

**Philanthropy, Entrepreneurship and
Transnational Exchange: Women's
Campaigns for Employment in Berlin and
London, 1859-1900**

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the 'moral panic' provoked by single, 'redundant' middle-class women in the nineteenth century and extends current research by exploring the debate in Europe from both a comparative and transnational perspective. Both pitied and pilloried, unmarried women were deemed to be 'surplus' women and two institutions were established in Berlin and London to provide them with vocational training and employment: the Lette-Verein and the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women respectively. This thesis contends that a comparative study is vital in understanding their work and that hitherto undiscovered transnational lines of communication between them shaped their aims, achievements and development.

A comparative perspective will reveal how not only feminists but male social reformers of the liberal bourgeoisie worked together across national boundaries in the campaign to provide middle-class women with employment. It will explore how women who took charge in both cities were not merely philanthropists, but forged their own careers as leaders and entrepreneurs. Case-studies will scrutinize and compare the businesses these institutions founded to train and employ women and analyze their varying degrees of success. This thesis will argue that the women in charge of these enterprises were compelled to negotiate a difficult boundary between commercial and welfare values to be successful. Furthermore, it will reveal that transnational networks were consolidated by men and women who exchanged information and ideas across national boundaries. They were keen to compete with their foreign contemporaries, yet found valuable support from their associates abroad. This thesis concludes that transnational cooperation between men and women in the mid-1860s formed the basis of a more formal international women's movement in the late nineteenth century.

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Philanthropy, Entrepreneurship and Transnational Exchange: Women's Campaigns for Employment in Berlin and London, 1859-1900

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Abbreviations

GCA	<i>Girton College Archive, Cambridge.</i>
GStPK	<i>Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem.</i>
LVA	<i>Lette-Verein Archive, Berlin.</i>
LSEA	<i>London School of Economics Archive, London.</i>
Oxford DNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.</i>

Chapter 1: Introduction

The inspiration for this thesis came during a visit to Girton College archive, Cambridge. Whilst examining the records of the Langham Place group of feminists and the work of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (hereafter referred to as the Society), I came across the Helen Blackburn collection. A keen supporter of women's suffrage, member of the Society and author, Blackburn donated a library of books and pamphlets to Girton College in 1903 on the struggle for women's labour and social rights throughout the world. Alongside works by authors from France and Italy amongst others, a number of books appear by German feminists including Helene Lange, Lily von Gizycki, Eliza Ichenhaeuser, Louise Büchner, Hedwig Dohm and Lina Morgenstern. Blackburn hoped that these books would help future students interested in the woman question. She described the collection in her will as a 'Memorial Library' of books on women's questions'. As I browsed the titles in the collection, it struck me that perhaps Blackburn had brought together titles written by people she knew, and that personal links may well have existed between them too.

My interest in the woman question focused on the work of the Society. Located at the headquarters for the Langham Place group of feminists, the Society aimed to improve employment opportunities for middle-class women. In doing so it established some of the first vocational training courses for women in Britain. Two articles within the Blackburn collection were of particular interest as they suggested that the Society had established links with German educators and reformers. Entitled *The Lette-Verein* and *Statutes and programmes for the promotion of higher education and industry among women* written by the Lette-Verein, these two articles described in English the work of a German institution which, similarly to the Society, offered vocational training to women in Berlin. Both articles suggested that communication and exchange had taken place between the Society in London and the Lette-Verein in Berlin; the statutes had been

translated at the request of the Society and the other article described the schools and institutions of the Lette-Verein in detail. Delving deeper into the Society's extensive records, in particular its committee meeting minutes, revealed more references to the Lette-Verein.

The Society and the Lette-Verein mobilized groups of women dedicated to providing a solution to the 'surplus woman' problem, or the *Frauenüberschuss*. Debate in England and Prussia grew over concerns that there were hundreds of thousands of single, middle-class women in excess of men who would not marry. The discussion reached fever pitch as commentators suggested emigration for these women to lands over-populated by men.¹ The panic was stimulated in part by the census of 1851 which revealed that in England there were 500,000 more women than men and two and a half million women who remained unmarried. The idea that there were surplus women unable to fulfil their natural roles was anathema to many. As W.R. Greg commented in 1862:

There is an enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation, a number quite disproportionate and quite abnormal; a number which, positively and relatively, is indicative of an unwholesome social state, and is both productive and prognostic of much wretchedness and wrong.²

A cartoon in *Punch* in 1850 depicted the dangers these women faced.³ Advocating emigration, it suggested that middle-class women, usually employed as needleworkers, faced destitution. Left to their own devices they would, like the woman in the picture, fall prey to the gin palace, solicited by men, whilst their children wandered the streets. In contrast, women who emigrated to the colonies would easily become wives and mothers safely ensconced in the home. Surplus women potentially risked the moral health of the nation. As Levitan highlights 'Greg's emphasis on healthy proportions and on the nation as a whole relied

¹ W.R. Greg, 'Why Are Women Redundant?', *National Review*, vol. 14 (1862), 434-460.

² *Ibid.*

³ See Appendix A.

heavily on the census, for it was the census that allowed people to think about the social body in terms of numbers and depicted single women as one among many problematic populations.⁴ This thesis will provide a comparative study of the efforts by the Lette-Verein and the Society to solve the problems posed by the single, 'surplus woman'. Furthermore, it aims to explore the transnational relationships formed between the men and women involved in its work and how these shaped nineteenth-century feminism.

1.1 British and German feminism and the campaigns of the Society and the Lette-Verein

The work undertaken by the Society and the Lette-Verein to increase middle-class women's access to education and employment has received relatively little attention hitherto in histories focusing on British and German feminism. These tend to portray their efforts as limited in impact and conservative in nature. The feminist ideals of those involved are considered to be bourgeois or reactionary, especially perhaps because women worked closely with men to achieve their goals. Radicalism is often located either at a later date within the suffragist movement in Britain or at the same time in the work of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein (ADF) in Germany.⁵

While more detailed research has recently provided a greater insight into the work of the Society, as will be seen below, accounts of the Lette-Verein are limited in number, and tend to provide little or no critical analysis of its work. Two books, both tending towards the celebratory, have been written about the Lette-Verein. *Der Lette-Verein in der Geschichte der Frauenbewegung* was written by Lilly Hauff in 1928. More recently Doris Obschernitzki has written a 100 year overview

⁴ K. Levitan, 'Redundancy, the "Surplus Woman" problem, and the British Census, 1851-1861', *Women's History Review*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2008), 359-376, here p. 360.

⁵ Richard Evans is adamant that even the ADF were conservative: see R. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1933* (Beverly Hills, 1976), p. 26.

of the Lette-Verein's work entitled "*Der Frau Ihre Arbeit!*": *Lette Verein - Zur Geschichte einer Berliner Institution 1866 bis 1986*. Neither can be viewed as an impartial account. Hauff was the director of the Lette-Verein from 1912.⁶ Despite Hussan claiming Obschernitzki's objectivity in the foreword, she was director of technical education for the Lette Verein when she wrote it.⁷ Other works have appeared that are straightforwardly commemorative. In 1966, *100 Jahre Lette-Verein; 100 Jahre Entwicklung von Frauenberufen. Eine Chronik* was published by the Lette-Verein as one such survey, with relatively little historical analysis.⁸

In accounts which examine German feminism the Lette-Verein is either absent or even presented as anti-feminist in nature. Wilhelm Lette's famous 'Denkschrift' described his plans for the creation of the Lette-Verein, and contained the most frequently quoted sentence about the organization's establishment. He stated that 'What we don't wish or aim for, either now or in distant centuries, is the political emancipation and equality of women' (*Was wir nicht wollen und niemals, auch nicht in noch so fernen Jahrhunderten wünschen und bezwecken, ist die politische Emanzipation und Gleichberechtigung der Frauen*).⁹ This statement ensured that the Lette-Verein has often been viewed as antagonistic with regard to women's emancipation in Germany.

Bussemer's work on German feminism compares the Lette-Verein to the ADF established in the same year.¹⁰ It situates both within the wider context of the bourgeois response to social problems and bourgeois involvement in the creation of civil institutions in an emerging nation-state. Bussemer characterizes the

⁶ L. Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein in der Geschichte der Frauenbewegung* (Berlin, 1928).

⁷ Foreword by H.D. Fussan in D. Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau Ihre Arbeit!*": *Lette Verein - Zur Geschichte einer Berliner Institution 1866 bis 1986* (Berlin, 1986). Obschernitzki had taught at the Lette-Verein since 1979.

⁸ Lette-Verein, *100 Jahre Lette-Verein: 100 Jahre Entwicklung von Frauenberufen. Eine Chronik* (Berlin, 1966).

⁹ W.A. Lette, 'Denkschrift über die Eröffnung neuer und die Verbesserung bisheriger Erwerbsquellen für das weibliche Geschlecht', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 349-364, here p. 358.

¹⁰ H.U. Bussemer, *Frauenemanzipation und Bildungsbürgertum: Sozialgeschichte der Frauenbewegung in der Reichsgründungszeit* (Weinheim, 1985).

attitude of the founder Wilhelm Adolph Lette as reactionary. Furthermore, whereas the Lette-Verein was initially run entirely by men, the ADF, led by Louise Otto, refused to include men in any of its governing institutions.¹¹ Twellmann agrees with Bussemer that 'the men made decisions and gave orders, the women were allowed to work with them, if they agreed with the men's measures and were found to be able enough' (*die Männer beschlossen und ordneten an, die Frauen durften mitarbeiten, wenn sie den Massnahmen der Männer zustimmten und von diesen für tüchtig genug befunden wurden*).¹² Though a growing body of literature has emphasized the significance of male and female cooperation with regard to social and political issues in Britain, the phenomenon of men and women working on the woman question in Germany has typically been perceived as anti-feminist in nature.¹³

Furthermore, Bussemer asserts that the Lette-Verein regarded the woman question as an economic and educational issue rather than a political one. This, and the idea that male hegemony prevailed, have been echoed by later writers such as Gerhard, who writes '[w]hat marked the ADF as feminist was its principle of self-help and self-determination and its conscious independence from male participation and decision-making. In contrast, other women's organizations, soon to be much more successful, took up the question of women's work as a social problem instead of as a question of woman's emancipation. Examples are the Lette-Verein (...).'¹⁴ The

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² M. Twellmann, *Die deutsche Frauenbewegung: ihre Anfänge und erste Entwicklung; 1843-1889* (Frankfurt, 1993), p. 43.

¹³ Gleadle has shown how men and women cooperated in the campaigns for the Reform Act of 1832; K. Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, c1831-51* (Basingstoke, 1995). Bland discusses the meetings of the 'Men and Women's Club' and their campaign to protect women by raising the age of consent in the 1880s; L. Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (London, 2002). Eustance describes how the vote became a 'rallying point for diverse groups of British women and men seeking reform on many different, and often conflicting, fronts', a theme reiterated by Sandra Stanley Holton in her work on male suffragettes; C. Eustance, 'Introduction: Writing Suffrage Histories – the "British"', in C. Eustance, J. Ryan and L. Ugolini (eds), *A Suffrage Reader: charting directions in British suffrage history* (London, 1999), pp. 1-19, here p. 4, A.V. John and C. Eustance (eds), *The men's share?: masculinities, male support and women's suffrage in Britain, 1890-1920* (London, 1997) and S.S. Holton, 'Manliness and militancy: the political protest of male suffragists and the gendering of the "suffragette" identity', in John and Eustance, *The men's share?*, pp. 110-134.

¹⁴ U. Gerhard, 'The Women's Movement in Germany in an International Context', in S. Paletschek

Lette-Verein is therefore presented as limited in scope, a conservative foil for the more emancipatory aims of the all female ADF.

Richard Evans regards feminist activity in Germany before 1890 as 'numerically weak, fragmented, timid and conservative'.¹⁵ He is also sceptical that the ADF were as truly feminist as Gerhard maintains. He states that they 'accepted almost without question the role which official social morality assigned to women'¹⁶ and that by the late 1860s they were 'no longer independent-minded enough to resist the ideological assault landed by the victorious Prussian ruling class'.¹⁷ As a result, by the late 1880s 'the women's movement was becoming more fragmented and less coherent as well as more timid and less progressive'.¹⁸ Although he does not mention the Lette-Verein, he clearly regards early German feminism as largely ineffective. Allen, by contrast, is critical of what she perceives as Evans' position in condemning German feminists for 'false consciousness and German political backwardness'.¹⁹ She is also critical of Bussemer's view that the bourgeoisie were politically conservative, a conservatism that led bourgeois feminists to view women's public rights and duties as rooted in a maternal ethic rather than an equal-rights ideology.²⁰ Allen challenges both Bussemer and Evans for their view that '[t]he only position upon which it is possible to base an argument for equal rights or for the elimination of gender-based injustice is the principle of the equal rights of women, as individuals.'²¹

An ideology of social motherhood was, according to Allen, less conservative than Evans and Bussemer contend. As an intellectual tradition it 'shaped the rhetoric of radical and (...) socialist feminists'.²² She criticizes Evans' and Bussemer's

and B. Pietrow-Ennker (eds), *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective* (Stanford, 2004), pp. 102-124, here p. 108.

¹⁵ Evans, *The Feminist Movement*, p. 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁹ A.T. Allen, *Feminism and motherhood in Germany, 1800-1914* (New Jersey, 1991).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

historical interpretation which she states is based on ‘presentism’, whereby women are judged according to ‘a present-day feminist ideology based on equal-rights theory’.²³ Instead she favours a contextual approach which acknowledges the ‘validity of diverse forms of feminist ideology and practice’.²⁴ She reassesses the activism of German feminists in the 1860s and the importance to them of the theory of social motherhood. Arguing that male citizenship was based upon military service, in ‘women’s political discourse, “Motherhood” became a metaphorical term for a distinctively female claim to rights based on women’s service to society’.²⁵

Allen’s arguments therefore provide a clear basis from which to reassess the hitherto neglected significance of the emergence of German feminist organizations from the 1860s. However, even Allen tends to dismiss the work of the Lette-Verein, stating that:

The Lette Association disavowed any interest in general questions of women’s emancipation and concentrated on sponsoring job-training programs. The German Women’s Association was led by committed feminists and insisted that the right to work was part of a more general claim to political and social participation.²⁶

Furthermore, although she identifies Lina Morgenstern and Jenny Hirsch as feminists, she does not mention Morgenstern’s support of the Lette-Verein,²⁷ nor Jenny Hirsch’s untiring work for the Lette-Verein as its secretary and role as editor of *Der Frauenanwalt*.²⁸

By contrast, Annette Kaiser in “Frauenemancipation” wider Willen - die

²³ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 91.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 106-107.

²⁸ The periodical established by the Lette-Verein which discussed women’s emancipation and published contributions by a number of feminists including Louise Otto herself.

pragmatische Politik des Lette-Vereins 1866-1876' challenges accounts which have defined the Lette-Verein as conservative.²⁹ She argues that after the death of Lette, the Lette-Verein became an important wing of the bourgeois women's movement. Holtzendorff's presidency from 1869 signified a shift in thinking and he brought with him radical ideas regarding women's rights. Holtzendorff believed that women should be granted full equal rights, the political right to vote, entry to all educational institutions and be recognized for the fulfillment of their duty in society rather than the family. His ideas did not result in open campaigning for women's rights by the Lette-Verein, but Kaiser believes this was a pragmatic decision based on the need for public support. She describes the work of the Lette-Verein and the ADF as 'real' and 'ideal' politics respectively. Furthermore, she emphasizes the cooperation between the two organizations and the formal agreement made in 1876 between them to work with one another.³⁰ Kaiser's research therefore provides a more complex picture regarding the nature of the Lette-Verein's work. She quotes Hirsch who stated that '[t]he nineteenth century preaches a new gospel, the gospel of work.'³¹ The Lette-Verein aimed to instil this new gospel of work into the lives of everyday women. Their attempts to do so and the idea that an individual's freedom to work could provide women with emancipation is one that requires further exploration.

Turning to the situation in Britain, historical accounts have examined the work of the Society as part of the early feminist movement, spearheaded by a group of women led by Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon. Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes, editor of the *English Woman's Journal* and Bodichon's childhood friend attracted a group of female activists committed to reforming women's lives. Based at 19 Langham Place, London, Emily Davies, Isa Craig, Jane Crowe, Matilda Hays, Maria Rye, Emily Faithfull and Jessie Boucherett were just some of the

²⁹ A. Kaiser, "'Frauenemancipation' wider Willen - die pragmatische Politik des Lette-Vereins 1866-1876', in A. Kuhn and J. Rüsen (eds), *Frauen in der Geschichte III: fachwissenschaftliche und fachdidaktische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Weiblichkeit vom frühen Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart mit geeigneten Materialien für den Unterricht* (Düsseldorf, 1983), pp. 167-194.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., p. 181.

women who joined them. The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women was established in 1859 when Boucherett took over the employment register started by Bodichon and Parkes. Soon she and others established commercial classes and businesses in law copying and printing to train women.

The Society has recently been the subject of a monograph written by Anne Bridger and Ellen Jordan. *Timely Assistance: The work of the Society for Promoting the Training of Women, 1859-2009* follows the Society from its birth in 1859 to the present day: it is thus a broad and general, though vital account.³² It builds upon Jordan and Bridger's article, "'An Unexpected Recruit to Feminism': Jessie Boucherett's "Feminist Life" and the importance of being wealthy', which provides a crucial insight into the life of Boucherett, the acknowledged founder and leader of the Society.³³ Although the latter makes a strong case for her feminist credentials, more research is needed on the Society's key protagonists and the roles they played. Many of the other women who are less well known but played a vital role in its operation remain hidden or relegated to the dismal realm of 'bourgeois ladies'.³⁴ Bridger's PhD thesis written in 2003 explored the impact of the Society on women's access to clerical employment, and carried out sociological analysis of the experiences of female clerical workers in the twentieth century based on quantitative data.³⁵ However, the sociological enquiry which forms the second part of her thesis means that historical investigation is limited to the first half only, leaving many questions unanswered. Prior to this, Jordan's book, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* provided a valuable account of the Society's role.³⁶ Yet Jordan was

³² A. Bridger and E. Jordan, *Timely Assistance: The work of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, 1859-2009* (Ashford, 2009).

³³ E. Jordan and A. Bridger, "'An Unexpected Recruit to Feminism': Jessie Boucherett's "Feminist Life" and the importance of being wealthy', *Women's History Review*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2006), 385-412.

³⁴ J. Matthews, 'Barbara Bodichon: Integrity in Diversity', in D. Spender (ed.), *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Women's Intellectual Traditions* (London, 1983), pp. 90-123, here p. 121.

³⁵ A. Bridger, 'A century of women's employment in clerical occupations: 1850-1950, with particular reference to the role of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', PhD thesis (University of Gloucestershire, 2003).

³⁶ E. Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* (New York, 1999).

unaware that the Society had an archive of primary sources. In view of the fact that this important interpretation was written without knowledge of the existence of the Society's primary documents, which were discovered in 1997 and given to Girton College, Cambridge, it is clear that more research into the work of the Society is needed.

In contrast to accounts of the Lette-Verein which define it as anti-feminist, the work of the Society has thus clearly been identified as feminist in nature. However, the early feminist movement itself has been regarded by some historians as marked by 'conservatism and moderation'³⁷ and of having little impact on later feminists.³⁸ The women of the Langham Place group have been blamed for later disagreements within the women's movement³⁹ and described as feminists who 'participated in drawing-room gatherings, addressed small conferences, and attended and spoke at larger public meetings, but always in ways designed to show their acceptance of Victorian codes of propriety'.⁴⁰ Bodichon's attempt to secure a Married Women's Property Act in 1856 and the work of the Suffrage Committee formed in 1866 have been assessed by some as bourgeois, aimed at improving the lives of middle-class women with ostensibly no understanding for those of the lower classes.⁴¹

Furthermore, since these campaigns and the work of the Society relied initially on close male and female cooperation, their feminist credentials have been questioned. Eileen Yeo's book *The contest for social science: relations and representations of gender and class* touches on how women involved in the work of the Society joined with men from the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences (hereafter referred to as NAPSS) to improve women's position. The Society is just one of many female-led institutions she describes as

³⁷ B. Caine, *English Feminism, 1780-1980* (Oxford, 1997), p. 99.

³⁸ Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 100. She states that Millicent Garrett Fawcett did not mention Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon but cited Martineau when talking about the women who had influenced her life.

³⁹ Matthews, 'Barbara Bodichon', p. 121.

⁴⁰ Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 90.

⁴¹ Matthews, 'Barbara Bodichon', p. 121.

joining with men to pursue social reformist agendas in a book which focuses on the emergence of social science. Though she acknowledges that ‘social science opened a field where (...) women could respectably engage in public work’⁴² she believes that women still had to adopt ‘strategies which could appease men’⁴³ and that ‘only certain kinds of feminism received real support’.⁴⁴ According to Yeo, the women of Langham Place ‘never totally abandoned key features of bourgeois femininity’⁴⁵ but remodeled it. She states that rather than ‘abandon the resonant language of motherhood and home, many women active in social science enlarged and altered it to fit the single woman’.⁴⁶ She does acknowledge, however, that ‘more radical women’ such as Davies and Bodichon tried to stretch the notion of what women could do, and that even married women could commit to ‘unpaid public services, which, when seriously undertaken, constitute something of a profession’.⁴⁷ However, as the women of the Langham Place group and their work for the Society forms only a fractional part of her work, how radical their brand of feminism was and how they managed to maintain their ideals whilst working alongside men is not discussed. Lawrence Goldman similarly touches on the cooperation between the Langham Place group and the NAPSS, but his focus is predominantly on the men who established the NAPSS itself.⁴⁸

Matthews has suggested that part of the reason that the Langham Place group are assessed negatively, is because they fail to fit into rigid ‘political and class categories’.⁴⁹ She contends that the ‘activity of the period before the women’s movement was consolidated into political organizations has been seriously underestimated’⁵⁰ and calls for a reassessment of the women involved in the

⁴² E. Yeo, *The contest for social science: relations and representations of gender and class* (London, 1996), p. xiii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁴⁸ L. Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association, 1857-1886* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴⁹ Matthews, ‘Barbara Bodichon’, p. 121.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Langham Place group's work. Some have indeed been made. Hirsch's authoritative account of the life of Bodichon uncovers the personal networks she established to initiate feminist reform.⁵¹ Gleadle's work on the Unitarian community provides an insight into Bodichon's views on work and the networks within this spiritual community that supported the development of a feminist consciousness.⁵² However, with regard to the Society, its leader Boucherett and other women more closely involved in its work are only mentioned in passing. The first account to explore Boucherett's contribution to the Society in more depth is Jordan and Bridger's article. "'An Unexpected Recruit to Feminism?': Jessie Boucherett's 'Feminist Life' and the importance of being wealthy' uncovers evidence to suggest that Boucherett was a feminist, rather than the conservative, upper-class character she is often depicted as.

These more recent accounts thus describe feminist consciousness as rooted in the personal, spiritual and familial ties between women. Gleadle explores the friendship between Bodichon and Parkes as one founded in the strong links between their Unitarian families. Hirsch highlights how women at Langham Place had met through family networks, at private social gatherings or in school.⁵³ Whilst religious belief⁵⁴ and family influence⁵⁵ were crucial in awakening feminist beliefs and ideals, this belief in feminist friendships⁵⁶ formed in the private sphere has been problematic. Meanwhile, to what extent feminist beliefs emerged through women's involvement in the public sphere has remained unanswered. In addition, the work of earlier authors such as Ray Strachey has cast a long shadow. She describes the women of Langham Place as 'a little band of friends'⁵⁷ describing how 'Barbara Bodichon, with her golden hair, and Adelaide Anne Proctor, with her endless jokes, whisked in and out of the office, and nothing discouraged them

⁵¹ P. Hirsch, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: Feminist, Artist and Rebel* (London, 1999).

⁵² Gleadle, *The Early Feminists*.

⁵³ P. Levine, *Feminist Lives in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1990).

⁵⁴ Gleadle, *The Early Feminists*.

⁵⁵ Levine, *Feminist*, p. 16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵⁷ R. Strachey, *The Cause* (London, 1928), p. 90.

for long.’⁵⁸ Later descriptions by Herstein of the ‘ebullient company’⁵⁹ fit in with this idealized vision of feminist society as committed but happy, enthusiastic and implicitly untouched by the public world. Although Gleadle, Hirsch and Levine move away from this idealization of feminist reformers, the networks they uncover are still formed in private, giving the impression of a ‘sisterhood’ supporting women engaged in reform in the public sphere.⁶⁰

Despite these accounts which tend to portray both the Lette-Verein and the Society as conservative and moderate, a number of the lead founders of the Lette-Verein and the Society both male and female were in fact the proponents of an ideology which was feminist for its time, albeit in diverse ways and within different national contexts. The term feminist here is defined according to the ideas of Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker in *Women’s emancipation movements in the nineteenth century: a European perspective*. They argue that the term ‘women’s emancipation movements’ extends our understanding of what constitutes feminist activity in the nineteenth century beyond the ‘organized efforts of women to achieve legal and political equality’ to include ‘the first indications of feminist demands, many of which originated within the area of male-dominated social, religious or political movements’.⁶¹ They contend that this broader concept thus stands for ‘different historical and contemporary expressions of women’s activities’ and as a result does not ‘obstruct historical perception, limiting our attention to the political demands of women’.⁶² They cite Karen Offen who states that “‘women’s movements’ in nineteenth-century Europe include an important subset of feminist and potential feminist movements (...) these movements even before the words ‘feminism’ and ‘feminist’ go into circulation (...) are integral to

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 96.

⁵⁹ S. Herstein, *A Mid-Victorian Feminist: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon* (New York, 1985), p. 140.

⁶⁰ Introduction in C.A. Lacey, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Group* (London, 1987), pp. 1-16, here p. 2. Lacey questions this stating that the ‘diversity (...) in (...) attitude and political outlook (...) denies us that temptation to reconstruct an idealized, unshakeable sisterhood’.

⁶¹ Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, ‘Concepts and Issues’, in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker (eds), *Women’s Emancipation*, pp. 3-10, here p. 6.

⁶² Ibid.

the history of feminism - the history if you will of challenges to male hegemony and authority'.⁶³

Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker's views are useful when applied to the work of both the Society and the Lette-Verein, institutions which whilst they avoided campaigning directly for women's political rights argued for an improvement in the position of women, greater educational opportunities, better conditions at work and an end to prejudices which prevented middle-class women from earning a living. Using their ideas as a framework it can be argued that despite some accusations that these two institutions were conservative they posed a direct challenge to male hegemony. Furthermore, their campaigns may have originated within a 'male-dominated social movement' yet men like Lord Henry Brougham and Baron Franz von Holtzendorff who helped found and run both organizations held radical views on women's position in society. In organizing the petition in favour of a Married Women's Property Act which he presented to the House of Lords in 1856 Brougham argued '[t]hat the laws affecting the Property of Married Women in this Country are imperfect and unjust' and that women should keep their property and earnings once married.⁶⁴ Holtzendorff who became president of the Lette-Verein in 1869 was outspokenly in favour of women gaining the right to vote stating that '[a]s soon as one connects the right to vote with the individual nature of humankind, the difference between the sexes becomes meaningless'.⁶⁵

1.2 Women, employment and the 'surplus woman' problem

A further historiographical context within which the work of the Society and the Lette-Verein features, albeit often in passing, is the literature on the history of women's employment in Germany and Britain and what became known as the 'surplus woman' problem. Bussemer discusses the importance of the debate for

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Hansard Series 3, HL Debate, 13 February 1857, vol. 144, pp. 605-619.

⁶⁵ Kaiser, "'Frauenemancipation'", p. 176.

those involved in establishing organizations such as the Lette-Verein. However, she argues that in nineteenth-century German debate the problem was more perceived than real.⁶⁶ Drawing on evidence which reveals that marriages were not in such great decline, she asserts that the number of surplus women was exaggerated. She emphasizes that late marriages were common even in the eighteenth century, forcing younger, single women to work, but without the woman question being raised. Furthermore, according to Frevert, the 'woman question' became a political issue through 'a combination of women's social conditions and their willingness to take their fate into their own hands'.⁶⁷ Catharine Leota Dollard has recently dedicated an entire book to considering the *Frauenüberschuss* in Germany. She states that the 'surplus woman' problem was most certainly imagined. A form of moral panic, it was 'not a real population event and (...) the notion was instead a cultural construction that was foundational to the moderate, radical, and religious German women's movements'.⁶⁸ It was a 'cohort that was simultaneously considered vulnerable and threatening'.⁶⁹ However, her work dates the emergence of this moral panic surrounding single women to the Kaiserreich, and as a debate used by women such as Helene Lange, Alice Salomon, Lily Braun and Clara Zetkin. As such she sees it as a 'dominant concept within the culture of Imperial Germany that helped to formulate gendered understandings of work, sex, class, and the role of motherhood and marriage in society (...) Organized German women of the Kaiserreich appropriated the plight of the single woman in their campaign to transform the society that had placed the unwed in such a predicament in the first place.'⁷⁰ It was thus a mode of reference which united these women, all from different backgrounds and political persuasions. Yet these women belonged to a later generation of female activists than those working for the Lette-Verein. Although the Lette-Verein, and women such as Jenny Hirsch working for it, made overt reference to the 'surplus woman'

⁶⁶ Bussemer, *Frauenemanzipation*, pp. 14-23.

⁶⁷ U. Frevert, *Women in German History* (Oxford, 1989), p. 119.

⁶⁸ C.L. Dollard, *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918* (New York, 2009), p. 11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

problem, Dollard does not locate the debate in the context of these earlier discussions and debates. Nor does she make reference to the fact that the debate over 'surplus women' was also taking place in England.

The Lette-Verein has also been mentioned in light of its specific training programmes for women, and what part they played in broadening women's access to certain kinds of employment. These have been mainly circumspect about its achievements. Carole Elizabeth Adams in *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender* briefly describes the work of the Lette-Verein. However she fails to go into any detail about the Lette-Verein's commercial training for women, preferring to emphasize what she describes as their rejection of 'emancipatory endeavours'.⁷¹ Having thus highlighted what she views as the Lette-Verein's conservatism, she does not delve further into the contribution made by the Lette-Verein to women's employment as clerks, concentrating instead on later efforts to access white-collar work taken by more progressive women's organizations in the 1880s. The Lette-Verein's two-year long commercial classes receive no mention.

Adams' work also reinforces the predominant view that women, including those trained by the Lette-Verein, entered white-collar employment at a time when the sector was already expanding, rationalizing and developing a hierarchical structure to accommodate women in low-paid, unskilled work. She states that:

(...) women did not enter the same labour market as male clerks, nor did they compete for the same positions, for they were welcomed only in the deskilled field of clerking, not in the managerial occupations that were becoming the basis of the new service class. Within clerking, women held positions of lower status, less responsibility, lower pay and fewer chances of upward career mobility than did men.⁷²

⁷¹ C.E. Adams, *Women Clerks in Wilhelmine Germany: Issues of Class and Gender* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 40.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

However, the Lette-Verein's attempts in the 1860s came at a time when white-collar work was predominantly a male preserve. Its members were thus pioneers in attempting to access commercial work for women, a point Adams ignores.

Finally, some accounts have tried to assess the work of the Lette-Verein in terms which focus on its impact on the number of women who gained access to employment. This has, of course proved difficult. Obschernitzki provides quantitative data regarding the number of women who were trained by the Lette-Verein and what employment they subsequently found. However, she does not attempt to place these figures within the broader context of women's work in Germany in the nineteenth century.⁷³ Similar information regarding the numbers trained and employed is provided by Hauff, again with no analysis of the impact of the Lette-Verein.⁷⁴

Turning to the situation in Britain, despite the Society's portrayal of the 'surplus woman' problem as the rationale for their work, generally historical accounts have not, in contrast to Dollard, examined whether it did in fact exist as a problem. Levitan is one of the few authors to examine the public debate about it in Britain.⁷⁵ She concludes that the 'surplus woman' problem signified the growing importance of identifying and controlling potentially problematic populations, rather than dealing with a definite group of unmarried women in need. Her work focuses on the processes of statistical analysis used to create the spectre of the redundant woman rather than practical responses to the fears it provoked. The idea that the figure of the 'surplus woman' allowed individuals and groups in both England and Germany to pursue their own agendas for change is not addressed.

Other assessments of the Society have focused on its impact on women's employment and have been largely negative. Bartley states that '[c]harity (...)

⁷³ Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau*".

⁷⁴ Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*.

⁷⁵ Levitan, 'Redundancy'.

could not solve women's employment problems (...) SPEW (...) relied on charitable donations for its work but, unfortunately, received insufficient financial support so failed in its major aim.'⁷⁶ The debate has been dominated by a framework which assesses early feminism's impact on women's employment, according to a belief in the primacy of economic and structural causes.⁷⁷ Holcombe asserts that middle-class women flocked into deskilled clerical employment in large joint stock companies from the 1860s onwards: a process caused by the expanding rationalized capitalist economy rather than the women's movement.⁷⁸ Levine agrees with this view: according to her only a handful of women found employment through the Society and they entered occupational areas that were increasing anyway as a result of growth in the white-collar service sector.⁷⁹ Rendall also believes that the list of jobs that women found through the Society '(...) lay significantly almost entirely within the expanding service sectors of the economy'.⁸⁰ Honeyman's work on women and industrialization supports this perspective: she argues that capitalism developed as a series of gendered practices resulting in the feminization of certain types of work. This then marginalized women in underpaid and deskilled employment⁸¹ a view which is supported by those who state that the Society encouraged this trend.⁸² A few studies have been undertaken on the Society's role in helping women gain employment as pharmacists, printers and bookkeepers, but these have been limited by a lack of sources and no efforts have been made to link them together so as to provide a

⁷⁶ P. Bartley, *Votes for Women: 1860-1928* (London, 1998), p. 73.

⁷⁷ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England, 1700-1870* (London, 2000) and H. Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union', *Capital and Class*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1979), 1-33.

⁷⁸ L. Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales, 1850-1914* (Newton Abbot, 1973).

⁷⁹ P. Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900* (London, 1987), p. 90: Levine states that in the first 10 years of the Society's existence it found work for only 48 permanent and 46 temporary women workers; the figures detailed in the Society's Annual Reports refute this. Between 1865 and 1870 alone, 160 women had permanent and 145 had temporary posts through the Society (Annual reports: 1865, 1866 and 1870. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA).

⁸⁰ J. Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860* (Basingstoke, 1985), p. 184.

⁸¹ Honeyman, *Women*, pp. 51-71.

⁸² Levine, *Feminist*, p. 155.

fuller picture of the Society's work.⁸³

Jordan refutes the notion that women were above all moving into white-collar work due to a general expansion of the sector. She is critical of the argument that 'it was not feminism that brought girls flocking to the lower echelons of sales forces or bureau employees, to posts where both pay and prestige were low; it was the rational, complex modern capitalist economy'.⁸⁴ She questions why '[s]ince the 1950s the part played by the Women's Movement has been continually discounted'⁸⁵ and maintains that a reassessment of the evidence reveals that middle-class women's increasing presence in white-collar work 'cannot, therefore, be explained without reference to the arguments and activities of the Women's Movement which opened the eyes of employers to the benefits and viability of employing young women, and convinced young women that it was in their interest to train for an occupation and practice it before marriage'.⁸⁶

Jordan goes on to argue that from the 1860s the rate of growth for women's employment in librarianship, clerical work and to a lesser extent drapery and photography was 'sudden' and 'dramatic'⁸⁷ and therefore, not caused by structural changes within these industries. Women flocked into clerical work in the 1860s yet they entered mainly small-scale private businesses rather than the large scale joint-stock companies that Holcombe argues brought an influx of women into deskilled female clerical work.⁸⁸ Jordan's evidence dates the growth of these larger companies to 1890 when women were already established in clerical employment. She believes that the Society's propaganda campaign was crucial in persuading

⁸³ See E. Jordan, "'Suitable and Remunerative Employment': The feminization of hospital dispensing in late nineteenth-century England", *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2002), 429-456; M. Tusan, 'Reforming Work: Gender, Class, and the Printing Trade in Victorian Britain', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2004), 103-126; S.P. Walker, 'Identifying the woman behind the "railed-in desk": The proto-feminisation of bookkeeping in Britain', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, vol. 16, no. 4 (2003), 606-639.

⁸⁴ P. Gay, *The bourgeois experience: Victoria to Freud; vol. 1, Education of the Senses* (Oxford, 1984), p. 179.

⁸⁵ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁸⁸ Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies*, p. 142.

employers to take on women during this earlier period. Employers could not only employ women for less, but were able to regard themselves as 'progressive, public-spirited businessmen'.⁸⁹ She argues that 'feminization as a solution would not have occurred, at least at the date when it did, to the employers of clerks, hospital dispensers (...) librarians (and possibly hairdressers) (...) without the propaganda and activities of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women'.⁹⁰ Her claim that the Society had this impact upon certain sectors of women's work warrants further examination.

Furthermore, Jordan's belief that an entrepreneurial ideal emphasizing the dignity of work emerged in the late nineteenth century, merits more detailed analysis. The Society's annual reports, articles and publicity were keen to emphasize the importance of self-help for women and the possibility of self-actualization through work. Parallels can be drawn between this and Kaiser's identification of a 'gospel of work' as underpinning the Lette-Verein's programme for reform. As in the case of the Lette-Verein, the Society established a series of businesses which trained and employed women. Tusan has written about the Victoria Press and identifies the importance of economic activity for women.⁹¹ She highlights that although women's political and social networks have been regarded as the basis for a modern feminist consciousness, little is known about the importance of women's economic networks for fostering self-reliance and entrepreneurship. She argues that the Victoria Press 'led to new opportunities for women-run businesses'.⁹² However, little is known about the Society's other female-run businesses in law copying and plan-tracing for example.

Tusan's description of a growth in female-run businesses and Jordan's mention of an entrepreneurial ideal amongst those working for the Society are themes which

⁸⁹ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 193.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 195. Michele Tusan and Ellen Jordan have written about the Society's contribution to the feminization of work in the areas of print compositorship and pharmacy respectively. See Tusan, 'Reforming Work' and Jordan, "'Suitable and Remunerative'".

⁹¹ M. Tusan, "'Not the Ordinary Victorian Charity": The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women Archive', *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 49 (Spring 2000), 221-230.

⁹² Tusan, "'Not the Ordinary'", p. 225.

require further analysis. An increasing number of historical accounts explore women's entry into various forms of entrepreneurship, with some specifically identifying philanthropy as a form of entrepreneurial activity. Although neither the Lette-Verein nor the Society have been described in any depth, if at all, within this historiography, it offers new opportunities for interpretations of their work. Historians who have uncovered the entrepreneurial aspects of philanthropy tend to downplay the idea that philanthropy is simply a form of altruism and look beyond definitions of entrepreneurship that tend to exclude women as historical subjects. The notion that both the Lette-Verein and the Society were involved in work which was a form of philanthropic entrepreneurship requires further exploration.

Firstly, whereas Prochaska defines philanthropy 'broadly as kindness' based on 'innovation, self-sacrifice and self-help',⁹³ McCarthy describes in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power* how twentieth century philanthropy became an arena within which middle-class women 'carved out "invisible careers" for themselves, pursuing distinctive forms of female entrepreneurship'.⁹⁴ In *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* she is keen to point out though that whether women's groups worked in 'separatist organizations, or in "assimilationist," mixed-sex groups' had an impact on 'the degree of authority and autonomy'⁹⁵ they were able to wield. Varty's research into philanthropic work in Canada reveals that women involved in nineteenth-century voluntarism developed 'expertise and administrative ability (...) [which] suggest strongly that for many women in this association, charity, was indeed, their profession'.⁹⁶ Their work demanded a 'significant sacrifice of time and, for some, a lifelong dedication of energy, skills and resources'.⁹⁷ According to Varty financial planning and fiscal management were especially important for them to be successful. However, she does not believe that women's entry into charitable work gave them access to the

⁹³ F.K. Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London, 1988), p. 7.

⁹⁴ K. McCarthy, *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power* (London, 1990), p. ix.

⁹⁵ K. McCarthy (ed.), *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (Bloomington, 2001), p. 5.

⁹⁶ C.N. Varty, "'A Career in Christian Charity': women's benevolence and the public sphere in a mid-nineteenth-century Canadian city", *Women's History Review*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2005), 243-264, here p. 248.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

public sphere. Instead, their philanthropic activity emphasized qualities of domesticity and motherhood which ‘were notions that referred to the “particularity” of womanhood and were, thereby, antithetical to the principles of the public sphere’.⁹⁸ Despite their reservations, both McCarthy and Varty are similar in their views to Anna Jameson writing in 1856 that ‘[w]hy should not charity be a profession in our sex, just in so far (and no farther) as religion is a profession in yours!’⁹⁹ Their ideas then are particularly relevant with regard to women working for the Society and the Lette-Verein.

Secondly, although entrepreneurship has, according to Gamber, been used as a gendered term to apply to men’s work within a historiography which regards business as a ‘school of manhood’,¹⁰⁰ there have been challenges to this which look at examples of female entrepreneurship. Koehn’s definition of entrepreneurship as the ‘relentless pursuit of opportunity beyond resources currently controlled’,¹⁰¹ extends the notion of risk beyond ideas about economic profit or loss to include risks which are familial, emotional and social, categories perhaps more easily applied to women.¹⁰² According to Gamber, the term entrepreneur has come to include the ‘organizers of charitable associations – people whose “businesses” lay at the murky boundaries of public and private, profit-seeking and philanthropic’.¹⁰³ The idea that women risked their reputation and social standing through philanthropic work and that they were forced to balance philanthropic aims with the contingencies of the business world, is a useful one with regard to those working for the Society and the Lette-Verein.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 254.

⁹⁹ Quoted in D.W. Elliot, *The Angel out of the house: philanthropy and gender in nineteenth-century England* (London, 2002), p. 111.

¹⁰⁰ W. Gamber, ‘A gendered enterprise: placing nineteenth-century businesswomen in history’, *Business History Review*, vol. 72 (1998), 188-217, here p. 198.

¹⁰¹ N. Koehn, ‘Women and the Industrial Revolutions’, paper read at the *Women, Money and Power: A Radcliffe conference*, <http://www.radcliffe.edu/events/conferences/wmp/index.php> (accessed 27 August 2007).

¹⁰² Koehn, ‘Women’. For more on this point see A. Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: a history of women and business in the United States* (New York, 1988), p. 5: ‘business is engaging in economic activity in a market to seek profit. We can interpret the terms of this definition as expansively as possible’.

¹⁰³ Gamber, ‘A gendered enterprise’, p. 193.

1.3 Social reform, feminism and transnational networks

The historiography outlined above on the Society and the Lette-Verein is set within each institution's respective national context and thus assesses the significance of these institutions according to different criteria and questions. As a result, the work of these two institutions has only been evaluated independently; the common goals that united them in their work and the influence each had on the other have not been explored. Despite the references in the Society's institutional records to the Lette-Verein, British historiography makes no mention of the institution's links with women in Berlin. A visit by Dr Frances Hoggan and Miss Moore on behalf of the Society to the 'Women's Congress in Berlin' mentioned in both the Society's General Committee meeting minutes and the *Englishwoman's Review* in 1880 receives no mention in *Timely Assistance*.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, in the German historiography although Hauff and Bussemer acknowledge that the Lette-Verein was inspired by the Society in London, neither look to see if links between the two organizations developed further or extended over time.¹⁰⁵ Obschernitzki makes no mention of them at all.

This study, by contrast, seeks to offer a comparative analysis of their campaigns for women's employment. Furthermore, it aims to identify the transnational connections between these two institutions. Thus a third relevant body of historiography is that which examines cross-border exchange between nineteenth-century social reformers and feminists. Historical accounts which explore such transnational networks are uncommon in themselves. A few studies assess how nineteenth-century philanthropists appropriated foreign models in order to carry out their own social reform measures at home. With regard to networks between feminists of different nationalities, Bell and Offen assert that the 'international intellectual ferment surrounding the cause of women has, until recently, been one

¹⁰⁴ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*.

¹⁰⁵ Bussemer, *Frauenemanzipation*, p. 20 and Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 79.

of Western civilization's best-kept secrets'.¹⁰⁶ There are some historical accounts which explore transnational networks between nineteenth-century feminists campaigning on a range of issues. These include studies which look at women's internationalism, analyzing more formalized networks between women working at state level to improve society within already existing international structures and processes. However, they have tended to focus on transatlantic networks, whereas European networks receive little attention. Furthermore, whilst women's international networks formed for a broad range of reasons have been discussed no studies exist which examine transnational activity between women aimed at improving women's employment.¹⁰⁷ Although research analyzing women's transnational activity regarding a specific cause, can shed light on how networks developed and operated, in practice such studies are rare.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ See introduction in S.G. Bell and K.M. Offen (eds), *Women, the Family and Freedom: the debate in documents, Vol 1, 1750-1880* (Stanford, 1983), pp. 1-12, here p. 7. They describe this movement and how 'in the nineteenth century intellectual networks soon assumed organizational forms through loose international alliances'.

¹⁰⁷ Some studies have been undertaken on women's transnational cooperation aimed at procuring specific national goals, but they are limited in number and focus predominantly on transnational networks formed to support demands for suffrage, secure abolition or further the temperance movement. See C. Daley and M. Nolan (eds), *Suffrage and Beyond: international feminist perspectives* (New York, 1994); R. Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism: The United States, Japan, and Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1859-1920* (New York, 2004); F. Ramirez, Y. Soysal and S. Shanahan, 'The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship: Cross-National Acquisition of Women's Suffrage Rights, 1890 to 1990', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 62, no. 5 (1997), 735-745; D.R. Margolis, 'Women's Movements around the World: Cross-Cultural Comparisons', *Gender and Society*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1993), 379-399; M. Keck and K. Sikkink look at international networks aimed at suffrage and abolition but from a political science perspective in 'Historical Precursors to Modern Transnational Social Movements and Networks', in J.A. Guidry, M.D. Kennedy and M.N. Zald (eds), *Globalizations and social movements: culture, power and the transnational public sphere* (Michigan, 2000), pp. 35-53.

¹⁰⁸ Other studies have concentrated on women's formation of specific networks but these are limited to those which took place in a national context, C. Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870*, (London, 1992); S.S. Holton, 'Kinship and friendship: Quaker women's networks and the women's movement', *Women's History Review*, vol. 14, no. 3/4 (2005), 365-384. A number of historians note this lack of transnational analysis and the traditional emphasis on state-based forms of international history. See M.H. Geyer and J. Paulmann 'Introduction: The Mechanics of Internationalism', in M.H. Geyer and J. Paulmann (eds), *The mechanics of internationalism: culture, society and politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (London, 2001) pp. 1-26; I. Tyrrell, 'American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 96, no. 4 (1991), 1031-1055; M. McGerr, 'The Price of the "New Transnational History"', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 96, no. 4 (1991), 1056-1067; D. Thelen, 'The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History', *Journal of American History*, vol. 86, no. 3 (1999), 965-975. Many historians have called for a transnational approach to gender history, see F. Miller, 'Feminisms and Transnationalism', *Gender & History*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1998), 569-580; J. Vellacott, 'A place for pacifism and transnationalism

Before examining the historiography further, a brief explanation is required concerning the distinction between internationalism and transnationalism. This is by no means straightforward since the meaning of the term 'transnational' remains contested amongst historians. Whilst some have dismissed it as 'a synonym for what would otherwise be called "international" or "global"'¹⁰⁹ others have explored its analytical potential in more depth. Historians debating its meaning seem to agree that 'transnationalism questions the dominant position of the nation state as both a unit of territorial and administrative organization and as a category of analysis'.¹¹⁰ Jenkins believes that the term crucially 'transcends' the boundaries of the nation state and she describes this as placing:

(...) emphasis (...) on dialogue between multiple actors (...) It emphasizes the active process of transmission and translation that necessarily occurs as ideas, narratives and models travel and are implemented across national boundaries (...) It highlights the active pressure provided by multiple contexts, many of which stayed invisible when seen through studies fixed on national borders.¹¹¹

I would argue that transnational relationships are therefore structurally more fluid and more informal than those relationships formed within what is referred to as 'internationalism'. Internationalism remains a term which denotes political cooperation between nation states to secure international peace. It is a term closely linked to formal political structures and state action, in particular that of United States diplomacy with institutions such as the League of Nations at its core. Recently, Martin Geyer and Johannes Paulmann have challenged the idea that

in feminist theory: the early work of the women's international league for peace and freedom', *Women's History Review*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1993), 23-56.

¹⁰⁹ J. Jenkins, 'Transnationalism and German History', H-German Transnationalism Forum, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-german&month=0601&week=c&msg=ZLMNtCvNbe1Q7Rkji%2bcRQ&user=&pw=> (accessed 2 May 2010).

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

internationalism denotes state foreign policy.¹¹² They argue that '[n]on-governmental organizations, international movements, and transnational cultural interactions' can be included under the term internationalism.¹¹³ However, the examples they cite range from phenomena such as the growth in foreign trade, the introduction of the passport and the emergence of the metric system to movements with an international character such as socialism, freemasonry and nineteenth-century art. Such a broad range of subjects, all labelled as 'internationalist' in character, ignores the important distinction between those movements or interactions which operated with state sanction and those which did not. The term transnational is useful here in that it describes well interactions between feminists and social reformers of different nations working towards common goals which often met with state opposition or simply operated outside the interests of the state.

Recent work by Adam has specifically analyzed the transnational exchange that took place between philanthropists in the nineteenth century. Adam focuses on the social housing movement and asserts that American bourgeois social reformers travelled to Germany and transferred German models to be implemented at home.¹¹⁴ He argues that 'models were transmitted from Europe to North America via wealthy citizens who travelled between both worlds. Though certain details of the philanthropic blueprints were altered during this transfer process, the basic philanthropic culture underlying these institutions remained the same.'¹¹⁵ According to Adloff and Mau exchange between philanthropists could result in 'long-term relations of reciprocal debt' fostering 'feelings of trust, gratitude and obligation, thereby generating solidarity between the parties to the exchange'.¹¹⁶ Evidence suggests that the Lette-Verein was similarly established according to a model of the Society and thus implies the exchange of some kind of blueprint. Although Adam highlights that some women played a role in such exchange, their

¹¹² Geyer and Paulmann, *The mechanics*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ T. Adam, *Philanthropy, Patronage, and Civil Society: Experiences from Germany, Great Britain, and North America* (Indiana, 2004).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹¹⁶ F. Ostrower, *Why the wealthy give: The culture of elite philanthropy* (New Jersey, 1995), p. 152 n.17.

involvement is portrayed as limited. For example, he describes how Princess Alice of Hesse, Queen Victoria's second daughter who married Duke Ludwig of Hesse, took an interest in local philanthropy in Germany and went on to correspond with and visit housing reformer Octavia Hill in London.¹¹⁷ Visiting her housing projects for the poor inspired Alice to translate Hill's 'Homes of the London Poor' into German, upon which male social reformers based their own practical initiatives. Adam cites this as an isolated event and does not consider other examples: in fact, women involved in the work of the Lette-Verein and the Society played an important part in enabling the transfer of foreign models of social reform. Female members of the royal family aside from Princess Alice of Hesse such as Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess Victoria also facilitated such exchanges. Furthermore, in Adam's work the cooperative relationships that female reformers formed with men were vital but remain unexplored.

Margaret McFadden suggests that informal, non-institutional networks between women emerged from 1815 and that 'the gradual building up of international contacts between women in Europe and North America' formed 'a pre-organizational matrix or network of international experiences and relationships, which then served as the basis upon which an autonomous movement and explicit feminist consciousness could later develop in the Atlantic Community'.¹¹⁸ She asserts that '[t]he network gradually emerged as a recognizable (...) infrastructure created by increasingly intense, multileveled, transnational "traditions of communication" among women.'¹¹⁹ She argues that although formal organizations of women such as the International Council of Women (ICW) emerged in the late nineteenth century the 'ground (...) had been well prepared'.¹²⁰ McFadden's research is wide-ranging. The transatlantic networks she identifies extend over great distances and periods of time as she considers successive generations of

¹¹⁷ T. Adam, 'Social Welfare between Private and State Responsibility', paper presented at the 20th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Sydney, Australia, 3-9 July 2005.

¹¹⁸ M. McFadden, *Golden cables of sympathy: the transatlantic sources of nineteenth-century feminism* (Kentucky, 1999), p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

women.¹²¹ Once again European networks are not explored in isolation and she acknowledges that there is a need for further inquiry of this kind.¹²²

Bonnie Anderson explores contact between early feminists in different nations between 1830 and 1860. Her account asserts that women 'visited each other, read a common body of published writings, shared and transmitted tactics and ideas'.¹²³ There was thus a 'matrix of a feminism that transcended national boundaries' and 'hundreds of people in the United States, Britain, France and the German states formed an international community dedicated to changing women's status in society'.¹²⁴ Anderson's work is useful in discussing the motivation behind these women's communication networks. However, the women she discusses had broad-ranging and diverse demands on issues such as prostitution, child-rearing and divorce. Furthermore, whilst she implies that these women's communication networks provided them with a sense of solidarity, her work does not discuss in any great depth whether these women used them to further specific aims. These women were united in their common cause to improve women's lives, but no single cause pursued by them is analyzed.

Leila Rupp's research focuses on institutionalized and organized international activity between women in the late nineteenth century. Specifically she examines the work undertaken by the International Council of Women (ICW), the International Alliance of Women (IAW) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) from 1888 onwards. She perceives this as the

¹²¹ As just one of many examples, American women such as Lucretia Mott active in the 1840s travelled, lectured, corresponded with and met women all over the world and acted as a 'broker' of communication for other women. McFadden describes how 'spiritual granddaughters' such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett used the transatlantic network built by Lucretia Mott in developing (much later) the international anti-lynching movement. McFadden, *Golden cables*, p. 6.

¹²² McFadden states that '[s]everal appendixes offer additional supportive data and invite further research in this neglected area, pointing the way, I hope, to future inquiry', McFadden, *Golden cables*, p. 6. One of these appendixes contains information about the work of the Society, Appendix D, p. 200.

¹²³ B. Anderson, *Joyous greetings: the first international women's movement, 1830-1860* (Oxford, 2001), p. 2.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

'first wave of an international women's movement'.¹²⁵ It is an account which explores institutions with definite links to state sanctioned diplomatic policy, specifically the ICW and the WILPF. Indeed, it aims to reveal the role women played in attempting to secure international peace through these institutions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The IAW differed in that it attempted to secure women's suffrage on an international scale. Similarly to McFadden and Anderson, however, in studying its work, Rupp's focus is on transatlantic networks. Furthermore, her work is more concerned with the formal networks and institutions associated with internationalism rather than the more informal, ad hoc communication processes that can be said to characterize transnationalism. However, her work does provide an insight into the emergence of a collective identity formed between women of different nationalities; something she refers to as an 'imagined community'. She describes the personalized politics that created a 'sense of "we-ness"' between women working for the ICW and other international organizations.¹²⁶ She explores how women were recruited through friendship networks, the costs and rewards of their participation and the formation of international 'families' amongst women.¹²⁷ These are all useful paradigms when referring to the transnational relations that developed between the women of the Society and the Lette-Verein.

With this historiography in mind, this thesis will explore the work of the Lette-Verein and the Society to improve women's training and employment from a transnational perspective. Men and women in England and Germany visited each other's institutions to inform their own initiatives at home. They communicated with each other in private and through the press. Their transnational relationships with one another shaped their achievements. They were interested in each other's efforts not only to gain valuable information to help them improve their own projects, but so as to emphasize the universal significance of what they hoped to

¹²⁵ L. Rupp, *Worlds of women: the making of an international women's movement* (Princeton, 1997), p. 3.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 180ff.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

achieve. Most importantly perhaps, this thesis will not only shed light on the hitherto neglected transnational campaign to provide women with vocational training and employment, but will redress the balance by showing the significance of male and female transnational cooperation.

