. Thus marriage becomes in thousands of cases an act of lowly calculation, and the question of the inner harmony of souls, which alone should be crucial, grows silent.<sup>6</sup>

None of the cited professions characterized the working-class, for Lischnewska interpreted the marriage problem as a strictly middle-class event. Bourgeois marriage was the mean product of “lowly calculation.” Lischnewska and her peers in the BfM believed that it was time to recalculate the value of the institution itself.

Marx and Engels had contended that the bourgeois family was based upon capital and private gain. The single woman’s expulsion from that sphere served as an important example of the middle-class family’s eventual dissolution. What better evidence of the family’s degeneration than the ease with which it dismissed the capitally useless unwed woman? The *Frauenüberschuß* was one of the steps in the process by which “the bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course.”<sup>7</sup> This chapter addresses the role of the female surplus as articulated by two of the most prominent figures in the history of Imperial German socialism: August Bebel (1840–1913) and Clara Zetkin (1857–1933). Zetkin was the leading female voice in the socialist movement of the *Kaiserreich* (Imperial Germany); her vision expanded upon the foundation provided by Bebel. Both believed that the surplus woman signified the bankruptcy of bourgeois culture and society.

### August Bebel and Capitalist Decay

A woodworker turned politician, August Bebel led the German socialist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Bebel in 1869 was a cofounder of the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei* (SDAP; Social Democratic Worker’s Party) and served as a member of Germany’s Reichstag from 1871 until his death in 1913. The SDAP in 1875 merged into the newly established *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD). Bebel would emerge as the most important figure in that party throughout the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine eras. Bebel became chair of the SPD in 1892 (after the lifting of anti-socialist legislation), the same year in which the party began to pursue a national profile. The SPD sought to achieve socialism through action in a national context, and by the final years of the *Kaiserreich*, it proved to be very successful in gaining an electoral constituency.<sup>8</sup>

Bebel’s most influential work, *Woman and Socialism* (1879), provides the seminal intellectual and political framework for the role of women in the German socialist movement. In their study of *Men’s Feminism*, Anne Lopes and Gary Roth have argued that Bebel’s book “sets the tone, scope, and particulars for the debate on gender equality” in the *Kaiserreich*, though in its immersion in well-worn roles and stereotypes, it is also “a throwback to the period from which [Bebel] had evolved.”<sup>9</sup> In his conception of conventional gender roles, Bebel strengthened the staying power of the old maid. *Women under Socialism* identifies the *Frauenüberschuß* as a pervasive problem of the modern era. Bebel’s account of the surplus woman later would be adopted by Clara Zetkin in her critiques of the bourgeois women’s movement. Bebel explained the female surplus in four stages: a description of bourgeois marriage as an economic institution; an accounting of the demographic origins of the female surplus; an argument that a surfeit of unwed women

offered evidence of greater social decay; and a declaration that only through a complete reordering of society could the female surplus be ameliorated. Marxism clearly governed Bebel's interpretation of the *Frauenüberschuß*. His description of the overabundance of unmarried women also went beyond ideological assertions of the bourgeois family "vanishing as a matter of course" to identify particular aspects of the Imperial German context that served as proof of the decline of both the bourgeois family and bourgeois marriage.

The economic basis of marriage served as the first component of Bebel's version of the female surplus. Bebel asserted that "modern marriage is an institution that is closely connected with the existing social condition, and stands or falls with it. But this marriage is in the course of dissolution and decay, exactly as capitalist society itself."<sup>10</sup> The potential bride was a pawn in a property transaction: "To man, woman is, first of all, an object of enjoyment. Economically and socially unfree, she is bound to see in marriage her means of support; accordingly, she depends upon man and becomes a piece of property to him. As a rule, her position is rendered still more unfavorable through the general excess of women over men."<sup>11</sup> All of her education, both practical and cultural, limited the bourgeois woman to the status of possession: "The woman who does not reach the development of her faculties, who is crippled in her powers, who is held imprisoned in the narrowest circle of thought, and who comes into contact with hardly any but her own female relatives,—such a woman can not possibly raise herself above the routine of daily life and habits."<sup>12</sup> Class status played a key role in her evolution, for the leisure of a secure income created her dependence upon the social structure into which she had been born and in which her only anticipated occupation was marriage.

Second, Bebel's discussion of the *Frauenüberschuß* offered a description of why a "general excess of women over men" existed. Several circumstances played into what Bebel asserted was a demographic reality, demonstrated through a broad international comparison of overall population statistics as well as an examination of population by age cohort within Germany.<sup>13</sup> He identified both the predominance of male migration and the male mortality rate as factors contributing to a European female surplus. Bebel also described the inherent character of bourgeois capitalism as a primary cause of the female surplus. Particularly important to his argument was the number of men who delayed marriage because of military service: "A considerable number of men are kept from marriage by the State itself. People pucker up their brows at the celibacy imposed upon Roman Catholic clergymen; but these same people have not a word of condemnation for the much larger number of soldiers who also are condemned thereto." Bebel argued that military regulations inhibited marriage, for "the officers not only require the consent of their superiors, they are also limited in the choice of a wife: the regulation prescribes that she shall have property to a certain, and not insignificant, amount."<sup>14</sup> Bebel's unique emphasis on military service implicated the state in broader social decay and condemned the military structure upon which that bourgeois state depended.

Another contributing factor to the *Frauenüberschuß* was less political but just as critical of the bourgeois milieu. The inequity of the bourgeois power structure allowed men to make a choice while women sat passively by: “Many women do not marry, simply because they cannot. Everybody knows that usage forbids woman to offer herself. She must allow herself to be wooed, i.e., chosen.”<sup>15</sup> And some men simply elected not to woo. Their justification might be economic: “many men do not marry because they think they cannot support a wife, and the children that may come, according to their station.”<sup>16</sup> But in electing such a path, these men emphasized the importance of “their station” well beyond any notions of love, spiritual commitment, or family ideal. Other men might decide not to marry for more libidinous reasons: “Due to his position as master, and in so far as social barriers do not hinder him, there is on the side of man the free choice of love.”<sup>17</sup> The cultural and economic reality of male autonomy combined with the social conditions of emigration, military service, and greater male mortality to create the female surplus.

Vivid descriptions of the consequences of an abundance of unwed woman form the third element of Bebel’s construction of the *Frauenüberschuß*. Familiar figures adorn *Woman under Socialism*. Bebel describes the anxiously waiting bride who “seizes gladly the opportunity, soon as offered, to reach the hand to the man who redeems her from the social ostracism and neglect, that is the lot of that poor waif, the ‘old maid.’” Competition between women for the few men available reflected the competitive spirit intrinsic to capitalist society. Some brave women might choose to remain single, even while facing the derision of the lucky wife, who “looks down with contempt upon those of her sisters who have yet preserved their self-respect, and have not sold themselves into mental prostitution to the first comer, preferring to tread single the thorny path of life.”<sup>18</sup>

Still, Bebel considered most unwed women to be more victims than vanguards. In this regard, Bebel reflected the growing scholarship on sexuality in his description of the *alleinstehende Frau*. Standing alone “produces a number of diseases into whose nature we will go no further, but that affect mainly the female sex ... her organism depends, in much higher degree than that of man, upon her sexual mission, and is influenced thereby as is shown by the regular recurrence of her periods.”<sup>19</sup> This unsophisticated assessment of sexuality and the female reproductive system cast the unwed woman into a category of abnormality and ill health. Elite class status worsened the lot of single women due to “the idle, voluptuous life of many women in the property classes; their refined measures of nervous stimulants; their overfeeding with a certain kind of artificial sensation”—all of these factors created the excitable, perhaps even neurotic, bourgeois surplus woman.<sup>20</sup>