1.4 Issues, perspectives and approaches

The existing historiography surrounding the work of the Lette-Verein and the Society leaves a number of questions neglected or unresolved which will be pursued in this thesis. As outlined above, these questions will be set within a comparative perspective, which simultaneously analyzes the transnational relations between the two institutions. The first set of questions will explore how the creation of training and employment opportunities for women was a project undertaken by men and women cooperating together. This has often been overlooked in accounts which explore the development of women's public activism and the rise of feminism. Whilst the role of men as sponsors of the Society and the Lette-Verein's work has been acknowledged in the historiography, their precise role and the full extent of their involvement remains unexplained.

Rather than male involvement being limited to a few individuals, this thesis will draw on documents which reveal that far more men were closely involved in the work of the Lette-Verein and the Society than has been suggested. It will explore these men's beliefs with regard to women's rights. Many were authors, editors and social reformers who expressed their views with regard to women through newspaper and periodical articles, novels and public speeches. Analyzing these documents reveals that a number of these men had progressive views on women's role in society, views which sometimes concurred with their female contemporaries who worked with them in establishing the Society and the Lette-Verein. Once established, men and women served together on the committees which governed these institutions' activities, although with time women often

came to carry out the bulk of the work. Furthermore, since both the Society and the Lette-Verein were backed by the NAPSS and the Centralverein respectively, questions will be raised as to what political agenda their backing possibly fulfilled. These questions aim to challenge accounts which imply that male participation in feminist projects, made them somehow less feminist and more conservative than those where only women were involved.

Evaluating the cooperation between men and women working to improve women's training and employment will also explore the tensions this created. Women gained access to public forums such as the NAPSS' social science congress and the meetings of the Centralverein. Such access gave them the opportunity to express their views in public for the first time and inspired a public response which was reported in the press. On other occasions women involved in the work of the Society and the Lette-Verein found themselves reliant on male support and investment. Businesses such as the Victoria Press which trained women as compositors (discussed in chapter 6) required men to instruct the women of Langham Place in the art of printing. Furthermore, enterprises such as the law copying office and the Victoria Press carried out work for male customers and entered trades previously exclusive to male employees only. Whilst reliant on male instruction, financial support and public backing, the enterprises the Society and the Lette-Verein founded promoted themselves in the public eye as exclusively female. Women were thus keen to hide the extent of male involvement in them. For example, the Victoria Press' success relied on it being presented as a women's printing press, owned and staffed by women. Furthermore, tensions emerged as both men and women wished to claim the credit for what they believed they had achieved. This thesis will question what these tensions were and how they were managed.

The second set of questions will explore what impact the Society and the Lette-Verein had on the lives of the women who founded and ran them. These women have received attention for the development of their feminist ideals, but their role

as working women and their identification with work as an ideal to be propounded to other women remains unexplored. As Cowman and Jackson highlight ‘the non working-class woman remains exceptional and under-researched’ with the ‘workplace and its relationship to a sense of self’ an unfamiliar area with regard to middle-class women.¹²⁸ Whilst working to administer these institutions, ostensibly as philanthropists, these women also emerged as entrepreneurs, operating as employers in businesses set up to train and employ women in the public, commercial sphere. As philanthropists these women suggested in their writing and speeches that they were assisting genteel middle-class women like themselves, yet there was a clear class distinction between them and the mainly lower middle-class women they helped. Philanthropy was still very much a class-based behaviour which gave these women power and a certain degree of social control over the women who came to them for help. As entrepreneurs the women running the Society and the Lette-Verein risked their finances and their reputations if they failed. This thesis will investigate what entrepreneurial skills they brought with them, and what qualities they had to develop in order to be successful. It will draw on personal letters and papers to explore their experiences of work, the hardships they believed they endured and the remuneration, both financial and emotional, they received. Taking as a point of departure the view expressed in the work of Kaiser and Jordan that an ‘entrepreneurial ideal’ or a ‘gospel of work’ emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the thesis will ask whether women discovered a new found dignity through work, and whether this was transmitted as an ideal to women who approached them for employment. It will investigate whether women working for the Society and the Lette-Verein developed their own ‘careers’ whilst they attempted to widen women’s access to employment. Both its leaders and less well-known women committed all their time and energy, sometimes over a period of decades, to running these two institutions. Finally, in connection with the first set of research questions, this thesis will examine how women who initially relied upon men for support were able to forge their own

¹²⁸ K. Cowman and L.A. Jackson, ‘Middle-Class Women and Professional Identity’, *Women’s History Review*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2005), 165-180, here p. 169.

careers independently of them, and to what extent they found encouragement from their male contemporaries.

The third set of research questions will attempt to assess the comparative successes and failures experienced by the Society and the Lette-Verein, specifically with regard to the enterprises they established. Beyond both the celebratory histories and those which fail to examine the businesses these institutions established in any great depth, this thesis will aim to provide a fuller and more realistic picture of what each achieved. Focusing on four businesses established to train and employ women, it will question to what extent these enterprises were able to act according to purely commercial principles and whether securing women's welfare in the work place interfered with their business aims. Drawing on Gamber's ideas it will explore whether there was, as she describes, a 'murky boundary' between the charitable and the commercial and how women running these businesses navigated this boundary. As both the Society and the Lette-Verein encouraged women to enter new forms of employment, some of which had been exclusively male, how did they protect them from the perceived and real dangers of the workplace? How was their female respectability maintained? An analysis of personal papers and public reports will explore what difficulties existed in training women who often had few skills to survive in the labour market, and how equipped these institutions' leaders were to cope with them. Were women entrepreneurial in their responses to difficulties and obstacles? Did they take risks by choosing to administer the businesses they did, and did these risks pay off? Furthermore, it will be assessed whether personal resentment and antipathy between the individual leaders of the Society and the Lette-Verein prevented them from acting professionally with regard to the enterprises they presided over. Some women apparently bankrolled the schemes they were personally in favour of to fulfil their own ambition. Others often refused to take advice from their contemporaries in running the enterprises they did.

At the same time, the thesis will explore the hypothesis that even when enterprises

were not commercially successful, they may have been politically successful, achieving a new-found visibility for women in the workplace and thus challenging the status quo. By campaigning for women to enter trades which were previously exclusively male, or simply for a woman's right to earn an independent wage under acceptable working conditions, these institutions struggled against conventional attitudes. The businesses each institution founded served as propaganda for the idea that middle-class women could be productive members of the labour market and maintain their respectability. Often they became models for others to follow, or were simply hailed as the flagship enterprise for these institutions' work, thus serving as propaganda for their aims. Success and failure will therefore not be assessed according to quantitative criteria such as their impact on the labour market, but on more qualitative data including how successful they were in communicating to the public the need for women to enter the workplace, often in hitherto restricted forms of labour. A causal connection may or may not exist between the efforts of the Society and the Lette-Verein and women's entry into bookkeeping. Certainly it has been claimed that the Lette-Verein was apparently instrumental in women entering photography and contributed to the 'feminization' of radiography.¹²⁹ However, the evidence on women working as bookkeepers is less readily available and any quantitative case is likely to be hard to prove.

The fourth set of research questions provides the overall context for the examination of the other three. It offers a comparative perspective and in addition moves beyond the parameters of the nation state by exploring the transnational activism that took place between the men and women running the Society and the Lette-Verein. Firstly, it questions what insights can be gained if we compare the work each institution carried out. Both institutions responded to a perceived threat to the moral health of the nation caused by 'redundant women'. Both received royal patronage: the Society from Queen Victoria, the Lette-Verein from her

¹²⁹ See M. Blum, 'Mediating technology: the feminization of radiographers', working paper at the Munich centre for the history of science and technology http://www.lrz.de/~martina_blum/blum_rtgass.pdf (accessed 14 October 2010).

daughter the Crown Princess Victoria. Royal approval of their work sanctioned their efforts and raised publicity for their cause. Furthermore, German and British debates were sometimes framed with reference to each other. Each organization responded differently to similar issues with varying degrees of success, and each experienced problems and difficulties as they did so.

Secondly, transnational lines of communication allowed the Society and the Lette-Verein to collaborate in their campaign to provide women with training and employment. The exchange of letters, translation of documents and development of personal contacts through travel led to ideas, narratives and models of organizational structure travelling across boundaries. This cross-border flow of information enabled the Lette-Verein to use Britain's example of the Society as its blueprint and later allowed the Society to look to Germany with regard to women's technical education. How this transpired and why transnational communication of this kind developed requires further investigation. What relationships emerged between men and women who engaged in transnational communication? How were knowledge, skills, ideas and beliefs transmitted and translated between men and women and how did these activists promote their initiatives abroad? Was the exchange between these feminists significant in laying the foundations for the more formal international women's movement of the nineteenth century? This thesis will thus examine whether men and women developed their identities as social reformers, feminists, philanthropists and entrepreneurs through this ongoing dialogue with one another. It will investigate the transnational culture of exchange operating below the level of the state that emerged at this time.

Furthermore, this thesis aims to assess whether these transnational relationships were simply cooperative. Men and women competed with their foreign contemporaries in a bid to surpass their foreign rivals' attempts at social reform. Feminists campaigning for women's employment presented themselves as guardians of the nation, protecting moral standards in light of fears that surplus,

redundant women could pose a threat to national moral standards. This thesis questions whether they developed a sense of solidarity through these relationships, or whether they were competitive and keen to 'outdo' their foreign contemporaries. As Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker remark '[t]he point in time in which organized women's emancipation movements evolved coincides with the formation of the modern nation-state. Gender and national identity were intertwined.'¹³⁰ Transnational interpretations of history do not therefore obscure the nation from view. Instead as Young-Sun Hong points out the nation state mediates the local impact of 'global' institutions and actors such as the women of the Society and the Lette-Verein while acting back upon them: women cooperated with one another but were fully aware of the importance of highlighting national competition as the rationale for their actions.¹³¹

Overall, this thesis sets out to shed new light on these two institutions, both in their own right and in relation to one another, situating their endeavours within the context of European social reform and feminism in the mid- to late nineteenth century.

1.5 Sources

In exploring these questions this thesis relies on a range of primary sources. Firstly, it draws on published material: the periodicals established in Germany and England by the Lette-Verein and the Society respectively which provide an important insight into the work and perspectives of the men and women who established the organizations.¹³² Bessie Rayner Parkes was editor of the *English Woman's Journal* which was superseded by the *Englishwoman's Review* from 1866 and wrote frequently upon the Society. In Berlin, Jenny Hirsch who was the

¹³⁰ Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, 'Concepts and Issues', in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker (eds), *Women's Emancipation*, pp. 3-10, here p. 5.

¹³¹ Young-Sun Hong, 'The Challenge of Transnational History', H-German Transnationalism Forum, http://www.h-net.org/~german/discuss/Trans/forum_trans_index.htm (accessed 22 August 2007).

¹³² *Der Frauenanwalt*, the *English Woman's Journal* and the *Englishwoman's Review* respectively.

secretary for and key protagonist in the Lette-Verein's work acted as the editor for *Der Frauenanwalt*, the Lette-Verein's mouthpiece. Whilst both these publications have been explored in their national contexts for the information they provide on these two institutions, they contain vital information regarding the networks that flourished between the two organizations in the form of letters between individuals, biographies, reports about visits and articles that give us an insight into the transnational elements of their work. *Das Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, edited by Joseph Lehmann, a key supporter of the Lette-Verein, is also a key source on these networks, as he appears to have had an interest in foreign initiatives regarding the woman question. Similarly, Theodore Stanton's book, *Women in Europe* written in 1882 offers a number of articles by women activists from all over Europe including women from the Society and the Lette-Verein, yet is a source rarely commented on.¹³³

The less public face of these two organizations can be accessed through the examination of institutional records. These are fairly prolific in England, with the General Committee and Managing Committee minute books and financial reports for the Society deposited at Girton College archive in Cambridge.¹³⁴ The Society also published Annual Reports which contain subscription lists and provide evidence regarding its yearly events, obstacles and achievements.¹³⁵ In Berlin, the majority of these sources have apparently been destroyed in the Second World War. The Lette-Verein produced one major report in 1891 covering 25 years of its work which provides wide-ranging evidence on its activities, subscription lists and financial status.¹³⁶ *Rechenschaftsberichte* or annual reports for the Lette-Verein are kept at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, in Dahlem, Berlin and provide vital information on its development. Furthermore, the Lette-Verein archive does contain letters, reports, articles and photographs which shed light on

¹³³ T. Stanton (ed.), *The Woman Question in Europe* (London, 1882).

¹³⁴ Minutes of the General Committee, vol.1, 1860-1901. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA; Minutes of the Managing Committee, 1870-1902. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

¹³⁵ Annual Reports, 7 volumes, 1859-1958. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

¹³⁶ J. Hirsch, *Geschichte der 25 jährigen Wirksamkeit (1866 bis 1891) des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Majestät der Kaiserin und Königin Friedrich stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechtes* (Berlin, 1891).

its activities.

Both the Society and the Lette-Verein were supported from the beginning by two powerful male-dominated organizations: the NAPSS and the Centralverein. Both of these organizations established their own periodicals which published information about the woman question and the activities of these two institutions; *The Transactions* for the former and *Der Arbeiterfreund* for the latter.

Finally, as organizations which each enjoyed royal patronage, the letters between royal family members provide some further insights into the workings of the Lette-Verein and the Society.¹³⁷

Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis explore the factors which led to the establishment of the Society and the Lette-Verein respectively. Chapter 2 focuses on the men and women involved in the NAPSS and the Langham Place group who worked together to set up the Society. It examines their motivation for doing so and how men and women cooperated in the campaign to train and employ women. Chapter 3 moves on to analyze what happened in Germany as men from the Centralverein drew on the British example to establish the Lette-Verein. It gives an account of the involvement of a more diverse group of men in the establishment of the Lette-Verein than has perhaps previously been acknowledged and how they worked with women. Chapter 4 assesses how the women involved came to develop their own careers as leaders and managers of these two institutions and the enterprises it ran, independently of their male supporters. It explores what work signified to them and how they developed professional expertise in their working lives. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the work of these enterprises in greater detail. Chapter 5 compares the efforts of the Viktoria-Bazar in Berlin to those of the law copying office in London and questions why these apparently failed to be successful, and were either forced to disband or sever ties with the institutions which had established

¹³⁷ F. Ponsonby, *Briefe der Kaiserin Friedrich* (Berlin, 1929) and R. Fulford, *Dearest Mama: Letters between Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia, 1861-1864* (London, 1968).

them. Chapter 6 looks at the Ladies' Restaurant (*Damenrestaurant*) in Berlin and the Victoria Press in London and tries to explain why these two businesses apparently became the flagship enterprises for the Lette-Verein and the Society respectively, capturing the public imagination and sustaining themselves over a longer period of time. Chapter 7 moves on to examine the various strands of transnational exchange and communication that took place between the Society and the Lette-Verein and their significance for the success of the campaign for women's employment. It discusses how women made contact with their contemporaries abroad and came to showcase their initiatives at home to their European counterparts. It explores the complexity of such relationships and how they underpinned more formal networks which developed later in the nineteenth century. Chapter 8 offers a series of conclusions to the thesis as a whole and evaluates the significance of situating nineteenth-century feminism within a European context.

Chapter 2: Between Social Reform and Feminism

2.1 Introduction

English and German men keen to make their mark in the field of social reform established two organizations in the nineteenth century rooted in the liberal-bourgeois ideology of the day: the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences (NAPSS) in England and Der Centralverein für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen (Centralverein) in Germany (the Central Institution for the Welfare of the Working Classes). Some of the most distinguished men of the era attempted to solve their nations' ills through practical social reform measures. Soon these men turned their attention to 'the woman question' and in particular the notion that there was a 'surplus woman' problem or *Frauenüberschuss* as women outnumbered men and failed to marry. The men of NAPSS joined forces with feminist groups to establish the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in London, and the Centralverein established the Lette-Verein in Berlin, partly to avert more radical feminist action by groups such as the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein (ADF). Both institutions offered practical training to women and they hoped that by doing so 'redundant' unmarried women would be trained for work and thus made useful. Whilst NAPSS relied on the input of female reformers to establish the Society, the Centralverein's efforts were dominated by men. A paradox emerged as these reformers built links with their contemporaries abroad. Information was exchanged in a spirit of mutual cooperation, but always with a view to compete on the international stage. Chapters 2 and 3 will focus on the key role played by male protagonists in establishing both institutions and the transnational networks that emerged between them as they sought solutions to the 'woman question'.

2.2 NAPSS and the Woman Question

The NAPSS aimed between 1857 and 1886 to consider 'social economics as a great whole'.¹ Designed to act as a bridge between government and 'an expanding political nation', it brought together the most influential men and women of the day meeting annually in cities all over the country for the social science congress, capturing 'national attention for a generation'.² The brainchild of Lord Brougham, it has been described as a '[p]arliament of social causes'.³ Its members were from varied backgrounds, making it a 'broad scientific church' combining MPs, members of the legal profession, city businessmen, doctors and civil servants with aristocrats, women and members of the clergy.⁴ Founded on the emergent belief in social science as a means to improve social conditions, it attempted to achieve social progress through the creation of a 'positive science' of society.⁵ The NAPSS' secretary, George Hastings, described its potential power at the social science congress of 1860 saying '[w]hen I hear objections to social science - when I hear it said that we are all talk - I consider talk to be one of the greatest institutions of the country. Talk has produced benefits that never could have been produced in any other way.'⁶

NAPSS combined three related movements aimed at social reform: the National Reformatory Union, the Law Amendment Society and the feminist women of the Langham Place group. Its members created five departments focusing on legal

¹ L. Goldman, 'The Social Science Association, 1857-1886: a context for mid-Victorian Liberalism', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 398 (1986), 95-134, here p. 96.

² Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p.1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴ Yeo, *The contest*, p. 154 and S. Collini, *Public Moralists: political thought and intellectual life in Britain* (Oxford, 1991), p. 210. Both believe that NAPSS was less of a political body with the bulk of members drawn from the professions whereas Goldman emphasizes that many of its key members had liberal political affiliations.

⁵ L. Goldman, 'A Peculiarity of the English? The Social Science Association and the Absence of Sociology in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Past and Present*, vol. 114, no. 1 (1987), 133-171, here p. 142.

⁶ 'The Banquet In the City Hall', *The Times*, 1 October 1860, p. 9.

reform, penal policy, education, public health and social economy.⁷ Goldman argues that the construction of social policy at this time was accompanied by the emergence of new professional groups who developed specialist knowledge and expertise and aimed to reach positions of social standing and authority.⁸ He is keen to point out that:

The bureaucrats were not distanced officials, but men with schemes, blueprints for change, ideas for social improvement and also for group-advancement who brought them to the Social Science Association.⁹

Women too came to the NAPSS with blueprints for reform, and the Langham Place group, led by feminist Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, became the key force in helping NAPSS' work to advance women's employment.¹⁰ A brief summary of who these men and women were is important for an understanding of the context for their involvement in the campaign for women's vocational training.

NAPSS' patrons Lord John Russell, Lord Edward Stanley, Lord Anthony Shaftesbury and Lord Henry Brougham were men of prestige, high social status and progressive opinions. Serving as prime minister on two occasions, Russell was passionate about putting education 'within the reach of every child' and deeply involved in the anti-slavery campaign.¹¹ Stanley, who was known for setting a

⁷ M. Diamond, *Emigration and Empire: The Life of Maria S. Rye* (London, 1999), pp. 43-45 discusses the establishment of NAPSS.

⁸ Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 12. Whereas Goldman emphasizes NAPSS' success in influencing public policy, Yeo is more circumspect about its ability to instigate concrete reforms. Goldman argues that NAPSS was not only successful in initiating legislation but that it had a wider 'social and cultural significance'. Abrams examines the role of the NAPSS in developing the discipline of sociology: see P. Abrams, *The Origins of British Sociology: 1834-1914* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 44-52.

⁹ Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, pp. 158-159. Jordan discusses how the Society was one of three organizations formed in connection with the NAPSS which aimed to make work more accessible for women and persuade parents of the importance of women's training. The other two were 'the Committee for Obtaining the Admission of Women to University Examinations (1862) with Emily Davies as Secretary, and the National Union for the Education of Girls of All Classes above the Elementary (1871), directed by Maria Grey.'

¹¹ John Prest, 'Russell, John [formerly Lord John Russell], first Earl Russell (1792-1878)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edition, May

third of his annual income aside for good causes, thought of himself as 'a radical' and believed in class cooperation and freedom.¹² Shaftesbury was a statesman and a philanthropist who led the way in reforming the law relating to the treatment of those referred to as 'lunatics' and the employment of workers in mills and factories, as well as championing 'ragged schools'.¹³ Brougham, who was NAPSS' first president in 1857, agitated for progressive reforms: he not only championed popular education, commercial reform and extension of the suffrage but as Lord Chancellor between 1830 and 1834 had piloted the Reform Bill through the House of Lords.¹⁴ He was a keen abolitionist and criticized married women's property law, presenting the married women's property petition to the House of Lords on 14 March 1856.¹⁵

Campaigning on the issue of married women's property meant Brougham had experience of working with feminists from the Langham Place group.¹⁶ He knew them prior to the campaign due to the radical circles in which he moved. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon's grandfather William, himself an abolitionist and radical, and her father Benjamin Smith, radical MP for Norwich were both

2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24325>, accessed 5 October 2009]. At the time of NAPSS' birth his reputation was under threat: in 1855 he had been forced out of office as Leader of the House of Commons and in 1857 survived an attempt to oust him from his city seat. Russell was President of NAPSS' Jurisprudence and Amendment of the Law Department for 1857: see Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, Appendix IV, p. 384.

¹² David Steele, 'Stanley, Edward Henry, fifteenth earl of Derby (1826–1893)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edition, January 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26266>, accessed 5 October 2009].

¹³ Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801–1885) <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/shaftesb.html> (accessed 26 March 2009).

¹⁴ Michael Lobban, 'Brougham, Henry Peter, first Baron Brougham and Vaux (1778–1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edition, January 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3581>, accessed 5 October 2009]. See also Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 30.

¹⁵ Hansard Series 3, HL Debate, 14 March 1856, vol. 141, pp. 120–1: Lord Brougham described how 'I have had the honour, and I regard it as a distinguished honour, of being entrusted with a petition from above 2,000 of our fellow countrywomen, of various stations'. For a discussion of the campaign for a Married Women's Property Act, see M.L. Shanley, 'What Kind of a Contract is Marriage? Married Women's Property, the Sexual Double Standard and the Divorce Act of 1857', in M.L. Shanley, *Feminism, Marriage and the Law in Victorian England* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 22–78.

¹⁶ Sir Henry Brougham, Matthew Davenport Hill and Sir Thomas Erskine Perry worked together with women who aimed to improve married women's property rights. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon had mobilized the support needed for a petition on Brougham's recommendation.

acquaintances.¹⁷ He was furthermore a close friend and associate of Joseph Parkes, Bessie Rayner Parkes' father, Parkes being Bodichon's closest friend and co-founder of the Langham Place group.¹⁸ As an associate of the barrister and penal reformer Matthew Davenport Hill, Brougham possibly learnt more about Bodichon's beliefs when she turned to her family friend Hill for advice in drafting her book, *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women*.¹⁹ Brougham encouraged Bodichon to bring together a committee of women dedicated to 'gather support for legislative action' on the issue of married women's property which resulted in the petition that was then taken to parliament.²⁰ According to Perkin, he was 'keenly aware of the significant role women could play in politics after he enlisted their support in the anti-slavery campaigns and saw how they formed abolition societies all over the country'.²¹

The strong bond of friendship between Bodichon and Parkes underpinned the work of the Langham Place group, and was reflected in a prolific exchange of letters between them in adolescence and early adulthood. The two women founded the *English Woman's Journal* in 1858 at 14a Princes Street, and their office soon became the focal point for other women keen to campaign for women's employment.²² The group comprised many of the women involved in the campaign for married women's property rights. Its key members were Emily Davies, Emily

¹⁷ Hirsch, *Barbara*, p. 3.

¹⁸ Brougham appointed Parkes secretary of the Royal Commission on Municipal Reform in 1833. He went on to assist Brougham in the passage of the Municipal Corporations Act. He later assisted Brougham on the work of the Charity Commission: see Philip J. Salmon, 'Parkes, Joseph (1796–1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edition, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21356>, accessed 5 October 2009].

¹⁹ Hill and Brougham had a history of working together. They co-founded the 'Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge' in 1825: see <http://www.technicaleducationmatters.org/biographies/sduk> (accessed 5 October 2009). For more discussion of Hill and Brougham's friendship, see A.S Wohl (ed.), *The Victorian Family: structure and stresses* (London, 1978), p. 130.

²⁰ J. Perkin, 'The Battle of Jericho', in J. Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1989), pp. 292-310, here p. 294.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294. On women's role in the anti-slavery movement, see L. Billington and R. Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness": Women in the British Anti-Slavery Movement, 1820-1860', in J. Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics, 1800-1914* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 82-111.

²² The women became known as the Langham Place group when the *Journal* moved to new premises at 19 Langham Place at the end of 1859.

Faithfull, Adelaide Proctor, Matilda Hays, Jessie Boucherett, Maria Rye and Isa Craig.²³ At 19 Langham Place its premises housed the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, a reading room and a luncheon club for ladies to attend.²⁴ 19 Langham Place was leased by Lady Monson on a seven year basis: she was a close friend of Matilda Hays who was co-editor of the *English Woman's Journal* alongside Bessie Rayner Parkes.²⁵

Bodichon and Parkes were members of radical Unitarian families and male family members had been important in inspiring their political action.²⁶ Versed in the radical politics of her father, Barbara was described by her contemporaries as 'a strong fighter against the established opinions of the world', and perhaps because she was illegitimate 'her radical ideas and endeavours were never curbed by the need for respectability and gentility'.²⁷ Parkes' father Joseph Parkes was secretary to the parliamentary commission on municipal reform and editor of *The Morning Chronicle*, and her maternal grandfather was Joseph Priestley, the famous Dissenting Radical.²⁸ These women's links to the exponents of anti-slavery agitation and Anti-Corn Law campaigns meant that they had 'a thorough grounding in radical political practice' from childhood.²⁹

²³ For more detail about the individuals involved in the Langham Place group, see Lacey, *Barbara*; Hirsch, *Barbara*; J. Rendall, "'A moral engine?'" Feminism, liberalism and the *English Woman's Journal*', in Rendall, *Equal or different*, pp. 112–138; Caine, *English Feminism*; Holcombe, *Victorian ladies*; Levine, *Feminist*.

²⁴ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 157.

²⁵ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 17.

²⁶ Gleadle, *The Early Feminists*; Levine, *Feminist*. Both books describe these women's strong links with radical politics and the family influences they were exposed to in more depth. Eustance, Ugolini and Ryan describe how radical activity amongst family members was crucial to many feminists' consciousness see, 'Introduction', in Eustance, Ugolini and Ryan, *A suffrage reader*, p. 4.

²⁷ Lacey, *Barbara*, p. 3.

²⁸ Levine, *Feminist*, pp. 16-17. The Unitarian beliefs of men such as Bodichon's father, Charles Smith and Parkes' father and grandfather Joseph Parkes and Joseph Priestley meant that they were Dissenters. Hirsch identifies the link between Unitarian belief and political involvement explaining that these men 'formed a significant part of the liberal intelligentsia' and how although they were 'well-educated and capable (...) as Dissenters, were denied Oxbridge degrees, and therefore access to the professions'. They thus 'put their talents to the service of commerce and industry (...) creating the country's wealth and were at the forefront of the demand for the reform of Parliament which would allow them political influence'. See Hirsch, *Barbara*, p. 2.

²⁹ Levine, *Feminist*, p. 17.

In July 1857, George W. Hastings, a friend of Bodichon's and secretary of both the Law Amendment Society and the National Reformatory Union, encouraged the Langham Place group to join these two institutions and form the NAPSS. Bodichon, Parkes and 13 other prominent women³⁰ joined 28 men in attendance at the inaugural meeting hosted by Lord Brougham, Hastings' patron, at his home in Grafton Street, London on 29 July 1857.³¹ By cooperating with those so closely involved in the campaign to improve women's education and employment opportunities, Goldman argues that the NAPSS showed its willingness to support both the social as well as legal emancipation of women.³² He states that:

The fifteen women who took part in this meeting were representatives of the first organized feminist movement in Britain, a circle of associates engaged in a campaign for the legal protection of a wife's property who had sought assistance from the Law Amendment Society between 1854 and 1856. They now attended the foundation of the Social Science Association, so prefiguring its function as the most important mid-Victorian forum for women's social emancipation.³³

2.3 A platform for change: men and women at the Social Science Congress

The men and women who founded NAPSS belonged to the same milieu and had strong reasons for collaborating on the woman question.³⁴ Men leading NAPSS

³⁰ These women included Anna Blackwell the sister of the physician Elizabeth Blackwell, Mary Howitt the popular writer, Elizabeth Jesser Reid founder of Bedford College and a Miss J. Martineau, most likely the niece of Harriet Martineau the author of many articles on political and social economy. She wrote 'Female Industry' in 1859 which in part inspired Jessie Boucherett to found the Society.

³¹ For a full list of all those present at the meeting see Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, Appendix 1, pp. 379-381.

³² Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 30.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁴ As the century progressed, male members of NAPSS emerged who were more overtly committed to the cause of women's suffrage. For example Samuel Courtauld, the Unitarian silk manufacturer who joined the Manchester Society for Women's Suffrage and Henry Fawcett, the husband of

recognized the importance of drawing on the talents of those in the Langham Place group, who could commit their time and energy to reform.³⁵ Despite their support for these women's campaign for women's property rights in marriage, NAPSS hoped that with their direction, more radical feminist ideas could be tempered.³⁶ An article in *The Times* on the proceedings of the social science congress held in 1862 quoted Lord Brougham's inaugural address of 1857, which explicitly referred to the desire amongst some of the female members of NAPSS to distance themselves from the issue of suffrage:

At the private meeting held in 1857, on constituting the National Association, there attended, among others, Mrs. Austin (...) She desired it to be distinctly understood that she belonged not to the party, however estimable in many respects, who maintained what were termed the rights of women (...) She was fully assured, and other ladies present joined in the disclaimer, that no such views were entertained; but that whatever most conduced to the well being and comfort of our sisters formed an important branch of Social Science and came within the scope of our plan.³⁷

Although certain to reject more radical feminist claims, members of the NAPSS were keen to welcome women's involvement in their work. Their efforts appeared to succeed, as on 27 September 1860 at the Social Science Congress it was reported in *The Times* that 'the whole of the ladies' tickets, numbering 600, were

feminist and suffragist Millicent Fawcett. For further information see E. Crawford, *The Women's suffrage movement: a reference guide, 1866-1928* (New York, 2001), p. 142 and L. Goldman, *The Blind Victorian: Henry Fawcett and British Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1989) respectively.

³⁵ Middle-class women were increasingly devoting their time to philanthropic work. The most well-known projects at the time perhaps were those established by Louisa Twining who founded the 'Workhouse Visiting Society' in 1858 which relied upon middle-class women to visit workhouse inhabitants. This had been established in association with NAPSS. See O. Banks, *The biographical dictionary of British feminists*, vol. 1 (London, 1985) and M. Vicinus, *Independent women: work and community for single women, 1850-1920* (London, 1985).

³⁶ Some of the women involved with the Langham Place group retained the belief that women should, when possible, remain in the domestic sphere as wives and mothers. Anna Jameson stated that she hoped that society would 'place on a purer, more truthful, more Christian-like basis, the sacred relations of domestic life': see A. Jameson, *Sisters of charity and the communion of labour: two lectures on the social employments of women* (London, 1859), p. xx.

³⁷ 'The Social Science Congress', *The Times*, 6 June 1862, p. 5.

sold out early yesterday afternoon'.³⁸ Women attending were toasted at an evening banquet the next day by Sheriff Glassford Bell, who stated that:

Without the ladies there would be no such thing as social science (Cheers and laughter). I rejoice to see that the great and flourishing tree of social science, which is now spreading out its branches so broadly and so widely over the land, has been planted in a bed of flowers (Applause) (...) if the ladies continue to smile upon the efforts of this Association, I have no doubt that the dry and arid places will become green and fruitful (Cheers).³⁹

Lord Brougham's speech echoed these sentiments, explaining that:

It is an old saying at the English bar that after a certain age a man becomes an old woman (laughter) - an observation which is currently and not very decorously applied to our old judges (...) But, that being the case, and I, having attained the distinction of an old woman, do myself the honour to return thanks for the ladies (roars of laughter) - for myself and my younger sisters.⁴⁰

Russell too recognized the emerging roles for women stating that '[e]very one (sic) must have observed the new influence, which is not being asserted or sought, but is falling to the lot of women, in swaying the destinies of the world.'⁴¹ These speeches cemented and acknowledged male and female cooperation. They suggested that men and women had embarked on a new journey together in dealing with the woman question, and that women had a significant role to play.

According to Yeo '[s]ocial science became an important part of the negotiations between middle-class men and women about their gender roles and sometimes

³⁸ 'Social Science Congress', *The Times*, 27 September 1860, p. 10.

³⁹ 'Social Science Congress', *The Times*, 27 September 1860, p. 10.

⁴⁰ 'The Banquet In the City-Hall', *The Times*, 1 October 1860, p. 9.

⁴¹ Excerpt from Russell's opening address for the second annual congress of the NAPSS in 1858 quoted in Jameson, *Sisters of charity*, p. viii.

provided a trump card which women played in their dealings with men for access to public space.⁴² For the women involved, their connections with NAPSS offered them the possibility of developing their roles as specialists with regard to women's employment even further. NAPSS offered women access to a public forum at the annual social science congress. Women increasingly read their own speeches instead of watching men deliver them, a fact which provoked surprise.⁴³ An article in *The Times* explained how:

(...) the proceedings in the third department attracted especial interest from the fact that the papers to be read were in every case contributed by lady members of the association. And although, if there be any 'platform' which women may legitimately ascend, the one which aims at social improvement seems especially suited to their native instincts, there is still sufficient novelty in the fact of ladies standing forward to propound and vindicate their opinions in public.⁴⁴

The work between men and women involved in the NAPSS was thus, to a certain extent, groundbreaking with regard to the experiences women could gain.⁴⁵ Bessie Rayner Parkes writing in the *English Woman's Journal* in 1862 regarded the spirit of cooperation between men and women as extraordinarily significant:

From the first semi-private meeting at Lord Brougham's house, to which he referred in his address last Thursday, and at which Mrs Jameson, Mrs Austin

⁴² Yeo, *The contest*, p. 121.

⁴³ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 158.

⁴⁴ 'The Social Science Congress', *The Times*, 9 June 1862, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Gillian Scott, analyzing the involvement of working-class women in the Women's Cooperative Guild from its inception in the 1880s, describes how even at this late juncture the phenomenon of women speaking from a public platform was deemed remarkable and sometimes improper. When one female member suggested that women might 'speak from the platform' at the annual Cooperative Union Congress which united men and women devoted to the cooperative cause, no resolution was passed on the subject and 'some members did not think it would be proper for a woman to speak in public on behalf of the Guild'. See G. Scott, "'As a war-horse to the beat of drums': representations of working-class femininity in the Women's Cooperative Guild, 1880s to the Second-World War", in E. Yeo (ed.), *Radical femininity: women's self-representation in the public sphere* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 196-216, here p. 198.

and Mrs Howitt were present, down to the present time; Lord Brougham and Mr. George Hastings, and all the numerous gentlemen who have been brought in contact with the question, of whom I would specially name Lord Shaftesbury as President of our Society, have shown the utmost desire to give women fair play, and not only fair play, for they have so managed the meetings and discussions as to enable them to be carried on with perfect ease and propriety by all ladies desirous of taking part in any of the sections. I believe I may truly affirm that never before in the world's history have women met with such equal courtesy and true deference as that which has been shown them here.⁴⁶

The spirit of cooperation described by Parkes between men and women of the NAPSS and the Langham Place group was vital in light of the opposition they faced. Outside NAPSS the feminists of Langham Place were mocked in Parliament as a 'large and manly body of "strong-minded women"' by Mr Beresford Hope in response to the petition signed by 26,000 in favour of Married Women's Property Rights which formed the basis for Sir Erskine Perry's Bill in the Commons.⁴⁷ Another member of NAPSS, Mr Monckton Milnes expressed his astonishment at the demeaning language used by Hope. Criticizing him for 'sneering' at these women, he stated that '[t]he House ought to address itself to the Amendment of our matrimonial law in a serious, not a jesting spirit.'⁴⁸ The women of Langham Place who worked with NAPSS were referred to as strong-minded into the 1860s. A male attendee of NAPSS' annual congress in 1862 described how he encountered a 'number of clever young ladies whom it is simply coarse abuse to be always designating the "strong-minded"'.⁴⁹ The periodical the *Saturday Review* having

⁴⁶ B.R Parkes, 'The balance of public opinion in regard to women's work', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 9, no. 53 (1862), 340-344, here pp. 340-341.

⁴⁷ Hansard Series 3, HC Debate, 14 May 1857, vol. 145, p. 266.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁴⁹ M. Diamond, 'Henry Parkes and the Strong-Minded Women', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 38, no. 2 (1992), 152-162, here p. 152. Diamond examines the use of the term strong-minded and states that it clearly conveys 'subtle overtones of masculine contempt.' Henry Parkes was the Emigration Commissioner to the New South Wales Government in Australia who lectured on the benefits to the colony of accepting immigrants. He thus came to know of Maria Rye's work on female emigration and was sympathetic to the women of the Langham Place group. According

previously ridiculed Bodichon for her article *Women and Work* in 'Bloomeriana'⁵⁰ was quick to condemn male and female cooperation within NAPSS:

It must be remembered to Lord Brougham's credit that he is the first person who has dealt upon this plan with the problem of female loquacity (...) It is a great idea to tire out the hitherto unflagging vigour of their tongues by encouraging a taste for stump-oratory among them (...) Lord Brougham's little corps of lady orators, preaching strong mindedness, gives a new aspect to the Association's presence.⁵¹

In light of such hostility the Langham Place group gained valuable patronage and support from NAPSS. Men and women shared ideas with regard to women's position in society: their agreement that women's training and employment was a vital area for concern and the debates that ensued led to the establishment of the Society. It is to these debates and the impact that they had that we turn to next.

2.4 The campaign for women's employment commences

Just as property law affected these women, so too did a lack of suitable employment opportunities. Anna Jameson, a mentor for Bodichon and Parkes, initiated the discussion about women and employment with her two lectures entitled *Sisters of Charity* and *The Communion of Labour* given in 1855 and 1856.⁵² Jameson was forced to work as a writer to support herself when her estranged husband died in 1854 and left her out of his will. Inspired by Jameson, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon went on to voice her frustration at the lack of work for women in her private correspondence with Bessie Rayner Parkes saying 'I believe there are thousands and tens of thousands who like you and I intend doing

to Rye he most likely met the women at Langham Place through Rosamund and Florence Davenport Hill, the daughters of Matthew Davenport Hill.

⁵⁰ 'Bloomeriana', *Saturday Review*, 12 September 1857, pp. 238-239.

⁵¹ Strachey, *The Cause*, pp. 93-94.

⁵² Jameson, *Sisters of Charity*.

- intend working but live and die, only intending.'⁵³ *Women and Work* written in 1857 by Bodichon dealt with these frustrations publicly and her words were an indictment against those who tried to deny women the right to earn a decent living.⁵⁴ In a passage under the sub-heading 'Women want Professions', Bodichon wrote:

Again, we hear cries that the world is going wrong for want of women, that moral progress cannot be made without their help; that Science wants the help of their delicate perceptions; that Moral Philosophy wants the light of their peculiar point of view; Political Economy, their directness of judgment and sympathy with the commonalty; Government, the help of their power of organising; and Philanthropy, their delicate tact (...) One great corresponding cry rises from a suffering multitude of women, saying, 'We want work'.⁵⁵

Women and Work made a strong case for middle-class women to receive vocational and professional training. Bodichon addressed her argument to the parents of middle-class girls:

Firstly, a girl will make a better wife for having had such serious training. Secondly your daughter may not marry. It is your duty to provide for that possibility; and she will surely be ill, miserable, or go mad, if she has no occupation. Thirdly, it may be years before your daughter finds a husband. It is your duty to give her worthy work, or to allow her to choose it.⁵⁶

She highlighted the census results for 1851 stating that 43 percent of women over 20 were unmarried. These women were in desperate need of work but could only enter employment as needleworkers or governesses. These professions were

⁵³ Hirsch, *Barbara*, p. 36.

⁵⁴ B. Bodichon, *Women and Work* (London, 1857).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Jordan states that Barbara's belief that fathers should ensure their daughters were trained for a profession was inspired by Anna Jameson: see Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 156.

deemed suitable for women of their status but conditions within them were poor and badly paid. Bodichon hoped that women would enter a number of trades if they received adequate training. Bookkeeping would enable women to become shopkeepers and businesswomen although currently 'very few young women know enough arithmetic to keep accounts correctly'.⁵⁷ She issued a direct plea to employers calling them to:

Apprentice 10,000 watchmakers; train 10,000 for teachers of the young; make 10,000 good accountants; put 10,000 more to be nurses under deaconesses (...) put some thousands in the electric telegraph offices over all the country; educate 1,000 lecturers for mechanics' institutes.⁵⁸

Women and Work was received with hostility in conservative quarters. According to a writer in the *Saturday Review*:

If this is a fair sample of what a lady who boasts to have made the subject her own is likely to publish we are afraid that the sex is not really so developed as we had supposed. As a piece of 'pretty Fanny's' talk it would be charming; but we should be sorry to trust 'pretty Fanny' with any business more important and intricate than the payment of a milk bill.⁵⁹

Following the publication of *Women and Work*, the campaign for extended employment opportunities for middle-class women grew in momentum. Parkes decided that there was little public sympathy for 'divorce and the suffrage' and that she no longer wanted to 'smash my head' and Bodichon's money 'against a brick wall'⁶⁰ with these issues and so turned her attention to journalism as a means for addressing the question of women's employment. Some men associated with NAPSS similarly voiced their concern over the issue of women and employment.

⁵⁷ Bodichon, *Women and Work*, p. 15.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁹ Quoted in B. Stephens, *Emily Davies and Girton College* (London, 1927), p. 50.

⁶⁰ J. Rendall and S. Mendus (eds), *Sexuality and subordination: interdisciplinary studies of gender in the nineteenth century* (London, 1989), p. 163.

In the first edition of the *Transactions* which recorded the proceedings for the NAPSS in 1857, a speech given by George Hastings at the NAPSS Congress that year was published entitled 'Remarks on the Industrial Employment of Women'. A reference note explained that the paper was 'communicated' by the author of *The Social and Industrial Condition of Women in the Lower and Middle Ranks* and read by G.W. Hastings. The author of this book was a Mr John Duguid Milne and his research published in 1857 was widely reviewed though he 'himself does not seem to have taken much further part in the public debate'.⁶¹ The speech is not a direct excerpt from the book therefore it is unclear as to whether it was Milne's work or a speech written by Hastings in response to Milne's book.⁶² Clearly however, Hastings wished to bring Milne's research and the ideas on women and work outlined in the speech he gave to the attention of the members of NAPSS.

George Hastings was described by Goldman as the 'founder and animating spirit of the Social Science Association'.⁶³ As the secretary for both the National Reformatory Union and the Law Amendment Society which aimed for legal and penal reform, he was in a key position to facilitate these two bodies merging with the NAPSS in 1857 and 1863 respectively.⁶⁴ A young barrister and 'aspiring politician'⁶⁵ he was appointed as general secretary for the NAPSS in 1857 and was elected as Liberal MP for Worcestershire East in 1880.⁶⁶ He is described as being 'known to the whole political and administrative class of the age as an expert on social questions'⁶⁷ which perhaps explains why he became such a prominent figure in NAPSS. From 1862 he replaced Brougham as its president. According to Goldman:

⁶¹ E.K. Helsinger, R.L. Sheets and W. Veeder (eds), *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883, vol. 2: Social Issues* (New York, 1983), p. 228.

⁶² J.D. Milne, *The Social and Industrial Condition of Women in the Lower and Middle Ranks* (London, 1857).

⁶³ Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. xi.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ Goldman, 'Hastings, George Woodyatt (1825-1917)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39463>, accessed 9 October 2009].

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

His interests were broad, including not only legal and penal reform but also the promotion of women's causes. Among other projects, he assisted the foundation of Girton College, Cambridge.⁶⁸

This assistance he gave to Emily Davies and Bodichon in founding Girton College in 1869 demonstrates his ongoing support for many of the women of the Langham Place group.

'Remarks on the Industrial Employment of Women' indicated Hastings' clear belief that the situation with regard to women and employment had to change. The opening paragraphs argued that according to the 1851 census the proportion of women working was far higher than had previously been acknowledged:

Three-fourths of the adult unmarried women of Great Britain, two-thirds of the widowed, and about one-seventh of the married, are returned by our census as earning their bread by independent labour; and besides these, there is the large multitude that, as wives, as daughters, as sisters share in the ordinary industrial avocations of their relatives - attending the counter or the dairy, plying the needle or the pen (...) While we still fancy it is an open question whether the female sex shall be admitted to industrial employment or not - lo! our decennial statistics startle us with the revelation that the spontaneous movement of society has decided the question for us. Two millions of adult women or one third of the entire adult female population, maintain themselves by independent work; and of the remainder, a very large section give perhaps equally efficient aid as co-operators in the business avocations of their relatives.⁶⁹

Hastings explained to his audience that whilst female industry had increased, conditions for them were poor and that they held a 'subordinate' position in

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ G.W. Hastings, 'Remarks on the Industrial Employment of Women', *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (London, 1857), p. 532.

industrial employment, with no protection for them in the workplace. As a result 'the crowd of two million women of humble rank engaged in industry' were predominantly 'only women belonging to the lower orders' who had been pressed into employment' with 'only the meanest occupations (...) opened' to them.⁷⁰ Consequently '[e]very woman belonging, or fancying she belonged, to the better classes, has hung back from industry (sometimes at the expense of little less than starvation).'⁷¹ The speech he gave argued that employment conditions for these women had to be improved with the aim that women of the middle classes would be encouraged to work rather than 'stand aloof on a mere scruple of caste (...) a still greater anomaly that they should do so notwithstanding they belong, for the most part, to a rank so essentially industrial as are the middle-classes'.⁷² Middle-class women would thus throw 'in their lot with their sisters of humbler rank' and take up employment rather than remaining idle.

The women discussed in the article were lower middle-class and upper working-class women as opposed to middle-class women of rank. If places could be found in the workforce 'for a due proportion of women of status and education', working-class women would feel that their 'sisters of a higher rank were now in the same lot with her'. This accorded with the belief that women of a slightly superior rank to working-class women would have a beneficial influence on the behaviour of the working classes. The article tended to describe these women as 'sisters' and to gloss over class differences amongst them thus playing down the implicit element of social control in the speech. However, there was a strongly utilitarian message about the social benefits of putting women from the lower middle classes to work. Harnessing women's productivity would thus boost industrial power:

The unmarried and widowed of the lower orders were formerly, as it were, a mere burden on their relatives, and, through these, on the community; but by absorption into industry, while the cost of their maintenance remains as

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 533.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

before, they now contribute efficiently to the productive power of the nation.⁷³

The work of Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and George Hastings' speech, both of which cited the 1851 census figures, were followed by Harriet Martineau's article 'Female Industry' published in the April 1859 edition of the *Edinburgh Review*.⁷⁴ Martineau had personal experience of the difficulties women faced finding work. In 1829 when she was 27 her father's firm failed and she was forced to work to support her sisters.⁷⁵ Her article cited both Bodichon's *Women and Work* and Milne's *The Industrial and Social position of Women in the Middle and Lower Ranks*. She explained to her readers how:

There was a time when continental visitors called England 'the hell of horses, the purgatory of servants, and the "paradise of women"', from the two former having everything to do, and the latter nothing. The lapse of centuries has materially altered this aspect of affairs (...) the women of the United Kingdom have been led forth from their paradise into a life of labour and care.⁷⁶

Martineau explained the causes of this dramatic change. She identified an earlier period of history when 'unmarried women were rare' and so supported by 'her father, her brother, or her husband'.⁷⁷ Women did work but according to Martineau predominantly 'within the establishment, - whether it were the mansion, the farm,

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

⁷⁴ H. Martineau, 'Female Industry', *Edinburgh Review*, 109 (April, 1859), 293-336. At various points in the article Martineau cites Bodichon's pamphlet, *Women and Work*.

⁷⁵ She worked as a writer, soon becoming a prolific author of numerous articles and books on a range of economic, political and philosophical subjects. See R. K. Webb, 'Martineau, Harriet (1802-1876)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edition, October 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18228>, accessed 5 October 2009].

⁷⁶ Martineau, 'Female Industry', pp. 293-294. This life of 'labour and care' was, according to Martineau, because the industrial employment of women was 'rapidly on the increase.' Like Hastings and Bodichon she relied on statistics to drive her point home. Whilst the numbers of women in the population had increased 'in the ratio of 7 to 8, the number of women working 'in independent industry has increased in the far greater ratio of 3 to 4': see p. 298.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

the merchant's dwelling, or the cottage'.⁷⁸ Martineau explained how:

In the modern sense of 'earning one's bread', the position arose, for men first and subsequently for women, after the creation of a middle class of society (...) From that time (the uprising of a middle class) to this the need and the supply of female industry have gone on increasing.⁷⁹

The existence of single middle-class women, unmarried and unprovided for meant that '[s]o far from our countrywomen being all maintained, as a matter of course, by us the "breadwinners", three millions out of six of adult Englishwomen work for subsistence; and two out of the three in independence.⁸⁰ A significant proportion of women were thus compelled to earn 'their own bread'⁸¹ yet as Martineau pointed out, were limited in regard to which occupations they could enter. This stemmed from what she regarded as a wider reluctance within society to acknowledge that women would not always find maintenance and provision within marriage or the family:

A social organization framed for a community of which half stayed at home, while the other half went out to work, cannot answer the purposes of a society, of which a quarter remains at home while three-quarters go out to work.⁸²

Martineau thus made the case for broadening women's access to employment. She surveyed the census results for 1851 and examined what occupations women could be found in. Like Hastings she was keen to highlight that women's employment was not a new phenomenon acknowledging that '[t]he gentlewoman of ancient times had to overlook the preparation of every article of food, clothing and convenience, for a whole settlement, in days when the corn had to be grown,

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 294.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 336.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 294.

⁸² Ibid., p. 298.

reaped and dressed at home.’⁸³ However, women had now ‘become industrial in the sense of being the supporters of themselves and of a large proportion of households’.⁸⁴ Women were employed as textile manufacturers, domestic servants and agricultural labourers, but despite these changes a significant number of trades were closed to them so that middle-class women typically survived ‘by the needle or by becoming educators’.⁸⁵ This state of affairs created ‘spirit-broken governesses and starving needlewomen’ according to Martineau.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the restricted range of occupations for middle-class women meant increased competition for work. She thus echoed Bodichon’s arguments in favour of opening up non-traditional trades for women suggesting shop-keeping, telegraphy, watch-making, cookery, photography and compositorship. Martineau pointed out that new areas of work could only be accessed by women if men agreed not to obstruct their entry into work traditionally dominated by men. Finally, she warned that the ‘penalty of (...) neglect’ with regard to the issue would be ‘pauperism at one end of the scale, and the most poisonous of vices at the other’ and called for an improvement and extension of education to all.⁸⁷

Bodichon, Hastings and Martineau all contributed to the debate about how to provide for the ‘surplus woman’. Their contributions differed in tone. Bodichon emphasised how meaningful work for middle-class women would not only alleviate suffering and poverty but could provide an alternative to marriage for girls who questioned ‘suppose I do not want to marry?’⁸⁸ Both she and Martineau explicitly identified areas of the economy which would provide women with work such as compositorship and shop-keeping. Hastings’ speech was less concerned with women exercising independent choices and argued for better employment conditions as a means to encourage single, middle-class women to enter work and thus become productive members of society rather than a potential drain on the

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

⁸⁸ Bodichon, *Women and Work*, p. 38.

economy. Whilst he called for improved employment conditions he did not specify the types of employment that could be opened to them. Bodichon, Hastings and Martineau all agreed however that training was essential and as Hastings argued should take place in ‘every branch of female employment’.⁸⁹ Training would open up new opportunities for women in the workplace. Furthermore, all three called for the end to restricted forms of employment for women. Whilst Martineau and Bodichon were explicit about the types of occupation that should be opened to women, Hastings argued that women could improve their situation if they came together and acted ‘as a class – with institutions to minister to their peculiar wants, a press to represent their wishes, and a public opinion to watch over and protect them’.⁹⁰

The ground had thus been prepared and the public debate on how to provide employment for middle-class women was underway. Clearly, women could no longer rely on, and in certain instances did not want to rely on, husbands or male family members for their subsistence. These important contributions by Hastings, Bodichon and Martineau apparently inspired Jessie Boucherett, a Lincolnshire woman from a conservative landed background to take action. In the summer of 1859 she approached Parkes with her idea to establish an organization to provide women of the middle classes with training and employment: training in commercial work was especially championed by Boucherett. She was given the opportunity to present her ideas to women at 19 Langham Place and received some assistance: funds were raised in aid of her cause and the Society was established in the summer of 1859.⁹¹ The Society formed a committee of twelve women and four men which first met on 7 July 1859.⁹² Boucherett recognized the importance of patronage, specifically from NAPSS, and approached Hastings for his support in the autumn of 1859. The report of a meeting held on 17 February 1860 described how:

⁸⁹ Hastings, ‘Remarks’, p. 536.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

⁹¹ The details of Boucherett’s part in founding the Society will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁹² Annual Report, 1860. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

Soon after the provisional establishment of the SPEW it received so much support and encouragement, that Miss J. Boucherett, the founder of the Society was anxious to take every means to consolidate its constitution and to place it on a permanent basis.⁹³

In light of Hastings' speech at the NAPSS congress she was 'desirous that the Society should, if possible, be connected with the NAPSS (...) to be strengthened by its yearly increasing weight and influence'.⁹⁴

Having asked Hastings for his help, he became vital in liaising between NAPSS and Boucherett and ensuring that the Society secured the backing of the NAPSS as Boucherett had hoped. Boucherett and Parkes attended the NAPSS social science congress between 10 and 15 October 1859 where they presented their plans to its predominantly male membership. Key speeches written by them were heard, each widely publicized in the press with Parkes in particular arousing media interest.⁹⁵ Whilst Boucherett's speech was read by Hastings, Parkes seemingly received more press attention by reading her speech herself. Crawford describes one NAPSS member's response to the speeches by these women, that of Samuel Courtauld the Unitarian silk manufacturer who noted that Parkes 'read a paper on educated female labour which made a great impression on him'.⁹⁶

On 13 October 1859 *The Daily News* reported on these two speeches and how 'in the department of Social Economy a very numerous auditory was assembled to hear two papers announced to be read by ladies with reference to female labour'. It went on to describe how 'BESSIE PARKES (a young lady, who courageously

⁹³ Annual report, 17 February 1860. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

⁹⁴ The date of affiliation seems only to have been recorded in retrospect. It appears, according to the Society's committee records of 1862, that the NAPSS passed a resolution to affiliate with the Society on 22 October 1859, just seven days after the conclusion of the Social Science Congress in Bradford. See Minutes of the General Committee, 8 May 1862, vol. 1. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

⁹⁵ Bessie's article was subsequently published in the *English Woman's Journal*: B.R. Parkes, 'The market for educated female labour', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 4, no. 21 (1859), 145-152.

⁹⁶ Courtauld had also heard "an exceedingly well-written paper that should have been read by its author" - George Hastings, the Secretary of the National Society had read Jessie Boucherett's paper: see Crawford, *The Women's suffrage movement*, p. 142.

mounted the rostrum and spoke with decision and emphasis) read a paper on the market for educated female labour, in which she called attention to the manner in which the important subject had been neglected by society.' Parkes explained how middle-class women risked penury for 'if the girl be not married or instructed in some special calling, she becomes a dependent upon the charity of others or worse'.⁹⁷ The social science congress and Parkes' speech were reported on across the country. Articles mirroring the report in *The Daily News* appeared in newspapers in Liverpool, Birmingham, Preston, Manchester, Glasgow and London.⁹⁸ A further article in *The Daily News* published on 17 November 1859 described the press attention which had followed Parkes' speech:

The *Edinburgh Review* of last April contained a full narrative of the actual state of female industry in this country; and at the Social Science Meeting at Bradford, a paper read by MISS PARKES excited so much interest that the discussion has been kept up, and does not seem likely to drop at present.⁹⁹

The paper went on to explain that Parkes' speech revealed 'the truth that a multitude of the daughters of middle-class men are neither educated nor provided for like their brothers; and that if they do not marry they must work (...) or starve'.¹⁰⁰ Drawing on Martineau's article 'Female Industry', the writer stated that 'careless people are unaware that we have long outgrown the fit of that theory of female maintenance. It has been out at elbows at least since the war which ended with Waterloo'.¹⁰¹ Other newspaper articles described how the question of female employment for middle-class women would not go away. One entitled 'Educated Female Employment' in *The Morning Chronicle* argued that '[i]t is not often that the ordinary social topics of newspaper controversy maintain a very lasting hold

⁹⁷ 'The Social Science Congress at Bradford', *Daily News*, 13 October 1859.

⁹⁸ See 'The Social Science Conference', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14 October 1859; 'National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences', *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 October 1859; 'Association for the Promotion of Social Science', *The Preston Guardian*, 15 October 1859; 'Social Science Conference', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 16 October 1859; 'The Social Science Congress at Bradford', *Manchester Times*, 15 October 1859; *Glasgow Herald*, 17 October 1859.

⁹⁹ 'London', *Daily News*, 17 November 1859.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

on the public mind' but that it was a 'great social problem, in which is bound up much of the welfare of English homes during future generations'.¹⁰²

The Society and NAPSS became affiliated on 8 December 1859. A committee of six men and six women was formed by NAPSS 'to consider and report on the subject of Female Employment': four of the women were Jessie Boucherett, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Adelaide Proctor and Emily Faithfull who were already members of the Society's committee.¹⁰³

The Liverpool Mercury reporting on 14 November 1859 explained the women's plans for dealing with this 'great social problem':

The employment of women, after much discussion in the newspapers and at the Social Science Congresses, is about to be practically promoted (...) A committee (...) have also formed a society whose object is to establish a large school for girls and young women, where they may be specially trained to wait in shops, and instructed in accounts, bookkeeping, &c.¹⁰⁴

With this the Society began its work. Unlike the Lette-Verein which was patronized by Crown Princess Victoria, the Society did not receive royal patronage from Queen Victoria from the outset. After a series of discussions at the General and Managing Committee meetings about when to approach Queen Victoria for her support, Mary Ponsonby, one of the Society's committee members, who also served as the Queen's maid of honour from 1853 to 1861 acted as an intermediary between the two.¹⁰⁵ On 26 January 1869 the General Committee meeting minutes

¹⁰² 'Educated Female Employment', *The Morning Chronicle*, 18 November 1859. Bessie Rayner Parkes' father Joseph Parkes, the radical dissenter wrote many articles for the *Morning Chronicle* as did Henry Brougham. In 1849 the *Morning Chronicle* carried out an investigation into the condition of the labouring classes in Britain. Henry Mayhew was one of the investigators and later used his research to write his famous book *London Labour and the London Poor*. The *Morning Chronicle* was thus an acknowledged supporter of more radical causes.

¹⁰³ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ 'Summary – domestic', *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 November 1859.

¹⁰⁵ See H.C.G. Matthew, 'Ponsonby, Sir Henry Frederick (1825–1895)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, January 2010

reported that a letter from Ponsonby confirmed that ‘Sir Thomas Biddulph would write announcing that the Queen has consented to become one of the patronesses of the Society’ and also that the Crown Princess Victoria had also shown that she was ‘anxious to join the Society’.¹⁰⁶

2.5 Conclusion

Men who played a role in the work of the NAPSS such as Brougham, Monckton-Milnes and Hastings developed links with women from the Langham Place group headed by Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon in the campaign for a Married Women’s Property Act in the mid 1850s. This history of cooperation meant that when the NAPSS was founded in 1857 men recognized the importance of securing women’s assistance: women had shown their ability as campaigners and men hoped to harness their energy. Hastings drawing on Milne’s book *The Industrial and Social position of Women in the Middle and Lower Ranks* presented the issue of ‘redundant’ women as one needing urgent attention to the members of NAPSS and women such as Bodichon and Martineau joined the debate. Bodichon wrote on the subject in *Women and Work* in 1857 and identified the areas of employment that could be opened up for women. In 1859 Martineau’s article ‘Female Industry’ raised fears that unmarried women without the means to support themselves faced poverty and destitution. These debates inspired practical action: Jessie Boucherett’s plan for a Society to provide women with training and employment was presented to feminists at Langham Place and with the backing of NAPSS the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women was formed.

The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women has typically been regarded as a feminist endeavour established by the women from the Langham Place group. Cooperation between these women and the men of NAPSS tends to be overlooked in contemporary accounts. Yet this cooperation was vital to the

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22497>, accessed 31 January 2011].

¹⁰⁶ Minutes for the General Committee, 26 January 1869. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

Society's success. Men recognized that middle-class women needed training and employment but relied on women such as Boucherett and Parkes to carry out the practical work required. At the same time members of the Langham Place group who faced ridicule from conservative quarters found powerful supporters within the membership of NAPSS. The social science congresses gave both men and women the opportunity to develop their status as experts in their chosen field. Furthermore, women gained access to the public sphere by appearing and speaking at these congresses. The following chapter looks at how this emerging group of male and female social reformers soon developed links with their contemporaries abroad. These links underpinned their attempts to deal with the woman question as the issue of 'redundant women' came to be regarded as a European problem.

Chapter 3: Adopting the British model: The Centralverein and contested paternity of the Lette-Verein in Berlin

3.1 Introduction

Der Centralverein für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen established in Berlin in 1844 dedicated itself to the 'improvement of the moral and economic situation of the working classes' (*Verbesserung des sittlichen und wirthschaftlichen Zustandes der arbeitenden Klassen*).¹ However, in 1865 it resolved to deal with the *Frauenüberschuss*, a perceived surplus of unmarried middle-class women in need of support. In October 1865 Wilhelm Adolph Lette, President of the Centralverein, wrote his famous 'Memorandum concerning the opening of new and the improvement of existing sources of employment for women' (*Denkschrift über die Eröffnung neuer und die Verbesserung bisheriger Erwerbsquellen für das weibliche Geschlecht*) which led to the foundation of the Lette-Verein, an institution aimed at improving women's training and employment opportunities.² Historians researching the Lette-Verein have thus widely regarded it as the work of one man, Wilhelm Adolph Lette.³

However, closer scrutiny of why the Centralverein supported Lette's initiative reveals how a reforming lobby of men emerged determined to deal with the issue of women and employment. Men such as Max Ring, Baron Franz von Holtzendorff and Gustav Eberty picked up the debate then emerging in Prussia on the *Frauenüberschuss*,⁴ and made a case for acting upon it. Their ideas, expounded in articles, books and reports both influenced Lette and underpinned his arguments

¹ Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 10.

² Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 349-364.

³ Obschernitzki describes how the person responsible for the Centralverein's discussions on women's work, emancipation and equal rights, as well as the establishment of the Lette-Verein itself was Wilhelm Adolph Lette: see Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 4.

⁴ Bussemer, *Frauenemanzipation*, pp. 25ff.

for reform outlined in the 'Denkschrift'. Their proposals for reform were based on cooperation with their contemporaries in Europe in particular in England. This cooperation took place at a time when social reformers in the nineteenth century increasingly looked abroad for solutions to society's ills. A 'new pattern of cosmopolitan sociability' emerged in this period as philanthropy and social reform 'vastly extended knowledge of Europe but also helped generate a strong sense of practical internationalism'.⁵ These men found inspiration for the Lette-Verein in the work of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in London, an institution founded by men and women with a clear feminist agenda. Paradoxically, the Centralverein under Lette hoped that establishing a similar institution would forestall the radical aims of the feminist organization the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein (ADF) founded in 1865 by Louise Otto and Auguste Schmidt.

Gerhard argues that the loosening of press censorship and amnesty for political prisoners of 1848 in the 1860s signalled the 'dawn of a new era' which led to the establishment of the ADF. She explains that:

(...) the women who had been active around 1848, led by Louise Otto and Auguste Schmidt, decided in 1865 to convene 'a conference of German women of the different cities and states.' *The Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (...) represented a bold venture, because even though German unification 'was still a dream,' these women wanted to represent 'the whole of Germany.'⁶

During the 1848 revolution Otto had demanded 'full equality for women in every sphere including the vote', something Lette strongly opposed.⁷ From 1865 the ADF founded a newspaper, *Neue Bahnen*, petitioned the Reichstag and

⁵ A. Howe, 'Introduction', in A. Howe, R. Cobden and S. Morgan (eds), *Rethinking Nineteenth-Century Liberalism: Richard Cobden Bicentenary Essays* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 1-20, here p. 14.

⁶ Gerhard, 'The Women's Movement', in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements*, p. 108.

⁷ Evans, *The Feminist Movement*, p. 24.

government and established a network of associations. Similarly to the Lette-Verein it argued for women's right to work outside the home and the improvement of women's education.⁸ However, unlike the Lette-Verein it was an all-female organization: men were excluded from membership.

Despite the fact that the ADF excluded men from its membership, male members of the Centralverein such as Ring, Holtzendorff and Eberty were keen to deal with the 'woman question' themselves and saw it as their duty to do so: they carried the debate forward and sought a practical solution to the problem. In acting as they did they started work on a promising new field for reformers and one that they hoped would yield tangible results. With this in mind this chapter aims to examine how the Centralverein turned its attention to the 'woman question' in nineteenth-century Prussia. The sources which provide an insight into the input of those men involved are fragmentary: a variety of documents have been analyzed to reveal the beliefs they had with regard to the 'woman question' including periodical articles, institutional documents and novels. They will hopefully provide an insight into how these men found out about the work of the Society in London, how they disseminated information regarding the Society's work to their colleagues in the Centralverein, what their opinions about women's position in society and the workplace were and the debates that led to the establishment of the Lette-Verein in 1866. This chapter will begin by providing background information about how and why the Centralverein was formed.

3.2 The origins of Der Centralverein für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen

In the early 1840s a pre-unified Germany experienced growing public protest sparked by a desire for institutional and constitutional reform, a subsistence crisis and increasing levels of poverty especially amongst traditional artisan labourers

⁸ Gerhard, 'The Women's Movement', in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements*, p. 108.

and proto-industrial workers.⁹ Criticism mounted of prevailing ruling-class privileges and conservative rule and in Silesia, weavers struggling to survive on low wages entered into violent revolt in 1844. Heine's poem *The Silesian Weavers*, written in the aftermath of the Silesian uprising of 1844, painted an ominous picture of the political situation at the time: despite the suppression of these linen-weavers demonstrating against subsistence wages, it was only a matter of time before God, King and Fatherland would be doomed by revolt.¹⁰ Critical of the political situation in Germany, Heine was anti-monarchical and a liberal. The Silesian uprising revealed to him, as it did to many others in Germany, the extent of autocratic rule in Germany and the brutality of the ruling elite in the face of opposition.

The Silesian Weavers was printed in *Vorwärts!*, a journal published in Paris by Karl Marx who was in exile there. Marx published his own views with regard to the uprising in *Vorwärts!* under the title 'Kritische Randglossen zu dem Artikel "Der König von Preussen und die Sozialreform. Von einem Preussen"'.¹¹ He offered a somewhat different view of the revolt: the protest, he argued, was not aimed at the King but at the bourgeoisie. Predicting the events of 1848 he believed that revolution would come. He hoped that proletarian class consciousness would lead to the eventual overthrow of the ruling classes. The uprising, according to Marx, was thus a sign to the bourgeoisie of the potential dangers the proletarian class posed to the economic order and property rights. This was in contrast to

⁹ D.E. Barclay, 'Political trends and movements, 1830-1850: The *Vörmärz* and the revolutions of 1848-1849', in J. Sperber (ed.), *Germany 1800-1870* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 46-68.

¹⁰ For a translation of H. Heine's poem, 'Die Schlesischen Weber', see P. Kossoff, *Valiant heart: a biography of Heinrich Heine* (London, 1983), p. 167. For more discussion of the Silesian revolt and the establishment of Der Centralverein für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen, see J. Reulecke, 'English Social Policy around the middle of the Nineteenth Century as seen by German Social Reformers', in W. Mommsen and W. Mock (eds), *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany, 1850-1950* (London, 1981), pp. 32-49; H. Beck, 'State and Society in Pre-March Prussia: The Weavers' Uprising, the Bureaucracy and the Association for the Welfare of Workers', *Central European History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1992), 303-331; H. Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia: Conservatives, Bureaucracy, and the Social Question, 1815-70* (Michigan, 1995), pp. 169-191.

¹¹ K. Marx, 'Kritische Randglossen zu dem Artikel "Der König von Preußen und die Sozialreform. Von einem Preußen"', *Vorwärts!*, no. 63, 7 August (1844), 392-409. Marx stressed the class consciousness of those involved in the Silesian uprising: see M. Löwy, *The theory of revolution in the young Marx* (Leiden, 2003), p. 92.

Heine's view who although a friend of Marx's, did not share his vision of a proletarian revolution and a Communist state.¹²

Fears of popular protest triggered by immiseration partly explain why at the Industrial Exhibition of the Zollverein in 1844 a number of industrialists, business men and academics - prominent members of the bourgeoisie - decided to establish the Centralverein in Berlin, thirteen years before the NAPSS was founded in London. Amidst fears about future proletarian unrest, the Centralverein aimed to prevent future discord by eliminating poverty through social reform. Ignoring the plight of the working classes would result in what Marx had witnessed in England, where failure to deal with the causes of poverty had led to the:

(...) pestilential atmosphere of English basement dwellings! (...) the fantastic rags in which the English poor are clothed and of the faded, shrivelled flesh of the women worn out by work and want; the children lying on dung-heaps; the stunted monsters produced by overwork in the mechanical monotony of the factories! (...) prostitution, murder, and the gallows!¹³

The Centralverein wished to avoid such horrors and with them the threat of revolution. According to Lees those involved 'helped to construct a middle-class culture of social reform for the purpose of fighting the social ills that in their view had given rise to deviant behavior by individuals and to the collective threat posed by Social Democracy'.¹⁴

The Centralverein thus developed an ambitious programme of social reform which aimed to establish savings banks, sickness and invalidity funds and pension funds. Their ethos was self-help rather than welfare. Industrial schools for the children of factory workers and sanitary accommodation for workers would elevate the lives of the Prussian proletariat. The Centralverein's work would be extended

¹² Heine feared that Communism would destroy his 'beloved world of art': see J. Hermand and R. Holub (eds), *Heinrich Heine: The romantic school and other essays* (New York, 1985), p. xiii.

¹³ L. Colletti, R. Livingstone and G. Benton (eds), *Karl Marx: Early Writings* (London, 1992), p. 406.

¹⁴ A. Lees, *Cities, sin and social reform in imperial Germany* (Michigan, 2002), p. 322.

throughout Prussia via a network of local and regional societies. It was an advanced but paternalistic plan: some of the ideas propounded by the pre-unification Centralverein became foundation stones of the welfare state in unified Germany later in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Reulecke argues that ‘a nationalistic concept of the Fatherland played a large part in its inception, focusing on the forces and traditions inherent in the German people to heal social ills’.¹⁶

Despite Marx's troubled images of industrial England, the Centralverein's ideas for social reform increasingly looked to English responses to social problems from 1851 onwards.¹⁷ The Prussian Foreign Minister von Bülow had received material from his ambassador to London, von Bunsen, on English legislation on Friendly Societies in 1850. He passed this to the Minister for Trade von der Heydt who passed it to the Centralverein itself in February 1851.¹⁸ The Centralverein, according to Reulecke, wished to emulate England's use of mutual assurance. However, it did not believe that the working classes were ready for independent institutions aimed at self-help and instead saw the middle classes as key in leading such associations. The Centralverein published details of the English experience so as to gain support from bourgeois circles in Germany for the concept of associations.¹⁹ Furthermore, it organized public lectures and discussions in the early 1850s on a range of contemporary social problems. Three lectures delivered in Berlin focused on England: the first and second saw Victor Aimé Huber discussing British Associations in general, then cooperative workers' associations in more depth. The third, given by Rudolf Gneist in September 1852, was a lecture on how cooperative bath-houses and wash-houses organized in England were a

¹⁵ For more in-depth discussions of the work of the Centralverein, see J. Reulecke, ‘Die Anfänge der organisierten Sozialreform in Deutschland’, in R. von Bruch, *Weder Kommunismus noch Kapitalismus. Bürgerliche Sozialreform in Deutschland vom Vormärz bis in die Ära Adenauer* (München, 1985), pp. 21-59; J. Reulecke, *Sozialer Frieden durch soziale Reform: Der Centralverein für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen in die Frühindustrialisierung* (Wuppertal, 1983).

¹⁶ Reulecke, ‘English Social Policy’, p. 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-49.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-49.

means of elevating living standards.²⁰ English models were key to what Reulecke describes as the learning process for a Prussia lagging behind England in terms of industrial development. However, their work was not merely imitative: the Centralverein also sought to avoid what it viewed as England's mistakes.

Reulecke identifies three phases which define the Centralverein's work: its development during the *Vormärz* period, followed by the revolutionary period of 1848 and finally the shift in its goals in the latter phase of its history, the period of post-1848 reaction.²¹ During the *Vormärz* period, the liberal, state-loyal bourgeoisie of the Centralverein found their work hindered by regulations imposed by the Prussian Interior Minister, Manteuffel. These were put in place as radical and socialist groups tried to use the Centralverein as a platform for their ideas. The revolutionary period saw a flurry of debates and increased membership. By the summer of 1848, the Centralverein was in a strong position with 300 Berlin members and 60 foreign and non-local members. Increasingly, local institutions with socio-political aims made contact with the Centralverein's leadership. Many of its members found themselves in politically influential positions. By the 1850s the Centralverein was on the defensive against a suspicious state, but still formulated its programme for reform.²² A series of commissions was established, each to deal with fourteen different areas of reform that reflected the Centralverein's broad agenda for change.²³ Distributive and productive associations received particular attention in line with the view that they were vital in improving working-class conditions. Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch established consumer cooperatives and self-help associations for the organization of credit and the 'common purchase of raw materials'.²⁴ From 1858 the Centralverein experienced a renewed boom: with the departure of the reactionary Manteuffel, the success of the liberals in 1858 resulting in the entry of some of their members to

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²¹ Reulecke, *Sozialer Frieden*, pp. 34-35.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

²⁴ H. Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany - The Reformation: 1840-1945* (Princeton, 1982), p. 116.

the Prussian parliament,²⁵ an increase in membership and the establishment of their own periodical *Der Arbeiterfreund*, the Centralverein found itself in a stronger position.²⁶

The Centralverein did not, despite its name, limit its attentions to reforming the lives of the working classes. In December 1865 it decided to establish an organization which would deal with the 'woman question' by training unmarried women of the middle classes and finding them employment.²⁷ This was a surprising change of direction and seemed incongruent with the Centralverein's aims to improve working-class conditions. However, as will become clear, this new departure had its own logic as a number of factors came together which acted as the catalyst for the men of the Centralverein to deal with the problem of women and work.

3.3 The Centralverein and the 'woman question': The founding fathers of the Lette-Verein

The Lette-Verein, which appears in most historical accounts as the brainchild of Wilhelm Adolph Lette, was in fact the joint creation of other less well known members of the Centralverein such as Max Ring, Baron Franz von Holtzendorff and Gustav Ebert. Exploring their role means piecing together clues and fragmentary sources; despite the gaps in the evidence, however, it is possible to point to the important contributions they made both to debates on the woman question and more specifically the launch of the Lette-Verein. The ideas that influenced these men were varied; some were home-grown, others imported. They were eager to publicize their involvement. Max Ring, a Jewish doctor and an

²⁵ Lette was a member of the Prussian parliament through the 1850s and 1860s: see H. Hagemann and M. Rösch, 'German Economists in Parliament (1848-1918)', in M. Augello and M.E.L. Guidi (eds), *Economists in parliament in the liberal age, 1848-1920* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 163-190, here p. 177.

²⁶ Reulecke, 'Die Anfänge', p. 38.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

author pointed out how in 1864 his conversation with Lette, the President of the Centralverein, had provided the impetus to turn their efforts to solving the woman question.²⁸ Ring entered the debate at home on the woman question by publishing an article on the subject in his periodical, *Der Volksgarten*.²⁹ Baron Franz von Holtzendorff, a penal reformer, had progressive views on the rights of women as well as links to the men of NAPSS. Eberty and Lette, drawing on influences from abroad, publicly referred to the Society as a template for a Prussian initiative to train middle-class women in need of work.³⁰ Although the evidence on their activities is sparse, it seems that these two men travelled to England and met with the men and women of NAPSS and the Society. Holtzendorff, Ring and Eberty all contributed to the debate surrounding the 'surplus woman' problem. A series of meetings held in 1865 by the Centralverein debated the issue which culminated in the establishment of the Lette-Verein, and each individual played a distinctive role in these developments.

Baron Franz von Holtzendorff, a German penologist was a founding member of the Centralverein and President of the Lette-Verein from 1868-1872. He, like other social reformers, travelled abroad in this period to gather information on social policy. Assessments of his public role, including the part he played as President of the Lette-Verein, have tended to focus on his work within the Prussian context.³¹ By contrast, Holtzendorff's book about his trip to Britain called *An English Country Squire*,³² translated into English by Rosa Gebhard in 1878, which described his search for ideas about criminal justice policy, has been largely ignored. In it he described his attendance at the NAPSS social science congress in Dublin in 1861, a congress which brought him into contact with Britain's leading

²⁸ M. Ring, 'Das Haus der Berliner Frauen', *Die Gartenlaube*, vol. 22 (1874), 400-403. 134/02, LVA.

²⁹ E. Lucia, 'Über das Los der unverheiratheten Mädchen', *Der Volksgarten*, vol. 2 (1864), 712-716.

³⁰ See Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 350 and G. Eberty, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bestrebungen für das Wohl der arbeitenden Frauen in England', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 387-402.

³¹ Kaiser, "Frauenemancipation".

³² Baron F. von Holtzendorff, *An English Country Squire*, Translated by Rosa Gebhard (Gloucester, 1878).

social reformers and feminists.

Holtendorff's *An English Country Squire* conveys to a certain extent the spirit in which practical internationalism came to operate at this time. Social reformers began to establish networks with their contemporaries abroad and thus gained access to information regarding foreign initiatives which might be followed at home. Such travel combined work with pleasure. Holtendorff described how his trip to England in 1861 was filled with:

(...) beautiful, sunny, hospitable, but at the same time hard and fatiguing days, the strain of which I should scarcely have been able to endure (...) To listen for at least four hours daily during a whole week to speeches, addresses, lectures, reports and discussions on English jurisprudence, education, schools, workhouses, political economy (...) besides visiting all the remarkable establishments and charitable institutions of the city and its neighbourhood, was hard work.³³

Following Holtendorff's trip to Dublin which was marked by 'overflowing hospitality'³⁴ and government officials who 'vied with each other in their courtesy to the foreign members of the congress'³⁵ he travelled to Gloucester visiting Hardwick Court, the home of fellow penologist Thomas Lloyd Baker.³⁶ They discussed their ideas over dinner and during walks in the squire's grounds. Holtendorff's account, aside from detailing his visit to Hardwicke reformatory for young offenders established by Baker and his discussions with Baker about the penal system, is punctuated with remarks about the domestic setting, describing incidental matters such as the squire's library and his relationship with his wife. In doing so it aimed to convey to the reader the mutual respect, affinity, friendship

³³ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 2

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ For more on the life of Thomas Lloyd Baker, see Bill Forsythe, 'Baker, Thomas Barwick Lloyd (1807-1886)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, Oxford University Press, September 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1140>, accessed 7 July 2010].

and good humour between these two men in their passion for penal reform.

An English Country Squire expresses the processes which underpinned this newfound 'practical internationalism'. It was a dynamic and sometimes informal process founded on personal contact and communication rather than the mere collection of facts. It mixed the political with the personal, the public with the domestic and combined friendship and cooperative exchange with a desire to transfer useful initiatives, ideas and traditions discovered abroad back home. Before turning to this mutual exchange between the two men, the author translating Holtzendorff's work summed up how exchange of this kind was founded on the desire for national improvement: 'Holtzendorff addresses himself to his own country'³⁷ and did so believing that 'we have yet a great deal to learn from you'³⁸ for 'in English politics common sense so often solves the questions which are insoluble by the learned world, and (...) in England you have a public opinion, which must be wanting in Germany for the present.'³⁹

There is no evidence for any specific exchanges between Holtzendorff and the members of the Langham Place group. However, it is possible that each had knowledge of the other through their involvement in the work of NAPSS. Holtzendorff's visit to the 1861 Dublin congress where he spoke on penal reform meant that he presumably heard speeches made by women who were considered the leading female social reformers of the day and had recently established the Society in London. Boucherett, the Society's leader, gave a speech at the Dublin congress entitled 'Local Societies' on the need for the Society to extend its work nationally. She spoke of the Victoria Press, the law copying office, bookkeeping as a profession for women and the Society's commercial classes. Emily Faithfull was also present and read a speech entitled 'Women Compositors' detailing the progress of the Victoria Press since its establishment.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the women of

³⁷ Holtzendorff, *An English*, p. iii.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁰ Lacey, *Barbara*.

Langham Place writing on the social science congresses in the *English Woman's Journal* reported on the process of mutual exchange and how 'an increasing number of foreigners frequent the meetings, and bear testimony to their value as a means of making them acquainted with our social life; and they are also beginning to contribute facts and suggestions from their own countries'.⁴¹

Despite the lack of available evidence about these possible links, Holtzendorff's presidency of the Lette-Verein from 1868 reveals that he was committed to improving women's social and economic circumstances: his radical ideas regarding women's rights were published in *Die Verbesserungen in der gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Stellung der Frauen* in 1867.⁴² Holtzendorff believed in full equal rights for women, the granting of the political right to vote and entry to all educational establishments. He believed that women unable to fulfil their role in the family be recognized for their contribution to society.⁴³ Indeed, his tract of 1867 outlined ideas that were in close alignment with those of the Langham Place group. He discussed the involvement of English women in the 1866 campaign for the right to vote, which included Jessie Boucherett and Emily Faithfull as signatories of J.S. Mill's petition in parliament for female enfranchisement.⁴⁴ Whilst it is hard to document whether these views were already fully formed in 1861, it is plausible that Holtzendorff was already sympathetic to the feminist beliefs of women from the Society speaking in Dublin.

Holtzendorff's beliefs were more radical than those of Wilhelm Lette's. Despite these differences in opinion, as social reformers committed to the emerging

⁴¹ 'Notices of Books', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 11, no. 62 (1863), p. 134.

⁴² Baron F. von Holtzendorff, *Die Verbesserungen in der gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Stellung der Frauen* (Berlin, 1867).

⁴³ Kaiser summarises his position as one which took the liberal belief in equality and freedom of all individuals to its logical conclusion and applied it to women: Kaiser, "Frauenemancipation".

⁴⁴ The petitions were presented in 1866 following the publication of Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon's pamphlets *Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women* and *Objections to the Enfranchisement of Women Considered* in 1866, publications that Holtzendorff possibly read. Frances Power Cobbe, another member of the Langham Place group who signed the petition for enfranchisement, had been mentioned by Holtzendorff as just one of the many 'eminent men and women' present at the Congress: see Holtzendorff, *An English*, p. 1.

principles of social science, both Holtzendorff and Lette believed that the 'woman question' could be resolved through social investigation. In *Die Verbesserungen*, Holtzendorff voiced the view that the relations between the sexes should 'from the standpoint of justice and reason be made into an object for research'⁴⁵ for the same reasons that 'we enquire about the merits of one form of government over another' or 'search for a boundary between the necessary power of the masses and the freedom of the individual'.⁴⁶

Holtzendorff thus occupies an important strategic position in the history of the links that developed between the men and women involved in the work of the Lette-Verein in Berlin and the Society in London. His attitude towards international exchange as a means for social reform may have informed the subsequent exchange that took place between the Society and the Lette-Verein. It may also have facilitated Lette and Ebert's visit to the Society in 1865. His example of cooperation based upon friendship and his recognition of the importance of personal contact for effective social investigation can be traced in future exchanges between the Society and the Lette-Verein. This cooperation set the standard for communication between the two organizations in the years ahead and will be examined further in chapter 7.

A further key member of the Centralverein who initiated public debate about the *Frauenüberschuss* which led to the establishment of the Lette-Verein was Max Ring, a doctor, author and editor from Breslau. Ring initiated debate as the editor of *Die Gartenlaube* and *Der Volksgarten*, publications both censored by the authorities.⁴⁷ Writing in 1874 in an article for *Die Gartenlaube*, Ring described how on a warm autumn day in 1864 whilst strolling through the gardens of Schulze-Delitzsch's villa in Potsdam, he and Wilhelm Adolph Lette, President of the Centralverein, entered into a lively discussion about the needs of unmarried

⁴⁵ Holtzendorff, *Die Verbesserungen*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ *Der Volksgarten* was established by Ring in Berlin to replace *Die Gartenlaube* which had been banned by the authorities. Within the year *Der Volksgarten* was also censored: see 'Max Ring', <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=302&letter=R>, accessed 5 December 2010.

women of the middle classes.⁴⁸ Lette apparently seized upon his views with a 'youthful enthusiasm' and thus at the home of Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch, founding member of the Progressive Liberal Party, Ring agreed to provide Lette with a preliminary plan for solving the problem and the necessary data to demonstrate how it could be done.⁴⁹ According to Ring his research became the basis of Lette's famous 'Denkschrift über die Eröffnung neuer und die Verbesserung bisheriger Erwerbsquellen für das weibliche Geschlecht'⁵⁰ which resulted in the foundation of the Lette-Verein.

Despite this, Ring's role in the establishment of the Lette-Verein has been neglected by accounts which detail its history. His concern for the welfare of the lower classes, in particular for women, seems to have emerged early on in life. In his memoirs, he described how training to be a doctor had given him an insight into 'the social conditions of the poor people'.⁵¹ His work as a doctor led him to treat the victims of an epidemic of typhoid in Upper Silesia in the winter of 1847-1848⁵² and he wrote about their suffering in his memoirs. He expressed his sentiments in describing his treatment of a young, sick needleworker who he noted was well educated despite her low class.⁵³ A close friend and associate of Schulze-Delitzsch, Ring and other men committed to reform met regularly at Schulze-Delitzsch's house in Potsdam.⁵⁴ It was through these meetings that he was introduced to Wilhelm Adolph Lette who he described as 'a liberal in the best sense of the word'.⁵⁵

Ring's work as editor of *Der Volksgarten* led to the publication of an article entitled 'Über das Los der unverheiratheten Mädchen' in 1864. The named author

⁴⁸ Ring, 'Das Haus', *Die Gartenlaube*, vol. 22 (Leipzig, 1874), 400-403. 134/02, LVA.

⁴⁹ M. Ring, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 1898), pp. 182-183.

⁵⁰ Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 349-364.

⁵¹ Ring, *Erinnerungen*, p. 110.

⁵² See 'Max Ring', <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=302&letter=R>, accessed 5 December 2010.

⁵³ Ring, *Erinnerungen*, p. 110.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

was Ellen Lucia, apparently a pseudonym for Wilhelmine Weyergang.⁵⁶ According to Sehlke, Weyergang was born in Greifswald and was a teacher there; she also had experience of teaching in both France and Germany.⁵⁷ She finally settled in Berlin where she continued to teach. By publishing the article she wrote, Ring showed he was keen to share her ideas about the consequences of inadequate female education which forced middle-class women into poverty.⁵⁸ Indeed, his publication of her article stimulated public attention on the issue of the *Frauenüberschuss* according to Lette.⁵⁹

The article 'Über das Los der unverheiratheten Mädchen' clearly set out to its readers the gravity of the problem posed by unmarried women in Prussia. It asserted that much had been written about the problem but little action had been taken. Weyergang claimed that in the last decade the number of unmarried girls had at least doubled, perhaps even quadrupled. Late marriages were becoming more commonplace as men delayed family life for financial reasons. She highlighted that late marriage meant girls were reliant on their own labour for longer. Furthermore, she pointed out that women without an education were unable to advise their husbands and support them in both life and business. A narrow upbringing usually in a densely populated town would limit a young woman's outlook making them seem like 'ornamental dolls' (*willenlosen Zierpuppen*).⁶⁰ They were unsuited to most occupations and working as a governess was, in the author's view, unwise considering their lack of education. Many governesses were treated terribly, earning very little for arduous work. Women working in factories or as needleworkers also suffered, working 12 to 15

⁵⁶ Ring describes Ellen Lucia as the teacher Fräulein Weyergang writing under the pseudonym Ellen Lucia: see Ring, *Erinnerungen*.

⁵⁷ S. Sehlke, *Pädagogen- Pastoren- Patrioten: Biographisches Handbuch zum Druckgut für Kinder und Jugendliche von Autoren und Illustratoren aus Mecklenburg-Vorpommern von den Anfängen bis einschließlich 1945* (Norderstedt, 2009), p. 404.

⁵⁸ Lucia, 'Über das Los', *Der Volksgarten*, vol. 2 (1864), 712-716. Ring met with Marion Evans, otherwise known as the author George Eliot and the close friend and confidant of Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, therefore it is possible he had knowledge about the work of the NAPSS and the Society that is discussed in the article in some detail: see Ring, *Erinnerungen*.

⁵⁹ Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 349.

⁶⁰ Lucia, 'Über das Los', *Der Volksgarten*, vol. 2 (1864), p. 713.

hour days and earning just enough to survive. Weyergang believed that work opportunities for women were too limited, partly because of fears amongst men that women would compete with them for a wage and were unsuited to certain work. She asserted that women were just as capable if they received a decent education and thus called for new employment opportunities to be opened for them. She hoped for a change in thinking amongst girls who did not wish to enter certain work. The perception amongst many that shop work was demeaning led them to carry out needlework at home, working through the night and damaging their eyes and health. Weyergang despaired that German girls failed to understand that honourable work was not something to be ashamed of.

Weyergang called for educational reform to prepare women more fully for employment. The article suggested that women could be trained as photographers or editors, whilst others could earn a living as pharmacists, watch-makers and book-binders. Such work would not undermine their femininity. She advocated cooperative action between influential and wealthy men and women who might consider establishing institutions to assist such women. In doing so she foresaw the work to come between men and women involved in the Centralverein and the Lette-Verein, perhaps inspiring Ring to discuss such a proposition with Lette.

The reader's attention was specifically directed to the efforts of the Society, and the article described how it had been established in light of the 2 million unmarried women in London who needed training and work to support themselves. The Society's annual report was cited which explained how many of these women were either too genteel or too uneducated to be helped. The Victoria Press, where women could earn the same wage as men was given as a model to be followed by the Germans. Weyergang mentioned Lady Monson's part in establishing the Society,⁶¹ indicating that she perhaps had personal contact with her, possibly when teaching in England.⁶² In publishing Weyergang's article, Ring showed his concern

⁶¹ See p. 46 of this thesis for more on Lady Monson.

⁶² Sehlke, *Pädagogen*, p. 404.

over the 'surplus woman' problem and the possibility of using the Society in London as a model for Prussia to follow.

Ring's own views regarding the woman question were expounded most vividly through his fiction. In 1876 he wrote *Die Unversorgte Tochter*, which centred on a character called Martha. Martha's father, a judge, dies suddenly and leaves considerable debts which force her into poverty.⁶³ As a result her engagement to a man called Von Rohrbach ends as he chooses to marry the bank manager's daughter for her substantial 3000 taler dowry and important connections. A doctor who is also the editor of a political paper declares his love for Martha. However, she does not simply marry him. When the doctor is arrested and imprisoned for his political beliefs Martha takes over as editor of his newspaper. By the time the doctor is released, she has established herself as a successful editor in her own right and marries the doctor as his equal.⁶⁴

Ring's book frequently highlights the importance of girls receiving a thorough education. In a discussion between two female characters on the 'woman question', whilst one is horrified at the idea of educational reform for girls the other maintains that not all girls will marry and thus must be educated. Furthermore, Ring was critical that marriage was in danger of becoming a business transaction. In contrast to Von Rohrbach who marries for the financial fortunes of his wife, Martha's marriage to the doctor is portrayed as an ideal partnership. She is presented to the reader as independent: capable of earning a wage whilst the doctor is incarcerated. The doctor is proud of her achievements stating that spirit and talent are not the exclusive privileges of 'Die Männerwelt'.⁶⁵ Furthermore, when the doctor is released she is content to give up her work and assume her duties as his wife, declaring that this sacrifice is the true path to emancipation for

⁶³ M. Ring, *Die Unversorgte Tochter* (Berlin, 1876).

⁶⁴ Ibid. The character of the doctor might have been based upon Ring himself. He too was a doctor who became an author and an editor. Although Ring did not go to prison for his political views, his periodical *Der Volksgarten* was banned: see 'Max Ring', <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=302&letter=R>, accessed 5 December 2010.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 154.

women. Martha's character is thus portrayed as the ideal woman by Ring. Without family finances to provide for her, Martha's skills as a writer enable her to support herself financially before marriage. But she is happy to give up the world of work and fulfil her duties as a wife by supporting her husband in his endeavours in the public sphere.

Ring's involvement in the work of the Centralverein and the Lette-Verein was deeply influenced by these beliefs regarding women's right to education and employment. In light of Ring's views on women, his knowledge of the Society's work and his conversations with Lette in 1864, Ring was understandably keen to claim 'paternity' for the establishment of the Lette-Verein. He made this claim both in his memoirs and in an article entitled, 'Das Haus der Berliner Frauen' in *Die Gartenlaube*.⁶⁶ Perhaps out of deference to Lette, both were written years after Lette's death. His claim was well-founded in that his ideas, drawn from Weyergang's article which he published in his periodical *Der Volksgarten*, were apparently taken up by Lette and used by Lette in writing the 'Denkschrift'. Moreover, Ring's knowledge of reform abroad which he made public by publishing Weyergang's article may have inspired not only Lette but other men to take action.

One other such man was Gustav Eberty. In the autumn and winter of 1865 Lette, as President of the Centralverein, initiated a series of debates amongst the Centralverein's members on the 'surplus woman' problem which were published in *Der Arbeiterfreund*. Eberty's report on the work of the Society in England which he presented to members of the Centralverein during these debates is vital and underpinned Lette's programme for reform. It is to Eberty's research that we turn to next.

Although Holtzendorff and Ring may have had knowledge of the work of the Society in England it was Gustav Eberty who made a detailed study of the

⁶⁶ Ring, 'Das Haus', *Die Gartenlaube*, vol. 22 (1874), 400-403. 134/02, LVA.

Society's work and presented it to the members of the Centralverein as a blueprint for Prussia to follow.⁶⁷ No historical documents regarding the details of Eberty's trip to Britain have so far been found. Virtually the only record confirming that he made the journey is the report on the work of the Society that he gave to members of the Centralverein at their open meeting to discuss the woman question on 13 December 1865. In addition, Marie Fischer-Lette, Lette's daughter, described how the Crown Princess Victoria was keen to support Lette's plans for founding an institution to train women and how Lette 'travelled to London, to gather information on the institutions which were already in existence to train women to acquire qualifications for work' (*reiste Präsident Dr. Lette nach London, um von den Anstalten Kenntnis zu nehmen, die bereits zur Ausbildung für weibliche Erwerbsbefähigung bestanden*).⁶⁸ Göttert states that Princess Victoria and Prince Friedrich, heir to the Prussian throne, had strong connections to the men from progressive liberal circles who were members of the Centralverein.⁶⁹

Eberty was a Jewish member of the Prussian Landtag (parliament) and a member of the Progressive Party. He became a judge in Berlin and according to Hamburger his interest in penal reform took him to many international congresses on the subject.⁷⁰ Clearly, like Holtzendorff, he believed in the importance of international exchange for the development of social policy at home. Foreign models for reform, if tried and tested, provided a country with an instant template for dealing

⁶⁷ Eberty presented his report to the Centralverein at an open debate on 13 December 1865. As previously mentioned it was entitled 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bestrebungen für das Wohl der arbeitenden Frauen in England', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 387-402. This report which gave substantial detail about the work of the Society in London is dated in *Der Arbeiterfreund* as being written on 8 December 1865. It is possible that by publishing the article by Weyergang in *Der Volksgarten* in 1864 which mentioned the work of NAPSS and the Society, Ring inspired Eberty to investigate further and make this report on the Society's work.

⁶⁸ M. Fischer-Lette, *Ein Lebensbild des verewigten Präsidenten Dr. Lette. Zu einem 100 jährigen Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 37-38.

⁶⁹ M. Göttert, 'Victoria und die Deutsche Frauenbewegung', in R. von Hessen, *Victoria Kaiserin Friedrich: Mission und Schicksal einer Englischen Prinzessin in Deutschland* (Frankfurt, 2002), pp. 94-113, here p. 96.

⁷⁰ E. Hamburger, *Juden im öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands: Regierungsmitglieder, Beamte und Parlamentarier in der monarchischen Zeit, 1848-1918* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 215-249, here p. 228. Gustav Eberty described as 'a Prussian Professor' was apparently the suitor of a woman called Octavia Grece, sister of Henry Grece, high constable of the Reigate Hundred in the mid-nineteenth century in Britain although it is not clear from the book how he came to know her: see C. Constable, *The Constables of Horley Mill* (Surrey, 2001), p. 314.

with their national social problems. Like Ring, Eberty was Jewish and both became involved in the work of the Centralverein at a time when the Jewish intelligentsia played a key role in nineteenth-century social reform. As Baader states '[f]or women as well as men, self-help and philanthropy (...) served as a means of integrating into German society, of socially and culturally uplifting themselves and the Jewish community, and of expressing Jewishness in a modern framework.'⁷¹

Eberty's report was introduced to his audience as the 'statistical representation' of the Society's work in London.⁷² He demonstrated that the decision amongst English reformers to act was based on statistical facts, quoting Harriet Martineau's now famous article in the *Edinburgh Review* which stated that two million unmarried women in England were forced to provide for themselves. The suffering of such women had sent shockwaves throughout the educated classes in England and, according to the Centralverein, was now being experienced by women in Germany.⁷³ Articles appeared in *Der Arbeiterfreund* on the need for work for women of the middle classes; commentators like Dr Hermann Grothe, general secretary of the Central Association of German Industry,⁷⁴ described the large numbers of women who struggled to find work and thus 'in thränenreichen Nächten ihr Brot essen.'⁷⁵

⁷¹ B.M. Baader, *Gender, Judaism and Bourgeois Culture in Germany, 1800-1870* (Indiana, 2006), p. 171.

⁷² Eberty, 'Beiträge', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 405.

⁷³ Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 349. The opening sentences of Lette's Denkschrift refer to articles written in the *Berliner Beobachter* and *Der Arbeiterfreund* on the subject of women's need for employment and in particular the article printed by Ring in *Der Volksgarten* by Ellen Lucia, 'Über das Los'. Bussemer describes the growing concern in Germany at the destitution of middle-class women in need of work and the interest in the subject taken by newspapers such as *Schlesische Zeitung*, *Vossische Zeitung*, *Volkszeitung*, *Kreuzzeitung*, *National-Zeitung* and *Social-Demokrat*: see Bussemer, *Frauenemanzipation*, pp. 11-81.

⁷⁴ Hermann Grothe travelled to America in the 1870s on behalf of the Central Association of German Industry to investigate how trade associations there lobbied for legislation favourable to their aims. This is another example whereby transnational research informed public practice: see D. Montgomery and M. van der Linden (eds), *August Sartorius Von Waltershausen: The Workers' Movement in the United States, 1879-1885* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 43-44.

⁷⁵ H. Grothe, 'Die Frau und die Arbeit', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 5 (1867), p. 343: This is an allusion to 'Lied der Parzen' by Goethe which begins with the line, '[w]er nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass'.

Having established the statistical and therefore scientific grounds for action in England by drawing on the census, Eberty then drew his audience's attention to England's means for dealing with the problem. He briefly described the proceedings of the 1859 NAPSS congress. Here Jessie Boucherett had delivered her paper entitled 'Remarks on the obstacles to the more general employment of women and on the means of removing them.' Furthermore, Lord Shaftesbury had stated that women could ideally be employed as cashiers, shop assistants, writers and bookkeepers. He reported to those present that the Society had been founded at this congress and remarked that the NAPSS, was 'quite analogous to' the Centralverein being interested, not only in 'the theory of social science as its aim' but rather the 'practical improvement of social conditions'.⁷⁶

Eberty was careful to downplay the Society's feminist aspirations, and emphasized that it had the backing of England's equivalent of the Centralverein, the NAPSS. With members who included some of the most learned and distinguished men in the country, its committee was headed by Lord Shaftesbury as President. Amongst its members 'one finds the most excellent personalities of the English aristocracy, the Jew Sir Francis Goldsmith next to the Bishops, several members of parliament and Academy members' according to Eberty.⁷⁷ Although he included the names of the women present on the Society's administrative committees, he was keen to point out that the Society's female members included aristocrats such as Lady Hoare and the Countess of Carnarvon as well as members of the Langham Place group such as Jessie Boucherett and Isa Craig.

Those listening to Eberty's report would have been reassured that the Society was organized by an eminent and respectable group of men and women with links to the establishment, ones who were committed to the principles of social science as providing the means for reforming society. Furthermore, his account would have

⁷⁶ Grothe, 'Die Frau', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 5 (1867), pp. 387-388. Reulecke states that the Centralverein saw its role as emulating the statistical and scientific societies which were a particular feature of England: see Reulecke, 'English Social Policy', p. 39.

⁷⁷ Eberty, 'Beiträge', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 389.

allayed any fears that such an institution would further the aims of those in favour of women's emancipation. This rejection of broader feminist aims was vital to the establishment of the Lette-Verein by the Centralverein. Lette and his colleagues placed men firmly in charge: unlike the ADF which excluded men from its membership the Centralverein clearly believed that dealing with the 'woman question' needed male direction. Women would assist men in this project for reform but men would be its leaders.⁷⁸

Eberty provided his audience with detailed descriptions about the classes and institutions that the Society had founded to assist women in their endeavours to find employment. In the process he highlighted those initiatives which the Centralverein was keen to emulate. An employment bureau for women, commercial classes and a bazaar for the sale of women's goods could all be considered as possible models. He described the Society's employment bureau, commenting that the average number of visitors per day had increased from 4 in 1863-1864 to 7 for 1864-1865. He emphasized that because of its work, those women 'who have any understanding of a job, are seldom waiting long for employment'.⁷⁹ The employment bureau's collection of information and statistics regarding women's employment was key to its work and '[i]n general it collects and shares information over which areas of business women are able to find employment in.'⁸⁰ Finally, without specifically mentioning how many women had found work through the employment bureau, he assured his listeners that 'a multitude (...) of those seeking work' had done so.⁸¹

Eberty turned his attention to the commercial school set up by Jessie Boucherett and outlined the structure of the three classes which trained mainly the daughters of tradesmen, detailing the costs to pupils and the class content. He gave his

⁷⁸ This was reflected in the statutes which regulated its work in that until 1872 only men could take up positions of power within the Lette-Verein. This point will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

⁷⁹ Eberty, 'Beiträge', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 391.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

listeners a breakdown of the school's income and expenditure and noted that it was funded mainly by donation. The investment made was worthwhile according to Eberty's report: all the women who had successfully passed their exams seemed to be 'well situated'.⁸² He then went on to briefly list the businesses the Society had established in law copying and compositorship as well as possible areas it had identified as suitable for women to work in such as stenography, photography, wood-carving, interior decoration, wallpaper design, telegraphy, hairdressing, shop-work and watch-making.⁸³

In describing the work of the Society, Eberty made three main points to his audience which informed the Centralverein's establishment of the Lette-Verein. Firstly, that '[t]he Society does not employ anyone directly. It does not wish to draw a profit. It encourages private enterprise and self-help for women. Its aim is to make women capable through loans and other means of assistance, so that they can establish themselves and then employ other women.'⁸⁴ Eberty hoped Germany would follow the Society and make the ideal of self-help central to its work, stating that the 'humanity' and 'spirit of the nation' of England was founded on this key principle.⁸⁵ Self-help crucially became synonymous with enterprise and business skills in this instance.

The second point made by Eberty was the need for public support in founding such an institution and his belief that success partly relied on its effective use of the media. Since 1859 the Society's work had been represented in the pages of the *English Woman's Journal*, 'the English woman's newspaper', and aside from this 'through very well edited pamphlets' which 'created propaganda for its cause'.⁸⁶ Eberty had translated the titles of some of these pamphlets for his audience, including one by Emily Faithfull entitled 'On some of the drawbacks connected

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 392-393.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 394-396.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

with the present employment of women.¹⁸⁷ The Society's use of the press perhaps provided the Centralverein with the inspiration to establish *Der Frauenanwalt*, a periodical edited by the Lette-Verein's secretary Jenny Hirsch, which advanced the cause of the Lette-Verein.⁸⁸

The third and final point made by Eberty concerned how to measure '[t]he influence of the Society.'⁸⁹ He agreed with the view expressed in the Society's Annual Report for 1864 that success could not be measured by looking at the Society's records alone. A key achievement had been the Society's ability to raise public interest in the issue, which meant that 'before it even comes to their registration for work most women are accommodated through private placements arranged by the members of the Society'.⁹⁰ Here Eberty drew attention to the limits of social science and highlighted the importance of personal commitment on behalf of those involved in advancing the cause of women. Successful social reform relied on the personal qualities of the individuals campaigning for women's employment, something which could not be measured or quantified.

At the end of Eberty's report he stated that '[t]hese sketches do not have the purpose of presenting England as a model (...) However, one can learn something from the experiences gained.'⁹¹ He thus made it clear that Germany would not simply mimic England's attempts to deal with the woman question, but would improve upon its efforts. Within Eberty's presentation of his vision for a German institution to deal with the 'surplus woman' problem there therefore lies a key paradox: Lette, Holtzendorff and Eberty conducted research abroad on the basis of cooperation with other social reformers, but the arguments Eberty gave focused on the desire for national self-assertion in an increasingly competitive world. In order to argue the case for founding a similar society in Germany, Eberty emphasized

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Furthermore, it explains why Joseph Lehmann, editor of *Das Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* and member of the Centralverein, published numerous articles in his paper in support of the 'woman question' and about the Society's work in particular.

⁸⁹ Eberty, 'Beiträge', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 397.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 385.

the inevitability of international competition between the two nations. Ebert's and Lette's visit to England and Ebert's subsequent report on the Society form the basis for Lette's programme for change as outlined in Lette's 'Denkschrift', and it is to this that we turn next.

3.4 Wilhelm Adolph Lette's 'Denkschrift' and the open debate amongst members of the Centralverein

Lette's 'Denkschrift' written and presented to the board and governing committee of the Centralverein in October 1865, concerned 'the opening of new and the improvement of existing sources of employment for women'. It claimed that 'our institution has had the subject outlined in the title of this article in its sights for a long time and has also become involved in discussions of the topic in the press; it has however led to no practical outcome until now' (*Unser Verein hat seit längerer Zeit schon den in der Überschrift gedachten Gegenstand im Auge gehabt, auch bei Besprechung desselben in der Presse mitgewirkt; es ist jedoch bis jetzt noch zu keinem praktischen Ergebniss gekommen*).⁹² He described the press interest and in particular the article published by Ring, 'Über das Los'. Lette went on to say that 'it appears to be the right moment for the general points of the case to be presented to the public, in order to secure their lively participation in the cause and their support for the practical resources and means to further it' (*Es scheint an der Zeit, dass die Sache zugleich aus ihren allgemeineren Gesichtspunkten dem Publikum vorgeführt werde, um dessen lebendige Theilnahme für dieselbe und für die ihr dienenden praktischen Mittel und Wege zu gewinnen*).⁹³ He concluded his opening paragraphs by stating that 'in England, France and North America they have only in the last few years begun to lead the way in this matter' (*In England, Frankreich, Nordamerika ist man mit der Sache auch erst seit wenigen Jahren vorausgegangen*).⁹⁴ With these opening statements

⁹² Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 349.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

to the members of the Centralverein, President Lette signalled to his audience that he regarded improving women's training and employment as a priority and one which Prussia needed to address to keep up with its foreign contemporaries.

Having emphasized to his audience the progress made by reformers abroad, Lette began to describe specifically the situation in England. Drawing on statistics in England he described how the census there had revealed that 'more than two million unmarried women are compelled to maintain themselves, and over 45,000 needleworkers and 15,000 teachers support themselves through arduous means' (*mehr als zwei Millionen unverheirathete Frauen auf Selbsterhaltung angewiesen seien und über 45,000 Nähterinnen und 15,000 Erzieherinnen sich auf sehr mühevollen Weise selber ernährten*).⁹⁵ He explained how these statistics had led to the establishment of the Society in London 'a women's institution under the leadership of Lord Shaftesbury, "to alleviate the distress of a large number of those women who are forced because of their need to make a living to search for positions as teachers and saleswomen etc."' (*ein Verein von Damen, unter Leitung des Lord Shaftesbury, "um der Noth einer grossen Anzahl derjenigen Frauen abzuhelfen, welche ihres Unterhalts wegen gezwungen sind, Stellen als Lehrerinnen, Verkäuferinnen u.s.w zu suchen*).⁹⁶ Lette described the Society as a 'polytechnic institute' where 'girls are trained in copying, stenography, drawing, accountancy (...) at the cost of the Society' and 'a printing press has come into being under the female direction of Mrs Emily Faithfull, in which the female workers are paid as highly as the male workers in other printing presses'.⁹⁷

Having outlined the work of the Society in London and the efforts made by England to deal with the issue, Lette went on to discuss the situation in Prussia which he viewed as urgent. He stated that other than women who were married who were thus completely occupied in caring for their homes and families, the number of jobs for working girls and women were limited. Providing statistics for

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Prussia he revealed that the majority of women worked as domestic servants or as agricultural labourers: almost 1.3 million women were employed in these areas alone. He went on to say that ‘in Prussia only approximately one sixth of all men is unmarried and in addition only every twelfth child illegitimate’ (*Zwar ist in Preussen etwa nur der sechste Theil der Männer unverheirathet, auch nur das zwölfte Kind ein uneheliches*).⁹⁸ Moreover, the number of upper-class men and women marrying was lower than marriages among the lower classes. He pointed out to his audience:

Therefore, the same need is undoubtedly recognizable here, which in other countries has led to the establishment of institutions to improve the situation for the female sex, on the one hand through the creation of new sources of employment, on the other through important scientific or technical training for them. For us too, however, this need stands out to a much greater degree with regard to those unmarried women of the middle classes, and similarly to women from the higher classes of society as well (*Deshalb ist unzweifelhaft auch bei uns das gleiche Bedürfniss anzuerkennen, welches in anderen Ländern Einrichtungen zur Verbesserung der Lage des weiblichen Geschlechts, einerseits durch Beschaffung neuer Erwerbsquellen für dasselbe, andererseits durch die dazu nöthige wissenschaftliche oder technische Ausbildung ins Leben rief. Auch bei uns aber tritt dies Bedürfniss in einem weit höheren Grade bezüglich der unverheiratheten Frauen aus den mittleren, nicht weniger indess auch aus den höheren Gesellschaftsklassen vor*).⁹⁹

Lette explicitly identified the bourgeois family as at risk: unmarried middle-class women needed support in finding work. He argued that unmarried women of the lower classes working on the land, in factories or in domestic service had other institutions available to help them. Obschernitzki highlights that from the outset

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

the Centralverein was not concerned with 'the professional activity of women, but rather to give assistance to women forced to give up their natural calling' as wives and mothers.¹⁰⁰ This was in contrast to Bodichon's proclamation that women who remained unmarried needed work for reasons other than financial necessity and that without it they would 'be ill, miserable, or go mad'.¹⁰¹

Having clearly stated that he wished the Centralverein to focus its attentions on the unmarried women of the middle and upper classes (*mittleren, wie auch der höheren Klassen*) he described what the beneficial effects would be of such training for these women:

Whatever is done to promote better training for women's practical lives and with that the immediate elevation and improvement of their status in life and in employment cannot - thanks to the ever greater cohesiveness of bourgeois society in our time - fail to also have a favourable impact on the lower working classes' (*Was zu deren besseren Ausbildung für das praktische Leben und dadurch unmittelbar zur Hebung und Verbesserung ihres Lebens- und Erwerbsstandes geschieht, wird, vermittelt des in neuerer Zeit immer enger gewordenen organischen Zusammenhanges der ganzen bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, die günstige Rückwirkung auch auf die untern Arbeiterinnenklassen nicht verfehlen*).¹⁰²

Lette was vague about the mechanisms behind his view that training for middle-class women would ensure more harmonious class relations with lower-class women. However, it may have echoed Hastings' view that lower-class women would look up to their upper-class 'sisters' as an example to follow.