But the most important consequence of the female surfeit was not to be found among the pathetic experiences of its victims; rather, it lay in the impact of the *Frauenüberschuß* upon production. Unsurprisingly, Bebel identified clear economic consequences of the demographic and cultural phenomenon he described. With a note of measured sympathy for uneducated middle-class daughters without means, Bebel noted: “The deficit of candidates for marriage affects strongest

those female strata that, through education and social position, make greater pretensions, and yet, outside of their persons, have nothing to offer the man who is looking for wealth.” Daughters on fixed salaries faced a most urgent crisis: “The life of the female being in this stratum of society is, comparatively speaking, the saddest of all those of her fellow-sufferers. It is out of these strata that is mainly recruited the most dangerous competition for the working women in embroidery, sewing, flower-making, millinery, glove and straw hat making; in short, all the branches of industry that the employer prefers to have carried on in the homes of the working women.” Occupying the bourgeois surfeit in cottage industry rendered harmful effects: “These ladies work for the lowest wages ... not to earn a full livelihood, but only [for] something over and above that, or to earn the outlay for a better wardrobe and for luxury.” The vanity of idle bourgeois women impoverished the female proletariat, because “employers have a predilection for the competition of these ladies, so as to lower the earnings of the poor working woman and squeeze the last drop of blood from her veins: it drives her to exert herself to the point of exhaustion.”<sup>21</sup>

Displaced from the only vocation she had ever imagined, the excessive woman in turn disrupted the productive capacity of others. Oppressed herself, the surplus woman became the inadvertent oppressor of her working-class sisters—while also slipping ever closer toward the ranks of the proletariat. Bebel used the surplus woman to link bourgeois oppression with a vision of capitalism’s inevitable decay. Bebel’s application of the *Frauenüberschuß* clearly did not validate the moderate women’s movement’s emphasis on creating new and special professions for surplus bourgeois women. Such women had already entered the marketplace, taking quiet steps that made evident both the perils and the oppression of the capitalist mode of production.

The final component of Bebel’s discussion of the female surplus set forth a solution to the problem. Bebel contended that the *Frauenüberschuß* offered evidence of “the irrationableness and unhealthiness of modern conditions.”<sup>22</sup> Radical reconfiguration of society could be the only solution to the female surplus and the more general malaise created by the industrial mode of production. Bebel offered a revisionist Marxist notion of broad social reform. The female surplus was but one of many “evils deeply rooted in our social state of things, and removable neither by the moral sermonizings nor the palliatives that religious quacks of the male and female sexes have so readily at hand.” One might add to this list of “quacks” the leadership of the bourgeois women’s movement, whom Bebel considered to be pursuing “a Sisyphus work ... with as much noise as possible, to the end of deceiving oneself and others on the score of the necessity for radical change.”<sup>23</sup>

Bebel argued that only very practical reform of education and social institutions could solve the female surplus: “The question is to bring about a natural system of education, together with healthy conditions of life and work, and to do this in amplest manner, to the end that the normal gratification of natural and healthy instincts be made possible for all.”<sup>24</sup> This goal could only be realized

through dismantling the bourgeois order. He concluded his discussion of the female surplus with a radical call for change: "Seeing that all these unnatural conditions, harmful to woman in particular, are grounded in the nature of capitalist society, and grow worse as this social system continues, the same proves itself unable to end the evil and emancipate woman. Another social order is, accordingly, requested thereto."<sup>25</sup>

Bebel's views on women and socialism greatly influenced Karl Marx's youngest daughter, Eleanor Marx-Aveling. In an 1886 essay, Marx-Aveling and her partner, Edward Aveling, reflected and expanded upon the judgment of Bebel regarding bourgeois single women: "We can, in a moment, tell the unmarried women, if they are beyond a certain age ... But we cannot tell a man that is unmarried from one that is wedded."<sup>26</sup> The burdensome wait for a husband transformed the female physique and laid bare the inherent unfairness of the fact that "our marriages, like our morals, are based upon commercialism ... Whether we consider women as a whole, or only that sad sisterhood wearing upon its melancholy brows the stamp of eternal virginity, we find alike a want of ideas and ideals. The reason of this is again the economic position of dependency upon a man."<sup>27</sup> The Marx-Avelings cited "the masculine woman" and "that morbid virginity" as markers of modern capitalism's "unnatural dealing with the sex relations," and maintained that "chastity is a crime."<sup>28</sup> Marxist doctrine merges here with the sexological reading of the physically malformed old maid; economic dependency and victimization through the commercial marriage market rot the body of the unwed woman. As interpreted by Karl Marx's daughter, Bebel's influential reading of the *Frauenüberschuß* provided a link between the crises of sex and the economy.