Lette wished to make clear to his audience that he was not advocating women's emancipation. Indeed, unlike von Holtzendorff he was most firmly opposed to it.

¹⁰⁰ Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Bodichon, *Women and Work*, p. 10.

¹⁰² Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 353.

In his most frequently quoted sentence he stated that '[w]hat we don't wish for (...) is the political emancipation of (...) women.' He went on to describe the work of J.S. Mill who demanded women's right to vote and to free assembly as 'in opposition (...) to thousand year old institutions of all states and peoples, and to the nature and purpose of women and to the eternal laws of the divine world order' (*im Widerspruch (...) mit den tausendjährigen Einrichtungen aller Staaten und Völker, so auch mit der Natur und Bestimmung des Weibes und mit den ewigen Gesetzen der göttlichen Weltordnung*).¹⁰³ However, he argued that the current social situation which saw middle-class women working as either needleworkers or governesses needed to change as too many women competed for a limited number of jobs.

Lette outlined to his audience the areas of employment women could be admitted to. In science, women could work as doctors' assistants and midwives in women's hospitals; in the arts as painters, sculptors, copperplate engravers, lithographers and wood carvers; in technical work producing chemical and microscopic compounds and as workers in the telegraphic and postal services or on the railways. Areas of work deemed traditionally 'feminine' would also provide employment for women who could, he argued, make hand-made goods such as shoes. However, crucially they would also find employment in the commercial sphere as bookkeepers, cashiers and traders. He was clear though that, in his view, women were not generally suited to scientific pursuits. Lette argued that women were intuitive and sensitive and thus 'the spirit of women was not created for deep abstract research in the area of science'.¹⁰⁴ He was therefore in opposition to the ADF who would argue for women's training as doctors and access to the medical profession.¹⁰⁵

Having outlined to his audience the scale of the problem in Prussia, the advances

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 358.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ K. Rowold, *The Educated woman: Minds, Bodies and Higher Education in Britain, Germany and Spain, 1865-1914* (Oxon, 2010), p. 73.

of other nations in dealing with the 'surplus woman' problem and what areas of work women could enter, Lette explained his vision for how the Centralverein would play a key role in providing for women of the middle classes. He hoped for the 'establishment of a women's institution to deal with the cause' he had identified (*Bildung eines Frauenvereins zur Beförderung der Sache*).¹⁰⁶ Such an institution would however operate under the guidance of men. This women's institution would find those willing to provide women with technical instruction in a range of areas, would help well-trained women find positions of work in institutions and workshops, and possibly even accommodation for women needing training. It would furthermore help to provide girls unable to finance their training with the money they needed to do so.

As a result of Lette's 'Denkschrift' the Centralverein's board and governing committee members convened on 8 November 1865 to discuss the matter further. Professors, members of the judiciary, editors, factory owners and government officials were among those present. A report on the meeting published in *Der Arbeiterfreund*¹⁰⁷ stated that after a long debate the members were in agreement that the Centralverein was responsible for the well-being of the middle and higher classes as well as the working classes and that it was vital to fight the existing prejudices amongst middle- and higher-class women against entering commercial employment. As a result, it was time for them to 'take the issue in hand' (*die Sache in die Hand zu nehmen*).¹⁰⁸ Those present agreed that a Commission should be formed to discuss the matter further. This was made up of Lette himself as the President of the Centralverein, the deputy president of the Centralverein Professor E.W. Kalisch,¹⁰⁹ factory owner Herr Bernhard Friedheim who was treasurer for the Centralverein,¹¹⁰ businessman Herr Töpfer a merchant from Stettin,¹¹¹ editor Herr

¹⁰⁶ Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 363.

¹⁰⁷ 'Auszug aus dem Protokoll der Sitzung des Vorstandes und Ausschusses vom 8. November 1865', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 365-368.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

¹⁰⁹ 'Aufruf zur Bildung eines Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts', *Das Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, vol. 35, no. 5 (1866), p. 70.

¹¹⁰ 'Aufruf zur Begründung einer Lette-Stiftung', *Die Grenzboten*, vol. 28, part II (1869), p. 120.

¹¹¹ 'Innere Angelegenheiten des Centralvereins', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 108.

Brämer and Dr Maron, secretary of both the German Handelstages and the Centralverein.¹¹² Women were conspicuously absent from this process of social investigation: this contrasted with NAPSS' close relationship to the women of Langham Place from the outset.

This Commission convened in a private meeting on 15 November 1865 and came to three conclusions which were published in *Der Arbeiterfreund*.¹¹³ Firstly, that aside from women's natural place in the family they should not be excluded from entry to commercial occupations (*gewerbliche Berufsthätigkeiten*).¹¹⁴ Secondly, that women were fully suited to working in most trade and technical establishments (*meisten Handels- und technischen Verrichtungen*).¹¹⁵ And thirdly, that as wages should match the effort involved in a particular type of work women should not receive less than men for the same job.¹¹⁶ These principles were established before the subject was put before an open debate of all the Centralverein's members on 13 December 1865.

Having established the key principles it believed should underpin the Centralverein's attempts to deal with the 'woman question' the Commission provided its evidence to the members of the Centralverein at the open debate on 13 December 1865. Those attending this open debate included workers as well as employers, businessmen and professionals, and they had different opinions concerning what work women could enter into.¹¹⁷ Lette opened the debate stating that he hoped to solicit the advice and opinions of the Centralverein's members but that he recognized the possibility of resistance and hoped to counteract all

¹¹² Maron was secretary of the Handelstag which was a national forum for commercial and industrial interests. It was founded in 1862 and is described as 'a central coordinating institution for some 160 Chambers of Commerce in Germany': see R.A. Brady and D. Dowd (eds), *Business as a System of Power* (New Jersey, 2001), p. 30.

¹¹³ 'Verhandlung und Gutachten der zur Berathung über die Erweiterung und Verbesserung der Erwerbsgebiete der Frauen niedergesetzten Spezial-Kommission des Centralvereins in Preussen für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 375-384.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ 'Öffentliche Besprechung über die Erwerbsgebiete des weiblichen Geschlechts', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 403-418.

‘prejudices, misunderstandings, one-sided doctrines and passionate agitation from the outset’.¹¹⁸ He made a direct plea to those present that they would give their support to improving women’s employment opportunities which he described as an ‘urgent societal need’ (*dringendes gesellschaftliches Bedürfniss*).¹¹⁹ Repeating the arguments from his ‘Denkschrift’ he stated that this was an issue which he believed had aroused the interest of the ‘whole civilized world in England, France and North America and recently in the German states’ (*der ganzen civilisirten Welt in England, Frankreich und Nordamerika, neuerdings auch in deutschen Ländern*).¹²⁰ In the face of potential intransigence he therefore reminded the bourgeois businessmen, state officials and other eminent men present that Germany’s status on the international arena relied partly on its ability to deal with the social problems it faced.

Gustav Ebert delivered his report on the work of the Society¹²¹ and a wider debate ensued. The Commission argued that helping women to find employment would optimise the state’s levels of productivity, which in turn would improve its international standing. Dr Maron, who delivered the main speech of the debate, presented his views regarding women’s rights. He explained that he was opposed to women’s subordination and gave the example of Oriental societies where women were effectively slaves.¹²² Maron was however equally scathing of the ‘foolishness’ of those who demanded equal rights for men and women. Having asserted his own antipathy towards any extreme view regarding women’s rights, he described his approach as ‘cold-blooded’ (*kaltblütig*) in its rationality and emphasized the need for a scientific perspective when dealing with the woman question. His speech implied that the question of women’s emancipation could be put to one side and the issue of employment for women considered on purely

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 413-414.

¹²² The oriental female slave was a common trope in discussions about women’s rights in the West. As Lewis states, ‘[t]he harem offered not only the worst example of the patriarchal husband’s power over his wife but also the spectre of concubinage’ and hence African and harem slaves were used as ‘potent symbols of oppression’. See R. Lewis, *Rethinking orientalism: women, travel and the Ottoman harem* (London, 2004), p. 129.

economic grounds. In Maron's eyes it was a form of brutality to say that 'you shall not be worth the same as I, if you serve in the same way as I do'.¹²³ He thus proclaimed the importance of the liberal principle, the freedom to work, and questioned whether the right should indeed be a male preserve.

Lette's own views were not dissimilar. Whilst Lette rejected the notion of emancipation for women in the 'Denkschrift', he stated that women had the right to earn their living and that the denial of this right went against 'freedom, humanity and justice'.¹²⁴ He still believed that men and women were suited to different occupations but disagreed with the printer, Herr Schilling that women would compete with men for jobs. According to Lette, women were not capable of 'men's work', but the increasing division of labour inherent in the capitalist system would see a growing demand for their labour.¹²⁵ Lette thus emphasized again that the problem presented by unmarried, unemployed women was primarily an economic one.

Herr Born believed that all jobs should be made available to women and that this was the only way to ascertain what work a woman was suited to.¹²⁶ Working relations between the sexes would regulate themselves naturally. Herr Schilling, the printer mentioned above, disagreed and said that although women were suited to most jobs that were hitherto the preserve of men, their entry into these jobs would result in unemployment amongst men and falling wages as they worked for less.¹²⁷ Meanwhile Herr Preuss, a worker, was outspoken in questioning the Centralverein's emphasis on assisting middle-class women in finding new forms of work, and asked why daughters of factory workers should not be educated.¹²⁸ Concerns that employment would take women away from the home were also raised. For instance, Herr Wilms impressed upon those present that the low

¹²³ 'Öffentliche Besprechung', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 406.

¹²⁴ Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 359.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

¹²⁶ 'Öffentliche Besprechung', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), pp. 417-418.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

marriage figures were a problem which needed urgent action.¹²⁹ Herr Stephany, a language teacher, spoke against extending possible types of work for women and reiterated the need for women to learn how to be mothers and wives first and foremost.¹³⁰

Despite some concerns that extending women's employment would remove them from the home, those involved in the debate hoped to make women economically productive. The implication was that a society founded on the suitable division of labour between the sexes would thrive as a nation. Following Ebert's speech, a number of resolutions were passed in favour of the plan for a women's institution based closely on the work of the Society. Just as the Society was accountable to NAPSS, the Berlin based institute for the well-being of female workers would adhere to the same statutes as the Centralverein and would have to provide details of its accounts and a yearly report.¹³¹ The Centralverein appointed a provisional committee to co-opt a group of women who would carry out this work. The aim of the latter would be to 'verify the sources of income available to female members of the middle classes and to facilitate their access to them'.¹³² On 22 January 1866 a commission responsible for drawing up the statutes for the Lette-Verein confirmed them. Statute 1 of the Lette-Verein outlined the organization's five key aims:

- 1) The elimination of discrimination and barriers against women entering occupations
- 2) The advancement of schools to train them for a business or commercial occupation
- 3) The provision of commercial training opportunities and mediation between employers and employees
- 4) The establishment of sales and exhibition areas for women's handmade items and artistic products

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 414.

¹³² Ibid.

- 5) The protection of independent, employed women against discrimination in moral or economic relations, preferably through the provision of suitable opportunities for accommodation and food

On 26 February 1866 the Centralverein received a letter from the private secretary of the Crown Princess Victoria stating that she wished to pledge 500 talers for the Lette-Verein's work.¹³³ It was announced in *Der Arbeiterfreund* that she would act as the Lette-Verein's official patron.¹³⁴ With royal patronage confirmed on 27 February 1866 the Lette-Verein was born.¹³⁵

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Lette-Verein was established by the Centralverein at a time when social reform became increasingly popular as a method to deal with society's problems. Single women, like the working classes were identified by a predominantly male, middle-class bourgeois elite as a problematic population. Both groups had the potential to create social disorder: the working classes through popular protest, the unmarried woman through her own lack of utility with no apparent purpose as she was neither a wife nor a mother. She could not fulfil her 'natural purpose' and therefore without training faced unemployment and impoverishment. In turning their attentions to the plight of redundant middle-class women, the Centralverein looked abroad and found in the Society in London a blueprint to dealing with the problem. Despite the lack of evidence it would seem that Holtzendorff's contact with the men of NAPSS, Ring's publication of 'Über das Los' and Ebert's report on the work of the Society after a visit to England all apparently contributed to Lette's discussion of the issue in the 'Denkschrift'. A crucial factor in Lette's argument was that Prussia was lagging behind its foreign contemporaries in finding solutions to the 'surplus woman' problem. These ideas

¹³³ 'Die Gründung des Berliner Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 97.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 94-96.

were presented to the broader membership of the Centralverein in the autumn of 1865 and despite some opposition the majority agreed that women of the middle-classes needed assistance. It was agreed that training and employment opportunities for women should be extended and the Lette-Verein was established in February 1866: although led by men it was decided that women would be co-opted to assist in the Lette-Verein's project.

The involvement of Holtzendorff, Ring and Eberty in the foundation of the Lette-Verein, which has so far been neglected in contemporary accounts, allows an alternative interpretation for the establishment of the Lette-Verein. Rather than accounts which regard the Lette-Verein as Lette's creation this chapter has aimed to show that the Lette-Verein was founded by a group of men with a range of varied and sometimes progressive ideas on women's role in society. Their knowledge of social reform abroad led to contact with the men and women involved in the work of NAPSS and the Society in London. The Lette-Verein thus opened itself up to more radical influences through contact with the Society whose protagonists had a more overtly feminist agenda. This contact formed the context for how the Lette-Verein was to develop in future years as networks between the British Society and the Lette-Verein in Berlin grew. It is to the women that became involved in the work of the Lette-Verein and their contemporaries in Britain that we turn to next.

Chapter 4: Invisible careers: Partnerships, affinities and rivalries in the campaign for women's employment

4.1 Introduction

The Society and the Lette-Verein trained 'surplus' women in need of employment, and simultaneously offered their female leaders the opportunity to forge what Daniels has described as 'invisible careers' in the campaign for women's employment.¹ Although founded with the support of men from NAPSS and the Centralverein, committed and diligent women increasingly emerged as the leaders of the Society and the Lette-Verein: Jessie Boucherett and Anna Schepeler-Lette took the lead in London and Berlin respectively. They were ambitious and powerful figures² who dedicated their lives to 'careers' which spanned decades. Yet their devotion and commitment has either been idealized as a sign of typically feminine self-sacrifice³ or otherwise remains undocumented and invisible in historical accounts.

These women are invisible on a number of levels. Typically, their involvement in the Society and the Lette-Verein has not been regarded as labour, because of its mainly voluntary nature. As Daniels asserts in her study of twentieth-century

¹ Daniels describes the 'invisible careers' of twentieth-century women involved in voluntary community work in A.K. Daniels, *Invisible careers: women civic leaders from the volunteer world* (Chicago, 1988). She quotes the words of a prominent civic leader and volunteer who states that '[i]t is impressive when a volunteer comes willingly to work to make a slave of herself', p. xix. Drawing on Daniels' work, others have used the word career to describe women's charitable endeavours: see McCarthy, *Lady Bountiful Revisited*, p. ix and Varty, "'A Career'".

² Martin states that '[s]ome ambitious, highly motivated women gained power and political expertise as voluntary workers': see J. Martin, 'Gender, the city and the politics of schooling: towards a collective biography of women "doing good" as public moralists in Victorian London', *Gender & Education*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2005), 143-163, here p. 145.

³ Strachey's work on the Langham Place group describes the employment register in terms which emphasize this and how 'pitiful cases came before them' and that '[a]s time went on the little office in Langham Place saw many sad sights': see Strachey, *The Cause*, p. 97. Furthermore, women working for the Society used images of suffering middle-class women to further their cause: see Annual Reports, 24 June 1860 and 14 June 1863. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

female voluntarism, the notion of work is believed by many to signify a salary.⁴ Furthermore, the term career appears synonymous with the desire for personal success: the term implies possible progression in the form of promotion and self-advancement, motives from which women involved in voluntary action have been keen to distance themselves. As Daniels notes 'the general philosophy of community work' is 'to obscure specific authorship or leadership in projects'.⁵ Pedersen highlights this with particular reference to Victorian liberal feminists involved in the campaign for women's employment. Their 'idea of work', according to her 'might incidentally promote individual self-interest, but it was not undertaken primarily with an eye to self-advancement'.⁶

Additionally, the historiography has focused on these women's lives within the context of early feminism rather than assessing their roles as the managers of complex organizations.⁷ Cowman has highlighted in the *Women's History Review* that 'the workplace – and its relationship to a sense of self – remains an under-researched terrain with regard to middle-class women'.⁸ A tendency to focus on the working-class woman as a historical subject has meant that 'the non-working-class working woman remains exceptional and under-researched'.⁹ Although Pedersen analyzes the beliefs of many of the women involved in the work of the Society, their 'idea of work' and their own working lives as leaders of a charitable organization have not come under scrutiny. Herein lies the paradox, that women

⁴ Daniels, *Invisible Careers*, p. xxiii.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ J.S. Pedersen, 'Victorian Liberal Feminism and the "Idea" of Work', in K. Cowman and L.A. Jackson (eds), *Women and Work Culture, c. 1850-1950* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 27-47, here p. 32.

⁷ Some studies which assess women's roles as leaders of charitable organizations have emerged: see S.P. Walker, 'Philanthropic Women and Accounting: Octavia Hill and the "Exercise of Quiet Power and Sympathy"', *Accounting, Business and Financial History*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2006), 163-194. This examines the importance of Hill's skills as an accountant for her profession in housing management. On women's use of bookkeeping skills in the public sphere, see J. Maltby and J. Rutterford, 'Editorial: Women, Accounting and Investment', *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2006), 133-142. S.P. Walker, 'How to secure your husband's esteem: Accounting and private patriarchy in the British middle-class household during the nineteenth century', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, vol. 23, no. 5/6 (1998), 485-514 provides an interesting analysis of how increasingly women in nineteenth-century society were expected to develop bookkeeping skills within the home.

⁸ Cowman and Jackson, 'Introduction: Middle-Class Women', p. 166.

⁹ Ibid., p. 169.

leading the Society and the Lette-Verein advocated a 'work ethic (...) distancing them both from the idle rich and the destitute poor'¹⁰ yet their own practices sometimes fell short of their ideals. They preached about the importance of work, and the 'necessity of "fixing early on a train of action"' to avoid a 'wasted life'.¹¹ Their mission was to bring about equal access to employment, fair pay, adequate training, decent conditions and a workplace based on formalized routines and procedures,¹² yet their own knowledge and working practices were often improvised and informal. Whilst they preached professionalism they often carried out their work in a manner that was distinctly amateurish. Women became responsible for the day-to-day tasks of administration, frequently with no prior experience: the committee meetings, vetting of applicants in need of assistance, assessment of training providers, financial administration and organizational development fell to them. Furthermore, their work was often complicated by the need for effective working partnerships in the face of personal rivalries. As Daniels states with regard to voluntary activists 'other elements - including the overall structure or framework within which their work occurs - remain unnoticed'.¹³ A focus on the leadership of the Society and the Lette-Verein offers a valuable insight into how women created working lives for themselves. It compares the different styles and approaches Schepeler-Lette and Boucherett had with regard to their work; the ambition that fuelled them, the recognition they received and the frustrations that stood in the way of their 'careers'. It analyzes why Schepeler-Lette, although a recognized figure at the time, was later forgotten in more contemporary accounts on German feminism. At the same time it examines why Boucherett fought for recognition of her work during her lifetime.

¹⁰ Pedersen, 'Victorian liberal feminism', p. 35.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30. Pedersen quotes Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon in a letter to Bessie Rayner Parkes.

¹² Lacey, *Barbara*. Lacey's collection of writing by women from the Langham Place group about women and employment gives an insight into these views.

¹³ Daniels, *Invisible careers*, p. xxvi.

4.2 Anna Schepeler-Lette: 25 years of service

In 1872 Anna Schepeler-Lette became the Lette-Verein's first female President. She remained its leader for the next twenty-five years until her death in 1897.¹⁴ Her presidency marked a critical change for, as Waescher remarks, according to the original statutes of the Lette-Verein, women had no formal power or positions of status within the Lette-Verein.¹⁵ Women's access to positions of power grew steadily under Baron von Holtzendorff, Wilhelm Adolph Lette's successor. In 1869, a year after Lette's death, women were granted the right to join the Lette-Verein's 20 strong governing committee (*Ausschuss*), in equal numbers in relation to men.¹⁶ The board (*Vorstand*) which was appointed by the governing committee, included the president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and vice-secretary and remained predominantly male until 1871 when the statutes finally granted women access to all positions within it.¹⁷ Dr Lammers, writing in an edition of *Der Frauenanwalt* in 1878, noticed the significant transformation that had taken place, stating that upon visiting the Lette-Haus at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse '(...) almost all the activities carried out there are, as far as I can see, in female hands. Twenty, even perhaps ten years ago most people would have found such a thing barely imaginable' (*fast alle ausführende Thätigkeit, so weit sich erkennen lässt in weiblichen Händen. Vor zwanzig, ja vielleicht noch vor zehn Jahren würden die Meisten etwas derartiges für kaum denkbar gehalten haben*).¹⁸

Despite Schepeler-Lette's surprising position, there are only a few contemporary

¹⁴ According to Hauff, the Lette-Verein was now led by women until 1933 and under Schepeler-Lette's presidency its work became groundbreaking (*bahnbrechend*) in its creation of training opportunities for women in new areas of work: Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 152. Schepeler-Lette's appointment to the position of President followed Holtzendorff's departure to work as a Professor of Law at the University of Munich in 1872.

¹⁵ J. Waescher, *Wegbereiter der deutschen Frauen; 18 Lebensbilder aus der Frühzeit der deutschen Frauenbewegung* (Kassel, 1931), p. 31.

¹⁶ The governing committee (*Ausschuss*) was chosen by the members of the general assembly (*Generalversammlung*) of the Lette-Verein: see Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", pp. 21-23.

¹⁷ Until 1871 only the secretary and vice-secretary could be female, with Jenny Hirsch assuming the former role: see Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 23.

¹⁸ A. Lammers, 'Öffentliche Wirksamkeit der Frauen', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 8, no. 8 (1878), p. 237. 134/02, LVA.

histories written which examine her role, her life or how such a male-dominated institution became predominantly led by women. Bussemer's work on the women's movement in Germany examines male and female responsibilities in the Lette-Verein during the early phase of its work rather than Schepeler-Lette's leadership from 1872.¹⁹ Jenny Hirsch and Lina Morgenstern receive more attention than Schepeler-Lette, and Bussemer discusses the former's 'feminism' whilst remaining silent about the latter's beliefs.²⁰ Obschernitzki and Hauff in their broad surveys of the Lette-Verein's history briefly refer to Schepeler-Lette's position as President, but reveal relatively little about her role.²¹ Recent work by Kaiser focuses on the rise of Holtzendorff as leader of the Lette-Verein.²² Though Kaiser documents changes in the Lette-Verein's statutes that allowed women more power, she attributes this to Holtzendorff, rather than exploring Schepeler-Lette's subsequent leadership. Accounts have thus failed to move beyond examining the establishment and early phase of the Lette-Verein's work to assess Schepeler-Lette's presidency.

This is partly due to a lack of sources regarding Schepeler-Lette's life. No private or personal papers exist for her. Evidence on her life largely consists of periodical articles written during her lifetime and after her death.²³ Some of these items in the periodical press and publications on 'pioneering women' tend to idealize and praise Schepeler-Lette's personal attributes, and to replicate each other. Many are

¹⁹ Bussemer, *Frauenemanzipation*, pp. 112-115.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²¹ See Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, pp. 119-120.

²² Kaiser, "'Frauenemanzipation'".

²³ Periodical articles describing her work appeared in *Die Gartenlaube* and *Beilage den Wochen-Berichten für Kunst, Kunsthandel und Kunstgewerbe* during her lifetime. Lina Morgenstern writing in *Die Frauen des 19. Jahrhunderts: biographische und culturhistorische Zeit- und Charactergemälde* (Berlin, 1891) wrote a section on Anna Schepeler-Lette. She is also mentioned in early works on the German women's movement: see A. Plothow, *Die Begründerinnen der deutschen Frauenbewegung* (Leipzig, 1907); A. Harder, 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', in *Bahnbrechende Frauen; hergestellt aus Anlass der Ausstellung 'Die Frau in Haus und Beruf' 1912 vom Deutschen Lyceum* (Berlin, 1912), pp. 83-87; Waescher, *Wegbereiter der deutschen Frauen*. I. Wirth refers to her in her book recording an exhibition of 1975 dedicated to famous and unknown women in Berlin, I. Wirth (ed.), *Berlinerinnen: Bekannte und unbekannte Frauen in Berlin aus drei Jahrhunderten; Gemälde, Plastik, Graphik, Photographien, Autographen, Bücher* (Berlin, 1975).

conflicting about the basic details of her life.²⁴ Furthermore, the majority of them do not explain that her election as President of the Lette-Verein marked a break with the past: both Lette and Holtzendorff were unelected leaders and only under the latter did the statutes change to allow women to be voted in as President. Plochow downplays the fact that initially women were excluded from positions of power within the Lette-Verein. She states that the Lette-Verein differed from the ADF because men were also active in the work of the former alongside women (*stets neben den Frauen auch Männer tätig*).²⁵ Plochow thus implies that men and women cooperated on equal terms from the start, and incorrectly states that the leadership simply ‘passed into the hands’ of Schepeler-Lette in 1872, ignoring the democratic processes behind her assumption of power.²⁶ Harder similarly fails to identify a shift in policy away from male domination of the Lette-Verein’s leadership which led to Schepeler-Lette’s election as President. She does not comment upon Schepeler-Lette’s election but refers to her instead as her father’s natural ‘successor’.²⁷ Although she briefly refers to Holtzendorff’s presidency, she does not mention his role in altering the statutes to allow women access to positions of power. Similarly to Plochow, Harder is keen to highlight Wilhelm Lette’s sympathy for unmarried women in need of work, rather than his antipathy towards broader political emancipation. Morgenstern does briefly highlight that Schepeler-Lette was elected as President which marked her entrance to public life. However, Morgenstern also focuses on the cooperation between men and women: she is keen to point out that Schepeler-Lette was lucky to have a large number of capable men and women as co-workers (*eine grosse Anzahl tüchtige Männer und Frauen als Mitarbeiter*).²⁸

Only Waescher makes reference to the fact that initially the Lette-Verein’s statutes

²⁴ Waescher says for instance that Anna was born on 10 December 1827, whereas Harder gives the date as 19 December 1829.

²⁵ Plochow, *Die Begründerinnen*, p. 55.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Harder, ‘Anna Schepeler-Lette’, p. 85: ‘Sie würde die Nachfolgerin ihres Vaters’.

²⁸ Morgenstern, *Die Frauen*, p. 277.

excluded women: they could not be voting members of the board (Vorstand).²⁹ She highlights Lette's reactionary attitude and his antipathy towards women's political emancipation which he believed went 'against thousand years of development for all states and peoples' (*im Widerspruch mit den tausendjährigen Einrichtungen aller Staaten und Völker*).³⁰ She is explicit in describing how during Holtzendorff's presidency a change was made to the statutes which allowed members of the Lette-Verein to choose Schepeler-Lette as President (*so dass der Weg frei wurde, Frau Anna Schepeler-Lette (...) als 1. Vorsitzende zu wählen*).³¹ Her article is generally more informative about Schepeler-Lette's role as President, commenting upon her centralization of the Lette-Verein's institutions under one roof, her founding of the Victoria-Club as a place for women to relax and socialize, her establishment of the housekeeping school and the photographic school and her commitment to the higher education of women. It mentions too her involvement in the debate on women's work at the national level: her belief that women should gain access to employment in the telegraphic industry, her participation in the World Congress in Chicago in 1893 and her position as Vice-President of the 'Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine' from 1894. It is, however, a brief article and does not expand on any of these areas of activity in any detail. As a result Anna Schepeler-Lette's life has faded from view, obscured by women with more radical aims. Yet if we examine her life in terms which assess it as the creation of a 'career' and follow her work to her death in 1897, new conclusions can be reached regarding its significance. Furthermore, relying on institutional documents such as the *Rechenschaftsberichte* which give annual reports on the Lette-Verein's work, we can piece together a fuller picture of Schepeler-Lette's role in the Lette-Verein.

²⁹ Waescher, *Wegbereiter*, p. 31.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

4.2.1 Opening the doors to power: women work for the Lette-Verein

Most historical accounts explain that Anna Schepeler-Lette returned to Berlin from Frankfurt following the death of her husband, Karl Schepeler and their three children, to assist her father in running the Lette-Verein.³² They suggest that her involvement in the Lette-Verein was the fulfillment of a family duty. Her tragic loss meant that she threw herself into her work for the Lette-Verein. Waescher states that Schepeler-Lette's work was 'the best means to heal her pain through devoted activity for the higher development of female youth'³³ and Harder writing in *Bahnbrechende Frauen* regards her work as a 'substitute for the happiness of a wife and mother' that was 'stolen' from her when her husband died.³⁴ Anna is idealized as a maternal figure: her obituary in *Wiener Mode* describes her manner as 'kind' and 'motherly' with 'the calm gaze of (...) a German housewife'.³⁵ Her motivation is described as her 'love for thousands of sisters'³⁶ with a selflessness described by the motto 'Nicht ich, sondern alle!'³⁷ Concern for this new family, the women who lived, trained and worked in the institutions run by the Lette-Verein, was presented by many authors as replacing the one she had lost.³⁸

However, it would be wrong to assume that Schepeler-Lette simply inherited the family 'business' from her father. The Lette-Verein did recruit women well before Wilhelm Lette's death, although the extent of their involvement was initially limited. Men involved in the establishment of the Lette-Verein were motivated in part by the emergent belief that women would bring morality to the workplace. As

³² There is some confusion about exactly when Schepeler-Lette returned. Waescher states that she returned to Berlin in 1868 in response to her father's wishes: Waescher, *Wegbereiter*, p. 32. Harder, states that she returned to Berlin in 1866: Harder, 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', p. 85. Plothow agrees with Harder that it is 1866: see Plothow, *Die Begründerinnen*, p. 56. Obschernitzki also concludes that it is 1866: Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 46.

³³ Waescher, *Wegbereiter*, p. 32: 'das beste Heilmittel für Ihren Schmerz durch die hingebende Tätigkeit für die Höherentwicklung der weiblichen Jugend'.

³⁴ Harder, 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', p. 85.

³⁵ 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', *Wiener Mode*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1897), p. 161. 235/01, LVA.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Harder, 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', p. 85.

³⁸ 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', *Wiener Mode*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1897), p. 161. 235/01, LVA.

Yeo highlights, women increasingly entered public service on the grounds of a developing notion of social motherhood: a belief that women's natural maternal qualities qualified them for the care and nurture of those in moral danger be they the poor, the sick, or the needy.³⁹ As Martin states, women were viewed as possessing natural female qualities which would 'enable them to articulate women's concerns'.⁴⁰ Women were co-opted to assist in the work of the Lette-Verein from 1866 on the basis of this belief that they would be best placed to meet and support women needing training and employment. However, the role they would play according to Lette as expounded in his 'Denkschrift', differed markedly from the power they achieved under Holtzendorff which culminated in the appointment of Schepeler-Lette as President in 1872. Her appointment as President was therefore part of a concerted effort to give women power in the administration of the Lette-Verein, power which was not envisaged for them by Lette in 1866.

Lette's 'Denkschrift' of 1865 did not doubt that it was possible to find a number of 'noble-spirited ladies' (*edler Frauen*) whose 'time and powers have not been exhausted through caring for their own house and family' (*deren Zeit und Kräfte durch die Sorge für den eigenen Hausstand und die Familie nicht erschöpft sind*).⁴¹ Their service would not only ensure the material well-being of their sex but also 'the maintenance and elevation of morality, the honour and worth of the same' (*nicht blos für das materielle Wohl ihres Geschlechts, sondern auch für Erhaltung und Hebung der Sittlichkeit, der Ehre und Würde desselben*).⁴² Such an 'institution of noble-spirited women' would be 'supervized by a committee of self-appointed male advisors' (*ein solcher Verein edler Frauen unter dem Beirath selbstgewählter männlicher Assistentin*).⁴³ Lette's insistence that women would consult with men was qualified further when the Centralverein concluded that

³⁹ Yeo argues that '[r]ather than abandon the resonant language of motherhood and home, many women active in social science enlarged and altered it to fit the single woman': Yeo, *The contest*, p. 122.

⁴⁰ Martin, 'Gender', p. 144.

⁴¹ Lette, 'Denkschrift', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 363.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

women should only take on certain 'limited' activities. Their moral influence was key: women would divert their charges from 'unsuitable areas of work in order to protect their morality and respectability and would exercise, at the very least, a moral influence over the institutions where they trained' (*von nicht geeigneten Erwerbsgebieten abzulenken, jedenfalls aber, um die Sitte und die Achtung vor den Frauen zu erhalten und zu schützen und einen, wenigstens moralischen Einfluss auf Institute (...) auszuüben*).⁴⁴ Lette explained that whilst the issue would be inspired by men who would do the groundwork, later the practical welfare deemed most suitable for women would come under the sphere of activity of a woman's institution (*die Sache selbst von Männern anzuregen und vorzubereiten, und das auch späterhin (...) der Wirkungskreis eines dort vorgeschlagenen Frauenvereins auf die den Frauen eignende praktische Fürsorge zu beschränken sein werde*).⁴⁵

Plans for women's involvement in the work of the Lette-Verein, if not in taking part in decisions regarding the policy and direction of the Lette-Verein generally, were still part of the Centralverein's agenda from the outset. The Lette-Verein's provisional committee discussed women's roles and published its ideas in the 1866 edition of *Der Arbeiterfreund*. Already in 1866 the Lette-Verein's statutes concurred that the governing committee could co-opt a number of women to assist in its work who would have access to the same voting rights as men (*Der Ausschuss kooptirt eine angemessene Zahl weibliche Vereinsmitglieder mit gleichem Stimmrecht bei seinen Verhandlungen*).⁴⁶ On 29 January 1866, the governing committee met and drew up a list of women who would be co-opted in this way.⁴⁷ The names of these women were given in the minutes of the meeting held to formally establish the Lette-Verein on 27 February 1866. They included

⁴⁴ 'Votum als Anhalt für die vom Vorstande und Ausschusse des Central-Vereins in Preussen für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen niedergesetzte Kommission behufs weiterer Bearbeitung der Frage über "Eröffnung neuer und Verbesserung der bisherigen Erwerbsverhältnisse des weiblichen Geschlechts"', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 369-374, here p. 373.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴⁶ 'Die Gründung des Berliner Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 95. See also *Der Bazar*, vol. 12, no. 36 (23 September 1866), p. 295.

⁴⁷ 'Die Gründung', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 96.

Frau Baronin von Kloest, Frau Dr Gubitz, Frau Betty Lehmann and Fräulein Baeyer.⁴⁸ An article announcing the Lette-Verein's establishment was published in the *Vossische Zeitung* on 27 February 1866 and stated that women's practical cooperation was essential (*[c]ooperation von Frauen (...) deren praktische Mitwirkung (...) unentbehrlich ist*).⁴⁹ Their input was needed for the 'provision of commercial training opportunities and mediation between employers and employees' (*die Nachweisung gewerblicher Lehrgelegenheiten und die Vermittlung der Beziehungen zwischen Arbeitgebern und Arbeitnehmerinnen*).⁵⁰ They would also help ensure the provision of 'suitable accommodation and food for numerous women in Berlin whether they be in training or independent economic positions' (*geeigneter Wohnung und Beköstigung für die grosse Zahl der in Berlin, sei es zu ihrer Ausbildung, sei es in selbstständigen geschäftlichen Stellungen*).⁵¹ They would protect women from 'prejudices in a moral or economic regard' (*Benachtheiligung in sittlicher oder wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht*) and even help to establish sales and exhibition areas for female hand-made goods.⁵²

According to the *Vossische Zeitung* '[t]he establishment of female commissions' would be vital.⁵³ These commissions had responsibility for carrying out the Lette-Verein's specific aims.⁵⁴ A report published in *Der Arbeiterfreund* in 1866 revealed that the women co-opted in February 1866 were invited to meet with male members of the Lette-Verein on the 15 and 16 March 1866 to allocate responsibilities for the Lette-Verein's work according to their own personal interest in a particular area.⁵⁵ Commissions used women to run the employment bureau⁵⁶ and assist women in finding apprenticeships.⁵⁷ A further commission

⁴⁸ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 11.

⁴⁹ *Vossische Zeitung*, 27 February 1866. 134/01, LVA.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² These aims had been outlined in the Lette-Verein's statutes. See chapter 3 of this thesis, p. 100.

⁵³ *Vossische Zeitung*, 27 February 1866. 134/01, LVA.

⁵⁴ 'Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit des "Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts"', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 202.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Betty Lehmann took this role and served in it for 25 years: Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 56.

⁵⁷ 'Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 207.

aimed to provide suitable accommodation for women training and in employment led by Wilhelm Müller and Joseph Lehmann.⁵⁸ Aside from them it comprised twelve women, one of whom could be elected as its president.⁵⁹ The report in the 1866 edition of *Der Arbeiterfreund* concluded by saying that these commissions were authorized to increase their membership through co-optation and that all members of the Lette-Verein, especially women, were encouraged to become involved.⁶⁰

4.2.2 Schepeler-Lette's career path: apprenticeship and promotion

Anna Schepeler-Lette returned to Berlin in 1866 and it was here that her career with the Lette-Verein began.⁶¹ She immediately assumed the role as president of the commission established to set up the Viktoria-Bazar.⁶² According to Hirsch, her eventual election as President of the Lette-Verein was partly the result of her 'skilful leadership' of the Viktoria-Bazar in the late 1860s.⁶³ Run by Karl Weiss the bazaar aimed to provide a sales and exhibition venue for handcrafted and artistic goods made by women. Weiss, a local silk merchant, was assisted by the commission whose female members were actively involved in its operation. In 1868 the management of the Viktoria-Bazar passed to Weiss. The aim of the bazaar, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 5, was that women be trained for constant, systematic professional work not only in new areas but in traditional areas such as sewing.⁶⁴ The Viktoria-Bazar's success depended upon training capable workers who made goods that were saleable and could provide a wage: it

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 205.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 216.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Hirsch describes how Anna came back in the summer of 1866 when the war between Prussia and Austria was at its height: Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22.

⁶² The commission in charge of the Viktoria-Bazar was presided over by a president and a secretary and each of these roles could be taken by a woman: see 'Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 214.

⁶³ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22 and p. 37.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

provided women with a place where they could receive and complete orders.⁶⁵

The Viktoria-Bazar struggled to provide women with remunerative employment. Despite the Frauen-Industrie-Ausstellung of 1868, an exhibition which aimed to boost its profile and its sales, the bazaar was not a financial success. However, in 1868 the bazaar became independent of the Lette-Verein following disagreements between Weiss and the Board. The cause of this is not clear but Weiss continued to run the bazaar with Anna Schepeler-Lette's assistance: she remained president of the bazaar's commission.⁶⁶ As a result and independently of the Lette-Verein's overall management, Schepeler-Lette and Weiss established classes in hand- and machine sewing, tailoring, the finishing of items of clothing and the fabrication of ornamental flowers in 1870. These became the commercial and industrial school (*Handels- und Gewerbeschule*) in October 1871, a school which was to remain highly successful over the coming years.

It would seem therefore that Schepeler-Lette perhaps played a major part in turning round the fortunes of the Viktoria-Bazar by establishing the commercial and industrial school with Weiss in the early 1870s. Whilst married to Karl Schepeler, himself a businessman she had, according to Harder, kept a 'vigilant eye on the flourishing business' in Frankfurt, the city 'famous for its trade' although no further evidence regarding the nature of his business can be found.⁶⁷ It seems in all likelihood that she brought valuable administrative and business skills with her from Frankfurt which made her indispensable to the Viktoria-Bazar and the commercial and industrial school.

A few months after establishing the commercial and industrial school, Schepeler-Lette was unanimously declared President of the Lette-Verein on 23 April 1872 at a meeting of the board and governing committee.⁶⁸ Her leadership ushered in even

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶⁶ See chapter 5 for further discussion on the Viktoria-Bazar.

⁶⁷ Harder, 'Anna Schepeler-Lette', pp. 84-85.

⁶⁸ Obschermitzki, "*Der Frau*", p. 45.

more women into positions of authority. Whilst the positions of treasurer and vice-president remained in male hands, for the first time three important posts on the board were occupied by women: Jenny Hirsch acted as secretary and Betty Lehmann took on the role as vice-secretary.⁶⁹ Furthermore, from 1872 the various institutes that made up the Lette-Verein; the aforementioned commercial and industrial school and the drawing school (*Zeichenschule*), the Viktoria-Stift which accommodated women, the employment bureau and the Lette foundation that provided loans for women entering business had separate accounts and were each run by an all-female body made up of a president, secretary and treasurer.⁷⁰

The start of her presidency was marked by Schepeler-Lette's impassioned plea for financial support for the purchase of premises to house the Lette-Verein's work. As a result, the various schools and institutions of the Lette-Verein were consolidated under one roof in a building known as the Lette-Haus which the Lette-Verein moved to in October 1873.⁷¹ Schepeler-Lette's call for funds was published in *Der Frauenanwalt* and entreated people to:

Help us to build a school-house, a school-house for women and daughters, who wish to earn their bread honourably, help us in the interest of our entire culture, that can only be promoted if women too are given the opportunity to joyfully and capably help with national work, so that happiness, affluence, cultivation and moral standards in the country can grow and flourish. (*Helpen Sie uns dieses Schulhaus für Frauen und Töchter, die ehrenvoll ihr Brod erwerben lernen wollen, bauen, helfen Sie uns im Interesse unserer ganzen Cultur, die nur gefördert werden kann, wenn auch den Frauen Gelegenheit gegeben wird, freudig und tüchtig mitzuhelfen an der nationalen Arbeit, dass*

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

⁷¹ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Kaiserlichen und Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 28. Februar 1873 Bis. 31 März 1874* (Berlin, 1874), p. 5. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

Glück, Wohlstand, Zucht und Sitte im Lande wachse und gedeihe).⁷²

Her plea also emphasized that women's innate principles would sanctify the workplace and its inherent evils, justifying the work of the Lette-Verein to gain entry for women into new forms of employment. It demonstrated Schepeler-Lette's clear belief in the honourable nature of work and used an argument similar to that used by Bodichon, that women should earn their own 'bread' and bring moral purity to the workplace. Bodichon stated in *Women and Work* 'we hear cries that the world is going wrong for want of women, that moral progress cannot be made without their help'⁷³ and '[e]very human being should work; no one should owe bread to any but his or her parents.'⁷⁴ Furthermore, such arguments also helped legitimate Anna Schepeler-Lette's own assumption of authority over an institution seeking to intervene in public life. The implication was that she too would bring feminine morality to her leadership of the Lette-Verein.

The Lette-Verein's need for the Lette-Haus had become apparent over time. Prior to its existence, the employment bureau ran from the private flat belonging to Betty Lehmann at 46 Kochstrasse, the commercial training institutes run by Clement and Lohff which received subsidies from the Lette-Verein⁷⁵ were held at 50 Behrenstrasse and 11 Poststrasse respectively and administered by them independently. The Viktoria-Bazar was held in Karl Weiss' premises at 93 Leipzigerstrasse and the classes it ran which became the commercial and industrial school were at 92 Leipzigerstrasse. Although these institutions were not far from one another, the lack of one central building to house the work of the Lette-Verein was bound to pose a problem: there was no central place for the men and women running the Lette-Verein to meet. From 1868 the various institutions of the Lette-Verein moved into Karl Weiss' property at 92 Leipzigerstrasse.⁷⁶ Despite hopes

⁷² 'Der Lette-Verein hat folgenden Aufruf veröffentlicht', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1872), p. 262.

⁷³ Bodichon, *Women and Work*, p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷⁵ These institutions will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 5.

⁷⁶ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 34 ff. For a map showing the location of the different institutions run by

that this would be a time of 'healthy development and fruitful activity',⁷⁷ these hopes were disappointed due to the aforementioned differences between Weiss and the board of the Lette-Verein. The Lette-Verein was forced to remain at 92 Leipzigerstrasse with Weiss as landlord until he went to Erfurt in 1872.

Schepeler-Lette's call for donations in 1872 was successful. The opening of the Lette-Haus, in October 1873, was testament to her organizational skill and energy. Having appealed for help in the spring of 1872, the Lette-Verein received a donation of 500 talers from the Crown Princess.⁷⁸ This apparently served as a 'good example' for others to follow: as Göttert states the Crown Princess's donation resulted in 'further donations from prominent well wishers' (*die weitere Spenden prominenter Gönner*).⁷⁹ Soon the Lette-Verein had raised 8000 talers, mainly from donors in Berlin.⁸⁰ A further 25000 talers was received from an anonymous donor, a man with liberal connections, 20000 of which was used as an advance payment for the house.⁸¹ Krakau states that the Crown Princess gave a further substantial donation of 20000 talers: this money according to Krakau came from England, and was put at her disposal for charitable causes.⁸² A property was purchased at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse, now Stresemannstrasse,⁸³ for 95000 talers. 13000 talers was used to begin the renovations and interior decoration.⁸⁴ Once the Lette-Verein had moved there in October 1873, the house was formally opened on 3 December 1873 with the Crown Prince and Crown Princess presiding over the

the Lette-Verein see Appendix B.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-44.

⁷⁸ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 5. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

⁷⁹ Göttert, 'Victoria', in von Hessen (ed.), *Victoria Kaiserin Friedrich*, p. 97.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 5. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

⁸² W.J. Krakau, 'Kaiserin Friedrich, ein Leben im Widerstreit zwischen politischen Idealen und preussisch-deutscher Realität', in K. Müller, *Victoria von Preußen, 1840-1901 in Berlin* (Berlin, 2001), pp. 164-182, here p. 168. Krakau cites Jessen here: see J. Jessen, *Die Kaiserin Friedrich ... Mit zehn Vollbildern in Tonatzung und einem Faksimile* (Berlin, 1907), p. 50. This money possibly was given to her by Queen Victoria though I can find no sources to verify this.

⁸³ In the twentieth century Königgrätzerstrasse was perhaps most famous for the Theater in der Königgrätzerstrasse: see B. Ladd, *The Companion Guide to Berlin* (Suffolk, 2004), p. 373.

⁸⁴ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 5. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

celebrations.⁸⁵

According to the *Rechenschaftsbericht* for the period, the sum raised was still not enough: fortunately parts of the Lette-Haus could be rented out to private tenants and this rent covered the mortgage interest.⁸⁶ Despite these efforts, Hirsch reported that some of the debt remained and it was Schepeler-Lette who took this on personally, a debt she bore until September 1874. At this point, the Lette-Verein became a legal entity in its own right taking over her debt and clearing it in November 1875.⁸⁷

Commentators were in agreement that Schepeler-Lette was the driving force behind these transformations. Max Ring described how Schepeler-Lette's leadership ushered in a period of strong development for the Lette-Verein.⁸⁸ He highlighted the lack of centralization before her presidency and emphasized that only with the establishment of the Lette-Haus could the Lette-Verein thrive. Another article described her 'self-sacrifice', 'rare energy' and how under her leadership the Lette-Verein widened its sphere of activity still further.⁸⁹ Her commitment was indisputable: she was described as working so hard that she often only slept for two to three hours a night.⁹⁰ Schepeler-Lette is thus widely accredited with driving forward the Lette-Verein's work and in particular consolidating its activities under one roof.⁹¹

Schepeler-Lette described the opening of the Lette-Haus with pride in an article published in 1879.⁹² Inviting her readers to follow her from the upper floors of the Lette-Haus down to the ground floor she described how the Viktoria-Stift now occupied the third and fourth floors of the building. Here, women who looked for

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 5-7.

⁸⁷ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 76.

⁸⁸ Ring, 'Das Haus', *Die Gartenlaube*, vol. 22 (1874), 400-403. 134/02, LVA.

⁸⁹ 'Ein Besuch bei Frau Anna Schepeler-Lette', *Beilage den Wochen-Berichten für Kunst, Kunsthandel und Kunstgewerbe*, vol. 2, no. 24 (23 December 1893). 235/02, LVA.

⁹⁰ Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, pp. 152-153.

⁹¹ Obschemitzki, "Der Frau", p. 71.

⁹² Ibid., p. 72.

training or employment opportunities in Berlin or were self-employed could find accommodation and all the amenities of 'sheltered domesticity' for a low price. On the first and second floors below were situated the schools of the Lette-Verein, which included the drawing school, the sculpture school and the classes formerly taught in the Viktoria-Bazar which had become the commercial and industrial school in 1871. The library was on the second floor and on the first floor were situated the offices for the board, governing committee and the commissions, the conference hall, president's consulting room, office for the secretary and the dispatch office for *Der Frauenanwalt*. Finally, the ground floor housed the employment bureau, newly established Viktoria-Bazar and Ladies' Restaurant.⁹³ With its work now under one roof, it was centralized, more efficient and an acknowledged centre for women's education. Schepeler-Lette became the figurehead for its work: her bust displayed in the house at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse was a visual symbol of her leadership over each woman who trained and worked for the Lette-Verein.

In the latter years of Schepeler-Lette's life she remained a strong and inspirational leader. Richard Stettiner described the 'bold' decision she made in supporting his idea to establish a photographic academy at the Lette-Haus. He commended her 'brave energy', and how as a woman who 'never did anything by halves', she helped raise funds to purchase the house next door at 89 Königgrätzerstrasse for this purpose.⁹⁴ The academy was founded in 1890 and was to become one of the Lette-Verein's most successful training institutes. Even now, the Lette-Verein is world-renowned for its photography and many famous female photographers were trained there.⁹⁵ In 1897 Schepeler-Lette died of a heart attack whilst presiding over a group of young women sitting an examination. Her hard work and unwavering

⁹³ For an artist's impression of the Lette-Haus see Appendix C.

⁹⁴ R. Stettiner, *Die Photographische Lehranstalt des Lette-Vereins - Eine Erinnerungsschrift 1890-1900* (Berlin, 1901). 101/03, LVA.

⁹⁵ The school has produced many famous female photographers including Käthe Augenstein who photographed Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht in the 1930's. Eva Kemlein trained at the Lette-Verein and was an active photographer in Berlin during the war joining the underground resistance against the Nazi regime: see P. Rosgen (ed.), *Frauenobjektiv: Fotografinnen 1940 bis 1950* (Köln, 2001), pp. 124-147.

commitment to the aims of the Lette-Verein and the energy that Stettiner described are clear as she spent her last moments at work.⁹⁶

4.3 Jessie Boucherett's invisible career

Committee meeting minute books and correspondence confirm that Jessie Boucherett was the Society's founder and leader. Travelling to Langham Place in June 1859 and introduced by Bessie Rayner Parkes to 'the circle of ladies' connected with the *English Woman's Journal*, Boucherett remembered how '[o]n that evening so memorable to me, I found some twenty ladies seated around the very primitive apartment which then formed the Reading Room.'⁹⁷ Although an employment register had already been established by Parkes,⁹⁸ Boucherett described her more extensive plan for the Society: 'For a moment there was a general silence, and no one moved; then a lady came forward, expressed her approbation of the plan, and promised her assistance.'⁹⁹ This woman was the poet Adelaide Proctor and she and Boucherett spent hours in their office, a 'comfortless unfurnished room', writing letters to potential sponsors. Boucherett was discouraged, for at first 'encouraging answers never came, and answers of any sort but seldom', but their perseverance paid off: 'At length we excited some little attention (...) Something like a committee was formed; we assumed the name of the 'Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', a prospectus was printed, a little money collected and our first difficulties were over.'¹⁰⁰ Despite this, the Langham Place group, or prominent members of the group such as Emily Faithfull and Bessie Rayner Parkes, have frequently been accredited with founding the

⁹⁶ Stettiner, *Die Photographische Lehranstalt*.

⁹⁷ J. Boucherett, 'Adelaide Anne Proctor', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 13, no. 73 (1864), 17-24, here pp. 18-19.

⁹⁸ For further discussion about Parkes' establishment of an employment register in connection with the *English Woman's Journal*, see B.R. Parkes, 'A Year's Experience in Woman's Work', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 32 (1860), 112-121, here p. 113. Hirsch also makes reference to its establishment: see Hirsch, *Barbara*, p. 191.

⁹⁹ Boucherett, 'Adelaide', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 13, no. 73 (1864), pp. 18-19.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Society.¹⁰¹ Boucherett's role at the time remained a largely 'invisible career' and has since received little attention.

By contrast, Bridger and Jordan's work, as well as my own MA thesis of 2005, reveal Jessie Boucherett's hitherto neglected part in the women's movement.¹⁰² Her obscurity can be partly explained by a speech made by Lord Brougham at the 1862 social science congress in London, which attributed the foundation of the Society to Bessie Rayner Parkes and Emily Faithfull.¹⁰³ This speech was published in *The Times* on 6 June 1862.¹⁰⁴ Brougham asserted that the subject of women and employment had first been discussed at the NAPSS congress in Birmingham in 1857.¹⁰⁵ According to his account '[t]he next Congress at Liverpool followed up that discussion, and by the exertions of Miss Bessie Parkes and Miss Emily Faithfull, a society in connexion with the National Association was formed "for promoting the industrial employment of women."¹⁰⁶ Aside from neglecting Boucherett's role, his speech suggested that NAPSS was predominantly responsible for instigating the establishment of the Society. Boucherett's correspondence suggests that she regarded it as an error on Brougham's part, but she voiced her suspicion to Bessie Rayner Parkes that the failure of others to correct his mistake was politically motivated.¹⁰⁷ She came from a Tory

¹⁰¹ Offen assumes the Society was established by NAPSS: see K. Offen in *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: a political history* (Stanford, 2000). She states that 'women members of the woman-friendly National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (...) spawned a host of organizations and projects aimed at improving women's conditions: these included (...) the Society for Promoting the Industrial Employment of Women' (p. 122). Offen goes on to state incorrectly that Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes alongside 'their associates in the Langham Place Circle' founded the Society. For more on the relationship between women and NAPSS, see K. McCrone, 'The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science and the advancement of Victorian women', *Atlantis: a women's studies journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1982), 44-66.

¹⁰² Bridger's PhD thesis and her article co-authored with Ellen Jordan, "An Unexpected Recruit", the latter published since my own MA dissertation was completed, reach the same conclusion as my thesis did, that Jessie Boucherett was the undisputed leader of the Society.