August Bebel was a politician as well as a Marxist theoretician. As the leading figure in the SPD and in the German socialist movement throughout most of the imperial era, Bebel's views on women and socialism had a pronounced impact on that movement by the turn of the century.<sup>29</sup> The viability of the SPD, the cohesiveness of the worker's movement, and the infusion of working-class concerns into the politics of the *Kaiserreich* formed Bebel's life work. In part because women were not permitted to join German political parties until 1908, he did not actively involve himself either in the activities of organized socialist women or in their ideological battles with the bourgeois women's movement. The lines of women's participation in German socialism were drawn by August Bebel, but it was Clara Zetkin who led socialist women and who most clearly articulated the difference between the socialist and bourgeois women's movements.

### **Clara Zetkin and the Subordination of Gender**

The historian Werner Thönessen has observed that, "in the writings of Clara Zetkin, the socialist theory of female emancipation was completed."<sup>30</sup> Zetkin, born Clara Eissner in Saxony in 1857, provided one of the most powerful female voices

of late nineteenth and early twentieth century German socialism. While her views were frequently challenged, it is nonetheless fair to say that Zetkin's beliefs, combined with Bebel's authoritative text, essentially defined the view of the SPD on the position of women from 1896 until Zetkin left the party in the midst of the 1917 schism over support for World War I. Much of Zetkin's work addressed the most significant dilemma faced by female socialists: the relationship of the *Frauenfrage* (woman question) to the *Sozialefrage* (social question). Zetkin maintained that while women of all classes experienced subjugation, true female emancipation could only be achieved through a proletarian revolution. This Marxist perspective required the subordination of feminist pursuits, such as expanded education and marriage rights, to class and party goals. Women's issues as such would not and could not be addressed in the socialist discourse. Zetkin held in contempt the moderate women's movement as well as the radical feminism as embodied by women such as Helene Stöcker and Lily Braun, because in their pursuit of particular objectives, these female leaders were blind to the greater causes of social inequality.

Clara Eissner began her career as a teacher and was introduced to the bourgeois women's movement through her mother's activism. While attending a teacher's course in Leipzig, she became acquainted with early female activists Luise Otto and Auguste Schmidt. But as Clara became involved with the vibrant worker's movement situated in Leipzig during the 1870s and 1880s, her political sentiments moved toward socialism. Through her activism, she met the Russian socialist Ossip Zetkin, and ultimately became his common-law spouse. Because of her gifts as a writer and orator, Clara rose to prominence among European socialists by the time she was thirty. In light of the hostile political climate that arose during the years of German anti-socialist legislation (1878–1890), the Zetkins emigrated to Paris and lived in exile together until Ossip's death in 1889. In July of that year, Clara spoke "For the Liberation of Women" at the Second International Worker's Congress in Paris. This speech contained the core ideas that would inform Zetkin's belief system throughout her career: the necessity of bringing working women into the proletariat struggle and pursuing female equality in the course of socialist reform. Zetkin found a forum for these ideas when, in 1891, she was appointed the editor of the *Die Gleichheit* (Equality), the SPD's journal for women. Zetkin held this position until her resignation from the party in 1917. Her position as *Gleichheit* editor and her prominence as an advocate of socialist education, gleaned from her years spent as a schoolteacher, raised her profile higher than any other German female socialist, excepting perhaps Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>31</sup> Zetkin used her editorship and her renown in the party to elucidate further her goal of integrating working women into the socialist cause.

Zetkin articulated a much more orthodox understanding of socialism than did her contemporary Lily Braun.<sup>32</sup> Braun's aristocratic background and radical views brought her into frequent conflict with Zetkin's view of class superseding gender. Zetkin objected to Braun's promotion of specifically female issues, such as women's cooperatives and female reproductive rights. Because Braun's reform-



ist agenda consistently placed the needs of the female sex before those of the working class as a whole, Zetkin found Braun's conception of womanhood to be antithetical to the socialist cause. In order to combat the reformist urges and class-unconscious leanings of rivals like Braun, Zetkin employed an arsenal of socialist doctrine augmented by consideration of the modern female condition. The existence of the *Frauenüberschuß* among the middle-class provided just such ammunition.