¹⁰³ 'Opening address by Lord Brougham', *The Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences, 1862* (London, 1863), p. 17.

¹⁰⁴ 'The Social Science Congress', *The Times*, 6 June 1862, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ G.W. Hastings had spoken on the industrial employment of women in 1857 as discussed in chapter 2.

¹⁰⁶ 'The Social Science Congress', *The Times*, 6 June 1862, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Jessie Boucherett to Parkes, 29 June 1862, Early History File. GCIP SPTW 4/1, GCA.

background, an upbringing that marked her out from her more radical colleagues, and so when George Hastings failed to correct Brougham she stated '[w]hy Mr Hastings should have been unwilling to do me justice I cannot imagine, it is hardly possible that I should have given him personal offence, but I suppose he is a great radical and does not like to acknowledge that the member of a Tory family should have started this thing.'¹⁰⁸

A lack of sources may also explain why Boucherett's involvement in the women's movement has been neglected in contemporary accounts.¹⁰⁹ Prior to her involvement in establishing the Society little has been written about her early life. Helen Blackburn provided an account in 1902 of how Boucherett came to Langham Place in 1859, stating that she was desirous 'to help women to better economic conditions when one day she caught sight, on a railway bookstall, of a number of the *English Woman's Journal* (...) she found her own unspoken aspirations reflected in its pages' and travelled to the offices of the journal.¹¹⁰ Despite this emphasis on Boucherett's admiration for the women of Langham Place, some accounts tend to focus on the differences between Boucherett and her colleagues. Levine's book, *Victorian Feminism: 1850-1900*, describes Jessie Boucherett as a conservative,¹¹¹ although she notes that feminist conviction often brought together those from different backgrounds. For example, in Levine's account though Helen Blackburn did not move in 'society' circles' she 'became the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Boucherett grew up in an entirely different milieu to women like Anna Jameson, Bessie Rayner Parkes and Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon. Many of these women spent their formative years together and came from more radical Unitarian backgrounds. Parkes' father, Joseph Parkes and Bodichon's father, Benjamin Leigh Smith, were radical politicians. As a result Boucherett is tellingly missing from accounts such as K. Gleadle, *The Early Feminists* (London, 1995) which focuses on the radical Unitarian networks which underpin the early feminist movement. Bridger has pointed out, however, that Boucherett did attend Avonbank School in Stratford-upon-Avon, the same school as Harriet Martineau's niece and 'the two grand-daughters of Dr Joseph Priestly', undoubtedly Bessie Rayner Parkes' mother and aunt. As Bridger highlights, this school was patronized by 'many leading Unitarian, radical families' and the Byerley sisters in charge of it had a 'feminist' ethos. This most probably had an impact on the development of Boucherett's feminist ideals. See Bridger, 'A century', pp. 41-42.

¹¹⁰ H. Blackburn, *Women's Suffrage: A Record of the Women's Suffrage Movement in the British Isles with Biographical Sketches of Miss Becker* (London, 1902), p. 50. This description has been quoted in most histories of British feminism which mention Jessie Boucherett.

¹¹¹ Levine, *Victorian Feminism*, p. 66.

friend of 'the wealthy Jessie Boucherett'.¹¹² Feminist histories have noted that Boucherett was one of the women involved in establishing the petition to demand suffrage for women in 1866,¹¹³ but only Bridger and Jordan have highlighted the key part she played by putting down £25 to cover the initial expenses of the campaign, a sum worth about £2000 in today's money.¹¹⁴ Similarly, accounts often describe the establishment of the Society in terms which gloss over any leadership it had and refer to it as a joint enterprise by a number of individuals including Boucherett.¹¹⁵ There is certainly little suggestion that the Society was firmly established and led by Boucherett, though some do mention that it was her idea.¹¹⁶ Only Hirsch states explicitly that 'Jessie took charge of the employment register, establishing the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', yet she too draws attention to Jessie's differences from her colleagues. She quotes a letter from Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon to Helen Taylor which described a visit to Boucherett and how 'I could not help thinking (...) how much she herself had gained in happiness by allying herself so bravely with us. She has a vivid interest in life which nothing in "the society" she was born in could have given her.'¹¹⁷ Feminist historians thus seem to have overlooked the part played in the early women's movement by Boucherett, a woman from a landed, Tory background. Essentially all accounts seem to agree that '[v]ery little is known about her and she remains one of the most elusive of the Langham Place circle. [She was] an unexpected recruit to feminism.'¹¹⁸

Bridger and Jordan's work has analyzed Boucherett's feminism and provided valuable information about her life and work. They contend that her 'influence on the movement's progress' was 'inextricably intertwined with her substantial wealth, and that, once she began to think and write about women's issues, she used

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹¹³ Books that briefly mention Boucherett's involvement in this campaign include; Hirsch, *Barbara*, pp. 221-222; D. Spender, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them: From Aphra Behn to Adrienne Rich* (London, 1982), pp. 417-418.

¹¹⁴ Jordan and Bridger, "An Unexpected Recruit", p. 386.

¹¹⁵ See Herstein, *A Mid-Victorian Feminist*, p. 140; Levine, *Victorian Feminism*, pp. 86-87.

¹¹⁶ Rendall, "A Moral Engine", p. 119.

¹¹⁷ Hirsch, *Barbara*, p. 254.

¹¹⁸ Banks, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 33.

the social skills and the wealth derived from her family background in ways which influenced the course of the women's movement.¹¹⁹ Although 'she never expected or needed to earn her own living' Boucherett still 'devoted forty years to the needs of those who did'¹²⁰ and made large financial contributions at key times to keep the Society operating. Bridger and Jordan thus suggest that Boucherett's style of feminism differed from most other women at the Langham Place group. Under Boucherett's leadership the Society used 'organizational methods already well established in the philanthropic world—a society with office-bearers, a committee, subscribers, an auditor and an annual report' and showed that these 'could prove equally effective in promoting feminist aims'.¹²¹ Her class status and confidence meant that committee work came easily to her. They conclude by stating that 'of all the causes she supported only the franchise could ever have impinged on her own life (...) Nevertheless, for the sake of women without her advantages',¹²² she had dedicated herself to the Society for over 40 years.

Whilst Bridger and Jordan argue that Boucherett's wealth and high status sustained her ability to lead the Society, they do not explain her motives for doing so. Though ostensibly she stood to gain nothing personally, her establishment of the Society was driven by more than feminist commitment for women 'without her own advantages'. Boucherett was ambitious and her work for the Society provided her with an occupation, one which she carried out with pride, energy and a definite vision for women's place in the workforce.¹²³ Middle-class women's experiences of work and the impact of work on their sense of identity have been overlooked in historical accounts. As Cowman states 'the workplace – and its relationship to a sense of self – remains an under-researched terrain with regard to middle-class

¹¹⁹ Jordan and Bridger, "An Unexpected Recruit", p. 388.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 387. Boucherett did not need to work, inheriting £10,000 from her father in 1857, £16,000 from her mother in 1873 and £1000 per annum for life upon the death of her brother in 1877.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 405.

¹²³ Boucherett wrote a number of articles which revealed the economic theory underpinning her views on how women should enter the employment market. For a collection of her writings see Lacey, *Barbara*, pp. 223-277.

women'.¹²⁴ In particular, philanthropic work such as Boucherett's has been viewed as typical of 'a caring femininity',¹²⁵ natural for women and therefore not perceived as work but as the fulfillment of a duty. According to Cowman '[t]his public duty was often (...) presented in terms of an essential association of womanhood with "caring" and "nurturing"', which has precluded an analysis of such endeavours as underpinned by personal ambition. Like other female members of the Langham Place group and those involved with the Society, Boucherett's work became her 'career'. As Varty highlights in her study of women involved in philanthropy in Canada, such women carried out their work with a sense of 'lifelong dedication' and offered a 'significant sacrifice of time'.¹²⁶ This was also true of Boucherett as she became heavily involved in all aspects of the Society's endeavours. It might also be useful to regard this philanthropy as a form of entrepreneurship. If the term entrepreneur does not simply signify individuals who take financial risks, but is taken to mean those who engage in the 'relentless pursuit of opportunity beyond resources currently controlled', such a definition is more likely to include women like Boucherett.¹²⁷ The founding of the Society brought Boucherett personal financial risks, but also meant emotional and social risks as she put her reputation on the line. Furthermore, personal ambition sometimes turned into rivalry as women competed for recognition for their endeavours.

4.3.1 Boucherett's ambition: rivalry within the Society

Boucherett and her associates reacted strongly to the misinformed speech made by Lord Brougham about the establishment of the Society in June 1862. His speech, and a letter sent by Isa Craig to *The Times*, had apparently led Mrs Locke King, a committee member of the Society, to fear that people 'would dispute the distinct existence of Miss Boucherett's Society previous to the affiliation' with the

¹²⁴ Cowman and Jackson, 'Introduction: Middle-Class Women', p. 166.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 170.

¹²⁶ Varty, "'A Career'", p. 248.

¹²⁷ Koehn, 'Women'.

NAPSS.¹²⁸ Indeed, Mrs Locke King wrote to Jane Crowe, the Society's secretary, expressing her view that 'there appears to me to have been a series of cross-purposes or rather rival purposes from the beginning'¹²⁹ concerning the formation of the Society, and she claimed to have papers which prove the 'distinct existence of our society before it became affiliated to the Social Science Association in December 1859.'¹³⁰ Her fears were politely dismissed by Crowe, yet Boucherett took the dispute further. This was presumably in light of Brougham's speech in June, which added to the suggestion that Boucherett had played no significant part in the Society's creation. Boucherett wrote to the Chairman of the Society's General Committee on 25 June 1862 claiming that Lord Brougham's speech 'places me in an awkward position, because having hitherto believed that the Society was founded by Miss Proctor and myself, I have sometimes said so'.¹³¹ She was worried that '[i]t may therefore be thought that I have put forward unfounded contentions' and was angry that following the Congress a 'relation of mine told him [Brougham] the truth and was evidently not believed'.¹³² Her letter to the committee was lengthy and she included the original prospectus which showed her and Proctor as honorary secretaries, and a letter from Hastings and Craig which she said 'showed I was then considered the chief mover in the matter'.¹³³ She hoped firstly that the committee would pass a resolution acknowledging the error, which would be sent to the honorary secretary of the Social Science Association and so prevent similar errors from occurring at later social science congresses. She did not wish for *The Times* to correct the error as it

¹²⁸ Letter from Jane Crowe, Secretary of the Society, to committee member Mrs Locke King, 24 May 1862, Early History File. GCIP SPTW 4/1, GCA. The letter by Isa Craig to *The Times* appeared on 18 November 1859 and stated that 'the council of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (...) appointed a committee (...) for increasing the industrial employment of women': 'Letter from Isa Craig to the Editor: Employment of Women', *The Times*, 18 November 1859, p. 11.

¹²⁹ Letter from committee member Mrs Locke King to Jane Crowe, Secretary of the Society, 22 May 1862, Early History File. GCIP SPTW 4/1, GCA. Mrs Locke King was, like Boucherett, a Tory and is identified by Jordan and Bridger as someone most probably recruited from Boucherett's 'own circle' see Jordan and Bridger, "'An Unexpected Recruit'", p. 408.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Letter from Jessie Boucherett to the Chairman of the Committee, 25 June 1862, Early History File. GCIP SPTW 4/1, GCA.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

would be 'uncourteous' to Lord Brougham but requested that the committee would write to him 'explaining the facts' and that the members would 'justify me if they should ever hear me blamed for putting forward unfounded claims, by relating the true circumstances'.¹³⁴

Boucherett's and Locke-King's letters revealed tensions between women involved in the work of the Society and Boucherett's concern that she would not be recognized for her work because of her political convictions. Although Boucherett claimed in the letter that she did not wish to 'disparage these ladies', her forthright opinions alluded to the 'rival purposes' mentioned by Locke-King. She was implicitly critical of Parkes and Faithfull, suggesting they had only given their support when it looked as if the Society would be successful:

When the idea of forming this Society first presented itself to me, I requested Miss Parkes to join me, which she declined to do on the ground that it was a rash enterprize and (...) she did not wish her name to be connected with an undertaking which might fail (...) Miss Parkes consented to join (...) a few weeks later when the prospect of success appeared brighter and Miss Faithfull came also at about the same time (...) The letters of enquiry were numerous and I was often writing all day (...) I confess I find it hard to be told the Society was founded by the exertions of Miss Parkes and Miss Faithfull.¹³⁵

She explained that she had questioned Parkes personally, and that Parkes had shown her a printed copy of an address made at the Glasgow congress in 1860, in which she had stated that Boucherett had started the Society. Boucherett also wrote a personal letter to Parkes on the matter which was stern in its reprimand. She told Bessie that '[w]hen Lord Brougham made the mistake two years ago Mr Hastings or Miss Craig ought to have set them right and here my dear Bessie you

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

were wrong, you ought to have ascertained if they had done so'.¹³⁶ Boucherett said she was sure that Parkes 'never meant to claim any credit that was not your due' but by trusting that Hastings and Craig would correct Brougham and failing to make sure they had done so, she had allowed the misconception to flourish. She expressed that it had been a most 'disagreeable affair', not only to her but for Parkes too as 'many ill natured people (...) will believe you gave false information to Ld Brougham'.¹³⁷

Despite Boucherett's words, she may well have suspected that Parkes did mean to claim credit for the Society's establishment. Speeches written by Boucherett and Parkes were both read at the Bradford congress in 1859. However, it was Parkes who attracted attention from the press perhaps because she presented her paper personally whilst Boucherett's was apparently read by George Hastings. Furthermore, *The Transactions* for 1860 contain a copy of Parkes' speech given at Glasgow regarding the work of the Society, and it does not mention Boucherett's role in its establishment, contradicting Parkes' claim that it did. Indeed, Bessie seemed to delight in the public reaction and wrote a letter to Bodichon following the 1859 Bradford meeting, which expressed her pride at the press reaction and how '[o]ur Bradford meeting has not done echoing (...) The daily news printed my article entire'.¹³⁸ In the postscript she explained how other activities prevented her from writing and said '[d]on't think me unkind when I don't write. Remember all my work in writing. It is not actual time I want, but power'.¹³⁹ Parkes may have failed to correct Brougham, perhaps because she enjoyed the interest her speech aroused, interest which gave her the power she craved. A correction was published by Parkes in the *English Woman's Journal* in August 1862.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Letter from Jessie Boucherett to Bessie Rayner Parkes, 29 June 1862, Early History File. GCIP SPTW 4/1, GCA.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Letter from Parkes to Bodichon, 3 and 5 November 1859. GCPP Parkes 5/94, GCA.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ 'Report of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 9, no. 54 (1862), 377-379, here p. 379.

4.3.2 Jessie Boucherett's leadership

The Society's organizational structure also ensured that Boucherett's leadership was obscured from public view. Unlike Anna Schepeler-Lette, who was appointed as president of the Lette-Verein, Jessie Boucherett had no formal title according to the Society's statutes. The Society's public image was thus of an organization run equally by men and women, yet equal representation did not mean equal involvement. Those with formal titles, the President, Lord Shaftesbury and Vice-Presidents, The Bishop of London and Oxford, W.E. Gladstone and Vice-Chancellor Sir W. Page-Wood, had little real involvement in the day-to-day running of the Society's activities. Furthermore, although the Society's statutes established a General Committee made up of twelve men and twelve women who in turn appointed a Managing Committee of six men and women from its members, the Society's operation depended on the commitment of a few key women.¹⁴¹ Male attendance at the General Committee and Managing Committee meetings became less frequent over time. Figures for the three year period from 1860 to 1862 show that male attendance at the General Committee stood at 27% compared to 52% for female members.¹⁴² From 1870, when the meetings of the Managing Committee were minuted separately, women dominated as attendees. Between 1870 and 1873 a core group of female attendees attended the Managing Committees meetings with no male members present during the period.¹⁴³ Therefore, despite the surface appearance of equal male and female involvement, Boucherett presided over an increasingly female dominated Society.

This increasingly female-led Society came to depend upon the work of Boucherett and a few women close to her. By 1862, Adelaide Proctor, Matilda Hays, Bessie Rayner Parkes and George Hastings had all resigned from the General Committee,

¹⁴¹ Most of these women were single whilst only Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon was married.

¹⁴² This is based on Jordan and Bridger's figures showing the attendees for 26 General Committee meetings between 1860 and 1862. See Jordan and Bridger, "An Unexpected Recruit", p. 398.

¹⁴³ Minutes for the Managing Committee, 1870-1873. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

the latter on the grounds of having too many work commitments.¹⁴⁴ Jordan and Bridger explain the apparent cause of the departure of the former three. Hays had written a letter to *The Times* about the lack of work for women and had compared some marriages entered into out of desperation as a form of 'legalized prostitution'.¹⁴⁵ This had prompted a NAPSS member and auditor of the Society's accounts, Mr A. Edgar, to write to the Society's secretary demanding that Hays resign. In response, Hays, Parkes and Proctor all threatened to resign and whilst initially their resignations were not accepted, within three months they had all left. Jordan and Bridger suggest that aside from this ostensible cause, the three were glad to be free of committee involvement having 'developed at Langham Place their own informal organizational style base on personal ties of friendship and loyalty'.¹⁴⁶ Although Boucherett was not directly to blame, it meant that these key influential figures were no longer involved in the Society's work, which became dominated by women from Boucherett's circle. These women were often eminent and from the aristocracy; Lady Elizabeth Cust, Mrs Bayne, Mrs Lankester and Mrs Locke-King were later joined by Lady Goldsmid and Lady Ponsonby. Boucherett was undoubtedly in charge and although Jordan and Bridger believe that she was neither 'hectoring' nor 'commanding'¹⁴⁷ her letters, they agree, assumed 'that those addressed will immediately see the force of her arguments and follow her lead'. They consent that '[i]n such company Jessie Boucherett's dedication and enthusiasm could well have swept her fellow members along'.¹⁴⁸

The minute books reveal that Boucherett attended the majority of the Society's early meetings and directed their proceedings, believing strongly from the outset that commercial training for women was a priority. Her views were part of a broader economic theory. She argued that the occupations of governess and needleworker were over-subscribed and that '[o]ne out of every three of the young

¹⁴⁴ Bridger, 'A century', p. 52.

¹⁴⁵ 'To the Editor of The Times', *The Times*, 29 April 1862, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶ Jordan and Bridger, "An Unexpected Recruit", p. 398.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

girls we bring up will have to fight the great battle for bread.¹⁴⁹ If lower-class women received a commercial training, they might become bookkeepers for small shopkeepers, or clerks in the postal service and banks. By accessing new forms of employment for women in the commercial sector, Boucherett believed that the competition for jobs for women would be reduced. She was keen to point out that as things stood women competed fiercely for a living: 'There is bread to be won for only a limited number, and if she succeeds in winning her loaf someone else must go without.'¹⁵⁰ Boucherett outlined her views in an article published in the *English Woman's Journal* in February 1860, entitled 'Obstacles to the Employment of Women'.¹⁵¹ She perceived that a lack of education in arithmetic for girls, and the 'general inferiority of the instruction they receive',¹⁵² prevented women from entering commercial occupations at the time. Training was vital, for without it women would fail in these areas of work and 'then the reaction will come, and we shall be told that attempts have been made to employ them, but that they proved unequal to their duties'.¹⁵³ She argued that women able to make their living in ways aside from governessing should do so.¹⁵⁴ In contrast to Parkes, who hoped that working women would always be a minority compared to those committed to a family life, Boucherett advocated that women should be admitted 'freely into all employments suitable to their strength'.¹⁵⁵ She believed that 'the labour market would adjust itself' to accommodate them.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, in contrast to Maria Rye who reasoned that the 'surplus woman' problem required women to emigrate, Boucherett contended that 'the real issue was the supply and demand of certain groups of people'¹⁵⁷ and that opening up more jobs for women would solve the problem of what to do with superfluous women. As Levitan suggests 'Boucherett

¹⁴⁹ J. Boucherett, 'On the Education of Girls with Reference to their Future Position', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 34 (1860), 217-224, here p. 218.

¹⁵⁰ J. Boucherett, 'On the Choice of a Business', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 10, no. 57 (1862), 145-153, here p. 145.

¹⁵¹ J. Boucherett, 'On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 4, no. 24 (1860), 361-375.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 364.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

¹⁵⁴ Boucherett, 'On the Choice', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 10, no. 57 (1862), p. 146.

¹⁵⁵ Rendall, "'A Moral Engine'", p. 125.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Levitan, 'Redundancy', p. 370.

challenged the entire notion that gender ratios had to be relatively even, and suggested that a large female majority in Britain was a perfectly acceptable solution to the problem of unemployment.¹⁵⁸ She argued that men employed in small shops selling light articles of female attire, for example ribbon and lace, should use their strength labouring in the colonization of new territories and make way at home for women more fundamentally suited to lighter shop work.¹⁵⁹

The minutes taken for the Society's first General Committee meeting at the start of 1860, stated that classes in bookkeeping would be established as Boucherett wished. The aim was that women would receive certificates of proficiency at the annual examinations of the Society of Arts.¹⁶⁰ Boucherett hoped to extend the training nationally, suggesting that 'whenever twelve young women in any country town have studied accounts and bookkeeping, and are thought capable by a member of this Society of passing an exam'¹⁶¹ they should be entered for one. Bookkeeping classes commenced on 6 February 1860 and were taught by Miss Sophia Jex-Blake.¹⁶² Jex-Blake received training in bookkeeping from Octavia Hill, the famous housing reformer and philanthropist, who gave tuition to clear her family's debts.¹⁶³ Both Jex-Blake and Hill had strong connections to the women at Langham Place. Hill was a close family friend of Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: she had helped Bodichon collect signatures in favour of a Married Women's Property Act in 1856.¹⁶⁴ Jex-Blake lived with Octavia Hill at Nottingham Place in London whilst studying to become a teacher at Queen's College in Harley Street, and so frequently met Bodichon who visited there.¹⁶⁵ Jex-Blake, like Bodichon,

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Boucherett, 'On the Obstacles', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 4, no. 24 (1860), pp. 373-374.

¹⁶⁰ Minutes for the General Committee, 11 January 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Minutes for the General Committee, 7 February 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA. Sophia was later to campaign for women's access to the medical profession and subsequently became a doctor.

¹⁶³ Walker discusses the importance of accounting skills for the philanthropist Octavia Hill: see Walker, 'Philanthropic Women and Accounting', p. 167.

¹⁶⁴ Gillian Darley, 'Hill, Octavia (1838-1912)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, October 2008

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33873>, accessed 30 November 2010].

¹⁶⁵ Shirley Roberts, 'Blake, Sophia Louisa Jex- (1840-1912)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34189>,

was an ardent supporter of women's rights. She was a friend of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the USA's first woman doctor, and eventually studied medicine going on to campaign for women to enter the medical profession. When her father tried to prevent her from earning a wage as a teacher she protested stating '[y]ou, as a man, did your work and received your payment, and no-one thought it any degradation (...) Why should the difference of my sex alter the laws of right and honour?'¹⁶⁶ Initially under Jex-Blake two classes were formed in the morning and evening consisting of writing, arithmetic and bookkeeping. Fifteen attended in the evening and eight in the afternoon. The same rooms were used to establish a school for children, and they received instruction of a 'more practical nature than usual, much attention being paid to arithmetic, and bookkeeping'.¹⁶⁷ Boucherett was keen to instil proficiency in arithmetic at an early age, recognizing that many of the young women they saw in the adult classes had had such a deficient education that training in adulthood was bound to be 'superficial' though 'valued by those for whom it is intended'.¹⁶⁸

Boucherett took charge of the commercial classes for women and children, and immediately sent a letter detailing her concerns with regard to its administration. The letter stated that the classes were in an 'unsatisfactory condition (...) owing to the incompetence of the teacher [Jex-Blake had left] and the inconvenient situation of the house' sited in Portugal Place.¹⁶⁹ She requested that she be allowed the 'entire management of the classes' and wished to 'provide a large room in a convenient commercial neighbourhood'.¹⁷⁰ Presumably, she believed that a commercial neighbourhood would lead to more opportunities for employment once women had completed their training. Boucherett, it seemed, had some business acumen and was aware of the practical issues involved in women finding work. In an effort to raise standards she proposed that she would find another

accessed 30 November 2010].

¹⁶⁶ Introduction in Lacey, *Barbara*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ J. Boucherett, 'Local Societies', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 8, no. 46 (1861), 217-223, here p. 220.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Minutes for the General Committee, 1 May 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

teacher and provide her with an increased salary, of £60 as opposed to £40. Furthermore, she hoped to give this teacher half the pupils' payments to make the school self-supporting. Boucherett threatened to establish the commercial classes on an independent footing if the committee did not agree to her demands. The committee 'begged' her to wait, reminding her that the premises at Portugal Place could only be given up with three months notice, and it appears she acquiesced. By July 1860, however, the classes had moved to Charlotte Street.¹⁷¹

The commercial classes appear to have struggled financially. The initial charges for tuition were too high: women were charged two shillings a week for day classes and nine pence a week for evening attendance. They were thus reduced to encourage women to attend and women on the evening course then paid six pence per week. The classes were described in Boucherett's article 'Local Societies' which she read at the NAPSS congress in August 1861.¹⁷² By this time they were running in the afternoon and evening, for Boucherett had discovered that 'the grown-up women preferred coming in the afternoon'.¹⁷³ The cost was reduced even more with the women paying just 4 shillings and 6 pence for a fourteen or fifteen week term, as even when classes were a shilling a week, the number of pupils only amounted to seven. Boucherett conceded the fee was 'very cheap' but believed that since these women paid out of their own 'pocket money' they could not afford more. Furthermore, she stated that although the revenue from the children's school was £43 and 16 shillings, she hoped for 'no defalcations, which at present is not quite certain, as part of the £43 16s is still owing'.¹⁷⁴

The fact that Committee members 'begged' Boucherett to leave the school running as it was on this occasion, suggests that she wielded a large degree of power over a not altogether democratic body. Boucherett's style of leadership was controlling and it would seem that she found it difficult to relinquish her direction of the

¹⁷¹ Minutes for the General Committee, July 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁷² Boucherett, 'Local Societies', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 8, no. 46 (1861), p. 220.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Society's activities. She assumed editorial control of the Annual Reports published in June each year. When she went to France in 1862, she requested that the secretary Gertrude King visit the commercial school on a weekly basis on her behalf, to make sure that things were running smoothly.¹⁷⁵ Boucherett was not only directive with regard to the administration of the commercial classes but also in her attitude towards other areas of the Society's work. She requested that transcripts of all committee meeting minutes be sent to her when she was unable to attend. Furthermore, she often forced through her ideas with little, if any, consultation and bankrolled schemes she personally adhered to, regardless of whether they were sustainable or not. In October 1875, when the Society was approached by three women who wished to establish a china painting business following a fire at their current premises, Boucherett decided to give them the huge sum of £25 on behalf of the Society, as she considered this 'a case which the society ought to help'.¹⁷⁶ Loan sums for women to establish their own businesses were advanced by the Society according to specific procedures and committee discussions that were apparently bypassed on this occasion. A few years later, the business failed due to irreconcilable differences between the women, and the committee became involved in resolving the dispute amongst them.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps on this occasion, Boucherett's vision had been clouded by her opposition to women's exclusion from the more lucrative areas of employment in the china painting industry.¹⁷⁸ It could be argued that Boucherett's strong individualism prevented the Society from developing further. Unlike the Lette-Verein, which under Anna Schepeler-Lette became more centralized, successfully fundraising to build its own premises, the Society appeared initially held back by in-fighting and a lack of scope for independent action under Boucherett's sometimes overbearing leadership.

Boucherett's own personal ethos regarding her work for the Society can be

¹⁷⁵ Minutes of the General Committee, 8 November 1871. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA; Minutes of the Managing Committee, 6 March 1872. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

¹⁷⁶ Minutes of the Managing Committee, 15 October 1875. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

¹⁷⁷ Minutes of the General Committee, January 1876. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁷⁸ Boucherett, 'On the Obstacles', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 4, no. 24 (1860), p. 371.

identified in the ethos she outlined for the women she tried to assist. Like her contemporary Bodichon, she believed in the transformative nature of work and was convinced that it brought dignity and meaning to people's existence. She argued that a good education would not only help a woman enter employment but benefit those who eventually married. It was crucial, she argued, to:

(...) teach them above all, that it is more honourable to depend on their own exertions than to marry for the sake of a maintenance, and then a different spirit will arise among them. Women thus educated will be able to find ample employment if they remain single, and if they marry will become real helpmates to their husbands instead of the heavy useless burdens they now too often are, unable to keep the accounts of their husbands' shops, or even of their own households, and not possessing sufficient intelligence to find pleasure in anything, but buying and exhibiting their handsome dresses.¹⁷⁹

Education and work thus raised women to an intellectual level on a par with men, and offered independence rather than the misery of entering into a marriage on the grounds of necessity. She was critical of women who were idle stating 'it is certain that a lack of spirit and energy is often to be seen in women; they seem to be willingly helpless and contentedly inferior, as if they thought that God had made them so, and it was not their own fault'.¹⁸⁰ Although Boucherett was a wealthy woman who did not need paid employment, her commitment to the Society was founded partly on these beliefs that work was honourable. She would not allow her wealth to prevent her from working for 'the cause'.¹⁸¹

Boucherett remained involved in the work of the Society until her death in 1905 and according to her will bequeathed £2000 to the Society. In the mid 1860s she joined members of the Manchester suffrage group in their attempts to 'revive the

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 366-367.

¹⁸⁰ Boucherett, 'On the Choice', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 10, no. 57 (1862), p. 149.

¹⁸¹ Letter from Jessie Boucherett to Bessie Rayner Parkes, 29 June 1862, Early History File. GCIP SPTW 4/1, GCA.

agitation for married women's property reform'.¹⁸² She also became actively involved in the "women's rights opposition movement" to factory legislation to protect women'.¹⁸³ Boucherett was concerned that legislation in the form of the Shop Hours Regulation Bill, which aimed to limit the number of hours women could work, would prevent male employers from appointing women and thus force women into overcrowded, poorly paid work. Once Gertrude King the Society's secretary was effectively running the Society, Boucherett focused on this campaign and she wrote a series of letters to both the General and Managing Committees requesting that they discuss the issue. The Freedom of Labour Defence Fund (FLD) was established in 1899 and was presided over by the Society despite Shaftesbury, the Society's President opposing the campaign.¹⁸⁴ Upon her death Boucherett left £2000 to the FLD, however, it was only able to carry on its work until 1913 when the funds left by Boucherett had been used. Boucherett thus remained committed to working for women's rights throughout her life.

4.4 Conclusion

While Schepeler-Lette's contemporaries acknowledged her work to a degree, her career has remained 'invisible' in historical accounts which focus predominantly on the leadership of Lette and Holtzendorff. In the case of Boucherett, she believed that because of her conservative background she was forced to fight for recognition and acceptance amongst her peers.¹⁸⁵ In reality, she may well have remained in the shadows because Parkes, Bodichon and Faithfull were apparently such charismatic and well-known figures at the time. Just as historians examining the role of women in the Lette-Verein prefer to focus on more acknowledged

¹⁸² Jordan and Bridger, "An Unexpected Recruit", p. 402.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 403.

¹⁸⁵ Both women went on to become further involved in the women's movement at a national level. Whilst Schepeler-Lette was made vice-chair of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenverein* (The Federation of German Women's Associations) in 1894, Boucherett, as previously mentioned, dedicated herself to fighting against restrictive legislation regarding women's work.

feminists such as Jenny Hirsch or Lina Morgenstern,¹⁸⁶ those who assess the work of the Society have tended to focus on the work of well-known radicals such as Bessie Rayner Parkes, Emily Faithfull and Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon. Contemporary accounts similarly neglect her role, partly because of a lack of sources. Only recently has Boucherett become the subject of renewed interest, perhaps because her role in establishing the Society has been uncovered through the discovery of the Society's archives at Girton College.

Neither Schepeler-Lette's nor Boucherett's leadership of the Lette-Verein and the Society happened as a matter of course. Schepeler-Lette did not simply inherit the Lette-Verein from her father, as some accounts imply: important though her family connections were, she had proved her abilities as head of the Viktoria-Bazar before being elected as President in 1872. Boucherett's leadership of the Society was purposely downplayed to emphasize male and female cooperation, and on certain occasions men of the NAPSS implied that the Society was their creation. Both Schepeler-Lette's election and Boucherett's less formally sanctioned leadership were underpinned by women's increasing participation in the work of these two institutions. In the case of the Lette-Verein, Schepeler-Lette's role as President was the direct result of the previous President von Holtzendorff's push to revise the statutes to give women positions of power. Perhaps this is why in the Lette-Verein more women were appointed to key positions, whilst the Society found itself less democratically governed under Boucherett.

To date, the commitment of both of these women has been cast as typically 'feminine', a natural role for middle-class women in light of the belief that they were suited to providing for, and assisting others, in a voluntary capacity. Schepeler-Lette has been described as motherly, warm and compassionate, though the same accounts explain that she carried out her presidential role as a 'man'

¹⁸⁶ See M. Büning, *Jenny Hirsch (1829 - 1902): Frauenrechtlerin - Redakteurin - Schriftstellerin* (Berlin, 2004) and H. Knoblauch, *Die Suppenlina, Wiederbelebung einer Menschenfreundin* (Berlin, 1997).

would, with aptitude and determination,¹⁸⁷ and an energy ‘rarely’ found in a woman.¹⁸⁸ This chapter has aimed to show that whilst women increasingly entered such voluntary positions in the latter part of the nineteenth century, historians have neglected to analyze the nature of their work and the skills of leadership, business acumen and organization that they brought with them. Women like Schepeler-Lette and Boucherett working ostensibly as philanthropists tried to forge their own personal careers and establish professional standards for their work. It would seem that these two women did so with varying degrees of success. Both women appear to have brought with them organizational and management skills: whilst Schepeler-Lette gained skills assisting her husband in his business in Frankfurt, Boucherett had prior experience of committee work. However, despite their professional aims their attempts often appeared amateurish, for example when Boucherett made the decision to finance a china-painting business with limited knowledge of how it would fare under commercial conditions. Schepeler-Lette seemed more willing to accept advice from others such as Stettiner in founding the photographic training institute, whereas Boucherett preferred to take action in isolation. What united both women was the commitment to improving women’s position in society. Both remained active in public life until their deaths serving both the institutions they helped to found and other campaigns in support of women’s rights. Having examined these women’s leadership of the Lette-Verein and the Society, the next chapter will focus in more depth on the individual businesses they established to provide women with training and employment.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Anna Schepeler-Lette’, *Wiener Mode*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1897), p. 161. 235/01, LVA.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Ein Besuch bei Frau Anna Schepeler-Lette’, *Beilage den Wochen-Berichten für Kunst, Kunsthandel und Kunstgewerbe*, vol. 2, no. 24 (23 December 1893). 235/02, LVA.

Chapter 5: 'In the great pressure of business inadvertences will occur': Unsuccessful attempts to balance the books in the campaign for women's employment

5.1 Introduction

Businesses which would train and employ women were soon established by both the Society and the Lette-Verein in printing, law copying, wood engraving, plan-tracing and the production of hand-made goods. They were founded according to the central premise upon which both the Lette-Verein and the Society were founded: the principle of self-help for the women they assisted. These businesses operated according to two parallel and often conflicting aims. On the one hand they were established to provide women with an income and thus aimed to be commercially successful: women training within them were to produce goods and services in a competitive market environment. However, on the other hand the women in charge of them were philanthropists campaigning for female employment for a group of women who required charitable assistance according to the rhetoric surrounding the 'surplus woman' problem. Whilst 'redundant' women needed the means to make an independent living, they were also perceived as a charitable cause by both those in charge of these institutions and the public. Furthermore, the Lette-Verein and the Society maintained that gainful employment should not be provided at the expense of female respectability. It was taken for granted that the dangers of fatigue, poor ventilation, long hours and inadequate pay which characterized many workplaces in this period had to be minimized for middle-class women. Balancing these two aims created tensions, tensions summed up well by Gamber who argues that as we reassess those whom we class as entrepreneurs we should include 'organizers of charitable associations – people whose "businesses" lay at the murky boundaries of public and private, profit-

seeking and philanthropic'.¹

This chapter will focus on two businesses, the Viktoria-Bazar and the law copying office created by the Lette-Verein and the Society respectively. Drawing on Gamber's ideas it will explore how and why the women running these two enterprises struggled to negotiate the 'murky boundary' between the profit-seeking and the philanthropic: between providing women with opportunities to make a living in a commercial environment and offering them charitable assistance. Firstly, the women who ran these two businesses were primarily philanthropists. They were therefore traditionally more accustomed to operating in a charitable environment rather than a business one. Their lack of business expertise thus often resulted in commercial failure. Secondly, when these businesses struggled financially their female leaders often kept them afloat either by personally bankrolling them or by applying to the Society and its benefactors for financial support. Schemes which foundered were often continued for the sake of the broader campaign for women's employment. Thirdly, the 'murky boundary' between profit-making and philanthropic that Gamber refers to was perpetuated by the women in charge: they presented these businesses as either charitable or commercial depending on the context at any given time. Frequently, charitable aims served business aims: publicizing these women's poverty became a means of marketing their goods or services to the general public. At the same time, opposition from men concerned that female competition would lower male wages led to accusations that these businesses were no more than charitable ventures: this claim was vehemently rejected by those running them who wanted to prove that women were capable of entering the employment market as equals with their male contemporaries. Women in charge of these institutions were therefore ambiguous about the motives underpinning the businesses they ran. This chapter will explore

¹ Gamber, 'A gendered enterprise'. For more on women in business, see R. Beachy, B. Craig and A. Owens (eds), *Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres* (Oxford, 2006); B. Hill, 'Single Women in Business', in B. Hill, *Women alone: spinsters in England, 1660-1850* (London, 2001), pp. 43-53; M. Freeman, R. Pearson and J. Taylor, "'A doe in the city": Women shareholders in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain', *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2006), 265-291.

these ambiguities in more detail.

5.2 The Viktoria-Bazar and the Lette-Verein in Berlin

According to Jessen, the Viktoria-Bazar in Berlin was based on an English model (*nach englischem Muster*).² It was founded by the Lette-Verein in Germany in 1866, some time after the founding phase of its English equivalents: according to Whitlock bazaars in England had already become ‘fixtures of early nineteenth-century culture and provided women with a public space for consumption and display’.³ An assessment of English bazaars will thus hopefully shed some light on the work of the Viktoria-Bazar. Whitlock highlights that different bazaars were established to serve two separate purposes: one was commercial and the other was charitable. She goes on to explain that:

(...) bazaars served as markets catering to women where buyers, sellers, and producers were female. In charity bazaars, upper-class women exhibited and sold their own artworks and craft products while buying similar goods produced by other women. For the middle-class and working-class women employed in commercial bazaars, it was a chance at a semi-independent existence as traders.⁴

The first British bazaar was the Soho bazaar founded in 1815. According to Whitlock it was ‘an amalgam of two types later becoming separate forms - the commercial and the charity bazaar’.⁵ Its founder John Trotter created what Whitlock describes as a ‘benevolent marketplace’⁶ established in the context of a Britain recovering from the Napoleonic wars. He claimed he was assisting the

² Jessen, *Die Kaiserin*, p. 48.

³ T. Whitlock, *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*

families of fallen soldiers, giving ‘small vendors a chance to sell their wares at a fair profit’.⁷ Trotter charged vendors three pence per foot of counter space within which to sell their produce. The goods sold were primarily what Whitlock refers to as ‘fancy goods and fripperies’.⁸ The Soho Bazaar itself was housed in a large building measuring 300 feet by 150 feet and offered 160 vendors sufficient counter space to sell their goods. According to his supporters, Trotter advertised the bazaar as a place where ‘reduced tradesmen may recover and retain their connexions’.⁹ With time a number of bazaars had sprung up all over London: at Leicester Square, Newman Street, Bond Street, St. James’s Street and the Strand.¹⁰

The Soho bazaar provided mainly women with employment. Whitlock states that for women vendors at the bazaar this type of employment was usually their only means of support.¹¹ The application form to sell at the Soho Bazaar confirmed that vendors were mostly female as it required referees to agree that ‘WE, the undersigned, being intimately and long acquainted with the aforesaid.....do hereby certify that she is truly respectable and good tempered and that her moral character is irreproachable, and her honesty unquestionable’.¹² Reverend Joseph Nightingale was one of the supporters of the Soho Bazaar at the time and strongly in favour of women’s employment there. He viewed it as the ideal blend of capitalism and charitable aims. His pamphlet entitled *The Bazaar: its origin, nature and objects explained and recommended as an important branch of political economy in a letter to the Right Honourable George Rose M.P.* published in 1816, aimed to persuade Rose, an advocate of savings banks for the poor and a member of the poor law committee in the 1812 parliament,¹³ that bazaars and

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 49. Prochaska quotes Robert Louis Stevenson who satirized bazaars as selling ‘objects of general usefulness, such as Tea-cosies, Bangles, Brahmin Beads and Madras Baskets’: see Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, p. 47.

⁹ J. Nightingale, *The Bazaar: its origin, nature and objects explained and recommended as an important branch of political economy in a letter to the Right Honourable George Rose M.P.* (London, 1816), p. 8.

¹⁰ Whitlock, *Crime*, p. 46.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 51.

¹² Nightingale, *The Bazaar*, p. 12.

¹³ Roland Thorne, ‘Rose, George (1744–1818)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, January 2010

savings banks could go ‘hand in hand – Let the BAZAAR furnish the *means* of saving’.¹⁴ Within this pamphlet he outlined that the bazaar’s ‘professed object is the encouragement of FEMALE AND DOMESTIC INDUSTRY’.¹⁵ He stated that ‘daughters of persons in trade, with large families and contracted fortunes, how are the anxious parents to provide for their beloved offspring? (...) They are above the class of servants; governesses are now more numerous than pupils; and they have not wherewithal to embark them in business.’¹⁶ He encouraged such families to send their daughters to work at the bazaar for ‘the very practice will render her managing, and prudent, and industrious’.¹⁷ His arguments were reminiscent of those used by the Lette-Verein and the Society in favour of women’s employment from the 1850s onwards. Indeed, in 1875 the Society in London, anxious to assist women in selling the goods they produced, raised the issue of sending them to the Soho Bazaar and inquired and reported on the cost such a course of action would incur.¹⁸

It would appear that this blend of commerce and charity found within the British bazaar was to influence the Lette-Verein’s establishment of the Viktoria-Bazar later in the century. In Wilhelm Adolph Lette’s ‘Promemoria’, published on 14 December 1865 in *Der Arbeiterfreund* he raised the possibility of ‘the establishment of sales and exhibition areas (bazaars)’ for women (*die Einrichtung von Verkaufs- und Ausstellungs-Lokalen (Bazars)*).¹⁹ In doing so he noted that ‘also one such bazaar has been newly founded in Dresden as the result of a programme initiated on the 26 November’ in 1865 (*Auch ist ein solcher Bazar neuerlichst in Dresden zufolge Programms vom 26. November ins Leben gerufen*).²⁰ Jenny Hirsch, the secretary of the Lette-Verein, provided further information about this bazaar in *Der Arbeiterfreund* in 1868. In an article on ‘the

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24088>, accessed 21 December 2010].

¹⁴ Nightingale, *The Bazaar*, p. 65.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Minutes of the General Committee, 26 June 1875. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁹ Lette, ‘Promemoria zur Beratung des Komites für Verbesserung der Erwerbsquellen und Lage des weiblichen Geschlechts’, *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), 424-431, here p. 428.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

endeavours to advance women's capacity for work in and outside Germany', she stated that '[i]n Dresden a bazaar for the daughters of officials has been established by Amely Bölte, which however did not make favourable progress and had to close' (*In Dresden wurde durch Fräulein Amely Bölte 1865 ein Bazar für Beamtentöchter eingerichtet, der jedoch keinen günstigen Fortgang nahm und wieder geschlossen werden musste*).²¹ This article provides no further information about the Dresden bazaar or its founder, but Hauff quotes what she describes as the prospectus for the Dresden bazaar written by Bölte.²² It stated that '[t]he number of daughters of officials who are unprovided for has over a decade markedly increased. And why? Because the needs, the demands of life, the luxury in clothing, lodging and way of life grow and young men therefore have to look for girls who are wealthy' to marry (*Die Zahl der unversorgten Töchter der Beamten hat sich seit einem Jahrzehnt bedeutend gemehrt. Und warum? Weil die Bedürfnisse, die Ansprüche an das Leben, der Luxus in Kleidern, Wohnung und Lebensweise sich steigern und die jungen Männer daher nach Mädchen mit Vermögen ausschauen müssen*).²³

As a German émigré in London from 1839 to 1851, Bölte's establishment of the Dresden bazaar may have been inspired by her time in England where the bazaar was already popular and male and female philanthropists were beginning to explore the problem of women's employment. Bölte developed networks with a series of key British philanthropists and public figures,²⁴ some of whom would later become important participants in the Langham Place group and the work of the Society. She was an 'acquaintance of Richard Monckton Milnes' who became a member of both NAPSS' committee and the Society's General Committee.²⁵ As

²¹ J. Hirsch, 'Die Bestrebungen zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts in- und ausserhalb Deutschlands', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 6 (1868), 188-212, here p. 210.

²² Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 93. Hauff gives no further details with regard to the prospectus' title.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Amely Bölte was also a governess in the household of Thomas Carlyle. For more on Amely Bölte's relationship with the Carlyles, see the Thomas Carlyle letters online at <http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/>.

²⁵ R. Ashton, *Little Germany: exile and asylum in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1986), p. 212.

the governess for the wealthy German Jewish philanthropist, Sir Isaac Goldsmid²⁶ she was in contact with his son, Francis Goldsmid, who later became both a member of NAPSS in 1857²⁷ and furthermore, a member of the General Committee of the Society based at 19 Langham Place in 1859.²⁸ When Bölte arrived in 1839, Francis had just married Louisa Sophia Goldsmid who was to become a close friend of Emily Davies, another member of the Langham Place group: Louisa assisted her in the movement to gain women access to university examinations from 1862.²⁹ In addition, Louisa's mother-in-law Isabel was a member of the Langham Place group from the outset and Louisa took her husband's place on the General Committee of the Society upon his death in 1878.³⁰ These individuals were strongly committed to social reform generally and women's employment in particular. Although there is no concrete evidence to suggest that Bölte's establishment of the Dresden bazaar for the impoverished daughters of officials was directly influenced by her contact with these philanthropists, it was a project that seems to have been very much in tune with their ideas.

Other individuals with links to England followed Bölte's example and established bazaars in Germany. Princess Alice of Hesse, the Crown Princess Victoria's sister in Darmstadt, founded the Alice-Verein and the Alice-Bazar in 1867 with the assistance of Louise Büchner who, according to the *Englishwoman's Review*, supervised the work of the latter where she 'receives and pays for women's work, exercising at the same time a beneficial supervision over the merits of the work,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Francis Goldsmid's wife Louisa was one of the fifteen women present at the meeting at Lord Brougham's house which signalled the establishment of the NAPSS in June 1857: see Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 31.

²⁸ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 37.

²⁹ Geoffrey Alderman, 'Goldsmid, Louisa Sophia, Lady Goldsmid (1819–1908)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48415>, accessed 3 January 2011].

³⁰ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 40. Louisa Goldsmid furthermore helped found the Governesses' Benevolent Institution in 1849. As a governess herself, Bölte may have been interested in its work: see Alderman, 'Goldsmid, Louisa Sophia, Lady Goldsmid (1819–1908)', Oxford DNB.

thus teaching girls the advantages of conscientiousness and thorough industry'.³¹ Princess Alice was known for her interest in charitable projects especially British ones: according to Koven she visited the slums in London in the mid- nineteenth century to witness conditions there in person.³² Furthermore, her interest in Octavia Hill's social housing project for the poor in London led to a friendship between the two and she translated Hill's *Homes of the London Poor* into German, upon which male social reformers based their own practical initiatives.³³ Like Amely Bölte, Princess Alice saw the British bazaar as a model to be used in Germany to provide women with employment.

As chapter 3 of this thesis has shown, Lette's 'Promemoria' written in December 1865 outlined five key aims to be carried out by the committee established to administer the work of the Lette-Verein.³⁴ The third of these aims was to set up bazaars for the sale of 'women's handmade items and artistic products' (*weibliche Handarbeiten und künstlerische Erzeugnisse*).³⁵ He argued in the 'Promemoria' that the need for bazaars 'is in the interest of avoiding depressed sales and increasingly emphasizing fair prices, in particular for those skilful, well-finished, labour intensive goods made by well-bred women' (*im Interesse eines nichtgedrückten Absatzes und angemessener Preise insbesondere für die von gebildeten Damen kunstmässig angefertigten mühsamen Arbeiten mehrfach hervorgehoben*).³⁶ The proposal Lette provided in his 'Promemoria' was vague. It was still to be decided 'whether such a bazaar would first and foremost be a sales area either for every type or particular types of hand-made goods by women, or whether it should rather provide for the exhibition of such goods leading to supply and demand in larger quantities' (*Es wäre zu erwägen: ob ein solcher Bazar vorzugsweise als Verkaufsstätte, und zwar für jede oder für welche Art weiblicher*

³¹ 'Louise Büchner', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 9, no. 59 (1878), 102-104, here p. 103.

³² S. Koven, *Slumming: sexual and social politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, 2004), p. 10.

³³ For more on how British philanthropic models were transferred to Germany, see Adam, 'Social Welfare', paper presented at the 20th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Sydney, Australia, 3-9 July 2005.

³⁴ See p. 100 of this thesis.

³⁵ Lette, 'Promemoria', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 426.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

Handarbeiten, oder aber vorzugsweise zur Ausstellung solcher Arbeiten behufs Nachfrage und Angebot in grösseren Partien dienen soll?).³⁷ Looking to the future, Lette noted that ‘whether the bazaar would from time to time link itself to industrial exhibitions for women’s goods of a particular or certain kind, either from all countries or only from Germany or Prussia, would be considered later’ (*Ob mit dem Bazar von Zeit zu Zeit Industrie-Ausstellungen weiblicher Arbeiten verschiedener oder jeder Art, sei es aus allen Ländern der Welt oder nur aus Deutschland oder Preussen, zu verbinden seien, mag später ins Auge gefasst werden*).³⁸ However, this was clearly something he wished for. He recommended in the ‘Promemoria’ of 1865 that the establishment of a bazaar would be carried out by ‘a women’s society (*Frauenverein*) as far as possible guided by a self-appointed group of trusted men with technical, industrial, sales and distribution expertise’ (*ein Frauenverein, soweit nöthig unter Zuziehung selbst gewählter, mit Technik und Gewerbe, mit Verkehrs- und Absatz-Verhältnissen vertrauter Männer, eignen*).³⁹ The aim was thus to place the bazaar on a firm commercial foundation from the start, relying on these men’s industrial and sales abilities. The implication was, as was the case with regard to other endeavours undertaken by the Lette-Verein, that women needed male advice to achieve their goals.

In 1866, *Der Arbeiterfreund* published a report about the founding of the Lette-Verein, which stated that according to Statute 1.4 the Lette-Verein was committed to ‘the establishment of sales and exhibition areas for women’s handmade items and artistic products’ (*Begründung von Verkaufs- und Ausstellungslokalen für weibliche Handarbeiten und künstlerische Erzeugnisse*) and that a committee would be responsible for this.⁴⁰ Later in the same report, the committee for the bazaar announced that ‘local and central sales depots are temporarily located in the premises of the silk-factory owner Karl Weiss at 93 Leipzigerstrasse, where objects for sale and exhibition are to be deposited. The committee in charge

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 429.

⁴⁰ ‘Die Gründung des Berliner Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts’, *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), 91-100, here p. 94.

comprises a number of men, and twelve women who will act as inspectors' (*Lokal- und Centralstellen sind vorläufig in der Wohnung des Seidenwaaren-Fabrikanten Karl Weiss, Leipzigerstrasse 93, an welchen Verkaufs- und Ausstellungs-Gegenstände abzugeben sind. Das Komite besteht aus einigen Männern und zwölf inspizirenden Damen*).⁴¹

The fate of the Viktoria-Bazar was influenced by a number of individuals who each had a vested interest in its outcome. Karl Weiss would offer not only his premises for the bazaar but would oversee its work using his business expertise as a silk manufacturer. According to Hauff, Weiss had at some point previously communicated with the Lette-Verein 'that he had already for some time been selling women's handicrafts, only as a middle-man without intending to make a profit' (*dass er schon seit einiger Zeit Frauenarbeiten ohne Gewinnabsichten, nur als Mittler, bei sich verkauft habe*).⁴² The bazaar would furthermore be managed by the aforesaid 'Kommission für Verkauf und Ausstellung weiblicher Handarbeiten und künstlerischer Erzeugnisse' (*Commission for the sale and exhibition of women's handmade items and artistic products*) which included the twelve female inspectors Lette referred to. Finally, the Crown Princess Victoria, Queen Victoria's daughter and wife of King Wilhelm I's son, Friedrich, the heir to the Prussian throne, became the Lette-Verein's patron and in particular gave her name and patronage to the newly named Viktoria-Bazar.

A follow-up report in *Der Arbeiterfreund* in 1866 on the founding phase of the Lette-Verein stated that the bazaar had opened on 24 May 1866.⁴³ The first published report on the Lette-Verein detailing its work for the period ending June 1866 explained that the cost of the bazaar had been 318 talers, 5 silber groschen and 9 pfennigs.⁴⁴ With regard to the Crown Princess's personal involvement in the

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 99.

⁴² Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 95.

⁴³ 'Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit des "Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts"', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), 198-221, here p. 205.

⁴⁴ *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit des Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts seit Gründung desselben am 27. Februar, bez. 15./16. März bis 20. Juni*

work of the Viktoria-Bazar, the committee in charge of it had asked the princess to donate her own 'choice of functional as well as beautiful models and patterns for a collection of items of clothing for a child from birth to the end of its first year' (*eine eigene Auswahl ebenso zweckmässiger als schöner Modelle und Muster zu sämtlichen Bekleidungsgegenständen für ein Kind von dessen Geburt bis zum vollendeten ersten Lebensjahre*).⁴⁵ Victoria's patronage was vital in conveying to the Prussian people that providing middle-class women with employment was a matter of royal importance. Furthermore, royal patronage highlighted that the Viktoria-Bazar was a benevolent cause in need of public support and a matter of national importance.

From the outset, therefore, the development of the Viktoria-Bazar was influenced by a number of protagonists. Karl Weiss, the committee running the bazaar and the Crown Princess all had a vested interest in its success, yet different motives for their support. Weiss was primarily a businessman perhaps more concerned with his own reputation and finances: although according to Hauff he was apparently sympathetic to the cause of women's employment, he was possibly an opportunist who recognised, like Trotter in England, the potential to make some money and boost his own reputation by helping women who were viewed as a worthy cause. He was paid 200 talers by the Lette-Verein to establish the Viktoria-Bazar in 1866.⁴⁶ Furthermore, his involvement in the Lette-Verein grew with time and from October 1867 he became the treasurer for the Lette-Verein following the departure of Bank Director Sörgel.⁴⁷ In the case of the committee and the Crown Princess they were clearly predominantly concerned with the course of the women's movement and with finding charitable solutions to the poverty experienced by 'superfluous' women.

1866 (Berlin, 1866), p. 7. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK.

⁴⁵ 'Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 205.

⁴⁶ *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit*, p. 29. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK.

⁴⁷ *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Berliner Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts* (Berlin, 1868), p. 7. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4., no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

Initially, it was the outbreak of war that dictated the course taken by the Viktoria-Bazar. War broke out between Prussia and Austria in June 1866 and the bazaar, which had opened on 24 May 1866, turned its attention to the war effort, thus immediately linking itself to a patriotic cause. According to Hirsch the economic climate was difficult and the Lette-Verein 'had begun its work at a time very unfavourable to serious and difficult economic endeavours' (*hatte seine Thätigkeit in einer ernsten, schweren, wirthschaftlichen Bestrebungen sehr ungünstigen Zeit begonnen*).⁴⁸ Despite this, the war provided the Viktoria-Bazar with the means for women to earn some money and raise the bazaar's profile. The Lette-Verein's first report for 1866 detailed the outcome of the first meeting held by the committee in charge of the bazaar on 20 June 1866. Those present had agreed to extend the bazaar's activities because of the war and to 'get involved in making suitable hospital items, the manufacture of which would be undertaken chiefly by the surviving wives of soldiers' (*auf Anfertigung passender Lazarethgegenstände einlassen; deren Herstellung vorzugsweise hinterbliebenen Frauen von Wehrmännern übertragen*).⁴⁹

The manufacture of hospital items (*Lazarethgegenstände*) by the women employed in the bazaar for the sick and wounded was designed to provide an income for women whose husbands were fighting or had died in the conflict. It immediately connected the Viktoria-Bazar with what Quataert describes as a 'historical tradition of "national defense"'.⁵⁰ A report in the *Englishwoman's Review* published in 1867 described this initial work and stated that:

(...) it was resolved that the Bazaar should be used for the preparation of hospital stores of all kinds, by the wives of the men in the *Landwehr*, and this undertaking was exceedingly successful. Advances of money were granted to these women who were thus enabled to prepare all the necessary

⁴⁸ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 21.

⁴⁹ *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit*, p. 22. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK.

⁵⁰ J. Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy: patriotic women and the national imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813-1916* (Michigan, 2001), p. 79.

stores, and to exhibit them and offer them for sale to the public. The expeditious distribution of these to various large commercial houses dealing in hospital stores, led to the best results, so that a sum of more than 3,000 thalers passed through the hands of the superintendents.⁵¹

The Lette-Verein's first report of 1866 provided more detail with regard to what the Viktoria-Bazar produced for the war effort. Models of bandages and practical hospital items were displayed for inspection as a pattern for women to follow (*das Bazar-Comite wird demnächst von Verbandmitteln und praktischen Lazarethgegenständen Modelle zur Ansicht ausstellen*).⁵² Furthermore, 500 hospital pillows made according to a pattern produced by the Crown Princess would be made by the Viktoria-Bazar as one of its first commissions.⁵³

According to Hirsch, the money to buy the materials needed to assist with the war effort came from the Board (*Vorstand*) and Committee (*Ausschuss*) of the Lette-Verein which contributed 100 talers. Further funds came from the bazaar's own takings⁵⁴ and apparently Wilhelm's son, Georg Lette, who had settled in America, also contributed.⁵⁵ Though details of how the money was raised and which hospitals received supplies is vague, Quataert confirms that the Viktoria-Bazar was one of many 'ad hoc relief' societies and how '[w]omen elites arranged for the making of jackets, shirts, socks, bandages, and pillows on a large scale throughout the territory.'⁵⁶ Quataert describes the work of a Berlin women's organization which 'supported a hospital in the Bavarian Palatinate' and 'organized the

⁵¹ 'General Meeting at Berlin of the Society for the Promotion of the Industrial and Professional Training and Employment of Women', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1867), 132-136, p. 135.

⁵² *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit*, p. 22. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37. He was Wilhelm Lette's only son and according to Obschernitzki died without descendants in America: see Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 9. Aside from these references to Georg I can find no further references to him or why and when he moved to America.

⁵⁶ J. Quataert, 'German Patriotic Women's Work in War and Peace Time, 1864-90', in S. Förster and J. Nagler (eds), *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 449-477, here p. 456.

production of linens and surgical bandages for its hospital'.⁵⁷ Although there is no evidence that this was the Viktoria-Bazar, the latter reported in June 1866 that it had established connections 'with those institutions which took care of the wounded' (*mit denjenigen Vereinen, die für Pflege der Verwundeten sorgen*).⁵⁸ In July 1870, when the Franco-Prussian war broke out, the Viktoria-Bazar again would become involved in the war effort. According to Quataert '[a] predominantly female executive committee of the Victoria Bazaar prepared an appeal to German and Prussian women in July 1870' stating that '[t]he historic enemy of Germany threatens once again to "destroy our districts, houses and property, our family and community, our happiness and honour"' and thus urged them to help in the war effort.⁵⁹

Once peace with Austria had been declared in August 1866, the Viktoria-Bazar took a different direction under what Hirsch referred to as 'skilful' leadership (*unter geschickter Leitung*).⁶⁰ There was a recognition that 'for it to become a really competitive business it could not be a charitable institution, and had to be led by firm business principles' (*sollte er ein wirklich konkurrenzfähiges Unternehmen, keine Wohltätigkeitsanstalt werden, nach festen Geschäftsprinzipien geleitet werden müsse*).⁶¹ Despite these commercial aims, the welfare of the women it tried to assist was still at the forefront, and balancing these two principles was problematic. It would appear that frequently charitable ideals took priority over commercial ones in the administration of the Viktoria-Bazar

The Viktoria-Bazar held an exhibition in September and October 1866 to mark this apparent change of direction and to market itself as a provider of quality hand-crafted goods to appeal to the bazaar's mainly female customers. It sold a range of goods including 'ladies' and children's linens' (*Damen- und Kinderwäsche*) and

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit*, p. 22. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK.

⁵⁹ Quataert, 'German Patriotic Women's Work', p. 456.

⁶⁰ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22.

⁶¹ Ibid.

‘embroidered and crocheted goods’ (*Strick-, Häkel- (...) Arbeiten*).⁶² As part of this exhibition, Franz Lipperheide, the publisher of *Modenwelt*,⁶³ a fashion magazine aimed at middle-class women founded by him and his wife Frieda, established a competition for women to produce the best hand-made items which were both ‘artistic and practical’: these were on display at the Viktoria-Bazar and until the end of October 1866 it served as a venue for the public display of competition entries.⁶⁴ The magazine thus provided the bazaar with vital publicity. Furthermore, both Franz and Frieda made annual donations of 1 and 2 talers respectively to the work of the Lette-Verein.⁶⁵ According to Hirsch, making the Viktoria-Bazar successful ‘depended on training good, capable female workers, to guide them in how to finish such items that were profitable and saleable, to procure the materials required for their manufacture and to take on and carry out people’s orders’ (*Es kam darauf an, gute, tüchtige Arbeiterinnen heranzubilden, sie auf die Anfertigung solcher Gegenstände hinzuleiten, die lohnend und verkäuflich waren, Material dafür zu beschaffen und Bestellungen anzunehmen und auszuführen*).⁶⁶ In this way, women were encouraged to demonstrate the quality of the goods they produced and show that they were able to compete with other producers, specifically men. Their ability to produce artisan crafts of the same standard as those produced by their male counterparts, was a key prerequisite for their success in a competitive market. Furthermore, this would provide them with the means to earn a living if they remained single.

Following the exhibition, although the Viktoria-Bazar continued to try and establish itself as a commercial venture, women’s welfare was prioritized over profitability. This can be seen in the terms of the contract drawn up with Karl Weiss from 1 April 1867. Not only did he assume responsibility for the bazaar’s

⁶² *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 13. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

⁶³ *Modenwelt* became the *Illustrierte Frauenzeitung* from 1874 and both were hugely successful.

⁶⁴ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22.

⁶⁵ *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit*, p. 34. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK. Frieda Lipperheide was particularly interested in the art of costume design and she collected old German and Italian embroidery patterns, publishing them with great success: see P. Wilhelmy, *Der Berliner Salon im 19. Jahrhundert (1780-1914)* (Berlin, 1989), p. 736.

⁶⁶ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22.

accounts and any financial risks incurred⁶⁷ but as Hirsch explained ‘in order to protect the character of the institution’ Weiss could only take ‘a profit of 10%, 12% at the most’ (*um den Charakter des Instituts zu wahren, stets nur einen Nutzen von 10, höchstens 12 Prozent zu nehmen*).⁶⁸ He furthermore agreed to receive advice from the commission established to run the bazaar and to allow Baron von Holtzendorff and factory owners Herr Friedländer and Herr Friedheim to inspect the accounts.⁶⁹ Thus despite the claim that ‘business principles’ (*Geschäftsprinzipien*) guided its work, the Viktoria-Bazar continued to operate according to charitable aims.

Hirsch stated that four women were in charge of the bazaar, all of whom received a salary from the Lette-Verein:⁷⁰ a female director (a woman named Johanne Knipp), a female tailor, a bookkeeper who was a pupil of Clement’s commercial school, and a saleswoman who was a trainee at the Lohff Institute.⁷¹ Both of these institutions were providing training in association with the Lette-Verein.⁷² Clement’s ‘Real-, Handels- und Gewerbeschule für erwachsene Töchter’ was founded following discussions between him and the Centralverein and Lette in the autumn of 1865.⁷³ It was agreed that the school would remain independent of the Lette-Verein but the latter would finance four of the year-long training places for women which cost 50 talers each.⁷⁴ It opened on 23 April 1866 and offered women training in German, French, English, Geography, History and Science as well as business courses in subjects such as commercial correspondence and bookkeeping.⁷⁵ Lohff’s school trained women for business and commercial work on a smaller scale than Clement’s school, once more as an independent institution

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 14. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

⁷¹ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 22.

⁷² *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 14. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

⁷³ Obschernitzki, “*Der Frau*”, p. 27.

⁷⁴ Other places in the school were financed by the Crown Princess Victoria, the Centralverein and other women’s institutions in Berlin: see *Bericht über Einrichtung und Wirksamkeit*, p. 5 and p. 29. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, 9237/66, GStPK.

⁷⁵ Obschernitzki, “*Der Frau*”, p. 27.

with places funded by the Lette-Verein.⁷⁶ By employing women who had received training in institutions affiliated to the Lette-Verein, despite their probable lack of practical business experience, the Viktoria-Bazar highlighted its commitment to advancing women's employment. Once again women's welfare was prioritized over and above commercial principles: women only recently trained and in need of work were employed rather than candidates with a strong background in business.

The work of the bazaar was reported at the general meeting of the Lette-Verein held on 9 November 1867, and an account of the meeting was subsequently published in Berlin's *National Zeitung*. This was translated into English and published in the *Englishwoman's Review* in 1867 and explained that:

The principal trade of the Bazaar now consists of children's clothing, from under-linen and shoes to the most beautiful dresses. There has, as yet, been little sale for embroidery; knitting, crochet and needlework have sold better. Orders are constantly received for the patterns exhibited. The workwomen are mostly girls of the educated classes, especially teachers and governesses.⁷⁷

According to Hirsch, at the close of 1867 the number of women working for the bazaar on a full-time basis was 40 and more than 100 had found temporary work there.⁷⁸ The *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht* of 1867 for the Lette-Verein explained the profile of these women in more detail. They were 'in the large part widows and daughters of officials, teachers and military personnel' (*grösstentheils Wittwen und Töchter von Beamten, Lehrern und Militairs*).⁷⁹ They were predominantly middle-

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ 'General Meeting', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1867), p. 136. The Society compared the Viktoria-Bazar to an institution at 47 Great Portland Street called 'The Association for the Sale of Work of Ladies of Limited Means' which although separate from the Society sold the handmade goods of poor middle-class women. For more on the association at Great Portland Street, see B.J. Morris, *Victorian Embroidery: An Authoritative Guide* (London, 1962), p. 194.

⁷⁸ The Society's Annual Report from 1868 also explained that the Viktoria-Bazar gave 'constant employment to 40 ladies, and occasional work to more than 100': see Annual Report, 1868. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

⁷⁹ *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 14. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

class: widows presumably had to work to support themselves but whether the daughters of middle-class men referred to needed the money or were simply sent there by parents who believed they would gain skills and some extra money is not clear. They may well have been like the girls Weyergang referred to in her article 'Über das Los der unverheiratheten Mädchen'; in need of some form of employment so as not to be a burden on their families if they did not marry.⁸⁰ The *Englishwoman's Review* of 1867 was keen to emphasise the vulnerability of these women and that the bazaar's purpose was to act as 'a depot for the sale of women's work, and so to enable the poor creatures, who are striving to earn their bread by painful toil, to obtain the real value of their work'.⁸¹ Once more the Viktoria-Bazar was presented to the public as a charitable cause.

The women working for the bazaar were furthermore treated as charitable cases by its leaders. They were encouraged to make a living, but did so whilst benefiting from more favourable terms than their contemporaries who were exposed to normal market conditions. Not only did they find employment but many of them resided in the Viktoria-Stift pension housed in the same building. The Viktoria-Stift aimed to provide them with affordable and safe accommodation supervised by a 'Hausmutter', a role fulfilled initially by Karl Weiss' wife.⁸² Their accommodation costs at the Viktoria-Stift were low and in contrast to women who worked in Trotter's Soho bazaar, where women paid three pence per foot of counter space to sell their goods, those working at the Viktoria-Bazar did not pay to sell theirs. It is not clear whether they paid for the materials they used or whether they received them at a subsidized rate. However, those housed in the Viktoria-Stift benefited from a cheap restaurant on the ground floor. These women therefore were assured lower living costs by working for the Viktoria-Bazar.

Whether the bazaar could provide women with a stable income, however, became a matter for concern. Initially the Viktoria-Bazar struggled to even achieve sales

⁸⁰ See p. 79 of this thesis.

⁸¹ 'General Meeting', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1867), p. 135.

⁸² Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 26.

for the women it assisted. The annual report for the Lette-Verein written in December 1867 explained that market demand did not match supply by the bazaar and that as a result it was currently ‘unfavourable for those who wished to profit from the bazaar’ (*ungünstig für diejenigen, welche vom Bazar profitieren möchten*).⁸³ It went on to say that it is ‘regrettable that at this current time, scarcely a sixth of women who wish to work for the bazaar can be given work; because the institution does not yet attract sufficient attention from a larger public’ (*Es ist bedauerlich, dass zur Zeit noch kaum der sechste Theil der Frauen, welche Arbeit vom Bazar wünschten, hat berücksichtigt werden können; denn das grosse Publikum schenkt dem Institute bei weitem noch nicht diejenige Beachtung*).⁸⁴ Public misconceptions about the bazaar were cited as the cause, predominantly that it was expensive (*dass der Viktoria-Bazar theuer sei*).⁸⁵ The report criticized these ideas, highlighting the bazaar’s ‘charitable aims’ (*Wohlthätigkeitszwecken*), and argued that the bazaar did not aim to make a profit. Furthermore, it claimed that by cutting out the need for a middleman, women working there could receive the best prices for their goods (*durch den Ausschluss des Zwischenhandels einen besseren Preis für ihre Arbeit erzielen*).⁸⁶ The same report explained that two substantial commissions had been received by the Viktoria-Bazar from the Crown Princess Victoria: a 40 foot square crocheted blanket and an embroidered banner with a flag showing on it known as a *Fahnenband*.⁸⁷ In doing so it was hoped that her commission would give the Viktoria-Bazar much needed publicity and encourage the public to buy from the bazaar. The bazaar thus relied not only on its charitable profile but on charitable commissions to keep it afloat: people who bought goods from the Viktoria-Bazar would know they were aiding a good cause.

In the spring of 1867 Holtzendorff suggested that the bazaar hold an international exhibition, perhaps with the aim of improving its profile and boosting sales.⁸⁸

⁸³ *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 14. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 27.

Johanne Knipp, the Director of the Viktoria-Bazar, was sent by the Board of the Lette-Verein to the Paris Exhibition in September 1867. She wrote a report about the visit which was published in *Der Arbeiterfreund* in 1868 and stated that the visit aimed ‘to see what use we could make of the exhibition for women's work in Germany’ (*um zu sehen, welchen Nutzen wir für deutsche Frauenarbeit aus der Ausstellung ziehen könnten*).⁸⁹ Knipp described how by the second day she and her colleague Fräulein Rullmann ‘directed our gaze with astonishment on the items which owed their existence to female hands’ (*richteten staunend unser Auge auf die Arbeiten, welche weiblicher Hand ihr Entstehen verdankten*).⁹⁰ She went on to say that ‘we felt rather impoverished with our German skills in the face of all this splendour’ (*wir kamen uns dieser Grossartigkeit gegenüber mit unserm deutschen Können ganz ärmlich vor*).⁹¹ She had regained some of her composure by the third morning and described how ‘I was calm and composed and said to my travelling companion: “we must above all remember that it is a world exhibition: everything that we see there has taken years to prepare in advance and is aimed for effect; the cost has not been taken into account”’ (*war ich ruhig und gefasst und sagte zu meiner Gefährtin: “Wir müssen vor Allem bedenken, dass das eine Weltausstellung ist; Alles was wir da sehen, ist Jahre lang vorbereitet und auf den Effekt berechnet; der Preis ist gar nicht in Betracht gezogen*).⁹² She made an assessment of the French exhibits starting with gold and silver embroidery and stated firmly that German women's abilities did not lag behind the French in this area.⁹³ Furthermore, Frau Knipp described a technique called ‘Point de Toile’ used in the production of covers and lace work which cost no more than 10 centimes to make but with a resale value of between 5 and 10 francs. She believed that ‘this is a type of work which could be transplanted to Germany with success, and so I brought drawings and a frame from which to copy’ (*dies sei eine Arbeit, die sich nach Deutschland mit Erfolg verpflanzen lasse, und so brachte ich Zeichnung und*

⁸⁹ J. Knipp, ‘Bericht über die auf der Pariser Ausstellung gemachten Beobachtungen über Frauenarbeit, erstattet von Johanne Knipp, Direktrice des Viktoriabazars’, *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 6 (1868), 182-187, here p. 182.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Rahmen zur Nacharbeit).⁹⁴ Some pieces she rejected, despite their beauty, on the grounds that they were impractical; it would seem that the Viktoria-Bazar aimed to create goods that were above all useful and cheaper as a result.

The Viktoria-Bazar opened its own exhibition, the 'Allgemeine Frauen-Industrie-Ausstellung', in the autumn of 1868. Entries were invited and received from all over the world with 1200 entries sent from Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, England, Bohemia and even Asia.⁹⁵ The exhibition was opened by the Crown Princess and Prince Friedrich on 1 October 1868 in a ceremony attended by numerous guests.⁹⁶ It remained open until 20 December 1868 and like many bazaars charged an entrance fee which in this case was 50 pfennigs. Hirsch explained that 'women belonging to the exhibition committee undertook (...) for one day in the week the supervision [of the exhibition] and were concerned too with the sale of the items there, the undiminished proceeds of which should have benefited the exhibitors' (*Die dem Ausstellungskomitee angehörenden Damen übernahmen (...) je einen Tag in der Woche die Beaufsichtigung und besorgten auch den Verkauf der eingelieferten Sachen, deren Erlös unverkürzt den Ausstellerinnen zu gute kommen sollte*).⁹⁷ The presence of these women may indeed have improved sales and was a common tactic used by charitable bazaars. As Prochaska highlights in his portrayal of charitable bazaars in England '[a] stall presided over by the Queen gave the greatest mark of distinction and guaranteed a large turn-out (...) and a tidy profit (...) Failing the Queen any distinguished lady, preferably with a title, ensured an increase in sales.'⁹⁸

Despite the efforts of the Exhibition Committee, Hirsch reported that the Industrial Exhibition held at the Viktoria-Bazar was not a financial success. Indeed the *Dritter Rechenschaftsbericht* published in 1870 which covered the period from 1

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 27. For more on the exhibition, see Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, pp. 102-103 and Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 29.

⁹⁶ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 27.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, p. 65.

January 1868 to 31 December 1869 revealed that the costs of the exhibition actually resulted in a deficit of 654 talers and 28 silber groschen. This left the Lette-Verein's finances in a 'precarious state' (*prekäre Lage*) which was only resolved by generous donations from the Crown Princess (200 talers) and other members of the Exhibition Committee.⁹⁹ Hirsch highlighted, however, the publicity surrounding the exhibition for the cause of women's employment and how it raised the profile of female skill in producing handcrafted goods. Those involved in running the 'Allgemeine Frauen-Industrie-Ausstellung' at the Viktoria-Bazar agreed that medals would be distributed by the Crown Princess Victoria in recognition of the women's achievements. Two gold, twenty-six silver and twenty-one bronze medals were handed out, each bearing the picture and name of the Crown Princess.¹⁰⁰ The criteria for entry were that where relevant, the items produced by women should be of a standard to compete with those produced by men. According to Hirsch, these women's achievements became public knowledge: for some it led to more orders for their work. In another case highlighted by Hirsch, the exhibition led one woman to settle in Berlin and carry on her work there.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, Hirsch believed that the exhibition galvanized support for women's right to be trained in practical work.¹⁰² The Society in England perhaps recognized the value of such publicity and seems to have followed the Lette-Verein's example. It too encouraged women to exhibit the goods they made at the Workman's International Exhibition of 1870. Here women's handcrafted items were displayed alongside male entries. The Society also distributed medals of its own to female apprentices in glass-engraving and other crafts who exhibited their work.¹⁰³ Amongst those given medals were Miss Crowe for a fern-printed blind and Elizabeth Walker for a water jug and glasses

⁹⁹ *Dritter Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung der höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 1. Januar 1868 Bis 31. Dezember 1869* (Berlin, 1870), p. 11. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 8603/40, GStPK.

¹⁰⁰ Pictures of the medals can be found in Krakau, 'Kaiserin Friedrich', in Müller, *Victoria von Preussen*, p. 80.

¹⁰¹ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 28.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Minutes of the Managing Committee, 15 May 1872. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

she had engraved.¹⁰⁴

Following the 1868 Exhibition and the financial losses it sustained, the contract between the Lette-Verein and Herr Weiss was terminated and the Viktoria-Bazar was handed over to Weiss to continue as a private business.¹⁰⁵ The reasons behind this are not altogether clear, but Hirsch describes how differences emerged between Weiss on the one hand and the Exhibition Committee and the Board of the Lette-Verein on the other.¹⁰⁶ However, the bazaar and Weiss retained strong links with the Lette-Verein: the bazaar was managed by not only Weiss but a committee of women with Anna Schepeler-Lette as its President.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the Viktoria-Bazar, the Viktoria-Stift boarding house, the employment bureau, the meeting rooms for the Lette-Verein's Board and Committee and the Damenrestaurant (Ladies' Restaurant) currently run by Weiss' wife were all now housed at 92 Leipzigerstrasse, a building owned by Herr Weiss. He and the committee of women responsible for the Viktoria-Bazar had autonomy in making decisions over how the bazaar should be run: crucially, they decided to open a sewing-school and offer lessons in tailoring to women at the start of 1870.

On 1 October 1870, Weiss and the committee for the Viktoria-Bazar decided to extend these classes and open an industrial school (*Gewerbeschule*) for women.¹⁰⁸ 130 female students joined the classes which were split into two areas. Weiss presided over classes in drawing, tailoring, hand-sewing, embroidery, machine-sewing and later on telegraphy. Commercial subjects were offered by Clement and included business script and correspondence, bookkeeping and dealing with commercial and industrial customers, coinage, masses and weights.¹⁰⁹ In 1871 courses in English and French were also offered.¹¹⁰ The school became well established and following Clement's decision to leave Berlin in October 1871 his

¹⁰⁴ Minutes of the Managing Committee, 2 November 1870. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

¹⁰⁵ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau*", pp. 46-47.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* and Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 25.

classes came under the management of the committee of the Viktoria-Bazar and the school became a commercial and industrial school (*Handels- und Gewerbeschule*) run by the Viktoria-Bazar.¹¹¹ The Crown Princess Victoria donated an annual sum to pay for students who could not afford the fees to attend.¹¹²

The fortunes of the Viktoria-Bazar were once again affected when in 1872 Herr Weiss left for Erfurt, selling his business at Leipzigerstrasse and setting up his own school in Erfurt to train 'Beamtentöchter'.¹¹³ On 23 April 1872, following Anna Schepeler-Lette's inauguration as President of the Lette-Verein, it was decided that the committee in charge of the Viktoria-Bazar and the 'Handels- und Gewerbeschule' should once more be administered by the Lette-Verein: those on the committee governing its work joined the Lette-Verein's Board, Committee and various commissions. Crucially the school was now managed directly by the Lette-Verein and continued giving instruction deemed vital for the training of women.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the establishment of this school was perhaps where the Viktoria-Bazar enjoyed most success.

The Viktoria-Bazar itself ceased to function for three years. It was re-founded on 1 April 1875¹¹⁵ with Anna Schepeler-Lette as president. Frau Arons assumed the role of treasurer, having already proved her skills in this regard as treasurer for the business and commercial school. Her husband Herr Arons donated 600 marks for the establishment of the new Viktoria-Bazar and it was housed in the Lette-Haus at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse, the new premises for the Lette-Verein as of 1872. Once more a tailoress and a saleswoman were employed to run it whilst later on an assistant was also appointed.¹¹⁶ With Weiss gone, it operated as more of an exhibition centre for women's work, providing a setting for women to receive

¹¹¹ Obschermitzki, "*Der Frau*", p. 47.

¹¹² Göttert, 'Victoria', in von Hessen (ed.), *Victoria Kaiserin Friedrich*, p. 96.

¹¹³ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 38.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53 ff.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

commissions.¹¹⁷ The aim once more was for the production of well-made and saleable items and furthermore to establish standardized prices for such work so that women could earn a fair wage. Despite this it remained according to Obschernitzki, the 'problem' child (*Sorgenkind*) of the Lette-Verein and ceased to operate in 1888.¹¹⁸

Karl Weiss reflected on his involvement in women's training in 1874 in a pamphlet entitled *Über Frauenarbeit*: he was convinced that such training was vital if women were to be able to support themselves.¹¹⁹ He argued that women of the middle classes did not necessarily need new employment opportunities but rather improved skills so as to make them fit for work. In line with the fact that he had only received a 10% to 12% profit as manager of the bazaar, Weiss highlighted his altruistic motives for the work that he did. At the start of the pamphlet he remarked that he was concerned on a 'daily', even 'hourly' basis, with how to ensure women secured an independent existence in salaried employment.¹²⁰ He concluded by saying that any contribution he was able to make to solve the problem of women and work would be the 'purest and most beautiful reward'.¹²¹

His pamphlet acknowledged that women needed work and a means of securing their independence in an honourable way. This concern had been raised by many: parents concerned about the future of their daughters, widows and orphans, preachers and guardians. He made it clear that he was not trying to assist women seeking political and social emancipation, but rather deal with a problem exacerbated by rapid economic change and growing materialism.¹²² Weiss believed that women's struggle to support themselves when they could not be supported through marriage stemmed from a lack of skills for work. He did not advocate that women be admitted to new forms of work but instead believed that suitable

¹¹⁷ Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 125 and Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau*", p. 65.

¹¹⁸ Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau*", p. 64 and Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 55.

¹¹⁹ K. Weiss, *Über Frauenarbeit* (Zittau, 1874), p. 172.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

training in skills which originated in the home would lead to increased employment opportunities for women. Gaining skills required in the kitchen such as cooking, baking and preserving would lead to jobs in hotels, private houses and bakeries. Ability in sewing and embroidery could help a woman find work as a director of a ready-made clothes company, or make a living running a small business producing gloves, woollen goods, dolls and other similar items. Women who already worked within the home as teachers and carers could turn these skills to public use as kindergarten employees or nurses. Weiss believed that the world was basically nothing other than an 'infinitely specialized and expanded house' (*Die Welt ist im Grunde nicht anderes, als das ins Unendliche specialisirte und erweiterte Haus*).¹²³

Women however desperately needed training. Weiss described how frequently young women's handwriting was deficient, they were unable to write numeric figures, did not know their multiplication tables and could not write down the simplest of expressions or sew the most straightforward of things. He described how in the case of the Viktoria-Bazar itself, their search for someone to manage the restaurant had been fruitless. Despite a year spent trying to find a woman knowledgeable in domestic science, they had had to appoint a man.¹²⁴ The same had happened for the Ladies' Restaurant that opened in Königgrätzerstrasse when the Lette-Verein purchased the Lette-Haus there. Furthermore, the managers of the Viktoria-Bazar had advertised for six weeks for someone to work in the area of pique embroidery at a rate of 6 - 8 talers per week but had had no response.

The Viktoria-Bazar therefore failed to offer women gainful employment, despite the best efforts of those involved in administering its work. Its launch in a time of war, unplanned though it was, gave it a patriotic boost and seems to have initially

¹²³ Ibid., p. 164.

¹²⁴ Lina Morgenstern decided to train women in professional cookery in kitchens which served food to the poor known as 'People's Kitchens' (*Volksküchen*) in Berlin. For further discussion about the professionalization of cookery and domestic science and Morgenstern's efforts to bolster public recognition of housewifery see N.R. Reagin, *Sweeping the German nation: domesticity and national identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (Cambridge, 2007).

provided it with commissions for work and a strong aim of providing for women who had lost their husbands. However, it would seem that in peacetime the Viktoria-Bazar struggled to provide women with profitable work. Public perceptions that it was expensive led to a concerted publicity campaign by the Lette-Verein which culminated in the 'Allgemeine Frauen-Industrie-Ausstellung' of 1868. However, this in itself was a financial disaster and the Viktoria-Bazar only survived with financial assistance. Furthermore, even when Weiss alongside the committee for the Viktoria-Bazar tried to establish the bazaar as a successful enterprise, the Viktoria-Bazar still foundered.

Crucially, although those in charge of it ostensibly claimed to run it according to commercial principles, the Viktoria-Bazar remained firmly a charitable concern. Women's welfare was prioritized: women were not only given work but safe and affordable accommodation and meals. Furthermore, as the bazaar struggled, those in charge of it relied on charitable arguments and interventions to keep it afloat. The public were encouraged to buy from the bazaar because the women working within it were presented as being vulnerable and therefore in need of their support. Commissions from the Crown Princess for work by the Viktoria-Bazar set a vital example to the general public to follow suit. However, as Hirsch highlighted, despite these failings the Viktoria-Bazar raised the profile of women's employment. Furthermore, it advocated better working conditions and higher rates of pay for women's work by cutting out the middle-man. Although women worked in areas deemed traditionally feminine, the bazaar aimed to find new value and recognition for their work. Louise Büchner, speaking at the first general meeting of the Alice-Verein in Darmstadt in October 1872, argued that the bazaar 'would also have a beneficial effect upon the scale of wages for female work, a scale now regulated by the arbitrary will of the employer' and that it 'afforded an opportunity for introducing among them the principle of co-operation'.¹²⁵ Recognition for the importance of good training led the committee of the Viktoria-Bazar and Weiss to

¹²⁵ 'Some Account of the Autumn Conferences in Germany', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 4, no. 13 (1873), 11-16, here p. 15.

establish a school for women that hopefully would enable them to gain these vital skills for work and with them better pay. Despite the bazaar's closure in 1888, these classes continued to offer women valuable training.

5.3 The Law Copying Office and the Society in London

On 30 January 1860 law copying classes for women commenced in a room in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, London under the management of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women.¹²⁶ In the General Committee meeting minutes for 7 February 1860 the entry described how Miss Martin, the daughter of a law engrosser, was paid 12 shillings a week to teach girls and women law copying for five hours per day.¹²⁷ By the 3 April 1860, Matilda Hays and Adelaide Proctor had drawn up a circular addressed to solicitors 'inviting them to furnish work to the Law Copying Class'.¹²⁸ The prospectus for the school was written by Jessie Boucherett and initially Jane Crowe was granted the lease of the school which by April had moved to 12 Portugal Street. From this office a trade, which until this point had been solely undertaken by men was carried out by a group of ten or so women, employed for an average wage of 16 shillings per week.¹²⁹ By August 1860, the manager of the office, who was now Maria Rye, stated that they had received so much work for the women to carry out that 'I have been incessantly employed from ten in the morning till seven, and, on two occasions, till nine o'clock at night, arranging, preparing, or examining deeds.'¹³⁰

Maria Rye, who led the work of the law copying office, was born in 1829 in London, the daughter of a solicitor. Bessie Rayner Parkes described how Maria

¹²⁶ Anna Jameson said that 'I have heard of women employed in writing and engrossing for attorneys, but this is scarcely an acknowledged means of existence; they are employed secretly, and merely because they are paid much less than men'. A. Jameson, *Memoirs and Essays Illustrative of Art, Literature and Social Morals* (London, 1846), pp. 236-237.

¹²⁷ Minutes of the General Committee, 7 February 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹²⁸ Minutes of the General Committee, 3 April 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹²⁹ 'Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), p. 391.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Rye came to know the women of Langham Place and that '[t]he first of those who joined the early work was Miss Maria Rye. At the time of the proposed introduction of a bill on the property of married women, our attention was attracted by an excellent article on the subject in the "Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine," signed "M.S.R." An enquiry made of the editor was answered by a visit from the young writer, then living near London with her family, and devoting her leisure to literature. From that time she became the fast friend of her fellow workers.'¹³¹ She became the secretary of the group formed to campaign for the Married Women's Property Bill in 1856¹³² and then a shareholder of *The English Woman's Journal*, thus forging strong connections with the women of the Langham Place group.¹³³ She was a strong critic of the legal position of women and wrote an article entitled 'The Property of Married Women' which was published in *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* in 1856.¹³⁴ It detailed the injustices women were subjected to upon marriage and showing her considerable understanding of the legal system.¹³⁵ Furthermore, it revealed her commitment to women's right to employment stating that '[a] new light is dawning upon men's minds about female labour. This ray may be very faint, so dim, indeed, that it is scarcely visible even to those whose eager eyes have watched the social horizon for a lengthened period.'¹³⁶ This legal knowledge, most likely gained from her experience of her father's business, may be why she came to be the manager of the law copying office: by the summer of 1860 she was in charge of its work.

In September 1860 an entry in the General Committee minutes for the Society described Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon's interest in the endeavours of the law

¹³¹ Bessie Rayner Parkes, 'A Review of the Last Six Years', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 12, no. 72 (1864), 361-368, here p. 365.

¹³² Judy Collingwood, 'Rye, Maria Susan (1829-1903)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35896>, accessed 31 August 2009].

¹³³ Jane Rendall, 'Langham Place group (act. 1857-1866)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, Oxford University Press, October 2005; online edition, February 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/93708>, accessed 31 August 2009].

¹³⁴ M. Rye, 'An Infallible Recipe for Making Poor Relations', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, vol. 6. (1857/8), pp. 280-283.

¹³⁵ Diamond, *Emigration and Empire*, p. 30.

¹³⁶ Rye, 'An Infallible Recipe', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, vol. 6. (1857/8), pp. 280-283.

copying office. She requested it be carried on solely in Maria Rye's name and if this was agreed would 'advance £200 to enable Miss Rye to accept the offer'.¹³⁷ The committee concurred that the law copying office could proceed on an independent footing and from this point on it was no longer under the control of the Society, but became Maria Rye's private business. Rye's law copying office provided a service to lawyers, professional men described by Diamond as 'those great generators of paper in all ages'.¹³⁸ The documents copied included wills and indentures which were usually engrossed 'that is, written on parchment (or pseudo-parchment) in a special handwriting style'¹³⁹ as well as drafts of leases, copies of affidavits, bills of costs and briefs.¹⁴⁰ The work was deemed suitable for women because it relied upon skills which were regarded as ladylike: the acquisition of a neat handwriting style and work which could be carried out behind closed doors whilst women were seated at desks. Women paid a premium to be trained of 1 guinea for one month's training.¹⁴¹ These premiums were usually advanced as a loan by the Society, to be paid back when the woman in question had secured enough work to do so.¹⁴² The law copying office, therefore, relied on the Society's funds to support women as much as possible in entering employment. Although it was a private business run by Rye it was underpinned by charitable principles.

Arthur Munby, the famous diarist and writer known for his fascination with working women, described how well the work fitted in with conventions about suitable work for the female sex.¹⁴³ Upon visiting the office at Portugal Place in 1863 he stated that he had met 'Miss Francies the deputy manager: a plainly drest

¹³⁷ Minutes of the General Committee, 26 September 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹³⁸ Diamond, *Emigration and Empire*, p. 47.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), pp. 391-392.

¹⁴¹ Diamond, *Emigration and Empire*, p. 52.

¹⁴² 'Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 11, no. 65 (1863), p. 420 describes how '[o]f two premiums advanced for law copying, the loan was paid back in a month after the expiration of apprenticeship'.

¹⁴³ Munby was a diarist and writer, who had trained as a barrister. He was fascinated by women workers, especially those involved in some of the filthiest occupations. He provoked scandal upon his death when it became apparent from his will that he had secretly married a maid-servant Hannah Cullwick: see Liz Stanley, 'Munby, Arthur Joseph (1828-1910)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edition, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35147>, accessed 2 June 2010].

quiet feminine person, under thirty; looking like a governess. On one side, among the ledgers and briefs and business apparatus, was a little basket of woman's work, and a thimble and scissors: a quaint and touching juxtaposition."¹⁴⁴ Anne Thackeray Ritchie, the daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray, a novelist in her own right and a friend of Adelaide Proctor, wrote about the work undertaken by the law copying office in its early years in an essay entitled 'Toilers and Spinsters' published much later in 1874. She described how she arrived at the offices at 12 Portugal Place and 'was rather disappointed to find the place perfectly light and clean, without any of the conventional dust and spiders' webs about. The manager sitting in a comfortable little room, the clerks busy at their desks in another - very busy, scarcely looking up as we go in, and working away sedulously with steel pens.'¹⁴⁵

In contrast to Munby's account, however, hers did not suggest that the work was entirely easy. Indeed, she stated that the female employees:

(...) go on from ten till about six. This business, however, cannot be counted on with any certainty; sometimes there is a press of work which must be done, and then the poor clerks sit up nearly all night, scratching with wearied pens, and arrive in the morning with bleary eyes, and pale faces, and fit for very little. Then, again, there is comparatively nothing going on; and they sit waiting in the office, working and embroidering, to pass the time.¹⁴⁶

Whereas Munby saw the law copying office in romantic terms, drawing attention to the quiet labour and feminine pastimes undertaken when work was quiet, Ritchie was far more realistic asserting that 'the idea of clerks embroidering in their office, and of young women with pens behind their ears, bending over title-deeds and parchments, seemed rather an incongruous one; but young women must

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Diamond, *Emigration and Empire*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁵ A.T. Ritchie, 'Toilers and Spinsters', in *Toilers and Spinsters: And other Essays* (London, 1874), p. 19.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

live somehow, and earn their daily bread; and a great many of these had tried and failed very often before they drifted into Miss Rye's little office.¹⁴⁷

Ritchie also documented well the difficulty women had in entering what until now had been solely a male preserve. Their lack of experience and contacts initially led to errors and problems in finding sufficient custom. She stated that:

It was very uphill work at first. The copyists were new to their work; the solicitors chary of reading it. Many of their clerks, too, seemed averse to the poor ladies. Others, however, were very kind; and one, in particular, came to see Miss Rye of his own accord, to tell her of some mistakes which had been made, and gave her many useful hints at the same time.¹⁴⁸

Maria Rye acknowledged the difficulties she faced in private correspondence with Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, stating 'I can't tell you how I am working. I have no time to stop and tell any one, I can only "do" - fancy a regular strain of hard work from 9 in the morning to 10 & 11 at night without any respite, & you see my daily life - & and it is the very dayshishness (sic) of it that is so trying.'¹⁴⁹ She too was concerned with the errors the women she employed made and feared that both her own and their inexperience could threaten the promise of future work. She told Bodichon:

(...) now fancy if you can what my feeling & anxiety is – when I remind you that every piece of work that enters this house *has the hour* marked on it by which it is to be returned & that with all their kindness – the Solicitors cannot give us any quarter in that respect – we have a ready made business to manage & and not only half trained but untrained hands only, to work it.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ritchie, 'Toilers', pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁹ Maria Rye, 12 Portugal St., to Barbara Bodichon, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Rye expressed clearly here how problematic it was to establish the law copying office as a successful business. The women it trained were those who had applied to the Society for help: they had their premiums paid by the Society so that they could train in law copying. In approaching the Society they were seeking charitable assistance: they were not skilled, experienced workers but young predominantly unskilled women in need of employment.

Despite this, Rye's letters to Bodichon conveyed that she aimed to run the law copying office according to business principles in her role as its manager. Not only did she acknowledge her responsibility for its success or failure, but her belief in the worth of her work and her determination that the law copying office should be commercially successful. She described how '[m]y business is progressing slowly - very slowly - but still progressing, - we made in the year - the first year I had it £300!! nearly £200 however went for wages - & the greater part of the rest for house expences (sic) - still it was not bad when you think of all our ignorance and inaptitude.'¹⁵¹ Although Bodichon had given £200 to put the law copying office on a firm footing, Rye was determined to use as little of the money as possible and aimed to make the office self-sufficient. She wrote to Barbara explaining this saying 'I very much hope that I shall not want to draw more than that first £50 of you (...) I have added rather over £36 of my own to it, - & am only spending about 10s. a week on my own board, wearing nothing but old clothes, - & going out nowhere, - because I can't bear to be a drag to you.'¹⁵² Rye's excitement about the business was evident: whether she would be able to surmount the difficulties the law copying office faced was less certain.

Maria Rye was keen to report on the successes of the law copying office at a meeting held by the committee on 29 June 1860. Chaired by Lord Shaftesbury, the Society's president, the meeting took place in the Ladies' Reading Room and was attended by 'many influential and benevolent persons'. Rye's report was one of a

¹⁵¹ Maria Rye, 12 Portugal St., to Barbara Bodichon, 16 January 1862. GCPP Parkes 10/56, GCA.

¹⁵² Maria Rye, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

number of papers written to inform those present of the progress of the Society's work and was read by Mr Cookson.¹⁵³ She explained that she had struggled to complete the paper due to the sheer volume of work they had received that week. She described how there were 'ten workers constantly engaged in this office, eight of whom are rapid and ready writers, the other two are pupils (...) the writers are paid by the piece, their wages also vary in proportion, ranging from five to sixteen shillings per week (...) the sum is nearly double that which could be earned at the needle, with nearly twice the amount of labour'.¹⁵⁴ Rye also acknowledged that to start up the business had been difficult. On the one hand the novices were inexperienced and 'took some weeks to unlearn the usual feminine spider-legged fashion of indicting; some weeks more to decipher the solicitor's signs, contractions and technical terms'. She implicitly agreed that errors were made and thus their 'success was, in a great measure, owing to the unfailing courtesy and unwearied kindness of (...) firms who supplied us with our first work' and whose 'advice', 'assistance' and 'instructions' helped them create the business which only 'carelessness and inattention can destroy'.¹⁵⁵ The 'kindness' of the solicitors referred to by Rye was clearly crucial. Although she aimed for the office to develop as a business it seems that she relied on male solicitors' firms' assistance in running the law copying office: presenting the office as a charitable cause in need of their support was therefore a pragmatic way of keeping her business afloat.

Rye acknowledged that in the area of law copying, unlike printing and telegraphy, there was no deficiency of male employees. Women were thus in direct competition with men. She argued, however, that women had just as much right to earn an income as men, stating that 'while thousands of young men are to be seen contentedly employed at sedentary and womanly occupations (...) at the same time thousands of young women are to be seen anxiously inquiring where they are to earn their daily bread (...) it becomes perfectly legitimate, and an imperative duty in the latter, to avail themselves of every opening by which they may support life,

¹⁵³ 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), pp. 389-396.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

and remain respectable members of society'.¹⁵⁶ Competition did, however, pose a problem. The *Alexandra Magazine* reported that 'the usual obstacle is in the way, viz., the jealousy of men already engaged in the profession. The law copyists of London form a sort of close corporation or guild, into which none are admitted without having served a seven years' apprenticeship (...) should a law-stationer engage a female clerk, it is at the risk of all the men in his employ instantly leaving him.'¹⁵⁷ Aside from competition with men for work, Rye faced a further problem when trying to gain access for women to the legal profession. She wrote to Barbara saying 'I must tell you I have added to my establishment a big man & a little boy, the former to relieve myself – the latter to please the solicitors, - some of them objecting and I think reasonably, to my young women meeting their young men.'¹⁵⁸ Standards of propriety governing male and female interactions thus complicated the task at hand for Rye even further.

In light of male competition and the difficulties women faced in entering a male-dominated working environment Rye was clearly reliant on the support of male solicitors' firms in receiving work from them. On 29 June 1860 during a meeting of the Society Maria Rye reported to those present on the work of the law copying office. Orders were sought as Rye exhibited work completed by the office requested that 'the friends of this society will kindly name our efforts to their several solicitors and acquaintances'.¹⁵⁹ The report of the meeting ended by describing how '[d]eeds and other law papers, engrossed and copied by women, were spread upon tables, and keenly and a little suspiciously scrutinised by the legal portion of the assembly, obtaining however, finally, in all cases, a verdict of very hearty and somewhat surprised approval'.¹⁶⁰ This was reiterated by powerful men involved in the Society's work. Lord Shaftesbury, speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Society on 3 July 1863, stated that '[w]e find that in copying,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ 'Law-Copying as an Employment for Women', *Alexandra Magazine*, vol. 1, September 1864, 305-310.

¹⁵⁸ Maria Rye, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

¹⁵⁹ 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), p. 390.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 396.

printing, and other occupations, women are fully equal to men'.¹⁶¹ Others were keen to denigrate the level of skill needed for the work so as to make it seem ideal for women. Mr Cookson stated that 'he looked forward with confidence to this pursuit becoming a recognized employment for women, as it required neither physical nor mental qualifications which they did not, in an eminent degree possess'.¹⁶² To a degree it seems that Rye's efforts paid off. In December 1860 she told Barbara that '[w]e have got work, from 6 new firms during the past six weeks, two of whom will be very regular in giving us work, being really interested in the movement'.¹⁶³ In December 1864 a large order from the India House was secured.¹⁶⁴ The interest these solicitors showed 'in the movement' accords with Jordan's belief that the Society's success relied on support from men who wished to portray themselves as 'progressive, public-spirited businessmen'.¹⁶⁵ It was good publicity to support these women in their 'philanthropic' cause of providing women of the middle classes with work. Furthermore, it is likely that employing female copyists was cheaper with them being paid lower wages for the work.

The Society had hoped that law copying would extend beyond London to other towns and cities in Britain. Boucherett outlined in a speech given at the NAPSS Congress entitled 'Local Societies' published in December 1861 how this could be achieved. She stated that:

The first step towards the establishment of one is to secure the patronage of the solicitors of the town, to induce them to promise that, as soon as the daughter of their ruined fellow townsman is well-qualified, they will give her a share of their custom. The next step is to send her to town to learn the business under Miss Rye's instruction, at 12, Portugal Street. Miss Rye

¹⁶¹ 'Society for Promoting the Employment of Women' *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 11, no. 65 (1863), p. 422.

¹⁶² 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), p. 389.

¹⁶³ Maria Rye, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

¹⁶⁴ Minutes of the General Committee, 2 December 1864. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA. Diamond believes this was probably secured on the recommendation of Florence Nightingale. Diamond, *Emigration and Empire*, p. 52.

¹⁶⁵ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 105.

would charge £5; and as she might board and lodge at the Ladies' Home, 51 Charlotte Street, for ten shillings a week, the expense would not be great, as the business can be thoroughly well learnt in six months. When qualified to commence business, little or no capital would be required (for she must lodge somewhere, and the office would serve as her sitting-room); a desk some pens, and a small supply of parchments and paper would suffice. She would be paid at the regular rate of law stationer's charges, and if the solicitors were friendly towards her, and she did the work well, she would be able to live, and by degrees, as the custom increased, could take a female clerk under her - perhaps, in time, two or three - and so gradually work her way up till she earned a good maintenance.¹⁶⁶

Law copying as a form of employment for women apparently did not take off as Rye, Boucherett and Bodichon had hoped. It was limited in its success because of a variety of factors. Boucherett's plans for law copying to be extended outside of London never came to fruition, although some women trained by the law copying office did set up businesses of their own. Whether these businesses were successful however cannot be ascertained from the sources available. The General Committee minutes for the Society recorded in February 1862 that a law copying office had been established at '[n]o. 24 Coleman Street, City, by Mrs Thackray, Miss Lucas and Miss Green - 3 former clerks of Miss Rye.'¹⁶⁷ Later the following year Boucherett visited these offices at Coleman Street. Furthermore, she was reported as having an interview with Mrs Sharpe at a law copying office in Doughty Street, although what they discussed was not recorded in the minutes.¹⁶⁸ It is likely that this was the Mrs Sharpe described by Maria Rye in 1860 when she said '[m]y idea is to train Mrs Sharpe and Miss Pownall under this man, & by & bye (sic) to make them the heads of the workroom.'¹⁶⁹ Clearly Rye's aim to advance their prospects had paid off with Mrs Sharpe establishing her own

¹⁶⁶ Lacey, *Barbara*, p. 251.

¹⁶⁷ Minutes of the General Committee, 6 July 1862. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁶⁸ Minutes of the General Committee, 10 November 1863. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁶⁹ Maria Rye, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

business. To a few women, therefore, there appeared to be some degree of social mobility. In 1865 one of the other former clerks, Miss Green, was appointed as the forewoman to Rye's law copying office by Jane Lewin, Rye's replacement following her departure to focus her energies on female emigration.¹⁷⁰

Whether the business of law copying was popular amongst the women employed in Rye's office is debatable and may have had an effect on its long-term success. Ritchie stated that 'many of them lose courage, cry off at the last moment, find the occupation too severe, the distance too great, would like to come sometimes of an afternoon, and so go off to begin their search anew'.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, staff turnover according to Diamond was high. Rye described the staffing problems she faced and how she had had to sack someone:

(...) for mislaying some sheets of a draft on another day which could not be found for a whole night – and made poor Mrs Sharpe & myself have a very sleepless night from anxiety – (in fact I dreaded the light) - & what was so vexing was that Miss J- was so unconcerned and indifferent about the matter - so I packed her off - & ultimately the papers were pinned to some other papers the next morning – Then the nicest new hand left at the end of the months trial because it did not suit her health, -& Miss Locke never came at all! – her father being afraid of the distance during the winter nights, - & and lastly we made a horrible boggle about an affidavit for Field & Roscoe which we scratched and had no business to do – (not having been apprenticed to the trade of course I did not know that.¹⁷²

Clearly familial concerns about the suitability of such employment for women had an impact on whether a woman would last as a law copyist as well as those concerns held by the women trainees themselves.

¹⁷⁰ Minutes of the General Committee, 17 January 1865. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA. The General Committee minute book entry stated that Miss Rye was unlikely to return and Mrs Webber had turned the office over to Miss Jane Lewin.

¹⁷¹ Ritchie, 'Toilers', p. 21.

¹⁷² Maria Rye, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

The law copying office was also affected by a change in management. The Society's minutes suggest that once Rye had departed, management of the office passed through a number of hands. Initially, the office passed to Miss Francies, described as Ann Francis in the Society's minute records.¹⁷³ She soon married and 'left the business in the hands of her sister who obtained knowledge of the business', a Mrs Webber.¹⁷⁴ By January 1865, the office had transferred into the hands of Jane Lewin, who as previously stated initially employed the aforementioned Miss Green as forewoman.¹⁷⁵ By 1878 however, the new forewoman was Mrs Sunter.¹⁷⁶ Mrs Sunter and Jane Lewin both worked closely with Maria Rye in her work for the Female Middle Class Emigration Society. Lewin was its secretary from 1862 and employed Sunter to assist her there from 1872.¹⁷⁷

As the office's personnel changed, so too did its relationship to the Society. Mrs Sunter and Jane Lewin came into conflict with the women and men at Langham Place with regard to how the business should be run. On 24 March 1876 the secretary of the Society, Gertrude King, reported in the minutes for the Managing Committee that she had received complaints from a woman who had recently paid a fee to train at the law copying office under Mrs Sunter.¹⁷⁸ This woman had showed King an advert circulated by Lewin and Sunter stating that women could earn 'by the lowest £100 a year' at the law copying office. The advert had led to a huge number of applicants so that Mrs Sunter had raised the premium women had to pay from £1 to £5: clearly the Society now no longer funded all the women's premiums as they had done initially. The woman complained to King that she had paid the fee but after nearly a year had not earned 'scarcely anything'.¹⁷⁹ The woman had 'asked whether the Society was at all connected with that office as she

¹⁷³ Minutes of the General Committee, 2 December 1864, GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Minutes of the General Committee, 17 January 1865, GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁷⁶ Minutes of the General Committee, 28 April 1878, GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁷⁷ See http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/londonmet/library/s44772_3.pdf (accessed 14 September 2009).

¹⁷⁸ Minutes of the Managing Committee, 24 March 1876, GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

considered that the paper contained an account by no means true, and she did not think the committee would countenance what was not straightforward'.¹⁸⁰ There were further complaints directed solely at Mrs Sunter who 'could not teach the apprentices' as she did not 'understand law-copying' and 'her manner to the girls was most unpleasant'.¹⁸¹ The first allegation amounted to one of fraud on the part of the Society and was so serious that committee members agreed that unless Jane Lewin agreed to return the advanced premiums to the girls who had seen the advert, notice of the law copying office should not be inserted in the Annual Report.¹⁸²

Jane Lewin's reply was assertive. She believed that the advert was an honest mistake and that its withdrawal would suffice. She responded frostily to the General Committee's request stating that '[a]lthough the Committee make use of so singular a word as "must" in suggesting the course to be pursued (...) I do not suppose they would be capable of wishing to interfere between an employer and her employees, except when they are justified in doing so by having been accessory to the employees entering the office.'¹⁸³ In her view 'the only account to be given of the matter is that in the great pressure of business inadvertences will occur'.¹⁸⁴ Lewin clearly believed vehemently in her right as the manager of the office to make unilateral decisions regarding its operation without interference from others. As the person responsible for the routine administration of the law copying office it is understandable that such intervention should have been so keenly resented. Furthermore, the demand that premiums should be returned was unlikely to be financially viable; Lewin was aware of the need for the business to remain commercially successful. It is possible that she saw this as the opportunity to sever ties with the Society and thus gain unfettered control of the law copying office business. She did so as the General Committee for the Society decided that as 'it could exercise no control over the management of the law-copying office' it

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Minutes of the General Committee, 28 March 1876. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

was freed from all responsibility concerning it.¹⁸⁵

Law copying as a form of employment for women received little attention from the Society after this point as it turned its attention to other types of work. This was perhaps especially the case in light of new technical innovations which meant that the trade of law copying itself came under threat. Diamond states that 'printing was beginning to take some business from the law copyists'.¹⁸⁶ Despite this the *Englishwoman's Review*, which took over the role of the *English Woman's Journal* when it ceased to operate, continued to highlight the ability of women in the field of law copying and specifically the work of the law copying office established with the support of the Society under Rye. In 1880 in the section *Record of Events* it reported that 'Mr. Dudley Leathley, of 44, Lincoln's Inn Fields gives strong testimony to the efficiency of women as law copyists. "I have for over four years (he writes) sent the whole of my law-copying to Mrs Sunter's office and I can say without hesitation that the work executed is, as a rule, infinitely superior, both as regards accuracy and legibility, to 19-20ths of the work performed by any law stationer whom I have come across."¹⁸⁷ However, women did not make a significant impact in the profession according to the census: in 1861 21 female '[l]aw Stationers and others connected with law' were recorded and this number had only reached 51 by 1871. It was reported that '[t]he increase here is not what might have been expected considering that great efforts were made some years ago to introduce women into the law-copying trade.'¹⁸⁸ By 1881 the number had only increased to approximately 100.

Overall, despite initial hopes for it, the law copying office failed to provide substantial numbers of women with employment. Unlike the Victoria Press which was assisted in its establishment by male printers, the law copying office relied on Rye's abilities alone and she appears to have struggled in running the business.

¹⁸⁵ Minutes of the General Committee, 28 April 1876. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁸⁶ Diamond, *Emigration and Empire*, p. 53.

¹⁸⁷ 'Social Science Congress', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 90 (1880), p. 466.