Clara Zetkin spent her life attempting to define and establish a place for women in German socialism; in doing so, she inherited the legacy of August Bebel. Bebel's *Woman under Socialism* had described the female surplus and even offered a limited demographic examination of the subject. Zetkin's work continued the socialist reckoning with the bourgeois surplus woman and added a maternalist touch. Zetkin brought to the socialist reading of women's rights "a new synthesis of ideas about gender in which women's equality once again complements domesticity."<sup>33</sup>

Zetkin's understanding of the woman's question conformed well to a model of economic determinism. She believed that the question of women's rights existed because of the *Frauenüberschuß*, a demographic event that resulted from the mode of production. In a speech given at the 1896 party congress, Zetkin argued that the surplus of women increasingly became a problem as capitalism developed. The question of women's rights stemmed from the female displacement wrought by the economic epoch: "For millions of women the question arose: Where do we now find our livelihood? Where do we find a meaningful life as well as a job that gives us mental satisfaction? Millions were now forced to find their livelihood and their meaningful lives outside of their families and within society as a whole. At that moment they became aware of the fact that their social illegality stood in opposition to their most basic interests. It was from this moment on that there existed a [*Frauenfrage*]."<sup>34</sup>

Zetkin expanded upon Bebel's depiction of the surplus woman by attributing greater agency to uprooted females. Bebel had viewed surplus women mainly as victims who, for the most part, had inadvertently subjugated working-class women. Zetkin retained Bebel's vision of victimization in her description of women as 'forced' to find new, meaningful lives. But upon becoming aware of their basic inequality, these victims of the female surplus formed a movement in response. The *Frauenüberschuß* served as the linchpin of Zetkin's argument regarding the origin of the women's movement. The same cohort of women who had been insulated from questions about their social and legal status while subjected to the domestic mode of production began to question the broader social ordering of society once capitalism and the industrial mode of production gained sway.

Zetkin believed that the most critical symptom of the impending ruin of the bourgeoisie was the decreasing number of marriages, leading to a more comprehensive erosion of the family unit. Absent any demographic support, she argued that marriages decreased among the bourgeoisie because economic factors

did not compel men to wed: “Although on the one hand the material basis is worsening, on the other hand the individual’s expectations of life are increasing, so that a man of that background will think twice or even thrice before he enters into a marriage.” The moral laxity of the capitalist age furthered marital aversion: “A man is under no pressure to marry since there exist in our time enough societal institutions which offer to an old bachelor a comfortable life without a legitimate wife ... Thus within bourgeois circles, the number of unmarried women increases all the time.”<sup>35</sup>

The question of women’s rights simply did not emerge among working-class women. Industrialization had created two interdependent yet quite different outcomes for the female proletariat. First, she was on par with the working-class man: “She became the equal of the man as a worker; the machine rendered muscular force superfluous and everywhere women’s work showed the same results in production as men’s work.” Oppression formed the second consequence of industrialization. Working women’s economic dependency merely shifted from husbands to employers, so that in the industrial age, “the proletarian woman fights hand in hand with the man of her class against capitalist society.”<sup>36</sup> The greater *Sozialefrage* thus subsumed the *Frauenfrage*.

Zetkin emulated Bebel, Marx, and Engels by declaring that the modern mode of production had created the dominance of the bourgeoisie while simultaneously hurtling them toward destruction. But she went much further than her socialist forefathers in celebrating the dismantled domestic sphere. Zetkin’s personal belief in the importance of family departed from the outlines of the question drawn by Bebel. Her reading of the symbiotic twosome of the prostitute and the *alte Jungfer* clarifies the distinctiveness of her position. Like Robert Michels, she argued that the bourgeois bachelor found fulfillment at the expense of the unwed working-class woman—while the middle-class old maid waited in vain.<sup>37</sup> Middle-class single men studied in universities, fraternized in clubs, and socialized in brothels. Unmarried middle-class women honed their domestic skills, mended in sewing circles, and pined away in solitude. Zetkin lamented the ways in which the traditional avenues of marriage and domestic occupation had been closed to unwed women of the middle-class. Because of such restrictions, these women had been forced to recognize their ‘social illegality’; the bourgeois women’s movement had emerged from this recognition.