¹⁸⁸ 'Occupations of Women', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 5, no. 18 (1874), p. 86.

Although Rye was keen to make the office a commercial success female trainees were inexperienced and Rye admitted that she found it difficult to instruct them well: as she acknowledged herself without having served an apprenticeship there were many things about the business she did not know. She was grateful for the kindness of solicitors willing to point out her errors and help her overcome them, but she and her apprentices continued to make mistakes. The law copying office did secure work from solicitors' firms but faced problems along the way. Objections that women should not deliver legal documents to male dominated solicitors' firms led Rye to employ men to assist her. Furthermore, Rye asked members of the Society to use their influence and find business for the office by talking about it to 'their several solicitors and acquaintances'. Considering that a significant number of lawyers were members of NAPSS, it may have been the case that work for the law copying office was found through men who already supported the work of the Society. Although it aimed to be a business, the law copying office relied on presenting itself as a charitable cause to secure support for its work. Some support did come from men willing to use Rye's law copying office, but the low number of women who worked as law copyists in the census suggests that the impact was minimal. It would appear too that law copying as a profession for women did not extend outside of London to the localities. Neither was the idea of employing women taken up by solicitors' offices which apparently continued to employ men to carry out law copying work. When Lewin took over as manager of the office she apparently aimed to make the law copying office more profitable. However, this was apparently at the expense of the welfare of the women working there and the office lost vital support and patronage from the Society. Without this it would appear that the law copying office was even more vulnerable in a highly competitive market. Beyond 1876 no further records can be found of the law copying office's work.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Viktoria-Bazar and the law copying office offered women very different opportunities for work. Whilst the Viktoria-Bazar offered women traditionally 'feminine' employment producing a variety of hand-crafted goods for sale to women, the law copying office attempted to offer women work traditionally done by men for male solicitors. Despite these differences each was established as a business enterprise. Those in charge aimed to provide women with respectable but profitable employment: each struggled to fulfil their aims. Both institutions were established by philanthropists with little knowledge of how to run a successful business. The Viktoria-Bazar was heavily subsidized on a number of occasions with the Crown Princess Victoria in particular acting as a vital donor. Furthermore, it was established according to a British blueprint which marked it out as a 'benevolent marketplace' for women needing work: it therefore relied on being perceived of as a charitable cause to gain public support. Its involvement in the war effort was a natural consequence of its partly charitable status yet it subsequently failed to provide women with profitable employment. Despite the input of businessman Karl Weiss and Johanne Knipp's visit to the Paris Exhibition, efforts to establish the bazaar according to business principles foundered. Overall, its success lies in its efforts to raise the profile of women's work specifically through the 'Allgemeine Frauen-Industrie-Ausstellung' of 1868 and the establishment of a business and commercial school from 1870 onwards. Meanwhile the law copying office similarly failed to find a balance between charitable purpose and commercial success. It was ostensibly established as a business with Maria Rye in charge yet it cost £200 to establish with a donation provided by Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon. Rye herself had little knowledge of business and came to rely on male support from 'kindly' solicitors rather than any business acumen. The law copying office apparently struggled to either find long-term apprentices or to train women effectively. Its reliance on its charitable status became clear when its new managers, Lewin and Sunter came into conflict with

the Society in the mid-1870s. Although the two women secured the right to manage the law copying office as they saw fit - albeit to the dismay of their employees - without the Society's patronage it could not prosper and was no longer mentioned in the Society's annual reports. It would seem that for both these enterprises the 'great pressure of business' referred to by Lewin had proved too much.

Chapter 6: Flagship enterprises: The Damenrestaurant and the Victoria Press

6.1 Introduction

The Damenrestaurant (Ladies' Restaurant) in Berlin and the Victoria Press in London, founded by the Lette-Verein and the Society respectively, offered women very different types of work. Female trainees at the Ladies' Restaurant were taught all aspects of cookery and served affordable lunches to both the general public and their fellow trainees within the Lette-Verein. The Victoria Press under its manager Emily Faithfull trained women as print compositors and operated as a commercial press offering long-term employment. However, they are comparable for a number of reasons. Firstly, both are noteworthy for their longevity and their impact. Whilst the Ladies' Restaurant is still in existence today,¹ the Victoria Press continued to print for twenty years following its establishment. Both enterprises achieved some fame as they each sought to offer women exemplary conditions at work, providing ample breaks, clean and healthy premises and fair wages. The Ladies' Restaurant went even further, offering female trainees secure and affordable accommodation in the Viktoria-Stift, a boarding house for women. Historians have tended to concur in seeing these enterprises as flagship projects of the Lette-Verein and the Society respectively. Obschernitzki states that the work of the Ladies' Restaurant soon resulted in profits (*erarbeitete sehr schnell Überschüsse*).² Hauff agrees that the Ladies' Restaurant prospered and that its cookery school became so popular that not all those who applied could study there.³ Tusan is keen to highlight that the Victoria Press' success was based on strong female cooperation and argues that the Victoria Press 'developed a utopian model of reform based on a maternalist

¹ See Appendix D for a photograph of the cookery school based in the Lette-Verein's restaurant today.

² Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau*", p. 55.

³ Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 134.

cooperative ideal that overturned masculine business practices'.⁴ Interestingly, in the case of the Victoria Press it was successful in spite of a series of scandals which it faced in its early years because of Faithfull's management; this point, neglected by Tusan, is one which will be explored in this chapter.

Both the Ladies' Restaurant and the Victoria Press mounted publicity campaigns emphasizing their success in providing for 'redundant' women of the middle classes. The propaganda surrounding their work differed greatly, however. The Ladies' Restaurant emphasized that it aimed to develop what were regarded as women's innate capacities. Karl Weiss, the initial founder of the Ladies' Restaurant on behalf of the Lette-Verein, argued that women's domestic abilities, specifically their skills in the kitchen could be used to provide them with work preparing food in hotels and private houses. Girls trained as cooks at the Ladies' Restaurant would thus use these domestic skills to secure some measure of independence rather than rely on others for their keep. The Victoria Press challenged entrenched male interests more directly. Male printers, as Tusan emphasizes, had long considered themselves as part of the 'labor aristocracy'. They earned high wages for producing 'culturally valued commodities'. Compositors, who were literate, were especially prestigious and their work was regarded as skilled labour.⁵ As Felicity Hunt highlights, although women had worked in printing usually alongside a male relative since the fifteenth century, by the nineteenth century 'men had appropriated printing as peculiarly suited to themselves'.⁶ Faithfull was keen to break this monopoly and a feminist who argued that women were just as suited to work in compositorship as men.

These two enterprises aimed to offer model training and employment opportunities for women based upon an ideal of optimizing women's welfare in the workplace: women's safety and respectability were key. Whereas the Victoria Press

⁴ Ibid., p. 105.

⁵ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 104.

⁶ F. Hunt, 'Opportunities Lost and Gained: Mechanization and Women's Work in the London Bookbinding and Printing Trades', in A.V. John (ed.), *Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 71-93, here p. 73.

introduced practical measures to reduce the health risks associated with printing, the Ladies' Restaurant offered women respectable employment whilst ensuring that they were provided with accommodation so protecting them from the perceived dangers of the city environment. At the same time they advertised and promoted themselves as a template for others to follow. Indeed the Victoria Press was the inspiration for a number of similar projects in Scotland, Ireland and Germany.⁷ This quest for respectability was especially ironic with regard to Faithfull's management of the Victoria Press and the scandals already mentioned that were linked to the press in the 1860s.

Both the Ladies' Restaurant and the Victoria Press enjoyed royal patronage. The Ladies' Restaurant and the Viktoria-Stift received support from the Crown Princess Victoria and the Victoria Press from her mother Queen Victoria. Royal support in the form of finances and public acknowledgment of their work gave these projects vital credibility. Royal patronage added to the philanthropic image of both the Ladies' Restaurant and the Victoria Press and possibly offered both businesses a commercial advantage. Other potential patrons of these two institutions could be meanwhile reassured that they were assisting a worthy cause.

Finally both enterprises had vital support from men who helped establish and run them. Whereas the Ladies' Restaurant was established by a prominent businessman Karl Weiss, the Victoria Press was established with the assistance of male printers sympathetic to the cause of women's employment. Male support for the Victoria Press was particularly important yet has been underplayed both in contemporary accounts and in recent analyses including Tusan's. This neglect has been in part because women involved in establishing the Victoria Press wished to take the credit themselves and presented the Victoria Press as a safe, respectable workplace dominated by female employees.

⁷ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 106 and p. 114. See also S. Reynolds, *Britannica's typesetters: women compositors in Edwardian Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1989).

This chapter will compare the work of these two very different businesses. The sources available for each, however, differ greatly. Official sources such as the Lette-Verein's annual *Rechenschaftsberichte* provide information on the work of the Ladies' Restaurant and the Viktoria-Stift. They shed relatively little light on any internal conflicts or differences between those involved in establishing these businesses; however, they do acknowledge that problems between Weiss and the Lette-Verein led to changes in the management of the Ladies' Restaurant. In addition Weiss' pamphlet *Über Frauenarbeit* published in 1874 offers an insight into his personal views with regard to training for women.⁸ In contrast to this, sources on the work of the Victoria Press are not only institutional but personal and private. Letters between women of the Langham Place group and Emily Faithfull vividly reveal the conflicts, personal clashes and scandal that dogged the Victoria Press whilst it tried to achieve public support and prove its respectability.

6.2. The Ladies' Restaurant and the Viktoria-Stift pension: institutionalized welfare with a commercial purpose

Feminists in Germany working for the Lette-Verein hoped to solve the 'surplus woman' problem by providing women with training and work. Yet these young, single women, with neither husbands nor a family to look after them needed protection. Fears that working women would be exposed to a series of moral and physical dangers in the workplace and the city led reformers to seek out respectable employment. Indeed, the Lette-Verein aimed to minimize the dangers women were exposed to by creating an institution where women could work, eat and rest in one location. The Damenrestaurant (Ladies' Restaurant) and Viktoria-Stift boarding house thus simultaneously provided women with training, employment and accommodation under one roof. It was a model of institutionalized welfare which aimed to emulate family life whilst providing women with the means to make a living and protecting them from urban dangers.

⁸ Neither Obschermitzki nor Hauff cite the contents of this work.

The Ladies' Restaurant provided trainees with instruction in domestic science and cookery: the women it trained were employed to serve lunches in the restaurant to women only. Its customers were women training and working in the Lette-Verein's institutions as well as the general female public. Women would thus use skills perceived as naturally 'feminine' to gain remunerative employment. Those at work needing a break from their labour would have a safe and respectable place to go; they would thus be less likely to visit the *Speisehäuser* that male workers frequented during the working day.⁹ The Ladies' Restaurant thus publicized itself as the ideal workplace for women and a suitable environment to eat in when not at work. With the Viktoria-Stift on the top floor and the Ladies' Restaurant at the bottom, women finishing work could retire to their living quarters where they found companionship and secure accommodation at a low cost.

It was hoped that this model of institutionalized welfare at work would be an incentive to middle-class women in need of employment but reluctant to enter the public sphere. Family members who perhaps would pay for their daughters or nieces to train there would do so in a safe and respectable environment. There was clearly an element of social control: women who worked, ate and slept in one house could be disciplined, their behaviour monitored and their morality safeguarded. However, it also offered women the chance to form a community. Work would not isolate them but bring them into contact with other women facing the same difficulties and obstacles. Furthermore, women learning domestic science were receiving a technical education that would prepare them for work. The Ladies' Restaurant functioned as a business and they therefore gained an insight into how a successful enterprise should be run. With time, the Ladies' Restaurant became the most financially sound of all the Lette-Verein's ventures.

⁹ Ward writing on Fanny Lewald sheds some light on the role of 'Speisehäuser' in providing food for workers during the day. Drawing on Lewald's writing she states that cooperatively run 'Speisehäuser' were predominantly for the lower classes. Ward states that in Lewald's view 'such facilities – if made more widely available – could also positively alter the lot of middle-class women as well'. This would suggest that middle-class women were possibly restricted in where they could go to eat when working in the city: see M.E. Ward, *Fanny Lewald: between rebellion and renunciation* (New York, 2006), p. 189.

6.2.1 The Viktoria-Stift

During the debates which led to the establishment of the Lette-Verein in 1865, concerns had emerged as to how to safeguard women working in the metropolis. Men and women involved in discussing how to deal with the woman question had raised the issue of providing suitable accommodation and board for single women from the outset.¹⁰ The *Votum* published in *Der Arbeiterfreund* in 1865 stated that there was an urgent need for 'accommodation', 'healthy food' and 'a place to read' for women; a 'communal home for unmarried women to be cared for who have no family'.¹¹ Later in a paper written by Herr Clement, the manager of the commercial school of the Lette-Verein, he described how boarding-houses for women would 'contribute to the elevation of the material, spiritual and moral welfare of the female sex'.¹² Savings banks created exclusively for them would protect them financially. He went on to describe a home already established in Hamburg where the residents had the use of their own garden.¹³ These views were reiterated by others, with Eberty describing the Governesses' Benevolent Institution in London as a model for Germany to follow.¹⁴ As a result, the 'Promemoria' published in *Der Arbeiterfreund* in 1865 suggested the establishment of boarding-houses and restaurants serving food exclusively for independent, employed, unmarried women as one of the Lette-Verein's aims.¹⁵ In this way it was hoped that women could work in the city away from their families without putting their moral, physical and spiritual welfare at risk.

In 1866 these aims were formally incorporated into the Lette-Verein's statutes. They thus publicly committed the Lette-Verein to the 'protection of independent, employed women against discrimination in moral or economic relations, preferably through the provision of suitable opportunities for accommodation and

¹⁰ 'Votum', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 374.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Professor Clement, 'Die Bedeutung von Logis- und Speisehäusern für alleinstehende Frauen und Mädchen', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), pp. 423 ff.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Eberty, 'Beiträge', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 399.

¹⁵ Lette, 'Promemoria', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), pp. 424 ff.

food' (*Schutz selbständig beschäftigter Personen weiblichen Geschlechts gegen Benachteiligung in sittlicher oder wirtschaftlicher Beziehung, vorzugsweise durch Nachweisung geeigneter Gelegenheiten für Wohnung und Beköstigung*).¹⁶

Discussions followed as to how the Lette-Verein would fulfil its obligation. Some suggested that they should search for families willing to take women into their homes. Indeed, this was deemed preferable amongst those who preferred a family environment to the anonymity of 'barrack-style' boarding houses where women would not receive individual care.¹⁷ It was decided that a committee would investigate how to provide women with accommodation and Preacher Wilhem Müller served as its President and Joseph Lehmann as its secretary. Twelve women were co-opted to assist with its work. Initially, the committee vetted boarding houses for their respectability. Preliminary investigations found thirteen boarding houses in the surrounding area which were thought to be unconditionally suitable, six conditionally suitable and eight which were rejected. At the same time respectable families were sought out to accommodate women in exchange for music or language lessons, the carrying out of domestic tasks or the supervision of children. With over 50% of existing boarding-houses deemed currently unsuitable and no reports of available accommodation in family houses, the Lette-Verein's efforts were clearly warranted. However, only four women came to them for assistance.

Despite this apparent lack of demand for accommodation, the committee remained concerned about the welfare of single working women in the city. In founding the Lette-Verein its male leaders had, as previously stated, made it their duty to secure the 'protection of independent, employed women' by providing food and accommodation. This was therefore a priority for the Lette-Verein and thus rather than waiting for women to approach them for assistance the committee decided to provide its own premises for women to reside in.¹⁸ An opportunity arose for the

¹⁶ 'Statuten des "Berliner Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts"', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 3 (1865), pp. 94-96.

¹⁷ 'Die Gründung', *Der Arbeiterfreund*, vol. 4 (1866), p. 93.

¹⁸ *Zweiter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 16. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 912/68, GStPK.

Lette-Verein to create its own boarding-house for single women in 1868. The Lette-Verein's patron, the Crown Princess Victoria, was also patron of the Viktoria-Stift, a home for governesses in Berlin. It had been established in her honour shortly after her marriage to Prince Friedrich in 1858 for governesses who 'came to Berlin as strangers and without positions, to offer them a place of residence' (*die fremd und stellenlos nach Berlin kamen, einen Aufenthalt bieten zu können*).¹⁹ It had for many years struggled financially and required 'urgent reorganization'.²⁰ She recommended that it be taken on by the Lette-Verein and it came under their management on 1 April 1868.²¹ It was re-opened at 92 Leipzigerstrasse, the premises owned by Karl Weiss and was thus housed in the same building as the Viktoria-Bazar and the employment bureau. It now offered women other than governesses accommodation providing they were 'well-recommended' (*gut empfohlen*).²² A smaller women's committee took on the day-to-day administration of the Viktoria-Stift with Anna Schepeler-Lette as president, Gräfin Brockenburg acting as its treasurer and Frau Weiss, Karl's wife, as the Hausmutter, the matron responsible for the well-being of the residents. Betty Lehmann, who ran the employment bureau, assumed responsibility for correspondence. It was hoped that by offering women accommodation in the same premises where they sought work at the employment bureau or received training and employment in the Viktoria-Bazar, the Lette-Verein would receive an increased number of applications for women seeking board there. The *Rechenschaftsbericht* for 1868-1869 would suggest that they were correct in their assumptions and soon the Viktoria-Stift could boast housing over two hundred women per year. Crown Princess Victoria's patronage gave the Viktoria-Stift vital publicity and royal acknowledgment that it provided women with accommodation of the highest standard. Furthermore, financial assistance from the royal family was also vital: 500 talers was granted in 1869 by His Majesty the King, the Crown Princess Victoria's father-in-law, to help with a shortfall with regard to items

¹⁹ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Dritter Rechenschafts-Bericht*, pp. 13-15. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 8603/40, GStPK.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

required for the Viktoria-Stift's inventory.²³

The Viktoria-Stift was situated on the third and fourth floors of the house at 92 Leipzigerstrasse and provided accommodation for 19 women who were housed in 14 rooms for a weekly payment of 3 talers and 22 silber groschen.²⁴ They received their meals daily in the restaurant on the ground floor for what was described as a very reasonable price, five silber groschen. At this stage the restaurant was independent of the Lette-Verein and in a preliminary report on its work the committee was keen to emphasize that although they were supportive and pleased with its work they could not take responsibility for its meal preparation or service.²⁵ There was a communal meeting room and a piano for the women to play, donated by Herr Duysen who provided pianos for the Prussian Royal Family.²⁶ Fanny Lewald-Stahr, the author and a keen supporter of women's education and employment, was reported as having donated books and newspapers to the Viktoria-Stift.²⁷ When Karl Weiss and his wife left Berlin and the Lette-Verein relocated to the Lette-Haus at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse in 1872, Betty Lehmann, head of the employment bureau, took over as the Hausmutter and the Viktoria-Stift accommodated 38 women living in 19 rooms with the weekly charge increasing to five talers per week.

The majority of women living in the Viktoria-Stift appear to have been trainees at the Lette-Verein. Between 1881 and 1883 the *Elfte Rechenschaftsbericht* listed where the inhabitants of the Viktoria-Stift were from and this is represented in the table below.²⁸

²³ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-15.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁷ Ibid. For more on Lewald's opinions on women's right to education and employment see Ward, *Fanny Lewald*.

²⁸ *Elfte Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Kaiserlichen und Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Berliner Vereins zur Förderung der Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 1. Januar 1881 Bis 31. Dezember 1883* (Berlin, 1884), p. 9. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

	1881 Viktoria-Stift residents	1882 Viktoria-Stift residents	1883 Viktoria-Stift residents
Handelsschülerinnen (Commercial school students)	12	13	11
Zeichenschülerinnen (Drawing school students)	6	8	12
Gewerbeschülerinnen (Industrial school students)	86	72	60
Stellensuchende (Those seeking positions)	75	60	65
Diverse Durchreisende (Diverse women passing through)	27	39	52
TOTAL	206	192	200

The majority of women training with the Lette-Verein and living in the Viktoria-Stift were students in the *Gewerbeschule* (industrial school) set up by the Viktoria-Bazar and women looking for work made up the next greatest proportion of residents. The Ladies' Restaurant was part of the industrial school, so presumably the Viktoria-Stift housed a large number of its trainees included in the figures above. Data given in the *Sechszehnter Rechenschaftsbericht* published in 1888 showed that of 177 residents who had lived in the Viktoria-Stift that year, 48 were the daughters of merchants and factory owners (*Kaufleuten und Fabrikanten*), 46 were the daughters of officials (*Beamten*), 32 of landowners (*Gutsbesitzern*), 13 of small businessmen (*Gewerbetreibenden*), 30 the daughters of preachers and teachers (*Predigern und Lehrern*), 4 of doctors and pharmacists (*Ärzten und Apothekern*) and 4 of officers (*Offizieren*) in the army.²⁹ The majority of women

²⁹ *Sechszehnter Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Majestät der Kaiserin und Königin Friedrich stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 1. Januar 1888 Bis 1. Januar 1889* (Berlin, 1889), p. 9. | Ha, Rep.

residing there were thus clearly women from the middle classes.

Ensuring that these women were respectable from the outset and maintaining their respectability within the Viktoria-Stift were key aims of the committee running it. Women were required to make a written application for accommodation which ensured that their backgrounds were closely vetted. Whether they were accepted was reliant on the receipt of certain testimonials regarding their character and good standing. Once they resided there residents were closely supervised by women in charge of the Viktoria-Stift, with the Hausmutter living on site. There was a strict regime according to the regulations of the Viktoria-Stift. These regulations were listed in the annual *Rechenschaftsberichte* of the Lette-Verein and given to every woman on arrival.³⁰ They detailed how women arriving were expected to unpack their suitcases immediately and leave the empty case upon the floor of their room with their name clearly visible. They were reminded not to dispose of scraps of paper, fruit peel, hair and other such rubbish in either their closets or the gutters, but to use the proper waste facilities provided.³¹ A bell would sound at 7.00 a.m. to wake residents up and they were asked to open their windows to air their rooms. Breakfast was served in the conversation room, the cost of which was included as was afternoon coffee. Lunch and dinner were served promptly at 1.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. in the restaurant on the ground floor at a table especially reserved for residents. Rent would then be collected weekly on a Monday morning from 10.00 a.m. by the Hausmutter. Aside from these rules governing their conduct within the Viktoria-Stift, there were rules which served to control their interactions and movements outside it. Women's visitors were limited and they could only apply to receive female visitors; male visitors were strictly forbidden. Lights were turned off and the Viktoria-Stift closed at 10.00 p.m; any woman arriving later than this

120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

³⁰ They were first listed in the *Dritter Rechenschafts-Bericht*, pp. 31-32. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 8603/40, GStPK.

³¹ These particular rules were first published in the *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Kaiserlichen und Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 28. Februar 1873 Bis. 31 März 1874* (Berlin, 1874), pp. 25-26. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

would have to ring the doorbell and pay a 1 silber groschen fee for late arrival. There was time for leisure activities and in the evening each woman could play the piano if she wished, but strictly for half an hour only. Suitable reading matter was approved and provided by the committee in charge of the Viktoria-Stift. Otto Janke, who in association with the Lette-Verein established the first printing press staffed by women, provided the Viktoria-Stift with complimentary reading material from his publishing house.³² In this manner the movements, behaviour, dining and leisure habits of these women were closely regulated and monitored. Women who resided at the Viktoria-Stift were not simply occupants, but subject to a form of social control which would act as a substitute for parental authority and maintain their respectability as young working women.

Welfare in addition to regulation was also a key concern. Herr Dr Feig administered free medical care to the women, a service which in the first few years of the Viktoria-Stift's existence was used frequently and was later taken on by one of Germany's first female doctors, Dr Franziska Tiburtius.³³ Women's protection in the labour market was important and from 1873 those who lived in the Viktoria-Stift were required to pay five silber groschen a month towards an insurance fund. This would provide them with assistance in case of unemployment or illness.³⁴ In addition to these attempts to regulate women's health and economic security there was an emphasis on community and solidarity amongst the women living there. The conversation room and piano playing presumably aimed to provide the women with a sociable environment where they could form ties with one another, in a sense as a replacement for the lack of family life. Celebrations were also vital for strengthening bonds and at Christmas the Viktoria-Stift received funds from the Crown Princess Victoria which were used to purchase a Christmas tree and

³² Otto Janke published amongst other works some of the writing of Max Ring; for example Ring's *Die Spiritisten* was published by Janke in 1885.

³³ *Siebenter Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Kaiserlichen und Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 1. April 1874 bis 31. März 1876*, p. 15. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 7128/76, GStPK.

³⁴ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 17. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

festive food for inhabitants to enjoy.³⁵ Reinforcing women's sense of belonging was likely to ensure good behaviour and compliance and to boost solidarity amongst women who would perhaps be ashamed of their need to work. Furthermore, receiving Christmas gifts from the Crown Princess would have most likely fostered a sense of pride in the Viktoria-Stift amongst its residents. It was in addition further vital publicity indicating that the Viktoria-Stift enjoyed the Crown Princess's personal involvement and support.

Communal meals in the restaurant aimed to strengthen these bonds even further. When Frau Marie Rother took over as Hausmutter from Betty Lehmann she was described as eating her meals with the residents to help strengthen women's sense of belonging to the Viktoria-Stift and to deal with any complaints that may arise.³⁶ Furthermore, cultural mores dictated that respectable women should not frequent the dining establishments used by men. Women dining in the restaurant, whether residents in the Viktoria-Stift or simply women working in Berlin, were able to eat cheap, nutritious meals with other women in a communal setting. In this way, women of the middle classes were made visible as workers with a tangible presence in the employment market. It is to the work of the Ladies' Restaurant that we turn to next.

6.2.2 The Ladies' Restaurant (*Damenrestaurant*)

The restaurant established in Karl Weiss' premises at Leipzigerstrasse transferred to the Lette-Verein's new premises at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse in 1872. It aimed to achieve three main goals; the provision of cheap, nutritious meals exclusively for working women of the middle classes, training and employment for women in domestic science and catering and the creation of a successful business model. The Ladies' Restaurant was in a number of respects modelled on Lina Morgenstern's Volksküchen (People's Kitchen). No longer under Weiss' control, it was

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

established at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse in the same year as the Volksküchen, the latter intending to provide working-class people with cheap nutritious meals.³⁷ Lina Morgenstern had, according to Knoblauch, approached Joseph Lehmann, Wilhelm Lette, Baron von Holtzendorff and Max Ring with her plans, men who were all key leaders of the Lette-Verein.³⁸ They gave her the encouragement and support needed to establish the first Volksküchen which grew to be a long-lasting success.³⁹ Joseph Lehmann was secretary of the committee responsible for helping to provide women with accommodation and food. This committee which had also co-opted women to assist in its work and had responsibility for the Viktoria-Stift was inspired to draw on the model provided by the Volksküchen. They used Weiss' already established restaurant in founding the Ladies' Restaurant which specifically aimed to offer working women affordable meals in a respectable and safe area of the city.

The Ladies' Restaurant was regularly hailed as a great success. Hirsch described how '[a]lready at the end of the first year it showed a profit' (*Schon nach Ablauf des ersten Jahres ergab sich ein Überschuss*).⁴⁰ However, upon its transfer to the Lette-Haus in 1872 it was run by a private individual who as restaurant manager (*restauranteur*) was paid by the Lette-Verein for meals that women from the Viktoria-Stift consumed there.⁴¹ Despite efforts to appoint a woman, the restaurant manager was a man.⁴² At the end of February 1874 the figure he received was 2659 talers.⁴³ In return he paid rent to the Lette-Verein.⁴⁴ Administered as a private

³⁷ L. Morgenstern, *Zuverlässiges Hilfsbuch zur Gründung, Leitung und Kontrolle von Volksküchen und anderen gemeinnützigen Massen-Speiseanstalten: Mit Kochrezepten der Berliner Volksküchen und die Geschichte des Vereins von 1866* (Berlin, 1900).

³⁸ Knoblauch, *Die Suppenlina*, pp. 16-17.

³⁹ For a recent insight into the continued existence of 'VoKü', modern Volksküchen in Berlin see M. Gunn, 'Welcome to Berlin's squat scene' *The Observer*, Sunday 12 July 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2009/jul/12/berlin-squat-music-food-parties> (accessed 4 December 2009).

⁴⁰ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 73. Obschernitzki and Hauff both agree that the Ladies' Restaurant was profitable: see Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 55 and Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*, p. 134.

⁴¹ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 32. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

⁴² Weiss, *Über Frauenarbeit*, p. 157.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* The rent the Lette-Verein received from renting out various rooms in the house was 3132

enterprise, albeit under the same roof as the Lette-Verein's schools and institutions, it was managed separately. In 1883, the management and administration of the Ladies' Restaurant passed to the Lette-Verein: at this point Frau Auguste Kühne took the position of the *Wirtschafterin*, Frau Euchel was president of the commission in charge of the cookery school and Fraulein Brandhorst was in charge of the accounts. By 1888 Anna Schepeler-Lette had replaced Frau Euchel as president of the commission responsible for the cookery school.

According to Hirsch approximately 100 women came to eat in the restaurant daily.⁴⁵ Lunchtime meals from 1873 cost 7 and a half silber groschen each with a subsidized rate of 6 silber groschen for members.⁴⁶ The number of women training there was revealed occasionally in the *Rechenschaftsberichte* for the Lette-Verein. At the end of March 1876 the *Rechenschaftsbericht* reported that the cookery school, which along with the Ladies' Restaurant was 'closely connected to the Viktoria-Stift', had taken 6 students.⁴⁷ By 1878 the number of cookery students stood at 80-90 per year.⁴⁸ In 1881 there were 52 students, 1882 56 students and 1883 73 students.⁴⁹ In 1888 that number rose sharply again to 135 and the Lette-Verein reported that the applications for the cookery school were so numerous that from 1 January 1889 they were providing an extra class and trainees had to apply a month in advance.⁵⁰ In 1893 a report in *Daheim*, a magazine aimed at housewives in Germany, described how in the cookery school there was 'a happy hustle and bustle. It is busy because of the Ladies' Restaurant (...) and from 12.30 p.m. onwards people go in and out as if in a pigeonloft (...) In one year 38084 portions

talers, a proportion of which would have come from the restaurant manager.

⁴⁵ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 73.

⁴⁶ *Sechster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 4. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 12760/74, GStPK.

⁴⁷ *Siebenter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 16. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, IV 7128/76, GStPK.

⁴⁸ *Achter Rechenschaftsbericht des unter dem Protektorat Ihrer Kaiserlichen und Königlichen Hoheit der Frau Kronprinzessin stehenden Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vom 1. April 1876 bis 31. März 1878*, p. 17. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

⁴⁹ *Elfter Rechenschafts-Bericht*, p. 12. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

⁵⁰ *Sechszehnter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 10. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

are served' (*ein fröhliches Treiben und Tummeln. Es heisst fleissig sein, denn es ist ein Damen-Restaurant im Hause, und von ½ 1 Uhr an geht man hier ein und aus wie in einem Taubenschlage (...)* In einem Jahre wurden hier 38084 Portionen ausgegeben.)⁵¹ The cookery school also took orders for food from outside the premises.⁵²

The students were classed as being trained in the *Gewerbeschule*, the industrial school and *Gewerbeschule* reports provide some insight into the content and cost of their courses.⁵³ The basic course was the *Koch- und Wirtschafts-Kursus* which lasted for three months and cost 75 marks in total. This offered women practical and theoretical classes three times a week for three to four hours in all aspects of cooking. In addition weekly one hour lectures on the chemical composition of food were given. Another course costing 500 marks and presumably of longer duration – the fees included daily lunches - taught women the principles of domestic economy, as well as washing and ironing. The most extensive course on offer for girls aged 18-20 who wished to train as teachers in domestic science, lasted for a year. Students were required to have a good general education and some experience in domestic matters before applying. For the sum of 1000 marks they would receive lunch and training. Training included 6 hours per week for four months of instruction in needlework and a further 6 hours per week for four months of instruction in repairing clothing and other textiles. The practice of washing and ironing would be learnt for nine hours per week over three months. These women would also be enrolled on the *Koch- und Wirtschafts-Kursus* for 11 months receiving instruction for between 12 and 20 hours a week. Lectures on doctrines of health, nutrition, the chemical composition of foodstuffs and domestic accounting would be given for an hour every week for 11 months. Students would be taught practical methods in pedagogy for three months for four hours a week as well as being entitled to attend lectures in the housekeeping school. Finally they

⁵¹ 'Berliner Frauenbildungsanstalten, III: Die Anstalten des Lettevereins', *Frauen-Daheim: Beilage zur Zeitschrift 'Daheim'*, vol. 29, no. 26 (1893), p. 5. 134/04, LVA.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Statuten des Lette-Vereins zur Förderung höherer Bildung und Erwerbsfähigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts* (Berlin, 1874), pp. 13-14. 161/01, LVA.

would be placed on a special one month course in August on the use of fruit and vegetables. This taught girls how to tin and cook fruit and vegetables according to different methods, how to prepare fruit juice, fruit liqueur and berry wine and how to preserve fruit, vegetables and mushrooms through drying methods.

It was thought that women training in the cookery school could gain access to a number of positions. According to Karl Weiss writing in *Über Frauenarbeit* '[d]as Haus ist die Welt der Frau' (*the house is the world of the woman*). On the one hand he wished to find women work which would suit their 'natural' skills by being connected to the home and the domestic.⁵⁴ However, he was keen to point out that 'the house demands two things from women; business knowledge and commercial qualities'.⁵⁵ He went on to say that '[m]any women are by their nature, born business people' and that they surpassed men in their attention to detail with regards to trade.⁵⁶ Women already used their business skills and domestic abilities to this end. There were women running their own hotels and guesthouses which according to Weiss yielded a large profit.⁵⁷ Domestic training therefore presented women with new possibilities for financial independence.

Figures detailing the numbers of women entering such work from the Lette-Verein are difficult to find, and when cited are vague. In the *Sechszehnter Rechenschaftsbericht* the Stellenvermittlungsbureau reported that of those who had approached it for work, 226 had found work as science teachers, 10 work as technical teachers. Presumably this referred to the domestic sciences. Only 80 found employment as housekeepers and companions.⁵⁸ However, training in the cookery school where women learnt to prepare and cook meals which they then served to the public gave these women an insight into the workings of a successful business. Women possibly developed their own commercial skills by working in a restaurant. Trainees would have learned to produce large quantities of food at a

⁵⁴ Weiss, *Über Frauenarbeit*, p. 161.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *Sechszehnter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 10. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

low price which would maximise profits. The restaurant had to be commercially viable to succeed and relied upon skilled accounting, an area in which female trainees in the school also received training.⁵⁹ Women's training was therefore not theoretical but highly practical and the success of the restaurant relied upon their abilities and skills.

Accounts for the Ladies' Restaurant indicate that the restaurant's popularity and profitability grew steadily. In 1883, when the Lette-Verein took over the Ladies' Restaurant, despite the fact that 3500 marks had been invested in it the restaurant still took a profit of 549 marks and 30 pfennigs.⁶⁰ Profit appears to have dipped to just 117 marks 63 pfennigs in the year ending 1 January 1887 but by the end of 1888 stood at over ten times that figure at 1719 marks and 47 pfennigs.⁶¹ The breakdown of income and expenditure for that year shows that the cost of food and provisions totalled 30782 marks and 21 pfennigs whilst the sum raised through payments for meals came to over 32000 marks. 16456 marks and 60 pfennigs came from residents in the Viktoria-Stift and 16006 marks and 55 pfennigs from other customers. The restaurant was listed as part of the industrial school (*Gewerbeshule*) and it paid the committee in charge of this 500 marks for administrative costs. This in itself constituted an important sum for the school considering that its profit for the year ending 1 January 1889 stood at 1549 marks and 44 pfennigs.⁶² Hirsch's view that the Ladies' Restaurant was important in supporting other institutions within the Lette-Verein was thus clearly well founded.⁶³ It remains to this day, training cookery students who serve food to other students in the Lette-Verein as well as local pensioner groups and other institutions in need of affordable meals in the neighbourhood.

⁵⁹ *Statuten des Lette-Vereins* (Berlin, 1874), pp. 13-14. 161/01, LVA.

⁶⁰ *Elfster Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 24. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

⁶¹ *Sechszehnter Rechenschaftsbericht*, p. 19. I Ha, Rep. 120, E. VIII, 4, no. 2, vol. 1, GStPK.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶³ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, p. 73.

6.3. The founding of the Victoria Press in 1860: a contested narrative

On 6 March 1860, at a meeting of the General Committee of the Society, Mr Hastings informed those present 'that he had formed a plan for the establishment of a Printing Office for women and that Miss Faithfull had undertaken the management of the same'.⁶⁴ Initially, according to the minutes, the plan had been to form a printing class, indeed £50 had been promised for this purpose. However, it was decided that rather than establishing a class this sum 'should be at once applied for apprenticing five girls' and that these women would soon start training at the newly founded Victoria Press at 9 Great Coram Street in an area of work hitherto undertaken solely by men.⁶⁵ The Victoria Press opened on 25 March 1860.

Emily Faithfull had been working for the Society as its secretary earning £50 per year.⁶⁶ It is not entirely clear how she first met the women at Langham Place. She was certainly interested in publishing, first appearing at the offices of the *English Woman's Journal* working alongside Bessie Rayner Parkes from November 1858. Parkes described her as a 'hearty young worker' and writing to Bodichon in January 1859 stated that, 'Emily is the nearest approach to my ideal of a canvasser I have yet got hold of (...) rather strong-minded; carried her own huge carpet-bag &c.'⁶⁷ She was also a friend of Adelaide Proctor who invited her to join the Portfolio Club which received 'the offerings of any visiting artists or writers who cared to join'.⁶⁸ Faithfull often read Christina Rossetti's work to those present, Rossetti being too shy herself to attend.⁶⁹ Some historians assert that Faithfull had already founded an 'all-women's printing society in Edinburgh in 1857 and moved thence to London'.⁷⁰ This may refer to the assistance Faithfull provided to a group

⁶⁴ Minutes of the General Committee, 6 March 1860. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. When she resigned she was replaced by Jane Crowe as secretary.

⁶⁷ Hirsch, *Barbara*, p. 192.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 168.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Levine, *Feminist*, p. 52. No other reference to this can be found aside from a reference in K. Olsen, *Chronology of Women's History* (Connecticut, 1994), p. 130 which states that Faithfull established a 'printing house in Edinburgh'. This was most probably the Caledonian Press which was established independently of the Society and Miss Faithfull although they gave it assistance.

of women who founded the Caledonian Press in Edinburgh in 1862, but there is no documentary evidence to suggest that she was in Edinburgh before this time.⁷¹ Indeed the details of Faithfull's life prior to her joining the Langham Place group are barely known.⁷²

Faithfull appears to have shared the views of many of the women at Langham Place. Her regular letters to *The Times* revealed that she was eagerly committed to the cause of women's employment. In one letter she described how she frequently received correspondence from women needing work stating that:

(...) during the last three months, in addition to the printed replies despatched by my clerk, I have been obliged to devote two hours every day to applications for advice upon every kind of work save the one in which I am more especially engaged. I can ill afford this time from my own business but the letters I receive are too distressing to put aside unanswered.⁷³

Although apparently sympathetic to the plight of genteel women needing the means to make a living, she was critical of those unwilling to accept certain types of employment for fear of losing caste saying:

Idle dependence on the charity of others seems to me the only discreditable position for a cultured lady. I remember the time when 'gentlemen' in any way connected with 'business' were regarded as outside that charmed circle for which people who talk about 'social status' will sacrifice so much (...) I

Olsen mistakenly claims that 'the press will issue the *English Woman's Journal* and the *Victoria Magazine*'.

⁷¹ For more on the establishment of the Caledonian Press, see Reynolds, *Britannica's typesetters and Tusan*, 'Reforming Work'.

⁷² Fredeman states that '[v]irtually nothing is known of her early life and education, about which the biographical references are silent.' See W.E. Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull and the Victoria Press: an Experiment in Sociological Bibliography', *The Library*, Fifth Series, vol. 29, no. 2 (1974), 139-164. For more on Faithfull's early life see E. Ratcliffe, *The Caxton of her age: the career and family background of Emily Faithfull (1835-95)* (Upton-Upon-Severn, 1993).

⁷³ 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 7 January 1862.

hope yet to see the day when the lady who maintains herself will be received and accepted for what she is, not for what she does.⁷⁴

Emily believed firmly in the need for industrial training at a young age. She regarded many women who came to the Society or to her printing press as too old to be trained for work and soon demanded that all apprentices she received should be under the age of 16.⁷⁵ She reported in one letter that:

I frequently receive letters (...) the candidate in question being a person of broken down health, above 30 years of age, and with the usual habits of inaccuracy and the want of thoroughness consequent on the careless bringing up of girls which has been so long prevalent. It seems impossible to convince people that training is as necessary to a woman as to a man; that printing and law copying are businesses which must be learnt through serving an apprenticeship (generally in youth), printing especially.⁷⁶

Through careful training from a young age, women would be as suited to employment as men, but in her words: 'Until a woman ceases to be a "Jack of all Trades" she will never be a master of one.'⁷⁷ Faithfull was a compelling writer: her letters were often witty and sardonic. In 1878 she wrote to *The Times* listing a series of job offers aimed at women, which she hoped would show how limited women's employment opportunities still were considering the dismal terms they offered. She described how: 'A gentleman wants a housekeeper to take sole charge of his house, and to do the whole of the duties, washing included, with the exception of his best shirts. A widow aged 35 preferred. Salary to commence at £10 per annum' and how a cashier was 'required in a ready-money business (...) Hours from 9 to 9 o'clock, and no salary offered.'⁷⁸ Faithfull and her colleagues

⁷⁴ 'Female Clerkships in the General Post Office Savings Banks', *The Times*, 18 September 1880.

⁷⁵ 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 23 July 1860.

⁷⁶ 'The Employment of Women', *The Times*, 7 April 1862.

⁷⁷ 'Employment for Women', *The Times*, 4 April 1874.

⁷⁸ 'Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 4 January 1878.

thus aimed not only to expand the employment opportunities available to women but to challenge the conditions under which they worked.

Faithfull gave her version of the founding of the Victoria Press in a report she read at the NAPSS Congress in August 1860:

In the November following the Bradford meeting, the council of this Association appointed a committee to consider and report on the best means which could be adopted for increasing the industrial employments of women; in the course of the investigation set on foot by this committee, of which I was a member, we received information of several attempts made to introduce women into the printing trade, and of the suitability of the same as a branch of female industry. A small press, and type sufficient for an experiment, were purchased by Miss Parkes, who was anxious to test, by personal observation, the information thus received. This press was put up in a private room placed at her disposal by the kindness of a member of this Association. A printer consented to give her instruction, and she invited me to share in the trial.⁷⁹

This account is interesting for what it concealed as much as for what it said, and in particular for the way it played down the role of male support in the setting up of the press. Faithfull did admit that men provided assistance in the operation of the press. Women were divided into groups of four or five with an 'intelligent, respectable' workman operating as the 'clicker' for each group, the clicker being the person to make up and impose the matter and carry the forms to the press-room.⁸⁰ Women's perceived lack of physical strength meant that once women had composed the type, a pressman lifted the iron chases in which the pages were imposed, moved the heavy cases of type from the rack to the frame and carried out what was known as the striking off of the sheets. Faithfull stated that 'it does not

⁷⁹ E. Faithfull, 'The Victoria Press', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 32 (1860), 121-126, here p. 122.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

appear that women will be able to accomplish all parts of the work, greater strength than they possess being required for striking off the sheets'.⁸¹ Beyond this Faithfull made no mention of male cooperation in founding the Victoria Press.

Whilst Faithfull initially mentioned that a man had 'consented to give her instruction' in printing it appears that she never intentionally chose to reveal his identity. Only in 1869 did it transpire that the printer in question was a man named Mr Austin Holyoake and his identity became known through a series of letters in *The Times*. Whilst Fredeman gives a brief description of who Austin Holyoake was,⁸² the significance of his involvement is not explored at any length neither does his involvement feature in later historical accounts of the Victoria Press; Tusan does not mention him at all. Only Stone explains Holyoake's involvement in the establishment of the press in more depth.⁸³

Austin Holyoake's identity was revealed when Faithfull brought a libel action against a man called James Grant who had claimed that Faithfull had been preaching atheism in Sunday Schools in association with the Ladies' Secular Society in his book entitled *The religious tendencies of the times*. The matter was reported on in *The Times* and Emily only dropped the action when Grant agreed to print a 'contradiction and a retraction' which would 'vindicate' her character.⁸⁴ In the meantime, *The Times* reported that a letter published in *The London Review*, stating that the Ladies' Secular Society planned to meet, had Faithfull's name as one of the undersigned alongside others including a Mrs Holyoake.⁸⁵ Faithfull had written to the paper requesting that the statement be contradicted for 'I have no connexion whatever with the club in question'.⁸⁶ She had also claimed to know nothing of Mrs Holyoake. Mrs Jane Holyoake was furious and wrote to *The Times* explaining that:

⁸¹ 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), 388-396, here p. 391.

⁸² Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 151.

⁸³ J. Stone, 'More Light on Emily Faithfull and the Victoria Press', *The Library*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1978), 63-67, here p. 66.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ 'Faithfull V. Grant', *The Times*, 9 August 1869.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

As a proof that I am not an entire stranger to her I may say that it was my husband who, at great personal inconvenience to himself, and at the cost of many weeks of anxious thought and labour, established for Miss Faithfull the Victoria Press (...) this was done in promotion of the movement for extending the sphere of woman's work, in which we both take a deep interest.⁸⁷

Faithfull's denial of her relationship with the Holyoakes was embarrassing in the light of Jane Holyoake's response. Faithfull was forced to acknowledge his help in a letter to *The Times* the next day, but was suitably vague and implied he had been less involved than Jane had claimed. She explained that:

A printer, who was introduced to me under the name of Austin, and whose name is in my cash-book for lessons in printing and general assistance, afforded me considerable aid in 1860. His brother left a situation in Birmingham to take one in my office as pressman, and his sister-in-law was one of my compositors. When I learnt that his real name was Holyoake it did not disqualify him in my opinion for the selection of types and presses, or giving aid in the general reorganization of my business, and though Mrs Holyoake's terms in a moment of natural annoyance are scarcely born out by facts, her husband undoubtedly rendered me valuable service at a time when a printer hardly dared to come near my office for fear of the trade union, and probably - as he was carrying on his own business at the same time - money did not repay him for extra work and worry. I deeply regret being the cause of paining anyone, and had the necessary retraction been given in the first instance, no name need have been mentioned but my own and Mr Grant's.⁸⁸

Faithfull clearly did not wish to share the credit for the establishment of the Victoria Press with Holyoake. Furthermore, she made no further mention of him in

⁸⁷ 'The Case of Miss Faithfull And Mr. James Grant', *The Times*, 10 August 1869.

⁸⁸ 'Faithfull V. Grant', *The Times*, 11 August 1869.

any of her writings which described the work of the Victoria Press. Yet Austin Holyoake's assistance is a vital factor in explaining why the Victoria Press was successful. As his wife explained, he was deeply committed to the 'promotion of the movement for extending the sphere of woman's work'. Indeed, it was no accident that Faithfull and Parkes had received help from Austin Holyoake. Although Faithfull claimed that the name Holyoake meant little to her, the Holyokes already had strong connections with the Langham Place group and Bessie Rayner Parkes in particular. The Holyoake name was synonymous at the time with the freethought movement and secularism. Austin Holyoake was the brother of George Jacob Holyoake, freethinker and cooperator, a follower of Robert Owen and editor of *The Reasoner*, a newspaper which ran from June 1846 to June 1861 and developed the teachings of Owen into a new movement called secularism.⁸⁹ They were radicals and both served on the recruiting committee for the Garibaldi Legion in 1860. *The Reasoner* collected funds to support European Republicanism.⁹⁰ George Holyoake frequently corresponded with Bessie Rayner Parkes and, prior to the establishment of the *English Woman's Journal*, suggested that women should publish 'a journal for women run by women' and 'take their own affairs into their own hands'.⁹¹ He went on to publish articles written by both Parkes and Bodichon, as well as *On Humanity* written by Bodichon's husband Eugene Bodichon in 1859.⁹²

⁸⁹ Edward Royle, 'Holyoake, George Jacob (1817–1906)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33964>, accessed 20 October 2009].

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Crawford, *The women's suffrage movement*, pp. 291-292.

⁹² *Ibid.* See also a letter from Bessie Rayner Parkes to George Holyoake sent 15 December 1857 which stated that '[w]e are consolidating arrangements for starting a small London woman's paper buying up the English subscriptions of the Waverley', Bessie Rayner Parkes to George Holyoake. GCPP Parkes 17/30, GCA. George Holyoake was a keen supporter of women's rights to property and earnings which he declared publicly as part of his election address at Tower Hamlets in 1857. In February 1857 he described to Parkes in a letter how he was in London 'repeating my Glasgow lectures on the Civil Freedom of Women', George Holyoake to Bessie Rayner Parkes. GCPP Parkes 9/122, GCA. See also E. Royle, *Victorian infidels: the origins of the British secularist movement, 1791-1866* (Manchester, 1974), p. 144. George Holyoake wrote to Parkes in February 1857 expressing his support for their writing in *The Waverley* stating '[w]e shall make known the Waverley which is worth knowing now you and Miss Barbara Leigh Smith write on it (...) For any advertisements of your own works command me ever', George Holyoake to Bessie Rayner Parkes. GCPP Parkes 9/122, GCA.

Indeed, the idea for establishing the Victoria Press may have come directly from the brothers themselves. An article which appeared in *The Reasoner* as early as 1849 entitled 'Female Printers and Editors' described how a number of women were employed as printers in the United States. The article gave information about 'a curious scrap of information relative to those females who have discharged the laborious duties of printers and publishers (...) given at a Printer's Festival in Rochester'. It described how a widow, Mrs Anne Franklin, had become the publisher of the first newspaper printed in Rhode Island in the eighteenth century and 'was aided in her office by her two daughters. They were correct and quick compositors, and very sensible women.' A Mrs Mary Holt had reached high status as a printer having been 'appointed printer to the State' offering 'powerful service during the Revolution'.⁹³ The article showed that early on the Holyoake brothers took an interest in printing as a form of employment well suited to women.⁹⁴

The support of these two brothers was therefore essential in establishing the Victoria Press, not only in practical terms as experienced printers, but as men whose political beliefs made them supportive of women's entry into compositorship.⁹⁵ Within a trade where 'men who were induced to come into the office to work the presses and teach the girls, had to assume false names to avoid detection'⁹⁶ for fear of union reprisals, such support was invaluable. The women who established the Victoria Press could not have done so without vital instruction

⁹³ 'Female Printers and Editors', in G.J. Holyoake (ed.), *The Reasoner: A weekly journal, utilitarian, republican and communist*, vol. 6 (1849), p. 297.

⁹⁴ Austin Holyoake went on to establish a Women's Printing Office in 1868 which according to Fredeman was designed to be a means for 'finding employment for educated ladies', see Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 24.

⁹⁵ The assistance given by these two brothers reveals the importance of support from post-Chartist radical men for the early feminist cause of the mid-nineteenth century. This has already been examined above with relation to the male founders of the NAPSS who supported the efforts of the Society from the outset. The Holyoakes had links with some of the members of NAPSS. O'Connor describes how Italian exiles received sympathy from both chartists such as George Holyoake as well as prominent liberals such as Lord John Russell, one of the founders of NAPSS' founders and later its President in 1858 see M. O' Connor, *The romance of Italy and the English political imagination* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 62. In 1865 the NAPSS established a Committee on Labour and Capital designed to promote industrial partnerships and George Holyoake was one of its members. See Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 96. George Holyoake was also a strong supporter of George W. Hastings' attempts to become the liberal candidate for Coventry writing personally to him to this effect: see Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics*, p. 104.

⁹⁶ E. Faithfull, *Three Visits to America*, (New York, 1884), p. 26.

from these men. Indeed, Jane Holyoake's claim that her husband had established the press for Faithfull is quite probably true.

6.3.1 1860-1864: challenges and obstacles

From its inauguration in 1860 the Victoria Press enjoyed an auspicious start as a business. In August of 1860 it was reported in *The Times* that '[h]er Majesty has graciously signified to Miss Emily Faithfull her approval of the establishment of the Victoria Press (...) for the employment of female compositors, adding, that all such useful and practical steps for opening new branches of industry to educated women must meet with her entire approbation.⁹⁷ The press managed to secure a number of key commissions including the printing of *The Transactions* on behalf of the NAPSS, the *English Woman's Journal* and *The Victoria Magazine*, the latter edited by Faithfull herself.⁹⁸ In 1861 Emily Faithfull expanded the business of the Victoria Press into publishing and published amongst other works *The Victoria Regia*, a literary anthology edited by Adelaide Proctor with contributions by Isa Craig, Monckton Milnes, Dante and Christina Rossetti, Trollope, Patmore and Tennyson.⁹⁹ This brought the press some renown as it won a prize for the best book printed by women in the London International Exhibition of Industry and Art of 1862. Indeed, as Fredeman points out, Faithfull was appointed 'Printer and Publisher in Ordinary to her Majesty' by Royal Warrant in June 1862 as a direct result of the publication of *The Victoria Regia*.¹⁰⁰

In June 1860 Faithfull compiled her first report concerning the work of the Victoria Press. The report was full of praise for her own success as manager and the accomplishments of the Victoria Press. Read by George W. Hastings on her

⁹⁷ 'Victoria Press', *The Times*, 8 August 1860.

⁹⁸ The Victoria Press ceased to print the *English Woman's Journal* in 1865 following Faithfull's involvement in the Codrington divorce trial. See Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 36.

⁹⁹ The publication of *The Victoria Regia* was described by Fredeman as 'the high point of all the printing done at the Victoria Press', see Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 153.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

behalf at the annual meeting for the Society on 29 June 1860 and published in the *English Woman's Journal* in August 1860,¹⁰¹ it declared that '[t]he Victoria Press is no longer an experiment, but an accomplished success.'¹⁰² She explained that the office had aimed to 'test thoroughly the question' of women's 'suitableness for the work' and that 'the experiment has certainly afforded a complete answer to the many objections and warnings which reached the promoters of the plan'.¹⁰³ Despite this positive report, establishing the press had proved to be a challenge. The inexperience of apprentices and their employers, scandal and conflict behind the scenes and opposition from some male printers threatened to limit its success.

Faithfull, Parkes and Hastings had taken a financial risk in establishing the Press. There are no details available regarding how much they personally invested, but the only sum received from the Society itself was £50 which was spent on paying apprentices' indentures. Faithfull explained the financial commitment in a further report and how the machinery and type needed to open a printing press were so expensive that 'the outlay would never be covered unless they were kept in constant use'.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, '[t]he pressure of work, the sudden influx of which is often entirely beyond the printer's control, requires the possession of extra type in stock, these and other economical reasons which will be easily understood by all commercial men, necessitate the outlay of a considerable amount of capital on the part of anyone who wishes to turn out first-class printing.'¹⁰⁵

Aside from the financial pressures, Faithfull took a risk because the Victoria Press was staffed by a number of inexperienced apprentices with not 'one skilled compositor' among them.¹⁰⁶ The five girls who originally came to the Victoria Press had their apprentice indentures paid for by the Society. They were soon joined by other apprentices whose fees were paid by family and friends. By

¹⁰¹ 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 392.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹⁰⁴ Faithfull, 'The Victoria Press', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 32 (1860), p. 122.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

October 1860 Faithfull reported that sixteen apprentices had been taken on. However, she was particularly relieved when a woman from Limerick arrived who:

(...) had been trained as a printer by her father, and had worked under him for twelve years. At his death she had carried on the office, which she was after some time obliged to relinquish, owing to domestic circumstances. Seeing in a country paper that an opening for female compositors had occurred in London, she determined on taking the long journey from Ireland to seek employment in a business for which she was well competent. She came straight to my office, bringing with her a letter from the editor of a Limerick paper, who assured me that I should find her a great assistance in my enterprise. I engaged her there and then; she came to work the very next day, and has proved herself most valuable.¹⁰⁷

Aside from this lack of experience, as Fredeman highlights the establishment of the Victoria Press was 'immensely controversial'.¹⁰⁸ It faced criticism from those who claimed printing was an unhealthy occupation for women. Faithfull was ready to face such accusations stating that:

The mortality known to exist among printers had led people to this conclusion, but when we consider the principal causes producing this result, we find it arises in a great measure from removable evils. For instance, the imperfect ventilation, the impurity of the air being increased by the quantity and bad quality of the gas consumed, and not *least* by the gin, rum, and brandy, so freely imbibed by printers. The chief offices being situated in the most unwholesome localities, are dark and close, and thus become hotbeds for the propagation of phthisis.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 142.