The *Frauenüberschuß* served a dual purpose for Clara Zetkin: it proved that the bourgeois women’s movement had emerged from economic displacement and it demonstrated the limited middle-class worldview of that movement. Proletarian women simply could not share in the goals of the surplus women who pursued job opportunities and professional training.<sup>38</sup> The organized women’s movement sought to enable bourgeois women to compete with bourgeois men, providing further evidence of the women’s movement as entwined with social class. Because the cause for women’s rights was rooted in the bourgeois capitalist epoch, it could not transcend the historical potentiality of the socialist movement.

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August Bebel and Clara Zetkin articulated an understanding of the *Frauenüberschuß* that both laid bare the damaging consequences of capitalism and provided a means to condemn the bourgeois women's movement. These augmentations to the portrayal of the female surplus were easier to assert in theory—the domain of Bebel's *Woman under Socialism*—than they were for Zetkin to consistently reconcile in practice. Simply asserting that excess bourgeois women demonstrated bourgeois decrepitude and enhanced class conflict did not provide relief. Neither Zetkin nor Bebel grappled comprehensively with how a proletarian revolution might affect the central tie between female identity and marital status. Yet the female surfeit signified anxiety about broader social, cultural, and economic change; in this way it also provided fuel for socialist ideology. The works of Bebel and Zetkin on the *Frauenüberschuß* reveal a concept that cut across political and class borders. The surplus woman provided socialists with proof of the unsettled, antagonistic, and rotting nature of bourgeois society.

## Notes

1. See chapter 5.
2. See chapter 6.
3. Jean Quataert, *Reluctant Feminism in German Social Democracy, 1855–1917* (Princeton, NJ, 1979), 129.
4. Robert Michels, “Die Dirne als die ‘alte Jungfer’ des Proletariats und die Prostitution,” *Mutterschutz* 1(2)(1905): 60.
5. *Ibid.*, 58.
6. Maria Lischnewska, “Die wirtschaftliche Reform der Ehe,” *Mutterschutz* 2(6) (1906): 219–220; emphasis in text. Lischnewska was an active member of the BfM and wrote frequently on the topic of sex education.
7. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore (New York, 1985), 100.
8. In the 1912 Reichstag elections, the SPD received 26 percent (and a plurality) of the vote.
9. Anne Lopes and Gary Roth, *Men's Feminism: August Bebel and the German Socialist Movement* (Amherst, NY, 2000), 38.
10. August Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, trans. Daniel DeLeon from 33<sup>rd</sup> German ed. (New York, 1904; reprint, New York, 1970), 144.
11. *Ibid.*, 120.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, 128–131, 133–134.
14. *Ibid.*, 136.
15. *Ibid.*, 126.
16. *Ibid.*, 127.
17. *Ibid.*, 140.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, 139; see chapter 2 on sexology and single women.

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., 142.
22. Ibid., 140.
23. Ibid., 142.
24. Ibid., 140.
25. Ibid., 145.
26. Eleanor Marx-Aveling and Edward Aveling, *Thoughts on Women and Society* [1886], eds. Joachim Müller and Edith Schotte (New York, 1987), 16.
27. Ibid., 17.
28. Ibid., 23, 24.
29. Quataert, *Reluctant Feminism*, 7.
30. Werner Thönnessen, *Frauenemanzipation: Politik und Literatur der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie zur Frauenbewegung, 1863–1933* (Frankfurt, 1969), 47–48.
31. Stanley Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Working-Class Mentality in Germany, 1887–1912* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 196; on Zetkin see also Dorothea Reetz, *Clara Zetkin as a Socialist Speaker* (New York, 1987).
32. On Braun, see chapter 6; on the tensions between Braun and Zetkin, see Quataert, *Reluctant Feminism*, 107–133.
33. Lopes and Roth, *Men's Feminism*, 200.
34. Clara Zetkin, “Only in Conjunction with the Proletarian Woman will Socialism be Victorious,” speech at the Party Congress of the SPD, 16 October 1896, in *Clara Zetkin, Selected Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York, 1984), 73.
35. Ibid., 75.
36. Ibid., 77.
37. See chapter 6 on Michels.
38. Ibid., 76.