¹⁰⁹ Faithfull, 'The Victoria Press', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 32 (1860), p. 124.

She countered such concerns therefore, by ensuring that the Victoria Press was located in what she described as a 'light and airy situation' in Great Coram Street, a 'quiet respectable neighbourhood', with the girls working from 'from nine till one and from two till six'. They were given sufficient breaks and:

Those who live near, go home to dinner between one and two; others have the use of a room in the house, some bringing their own dinners ready cooked, and some preparing it on the spot. When they work overtime, as is occasionally unavoidable, for which of course they receive extra pay per hour, they have tea at half-past five, so as to break the time.¹¹⁰

She also ensured that women sat on high stools so as to prevent the fatigue and apparent digestive discomfort incurred by standing for prolonged periods of time whilst composing. She admitted, however, that the work still carried health risks:

The inhalation of dust from the types, which are composed of antimony and lead, is an evil less capable of remedy. The type when heated emits a noxious fume, injurious to respiration, which in course of years occasionally produces a partial palsy of the hands.¹¹¹

Discussion continued and in 1861 a writer, most probably Faithfull, rejected the idea that the work was unhealthy and commented that the belief that 'women at printing would "die off like birds in winter,"'¹¹² was nonsense. She went on to state that:

I could well understand it if the young girls were to work in the generality of men's printing offices, where notwithstanding the quantity of gas they burn, ventilation of any kind is never thought of; and what with the impurities arising from the gas, and from the breaths of so many individuals, the air

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 125.

¹¹² 'Letters to the Editor', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 7, no. 39 (1861), p. 209.

they inhale must necessarily be very injurious; but when they work in well-ventilated rooms like those of the Victoria Press, I cannot see any reason why they should "die off like birds in winter."¹¹³

Furthermore, the Victoria Press was keen to assist the most disadvantaged girls. One of these was brought to the press by the *Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb*. Faithfull described how '[t]his child will make a very good compositor in time, her attention being naturally undistracted from her work, though the difficulty of teaching her is very considerable, and the process of learning takes a longer time.'¹¹⁴ According to Fredeman, concerns for apprentices' well-being extended beyond the workplace. Faithfull had plans to rent a house where girls from the country might be 'safely lodged and cared for'.¹¹⁵ As Tusan states, Faithfull decided to 'place the needs of workers over profits' and thus 'reworked long-tolerated hazardous industrial standards'.¹¹⁶

Aside from concerns about women's health, the Victoria Press provoked some powerful male opposition to women training as compositors amongst those who feared female competition for jobs. As women were taken on in similar 'female-led' printing presses in Scotland and Ireland, the Caledonian Press and the Queen's Institute respectively, opposition grew more fervent. W. W. Head who took over as manager of the Victoria Press in 1864 wrote a pamphlet describing the history of the Victoria Press in 1869 and gave a detailed account of the opposition.¹¹⁷ He remarked that with regard to female compositors 'few innovations could have been so obnoxious to a large and powerful class - the printers of the metropolis, and few have experienced such persistent, bitter and unscrupulous opposition'.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Faithfull, 'The Victoria Press', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 32 (1860), p. 124.

¹¹⁵ Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 149.

¹¹⁶ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 113.

¹¹⁷ W. Wilfred Head, *The Victoria Press: Its History and Vindication* (London, 1869).

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

The arguments that male printers used against women entering work as compositors varied. Despite Faithfull's evidence that the Victoria Press had made printing a safe occupation for women, in 1867 the *Printers' Journal* published a poem entitled 'The Female Printer's Lamentation' which argued that the risks to women had not been overcome. An excerpt from this eight verse poem reads as follows:

'The Female Printer's Lamentation'

(...) I once was with a poulterer of delectable urbanity,
And happy were my days among the hares and snipes;
But a red-nosed philanthropist imposed upon my vanity,
And wiled me from the cocks and hens, to set up types.

Says he, "Tis nice enjoyment,

Such delicate employment!

You'll make such charming wages,

A-setting up the pages!"

Tender-hearted Christians of all denominations,

Listen to the sorrows of a female tramp!

Oh all ye blooming maidens gay, whate'er your work or station.

Take warning from a sister who was once as fair:

Never cope presumptuously with lords of the creation,

Or, like myself, you'll come to - plenty nice fresh air!

Besides, a *comp.* with crotchets rife,

Can never make a proper wife:

Her typographic whims and dorts

Will put the best man *out of sorts*.

Tender-hearted Christians of all denominations,

Now you've heard the sorrows of a female tramp!¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ This poem is cited by Robak as appearing in *The Printer's Journal and Typographical Magazine* in 1867. She gives no volume number or date other than 1867 for its publication: see B. Robak, *Vom Pianotyp zur Zeilensetzmaschine: Setzmaschinenentwicklung und*

Other opponents claimed that the work of these all-female presses was mere philanthropy rather than successful commercial enterprise. One such article published by *The Scottish Typographical Circular* argued that the Caledonian Press which trained female compositors in Edinburgh:

(...) originated (...) with a few fanciful theorists, who (...) [created] a supply where no demand existed (...) Undoubtedly they were actuated by philanthropy in the first instance, tempered by the prospect of some nice fat job, or dividends at least, in the background.¹²⁰

As Tusan states:

The charge of benevolence made it possible to understand this women-run enterprise in conventional gendered terms: the Press did not represent a threat to male-run print shops if it was bent on philanthropy, a legitimate female pursuit, rather than on profitability.¹²¹

The press refuted these accusations stating that 'we do not ask alms for our protégés: nor are they paupers: we solicit subscriptions'.¹²²

The fact that men assisted women led some to claim that the Victoria Press was not run and staffed solely by women. Fredeman quotes Arthur Munby who observed upon visiting the press that '[f]ifteen or sixteen female compositors are all the women they have on the premises: and the actual printing, which is done here, is all done by men. The clerk in charge, whom I saw, was a man: the office boys *were* boys.'¹²³ Fredeman refutes Munby's opinion stating categorically that it was 'a *printing* establishment in which women were to be employed exclusively as

Geschlechterverhältnis, 1840-1900 (Marburg, 1996), pp. 57-58, I have found a copy of the original poem in J. Smith, *The Merry Bridal o' Firthmains and Other Poems and Songs* (Edinburgh, 1866), pp. 279-282.

¹²⁰ Head, *The Victoria Press*, p. 14.

¹²¹ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 112.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', pp. 147-148.

compositors'.¹²⁴

Others had a more favourable view of women's entry into compositorship. One journal, the *Printer's Register* published an article entitled 'The Female Compositors' Question' in October 1869 in which the writer refuted the claim that women were not physically or mentally capable of setting type and stated that: 'We found the girls apparently comfortable and contented; well in health, respectable in appearance; turning out good work, and drawing good wages.'¹²⁵ Such a benevolent viewpoint was however rare amongst male printers. Their opposition was not only verbal but resulted in direct action being taken against women's entry to compositorship. Emily Faithfull described how on one occasion male printers resorted to sabotage. Having somehow gained access to the Victoria Press:

(...) the girl apprentices were subjected to all kinds of annoyance. Tricks of a most unwomanly nature were resorted to, their frames and stools were covered with ink, to destroy their dresses unawares, the letters were mixed up in their boxes, and the cases were emptied of 'sorts'.¹²⁶

Spoiling these women's dresses in this manner would presumably have caused the apprentices a great deal of distress. Replacing their clothing would have proved costly and might have been viewed by some as implicitly suggesting their loss of respectability by entering such work. Personal intimidation of this kind may have put off other girls from entering apprenticeships at the Victoria Press.

Women were also excluded from becoming members of the London Union of Compositors. Furthermore, Faithfull reported how at the close of 1879 when approached to provide extra help in completing an order:

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Head, *The Victoria Press*, p. 26.

¹²⁶ Faithfull, *Three Visits*, p. 26.

(...) the Secretary of the London Society of Compositors stated that, 'unless an assurance could be given that the said compositor would not be called on to assist the females in any way', no Society man could be sent; and a resolution was passed by that Society (...) 'that no man belonging to it should touch work in any way handled by women'.¹²⁷

Faithfull's attempt to open up the occupation of compositor to women was a radical challenge to this male monopoly and explains why it was so strongly resisted. Women would be trained to enter printing as skilled workers responsible for 'the setting of the type (...) which is the higher branch of the trade'.¹²⁸ Faithfull hoped that, with training, women would complete the work with 'the same facility as men, and it is probable when they have had the same amount of practice their superior delicacy of touch will enable them to compete successfully with the best men compositors'.¹²⁹ As a result, Faithfull believed they would not be 'deprived of the advantages of systematic training, nor excluded from the most lucrative branches of the various "occupations" in which they engage'.¹³⁰ As Tusan argues this clearly challenged 'women's exclusion from high-status and well-paid industrial employment'.¹³¹

6.3.2 Scandal, conflict and Emily Faithfull's resignation

Faithfull's reputation grew not only as the founder of the Victoria Press but as a key figure in the early women's movement.¹³² Gaining fame for her lectures on women's rights abroad, Faithfull was granted £100 from the Royal Bounty in 1886.¹³³ In 1888 she received an inscribed, engraved portrait from the Queen 'in recognition of thirty years dedication to the interest of her sex' and by March 1889

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

¹²⁸ 'Society for Promoting', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 30 (1860), p. 391.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Faithfull, 'The Victoria Press', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 6, no. 32 (1860), p. 122.

¹³¹ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 105.

¹³² Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', pp. 145-146.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 148.

she was awarded a Civil List Pension of £50.¹³⁴ Tusan's research argues that Faithfull was a vital figure in the early feminist movement which centred on the Langham Place group. She claims that Faithfull worked within a 'middle-class feminist community dedicated to promoting the cause of women's employment'.¹³⁵ Fredeman describes her as having a 'natural flair for business'.¹³⁶ However, the Victoria Press soon found itself weakened by internal disputes which seemed mainly to be caused by Faithfull herself. For all her dedication, high profile and ultimately royal acknowledgement, Emily apparently courted scandal, upset those around her and became in some respects a liability to the cause. By 1865 she had severed all ties with the women at Langham Place. Indeed, Faithfull's leadership was far more damaging to the Victoria-Press than has ever been acknowledged. Personal letters held at Girton College archive, which to date have received little attention, reveal the extent to which Faithfull's relationship with the women of Langham Place had broken down by the mid-1860s, the impact it had on the press and the circumstances surrounding her departure as its manager.

Although the cause of the breach between Faithfull and the Langham Place group is not entirely clear, Faithfull's former close friend, Adelaide Proctor, became highly critical of her in a letter to Bessie Rayner Parkes written on 4 July 1861. Proctor warned Parkes against replacing Matilda Hays with Emily Faithfull in the work for the *English Woman's Journal*. She stated that 'I must add that to my mind anything which throws E.W.J into E. Faithfull's power - which giving it to Isa Craig does, is a positively wrong and wicked thing.'¹³⁷ By January 1862, Maria Rye, manager of the law copying office, was also disparaging in her opinion of

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 104.

¹³⁶ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 149.

¹³⁷ Adelaide Proctor to Bessie Rayner Parkes, 4 July 1861. GCPP Parkes 8/24, GCA. It is not clear exactly why Adelaide Proctor fell out with Emily Faithfull. However, Vicinus describes a particular letter from Robert Browning to his friend Isa Blagden which gossiped about Faithfull and the Codrington divorce. The letter mentions Adelaide Proctor and that 'Mrs [Anne] Proctor, for instance told me of a lie she (E) had invented to interest Adelaide, about as pretty a specimen as I ever heard, though familiar with such sportings of the fancy.' Vicinus suggests that Faithfull had perhaps made a pass at Proctor. M. Vicinus, 'Lesbian Perversity and Victorian Marriage: The 1864 Codrington Divorce Trial', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1 (1997), 70-98, p. 92.

Faithfull. Writing to Bodichon on 16 January 1862 she stated 'I suppose you see the "Times". If so you will have been astonished (...) at Miss Faithfull's letter about "Emancipation". She has I consider been behaving most disgracefully - doing nothing of the work and trying to take, and she has in a great measure succeeded too, all the credit - she has I am sorry to say done some real harm (...) she will if she does not mind get such a slap in the face soon that she will never recover it.'¹³⁸ Adelaide Proctor also questioned the quality of Faithfull's work. She regretted her reliance on the Victoria Press for printing some of her work, stating 'I cannot afford so expensive a printer - and one who is so terribly slow, besides - even if I had no other reason - the breach with E.F is made and is a final one, and there is a sort of absurdity in my printing the vol. there at all - only that it was half set up, I would have taken it away.'¹³⁹ Her dissatisfaction throws into question Fredeman's belief that Faithfull had a natural flair for business.

The exact reasons for Emily's unpopularity amongst the women at Langham Place are hard to ascertain, yet criticism may have been triggered in part by Faithfull's involvement in a public scandal which, to a degree, threatened the reputation of the Langham Place group as a whole. Faithfull became involved in what Hirsch describes as 'the most sensational divorce trial of the 1860s', which sheds light on why she provoked such personal attacks on her character.¹⁴⁰ The scandal emerged in 1863 when Admiral Codrington filed for divorce from his wife, Helen Jane Codrington. He did so on the grounds that she had used Faithfull's home as a place to meet her lovers. The case became even more serious when Mrs Codrington made a countersuit, alleging that her husband had tried to rape Faithfull whilst in Mrs Codrington's bed. It transpired that the two women had been living together with Admiral Codrington since Faithfull arrived in 1854.¹⁴¹ Mrs Codrington was reported to have refused to share the same bed as the admiral from spring 1857

¹³⁸ Maria Rye to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 10 December 1860. GCPP Parkes 10/55, GCA.

¹³⁹ Adelaide Proctor to Bessie Rayner Parkes, 7 August 1862, GCPP Parkes 8/26, GCA.

¹⁴⁰ P. Hirsch, 'Passions ran high on "Woman's Journal"', *The Independent*, 2 July 1999. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/passions-ran-high-on-womans-journal-1103696.html> (accessed 28 September 2009).

¹⁴¹ For a broader discussion of the significance of Faithfull's involvement in the trial, see A. Clark, 'Twilight Moments', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2005), 139-160.

and had insisted instead on sharing a separate bed and sleeping with Faithfull. Initially Faithfull fled abroad only later returning to appear in court in November 1864. She withdrew her previous signed affidavit from the spring of 1864 which accused the admiral of attempted rape in October 1856, and in a complete rejection of Helen Codrington's claims, testified she had been asleep during the entire incident. She claimed that she had trusted Mrs Codrington's side of the events and had signed the affidavit without reading it or being aware of its contents.¹⁴²

Vicinus gives details of contemporary opinion of the case. Bessie Rayner Parkes' father wrote to his daughter remarking:

I believe the truth to be that she kept back much fact & truth of both husband & wife in her evidence, & that forced into the [witness] box she made up her tale to cut the best figure for herself in her painful ambiguous & contradictory relations to both. Indeed I believe never was a trial in which more falsehoods were told or more suppressio veri on both side.¹⁴³

Vicinus regards Faithfull's actions as a betrayal of her lover motivated by anger. Fredeman believes Emily changed her evidence after Admiral Codrington threatened to reveal the contents of a mysterious sealed packet. He handed this packet to his brother as Faithfull was dismissed from his household, informing her that it contained information that would damage her reputation.¹⁴⁴ Stone disagrees with both arguing that Faithfull was:

(...) 'conned' by Mrs. Codrington and Mr. Few, Mrs. Codrington's unscrupulous lawyer, into believing that she could help her friend Mrs. Codrington—*without damage to her own reputation*—by giving such

¹⁴² Vicinus, 'Lesbian Perversity', p. 82.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 144.

evidence of the Admiral's 'cruelty, neglect, and misconduct' as the Marriage and Divorce Act of 1857 had made admissible.¹⁴⁵

It is not clear which of these conclusions is true, but it would appear that Faithfull's disgrace following the Codrington trial compounded her already difficult relationships with the women at Langham Place. Parkes described how the Codrington divorce only confirmed negative opinion regarding Faithfull in a letter to Mary Merryweather on 30 November 1864 stating 'I find social opinion running high against E.F. more so than I think quite just if only the trial be known.'¹⁴⁶

By 1865 the *English Woman's Journal* was no longer printed by the Victoria Press, most likely because of the Codrington scandal. This was explained in the Society's minutes for 14 February 1865. In response to a letter written by Boucherett 'referring to the connection of the Society with the Victoria Press' the chairman stated that 'he had been authorized by Miss Faithfull to say, that she did not desire to be employed in future as printer of the Society'.¹⁴⁷ Boucherett's letter was not read further, perhaps saving those present from an uncomfortable account of Boucherett's concerns. Faithfull's participation in the work of the Langham Place group thus came to a formal end in 1865 after only 5 years.

In 1864 a Mr William Wilfred Head was brought into the business, described by Fredeman as a journeyman printer in London.¹⁴⁸ He received a one third partnership for £1000 and an equal share in the profits.¹⁴⁹ By 1867, he informed Emily that the 'business is enough for one but not for two' and bought her out for £1500.¹⁵⁰ A series of letters published in *The Times* suggested that Faithfull left because of irreconcilable differences between her and Head. She stated that she

¹⁴⁵ Stone, 'More Light', p. 65.

¹⁴⁶ Bessie Rayner Parkes to Mary Merryweather, 30 November 1864. GCPP Parkes 6/86, GCA.

¹⁴⁷ Minutes of the General Meeting, 14 February 1865. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

¹⁴⁸ Fredeman, 'Emily Faithfull', p. 157.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

had 'no control' in the office and wished to distance herself from Head who had started publishing a weekly newspaper which she disapproved of. Head claimed in response to Emily's letter that 'for upwards of three years Miss Faithfull has only once visited the workwomen at the Victoria Press, and I have young women constantly at work there for 2½ years who have never seen Miss Faithfull'.¹⁵¹ This was apparently confirmed in Head's history of the Victoria Press by female apprentices of the press themselves who had, he maintained, written a letter to the editor of the *Publisher's Circular* in response to an article published condemning female compositorship. They claimed that:

Instead of being "cockered" up (*pampered/spoiled*) by ladies (...) we have been forsaken by them (...) they having shown no interest in our persons nor prospects. Indeed, our advantages have been greatly increased by the transfer of ownership from the hands of a lady to those of our present proprietor. *Then* we had to pay 10 l. premium (...) *now*, as we said before, we pay nothing.¹⁵²

This letter was signed on behalf of the twenty-one female compositors by Rebecca Isaacs, Lucy Maria Mothersole and Annie Ellen Davis. Although it is unclear how true their statements were, it was a strongly critical appraisal of Faithfull's management of the Victoria Press.

6.3.3 The longer-term success of the Victoria Press

In light of an inexperienced workforce, male opposition to the Victoria Press and the scandals which led to Faithfull's departure as its manager and proprietor, it is important to question how the Victoria Press and other female run presses managed to be successful. How were they able to challenge the male monopoly

¹⁵¹ 'Victoria Press', *The Times*, 15 October 1867.

¹⁵² Head, *The Victoria Press*, p. 11.

which excluded women from printing to train a growing number of female compositors? How were they able to make such work respectable for women? Were there other individuals aside from Faithfull who ensured that these enterprises were a success?

In Tusan's view the Victoria Press's success stemmed from the fact it was a female-led enterprise which formed part of a wider movement of 'women owned and run printing organizations' to create 'employment opportunities for women compositors'.¹⁵³ The Caledonian Press in Scotland and The Queen's Institute in Ireland were established using the Victoria Press as a blueprint and had links with the Society in London. The Women's Cooperative Printing Society founded in 1876 by Emma Paterson similarly was inspired by the Victoria Press, and in contrast to the Victoria Press was founded as a cooperative from the outset. Tusan asserts that all of these businesses were successful because they 'developed a utopian model of reform based on a maternalist cooperative ideal that overturned masculine business practices'.¹⁵⁴ She goes on to claim that women worked together to form 'cooperative enterprises' that challenged existing 'capitalist business practices'.¹⁵⁵ They formed 'mutually dependent networks' which would secure their success, based on shared ownership of businesses established according to new Limited Liability legislation. Women without sufficient funds to purchase a business could group together and divide ownership as shareholders in 'philanthropical' enterprises.¹⁵⁶

However, Tusan fails to distinguish between the financial arrangements made for the Victoria Press and the Women's Printing Society. Whereas the latter was founded according to investments made by a number of shareholders, and employees earned bonuses each year on the basis of surplus profit, the same cannot be said of the Victoria Press. Her argument that Parkes advocated women

¹⁵³ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 104.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

'clubbing together' their financial resources so that they could more easily own businesses as shareholders applied to the establishment of the *English Woman's Journal* rather than the Victoria Press. Indeed, whilst she asserts that the Victoria Press was founded according to Bessie Rayner Parkes' belief in the power of 'women run business networks' and a 'philanthropical business model', Parkes had very little to do with the Victoria Press. Parkes had purchased the type and printing press and Hastings and Faithfull had invested some funds personally. The Society had contributed the £50 needed to pay for the apprentices' indentures. However, the Society's Annual Report for 1863 pointed out that the Press was a business operating independently of the Society. Although 'letters from employers and applicants' were received by it, the Society thought 'the undertaking would be more likely to succeed if left to private enterprise'.¹⁵⁷ This was reiterated in the Annual Report for 1864 which explained how early on:

(...) the Committee came to the conclusion that the undertaking would be more likely to succeed if it were left to private enterprise (...) the Society has had no share in the undertaking, the credit of which belongs to Miss Faithfull alone.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, whilst Tusan is keen to describe the press as a 'maternalist cooperative' relying on 'mutually dependent networks' formed between women, this fails to acknowledge the importance of cooperation between men and women in the Victoria Press' success, or the fact that often women failed to work together successfully. Male support has not been acknowledged perhaps because it undermines the image of female solidarity that not only Tusan, but the Langham Place group itself were keen to present to the public. Aside from the support from Austin Holyoake, the important role of cooperation with men in the printing trade was also evident in the fact that the Society established good relations with a

¹⁵⁷ Annual Report, 1863. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

¹⁵⁸ For further discussion of this see Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, pp. 36-37. Bridger and Jordan similarly agree that Tusan's article 'Reforming Work' contains a number of inaccuracies, n.6, p. 56.

number of male run printing houses who were willing to take on female apprentices. The most prominent of these appears to have been John Bale and Sons. When the relationship between the Society and the Victoria Press under Faithfull's management began to break down, they undertook to print the feminist periodical the *English Woman's Journal*. They continued as printers of the *Englishwoman's Review* which replaced it later in the decade. Their relationship with the Society continued and although the Society had long ceased to find apprentices for Faithfull's Victoria Press, it happily supplied female apprentices to be taken on at John Bale and Sons.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, when new technology arose to threaten printing at the turn of the century, the Society raised a fund to enable the Bales to hire a linotype and then a monotype machine for apprentices to train on.¹⁶⁰ It was a relationship, therefore, which benefited both. The minute books for the Society show that a number of male run printing houses followed John Bale's example and applied to the Society to help them find women apprentices. The Society aided these firms which included Messrs Hutchings and Crosby of Henry Street, Mr Straker of Bishopsgate Avenue, Mr Ellisen of Type Street and Mr Burns of Southampton Row.¹⁶¹ Indeed, in 1877 a Mr Hurd of Bedford Street, Commercial Road 'resolved to try the experiment at the suggestion of Mr Bale'. He went on to apply for apprentices through the Society in 1884 and in 1888 reported that 'he now employs women only as compositors'.¹⁶² Thus despite union opposition, the cause of female compositorship had important supporters amongst men within the printing trade.

Their motivation for taking on women is not clear but they may well have been impressed by the work these female apprentices produced, in line with the view taken in the *Printer's Register* report of 1869. The report also highlighted that the Victoria Press had abolished the seven-year apprenticeship compulsory for men.

¹⁵⁹ Minutes for the General Committee and Minutes for the Managing Committee reveal that women were regularly apprenticed to John Bale and Sons through the efforts of the Society: see GCIP SPTW 1/1/1 and 1/2, GCA.

¹⁶⁰ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 37.

¹⁶¹ Minutes for the Managing Committee: 24 November 1882, 8 December 1882, 18 May 1883 and 7 December 1883. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

¹⁶² Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, p. 37.

This may have benefited businesses such as John Bale and Sons who would therefore be released from the contractual obligations that a seven-year apprenticeship signified. Furthermore, it is possible that they were able to exert a greater degree of control over their female employees. Male printers at a particular firm were known as being members of a 'chapel' and enjoyed the protection of the 'father' of the chapel, who represented their interests.¹⁶³ Finally, companies such as John Bale and Sons and Messrs Hutchings and Crosby may have benefited from presenting themselves as the compassionate businessmen, 'progressive' and 'public-spirited', that Ellen Jordan has described.¹⁶⁴ Whatever their motivation, in the face of male dominated labour organizations such as the London Union of Compositors their support was invaluable.

Furthermore, the Victoria Press successfully provided other organizations and individuals with a model to train female compositors. Increasingly girls signed their indentures as apprentice compositors in female run printing presses established throughout the United Kingdom and abroad. Men and women with wealth and status worked together to found these 'philanthropical' enterprises using the Victoria Press as a blueprint.¹⁶⁵ It appears therefore, that with the right backing it was a model that could be easily replicated. The Caledonian Press opened its doors for business in Edinburgh in 1862, with assistance from the Scottish branch of the Society.¹⁶⁶ According to Tusan, this Scottish branch was established following a visit from Parkes and Faithfull to Edinburgh and enjoyed the patronage of a number of renowned men and women. With the Duchess of Kent as its patron and a wealthy Scottish woman, Mary Anne Thomson in charge, the Caledonian Press claimed it could 'execute any description of printing'.¹⁶⁷ A further printing press, the Queen's Institute, was established in Ireland. Though little is known about the work it carried out, it too had connections to the Society

¹⁶³ See <http://www.metatype.co.uk/stories/story18.shtml> (accessed 16 November 2010).

¹⁶⁴ Jordan, *The Women's Movement*, p. 193.

¹⁶⁵ For further discussion of how increasingly philanthropists relied on using blueprints created by others, see Adam, *Philanthropy*.

¹⁶⁶ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 106.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 107: according to Tusan it printed its own feminist periodical called the *Rose, Shamrock and Thistle*, a women's magazine 'for the Fair Daughters of Great Britain and Ireland'.

in London. The philanthropic image and background of these printing presses would appear to have offered them something of a commercial advantage.

In addition, the model of the Victoria Press was transferred to Berlin where it had provoked interest amongst men involved in the printing trade, men with links to the Lette-Verein and supporters of the campaign for women's employment. It was repeatedly mentioned in the Berlin publication *Das Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* edited by Joseph Lehmann, a member of a number of the Lette-Verein's committees.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, the *Berliner Buchdruckerei-Aktiengesellschaft, Setzerinnenschule des Lette-Vereins*, the Lette-Verein's own printing press which trained and employed women, was described as being founded using the Victoria Press as its model.¹⁶⁹ The printer Otto Janke worked with the women administering the Lette-Verein to establish it. His son, Carl Janke became director and defended the work of the female compositors trained and employed at the press claiming that they could earn 26 to 30 marks a week. Following criticism of female compositors he challenged other printing houses to compete with his press in a public display of speed, a challenge which was printed in Berlin's *Deutsche Buchdruckerzeitung* in 1879.¹⁷⁰ The willingness of individuals to follow the model of the Victoria Press would suggest that, as Tusan claims, 'women reformers challenged what they understood as exclusionary commercial and labor practices'.¹⁷¹ They did so however, with the assistance of men.

¹⁶⁸ Lehmann's publication reported on the existence of the Victoria Press and the work of its founder Emily Faithfull in a number of articles, see *Das Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, 'Die Erziehung des weiblichen Geschlechts zur Förderung seiner Erwerbsfähigkeit', vol. 35, no. 13 (1866), p. 176; 'Denken, Sprechen und Handeln der Frauen', vol. 35, no. 27 (1866), p. 371; vol. 38, no. 15 (1869), p. 224. *Das Magazin* took a great interest in the work of the Society in London and regularly reported on its work, often translating its Annual Reports for readers and describing the social science congress discussions on the woman question: see, 'Die englische Gesellschaft zur Beförderung der Frauen-Arbeit', vol. 35, no. 4 (1866) pp. 52-53; 'Stimmen des Auslandes über die Erziehung des weiblichen Geschlechtes zur gewerblichen Thätigkeit', vol. 35, no. 21 (1866), pp. 284-287; 'Der Socialwissenschaftliche Kongress zu Manchester, 1866', vol. 36, no. 10 (1867), pp. 133-136.

¹⁶⁹ Obschermitzki, "Der Frau", pp. 52-53.

¹⁷⁰ C. Janke, 'Eingesandt', *Deutsche Buchdruckerzeitung* (1879), p. 115. 2/06, LVA.

¹⁷¹ Tusan, 'Reforming Work', p. 114.

The Victoria Press was above all a success because it challenged preconceived ideas about what constituted women's work. It provided concrete evidence that women could enter an unfamiliar trade and attain the same standards as their male counterparts. The growing debate about women becoming compositors focused public attention on the issue of women's position in skilled trades and the need for better working conditions generally. Considering the level of opposition that existed against women entering the trade, the Victoria Press was not only successful for surviving these persistent attacks, but in inspiring other men and women to follow suit in choosing to apprentice women. Despite union hostility, girls and their families were encouraged to enter training as compositors believing that such work was respectable and that they would earn a good wage. The number of women entering printing did increase. Whereas the census of 1861 reported only 70 women employed in printing, by 1891 this figure had risen to 4527.¹⁷² Jordan argues that while women remained a small minority of typesetters the increase in numbers itself was an achievement. Women continued to train and work as compositors and the Women's Printing Society was founded by Emma Paterson in 1876, where women were taught 'all branches of printing'.¹⁷³ As Tusan states, the legacy of the Victoria Press was that '[a]lthough the increased ability to find work in Victorian male-run print shops did not dramatically alter women's status as underpaid employees, the "experiments" in women's printing did increase visibility of the female industrial workers' plight.¹⁷⁴

Overall, the Victoria Press was successful because of a range of factors. In spite of the inexperience of its apprentices and manager, it soon produced work for a number of high status clients and patronage from the Queen. Crucially the Victoria Press provided women with the model workplace: working hours were regulated and frequent breaks ensured within well ventilated premises located in a safe neighbourhood. The philanthropic values claimed by Tusan to be at the heart of the Victoria Press and others modelled on it, were vital in encouraging women to

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

enter apprenticeships as print compositors. Furthermore, the claim that these businesses were in part philanthropic was useful propaganda. It triggered vital assistance and investment from progressive men and women committed to a form of philanthropy based on the notion of self-help.

Male cooperation was, however, particularly important, yet has been overlooked by historical accounts including Tusan's. The Victoria Press overcame formidable opposition amongst male printers hostile to women being trained in a skilled area of labour they claimed as their own. Furthermore, it recovered from Faithfull's sudden departure as manager and served as the model for similar institutions to be established elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in Germany. It did so because from the outset it was supported by male printers sympathetic to the Society's aim to open new forms of employment for women. Men such as the Holyoakes provided vital instruction in an area totally unfamiliar to Parkes and Faithfull when they established the Victoria Press. Other male printers soon became keen to train and employ women and worked with the Society which provided a ready stream of girls willing to become apprentices. Businessmen who decided to apprentice women as compositors could depend on the Society for assistance in finding these apprentices. They were able to present themselves as committed to a cause which seemingly provided them commercial gain on the basis of a manageable, disciplined and well-vetted workforce of women. Despite Faithfull's efforts to underplay male cooperation, without it the Victoria Press would not have enjoyed the success that it did.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Ladies' Restaurant and the Victoria Press were two of the most successful institutions established by the Lette-Verein and the Society. Whereas the Ladies' Restaurant continues today and relocated with the Lette-Verein to new

premises at Viktoria-Luise Platz in 1902,¹⁷⁵ the Victoria Press operated for twenty years and provided a model for a number of other female run printing establishments in Scotland, Ireland and even Berlin. They were founded according to different notions of what constituted suitable work for women. In the case of the Ladies' Restaurant training accorded with traditional values regarding women's natural abilities. However, these domestic skills of cooking and household economy could potentially be used for entrepreneurial purposes by women to secure their independence. With regard to the Victoria Press, female compositorship offered a more overt challenge to established norms regarding suitable work for women. Although printing was a male preserve, by improving working conditions for female printers Faithfull and others who subsequently followed in her footsteps showed that women could be employed in new trades if workplaces were made respectable and safe for them. Despite these differences, both successfully publicized their work as model enterprises for women to work in. Royal patronage and male support ensured that although they maintained a philanthropic image they were able to capitalize on vital business knowledge and expertise of men keen to offer their assistance. In this way the Ladies' Restaurant and the Viktoria-Press successfully combined philanthropic and entrepreneurial values and offered an acceptable image of the professional, skilled but ultimately respectable middle-class woman.

¹⁷⁵ See Appendix E for photos of the Kochschule and the Viktoria-Stift in 1912.

Chapter 7: International research and transnational exchange: Women build networks in the campaign for women's employment

7.1 Introduction

In the introduction to *The Woman Question in Europe* published in 1884, Frances Power Cobbe suggested that the women's movement represented a natural, ineluctable force:

Of all the movements, political, social and religious, of past ages there is, I think, not one so unmistakably tidelike in its extension and the uniformity of its impulse, as that which has taken place within living memory among the women of almost every race on the globe (...) Like the incoming tide, also, it has rolled in separate waves, and each one has obeyed the same law, and has done its part in carrying forward all the rest. The waves of the Higher Education of Women all over the world; the waves which lifted women over the sandbars of the medical and (...) legal and clerical professions (...) every one of these waves, great and small, has been rolled forward by the same advancing tide.¹

Women working for the Society in London and the Lette-Verein in Berlin built links with their contemporaries abroad, and in doing so formed an 'imagined community' of women united in their aim of improving women's employment opportunities.² Individuals such as Marie Fischer-Lette, Frances Hoggan and Helen Ogle Moore decided to investigate foreign initiatives in the campaign for women's education and employment. They were committed to the cause of

¹ F.P. Cobbe, 'Introduction', in Stanton (ed.), *The Woman Question*, pp. xiii- xiv. For more information on Cobbe's involvement in the international women's movement see McFadden, *Golden cables*, pp. 161-169.

² Rupp, *Worlds of women*.

women's training, a cause held up as an international ideal in the face of national indifference and hostility towards improving women's employment opportunities. Travelling to attend congresses abroad and communicating about their work strengthened their commitment, and international 'intermittent contact' became 'something quite pervasive in their lives' especially in the case of Marie Fischer-Lette.³ Transnational cooperation of this kind aimed at a specific national goal also provided women with the opportunity to extend their influence within national borders. The knowledge they accumulated increased their standing as experts and crucially emphasized the need for competition in the light of foreign successes. This was powerful propaganda in an era of international competition, and strengthened the argument for more concerted action at home. Women thus entered the public debate on an issue which, if dealt with effectively, had the potential to improve the nation's standing. 'Surplus women' could be made to be productive; training and employment in suitable areas would boost the national economy and potentially the nation's reputation.

7.2 Marie Fischer-Lette: the go-between

Unlike her better-known sister, Anna Schepeler-Lette, President of the Lette-Verein, Marie Fischer-Lette has all but disappeared from historical accounts.⁴

³ Ibid., p. 159.

⁴ Obschernitzki describes her as an authoress and an artist and she is mentioned for her book dedicated to the life of her father, but beyond this she receives no further mention. See Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 9 and Fischer-Lette, *Ein Lebensbild*. There is brief mention made of Marie Fischer-Lette in K.K. Sklar, A. Schüler and S. Strasser (eds), *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany: a dialogue in documents 1885-1933* (London, 1998). This book describes Marie Fischer-Lette as one of the delegates from Germany who visited the women's congresses as part of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 but goes on to say that 'it is not clear' how Marie Fischer-Lette was related to Anna Schepeler-Lette and that 'no detailed biographical information is available (...) on Fischer-Lette', p. 26. Even the information given here is incorrect as she travelled to Chicago as part of the English delegation to read a speech written by Helen Taylor, secretary of the Moral Reform Union in England. See the appendix to 'The World's Congress of Representative Women: a historical resume for popular circulation of the World's Congress of Representative Women, convened in Chicago on May 15, and adjourned on May 22, 1893, under the auspices of the Woman's branch of the World's congress auxiliary', p. 936, which lists which delegates attended from which country:

Further research into her life reveal, however, that Fischer-Lette played a crucial role in bringing women working for the Society in London into contact with those involved in the Lette-Verein in Berlin. She was very much affected by the issues that both institutions tried to address. A spinster until the age of 36, she married in London only to be widowed a few years later. She then attempted to find employment and so was one of the 'surplus women' who aroused such public debate and concern. Furthermore, her attempts to find work in London apparently brought her into contact with women involved in the work of the Society. The combination of her personal experiences regarding employment, her connections to the Lette-Verein and the friendships she made with women committed to advancing women's employment in London provided an opportunity for the creation of a nascent transnational network between women in Germany and England.

The Lette-Verein published details of Fischer-Lette's personal situation in *Der Frauenanwalt* in 1875 by including a letter written to Anna Schepeler-Lette by the youngest of Lette's daughters, Elisabeth Lette, regarding Marie's situation in London. It indicated that the two sisters were there together and described Fischer-Lette's difficulties in finding work:⁵

Our sister Marie draws medical things; you know, that she is very interested in this area of study and I believe she is until now the only woman who does it. Professor Dr Liebrich has seen her drawings, which he praised very much, and has given her an introduction to his publisher. Similar praise has been

<http://www.archive.org/stream/worldscongressof00worluoft#page/n5/mode/2up> (accessed 22 June 2010). Marie Fischer-Lette was involved in this organization and the International Arbitration and Peace Association: see H. Brown, *"The truest form of patriotism": pacifist feminism in Britain, 1870-1902* (Manchester, 2003), p. 136.

⁵ W.A. Lette had four daughters: Anna, Marie, Auguste and Elisabeth. Auguste was born in 1837 and later married and had three children. Her husband died when she was 35 years old. Elisabeth, apparently the youngest born in 1840, seems to have remained single although nothing has been written about her. This letter was therefore written when she was 35 and refers to her by her single initials, E.L. At this age she would have been unlikely to marry. In accounts which describe W.A. Lette's establishment of the Lette-Verein, there is frequent mention of his concern for his own daughters' welfare as being motivation for his interest in the issue of women's employment. 229/03, LVA.

given to her by other doctors but all openings are difficult and doctors perhaps do not always find it suitable to employ a woman.⁶

This letter, published in the 'Correspondence' section of the periodical, revealed that the search for work could take one abroad. Here, even the sister of the Lette-Verein's President required work, indicating that the issue of women's employment affected the leader of the Lette-Verein personally.

Fischer-Lette had settled in London though it is not clear how she came to be there. According to the census records she married a Mr Johan Georg Paul Fischer on 6 April 1866 in Marylebone,⁷ but was widowed some time between 1871 and 1881.⁸ Paul 'Fisher', as he was known on the census entries that appear for him, was 80 years old when they married.⁹ He was a portrait painter from Hanover, the son of a sword-maker and had previously been married to Jane Fischer, residing with her at 4 Upper Spring Street, Marylebone, Middlesex.¹⁰ Marie Lette, according to their marriage certificate, had been his neighbour at 3 Upper Spring Street and presumably married him when Jane died. In 1861, Paul's neighbours at 3 Upper Spring Street comprised four households ranging from a needleworker living with her 16-year-old daughter; a scripture reader, his wife, child and father-in-law; a lace-cleaner from France living on her own and an unmarried bank clerk.¹¹ It is possible that Marie Lette was a lodger with one of these neighbours.

According to the 1871 census, Paul Fischer and Marie Fischer-Lette were still living at Upper Spring Street five years after their marriage and she was working

⁶ 'Correspondenzen', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 5, no. 7 (1875), p. 170. Rupp emphasizes that in the absence of face-to-face contact, women used printed material, in particular periodicals, to 'knit together far-flung women through regular communication about what was going on in every corner of the international community'. See Rupp, *Worlds of women*, p. 159.

⁷ Marriage certificate, General Register Office in the District of Marylebone in the County of Middlesex, no. 186, 6 April 1866, see Appendix F.

⁸ 1881 Census, p. 22, no. 350.

⁹ Marriage certificate, F.

¹⁰ 1861 Census, p. 36, no. 189-192.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

as a teacher of languages, whilst Paul was still an artist.¹² However, by 1881 Fischer-Lette was a widow lodging at 57 Charlotte Street with a builder and his family. Her occupation was recorded as 'artist/painter'. Whether she received an income upon the death of her husband is not clear,¹³ but the fact that she was forced to lodge upon widowhood and seek employment suggests that as for many widows, she relied upon herself for her subsistence. Their circumstances as a married couple also suggest that they received a lower middle-class income. Fischer-Lette worked when she was married and they lived in a neighbourhood of clerks, needleworkers and preachers. Furthermore, Paul Fischer was 84 by the time of the 1871 census: although he described himself as an artist it is probable that he would struggle to take on a huge amount of work at this age.¹⁴

Fischer-Lette's relationship with her husband provides a clue as to how she initially met the women involved in the work of the Society. Society records indicate that Paul Fischer was a keen supporter of its work. A Mr J.P. Fischer Esquire appears as a donor for the Society from 1861 to 1866 donating 10 shillings a year, and no other J.P Fischer appears on the census in 1861.¹⁵ He ceases to appear as a donor from 1866. By 1881 Fischer-Lette had moved to 57 Charlotte Street just 500 metres and a short walk from the Society's offices at 22 Berners Street. This raises the possibility that she maintained close connections with the Society and continued to act as a mediator between them and the Lette-Verein in Berlin. Indeed, it is possible that as a woman widowed and in need of employment, she may even have approached them for work.

The letter presented Fischer-Lette as a woman who wanted to work, and though art was a suitable pursuit for a middle-class woman she pushed the boundaries of respectability by aiming to embark on medical illustration. It went on to reveal her connections with English women committed to the campaign for women's

¹² 1871 Census, p. 39, no. 107.

¹³ I have not found a copy of his will.

¹⁴ 1871 Census, p. 39, no. 107.

¹⁵ Annual Reports for the Society, 1860-1866. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

employment. Whilst her illustrations were rejected by many male doctors, they were used by a young female doctor, a 'Mrs Hoghan-Morgan' (Dr Frances Hoggan nee Morgan) to accompany her medical lectures. It was therefore female solidarity and mutual assistance amongst women that allowed Fischer-Lette some success against prejudice in this regard. Hoggan apparently remained a friend of Marie Fischer-Lette's and developed links with the Lette-Verein that sustained communication between the two organizations for years to come.

Hoggan was a supporter of the Society in London and had close links to the women at Langham Place.¹⁶ In October 1880 she travelled to Berlin to attend the Lette-Verein's Women's Congress accompanied by Helen Ogle Moore and representing the Society in London. The Women's Congress brought together women from all over Germany to discuss the issue of women and employment. Over a period of four days, congress delegates gave speeches and lectures about their efforts to gain access for women into new forms of employment: Hoggan herself spoke in German on the efforts of England and the Society to deal with the problem of 'surplus' women. The various institutions of the Lette-Verein were opened up to the public and tours gave delegates an insight into their work.

Whilst serving as propaganda for women's transnational cooperation and providing an insight into how this network was established, Elisabeth's letter discussed Hoggan's involvement in the campaign for women's employment in more depth. It described her work as a doctor¹⁷ and the hospital established by Hoggan and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson for women and children in Marylebone Road.

¹⁶ For more information on the links between Hoggan, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and the women at Langham Place, see J. Manton, *Elizabeth Garrett Anderson: England's first woman physician* (London, 1965).

¹⁷ It was a profession closed to women in Germany and England, but one in which they gained access to by completing their training abroad, mainly in Switzerland. Indeed Frances Hoggan studied at Zurich University in Switzerland just shortly before Franziska Tiburtius, later the doctor for women training at the Lette-Verein, was completing her medical tuition there. Tiburtius gained her medical degree in 1876 in Zurich whilst Hoggan received hers in 1870: see L.L. Clark, *Women and Achievement in nineteenth-century Europe* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 216 and S. Roberts, *Sophia Jex-Blake: a woman pioneer in nineteenth-century medical reform* (London, 1993), p. 154 respectively.

According to Elisabeth, Hoggan was eager to raise the profile of the hospital and Elisabeth commented on how beneficial it would be for people of high standing to take note of its work, emphasizing that it had already received commendation from the Crown Princess Victoria.¹⁸ Again, Elisabeth highlighted the importance of transnational support, in this case from the German Royal family, and the possibilities it provided for Germany to learn from the English example with regard to health care and employment for women as doctors and pharmacists. Furthermore, women who trained abroad as doctors, mainly in Switzerland, met and engaged with women of all nationalities, creating contacts who could potentially be drawn upon to advance the cause for women to train in the medical profession.¹⁹

A further key theme of the letter was the importance of work to women and crucially the recognition they received for it. Elisabeth's pride at Professor Liebrich's praise for her sister's drawings was undoubtedly felt by Fischer-Lette, alongside her likely frustration at the obstacles she faced in entering this work. Similarly, Hoggan was eager that the hospital be visited as much as possible in order to 'awaken' people's consciousness about the importance of healthcare provided by and for women only. Both Hoggan and Fischer-Lette aspired to be professionals in their field and looked for recognition amongst their peers: more often than not they received this recognition from other women rather than their male contemporaries and this was clearly key in sustaining their work.

Fragmentary though the evidence is, it points to Marie Fischer-Lette playing an

¹⁸ 'Correspondenzen', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 5, no. 7 (1875), p. 170. Aside from Elisabeth's letter I can find no reference to the Crown Princess Victoria's support for Anderson and Hoggan's hospital for women in Marylebone. However, Olechnowicz states that her sister Princess Louise gave financial support to this hospital: see A. Olechnowicz (ed.), *The monarchy and the British nation, 1780 to the present* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 104.

¹⁹ Clark describes how Elizabeth Blackwell, the first female doctor who trained in the United States encouraged many more to follow in her footsteps. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, an English woman inspired by Blackwell followed Mary Putnam, one of Blackwell's friends to study as a doctor in Paris. There they both studied alongside Madeleine Brès who became one of France's first female doctors and Russian's Catherine Goncharova. Similarly in Zurich, Frances Hoggan studied there as did the German doctors Franziska Tiburtius and Emilie Lehmus: see Clark, *Women and achievement*, pp. 211-213.

important role as an intermediary for the Lette-Verein and the Society. Her personal experiences of seeking work drew support from women involved in the Society and opened up communication between England and Germany. The publication of Elisabeth's letter in *Der Frauenanwalt* communicated these issues: it encouraged readers to view the Lette-Verein as run by women who were personally affected by the issues it tried to address.

Marie Fischer-Lette's friendship with Frances Hoggan contributed to the development of a network of women committed to improving employment for women across national boundaries. In 1879, *Der Frauenanwalt* published an extract from a letter sent by 'a lady of distinction' in England to the President of the Lette-Verein, Anna Schepeler-Lette in Berlin. The letter translated 'as accurately as possible' was presented as 'proof that England, whose institutions have served so many times as a pattern for the foundation of our organizations (...) now for their part wish to learn from us!'²⁰ This lady of distinction was writing on behalf of the Society having received Schepeler-Lette's details from Frances Hoggan. She wrote with the following plea:

Madame! I must ask your forgiveness for burdening you with my letter, but I hope, that you will forgive my question, because I turn to you for information which I don't know how to get in any other way; I wish to collect as many facts as possible concerning the recently opened school in Berlin for education aimed at advancing employment amongst the female sex (...) The subject is of great interest and meaning to England, because one hopes, that as soon as possible technical schools of the same type as those in Germany will be established in England. Until then it interests us very much to know what in other countries has already been achieved in this regard and for us all to experience what is suitable, to spread light over a subject which in England has only recently entered our knowledge. Frau Dr Frances Elizabeth Hoggan who I have consulted over this matter, referred me to that

²⁰ 'Bericht über den Verein deutscher Lehrerinnen und Erzieherinnen', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1879), p. 53.

which is already established in Berlin, she gave me your address and gave me hope that you would provide me with all the details. I would be indebted to you if you would send a prospectus for your school here.²¹

This letter, published again in *Der Frauenanwalt*, indicated that women in Germany and England were keen to keep up with their contemporaries abroad. Furthermore, although initially the Lette-Verein was established on the basis of the Society's work, by 1879 the Lette-Verein had successfully set up a large training establishment for women within the house at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse which opened in 1873. In contrast, the Society operated on a much smaller scale and its classes were not centralized: it would appear that the Society hoped to improve their provision of technical education, in part by relying on information from abroad.

The timing of the letter is crucial in suggesting that this was the case. The Society's interest in the Lette-Verein's success emerged when the subject of technical education was of key importance in Britain. The Paris Exhibition of 1867 had revealed the level of Britain's industrial decline, triggering concerns over the nation's lack of technical expertise.²² The Society's secretary, Gertrude King, reported that to establish a national system for technical education,²³ the City Companies were planning to set up a joint body known as the City and Guilds of London Institute.²⁴ This body aimed, amongst other things, to fund apprenticeship fees for deserving applicants requiring technical education. Since its aims were very similar to the Society's, with time the CGLI suggested the Society become incorporated by Licence from the Board of Trade and letters be sent to the Companies of London requesting support for the Society's aims.²⁵ On 17 March 1879 the Society was allocated an annual grant of £300 from the City and Guilds

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² For a discussion of Britain's industrial decline and poor performance with regard to technical education, see R. Betts, 'Persistent but misguided?: the technical educationists, 1867-89', *History of Education*, vol. 27, no. 3 (1998), 267-277.

²³ D. Evans, *A History of Technical Education: a short introduction*, http://www.tmag.co.uk/extras/history_of_Technical_Commercial_Exams08.pdf (accessed 22 October 2010).

²⁴ Bridger and Jordan, *Timely Assistance*, pp. 78-79.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

of London Institute 'for the technical instruction of women'.²⁶ The Society was incorporated on 18 June 1879. This recognition by the CGLI of the role the Society could play in the development of a system of technical instruction underpins the Society's motives for researching their colleagues' endeavours abroad. Women from the Society communicating with their contemporaries in Berlin had the opportunity to gather more information, this time on technical education in Germany, a nation widely regarded as excelling in this area.²⁷ The letter sent by the Society to the Lette-Verein was followed by an invitation from the Lette-Verein for Society representatives to attend the Women's Congress in Berlin in October 1880. As mentioned previously, Hoggan and Ogle Moore attended the congress on behalf of the Society, where they gained an insight into campaigns abroad and the opportunity to develop a national agenda for change.

7.3 International research and transnational exchange: Female propagandists and fact-finders working for 'one common cause'

By the end of 1880, dialogue between women involved in the Society and the Lette-Verein had intensified. The 'Verband der Frauenbildungs- und Erwerbsvereine', an association of German women's education and employment institutions headed by the Lette-Verein, convened the Berlin Women's Congress in October 1880. The origins of the Verband (as it will hereafter be referred to) require some explanation here. In 1869 the Lette-Verein's President, von Holtendorff, led a three day conference in Berlin to discuss the issue of women's education and employment, which assembled delegates from women's institutions all over Germany.²⁸ These women's institutions formed the Verband, with the aim

²⁶ Annual Report, 1879. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA. This is also mentioned in Evans, *A History*.

²⁷ Philip Magnus writing for the Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry in 1886 stated that '[t]he advance of German trade does not appear to be owing to any falling off in the efficiency of the British workman, but solely to the superior fitness of the Germans': cited in Betts, 'Persistent but Misguided?', p. 276.

²⁸ The establishment and work of the Verband are best described in Hirsch, *Geschichte*, pp. 93-113. Details of the 1869 conference proceedings can be found in the 'Programm für die Conferenz der

of providing unity and establishing common aims for numerous associations across Germany which aimed to train and employ women.²⁹ These had proliferated, according to Hirsch, in the years following the Lette-Verein's establishment, and now existed both in cities close to Berlin such as Hamburg as well as in the Habsburg Empire, in Vienna and Prague.³⁰ Those present at the conference included Louise Büchner from Darmstadt and Auguste Schmidt representing the ADF in Leipzig.³¹ Delegates from overseas also attended; a Miss Curtis from Boston and Mr and Mrs Doggett from Chicago were listed as being present. The Verband's remit was decided at the conference in 1869 and Holtzendorff described one of its key aims as to promote the regular exchange of opinion on the question of women's training and employment between relevant institutions at home and, crucially, abroad. The Verband met regularly, and with the Lette-Verein's guidance, organized petitions demanding women's entry to employment on the railways, in the telegraph and postal services as well as to the pharmaceutical profession.³² Speaking at the 1869 congress, Holtzendorff, who had recently been appointed as the President of the Lette-Verein, explained the value of international exchange. He asserted that the woman question was a 'world' question for the whole of humanity.³³ In 1872, when the Verband met once again, these international links were evident as Mary Carpenter and Florence Davenport Hill travelled from England to attend the congress of the Verband.³⁴

Florence Davenport Hill discussed the work being done by women working with orphans in England at the 1872 congress. She was the daughter of Matthew Davenport Hill, the famous penal reformer and a key founding member of NAPSS who had strong personal links to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and her family: he had helped Bodichon in writing her pamphlet entitled 'Brief Summary of the

deutschen Frauen-Bildungs- und Erwerbsvereine am 4., 5. und 6. November 1869' (Berlin, 1869).

²⁹ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, pp. 30 ff. and pp. 93-113; 'Programm für die Conferenz der deutschen Frauen-Bildungs- und Erwerbsvereine am 4., 5. und 6. November 1869' (Berlin, 1869); Obschemitzki, "Der Frau", pp. 30-33.

³⁰ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, pp. 30-33.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., pp. 93-96.

³³ 'Programm für die Conferenz', p. 13.

³⁴ Hirsch, *Geschichte*, pp. 94-95.

Laws of England concerning Women' in 1854.³⁵ Matthew Davenport Hill's interest in prison reform brought him into contact with Mary Carpenter 'whose reform interests included educational work with society's poorest children, and with the reform of the treatment of juvenile delinquents'.³⁶ Apparently Florence Hill, along with her two sisters 'became part of Carpenter's reforming circle' which would explain why Florence Hill and Mary Carpenter visited the Verband congress of 1872.³⁷

The congress in 1880 described itself as a forum to 'discuss the important questions of the education and employment of women'³⁸ and was attended 'by delegates from all parts of the empire, from Darmstadt, Cassel, Bremen, Stettin, Breslau, Brunswick, Hanover and Tübingen'.³⁹ Upon their return, Hoggan and Moore translated the Lette-Verein's ideas and models for the reform of women's employment in reports which were published in the *Englishwoman's Review*. Whilst on the one hand they wished to emphasize the cooperation between them and their foreign 'sisters', on the other hand they hoped to prevent Britain from lagging behind Germany.⁴⁰ Their commitment was thus not only to an international ideal, but also to a series of specific national goals. National concerns about education and training were identified and developed by these women in the light of the knowledge and information they gained through their transnational encounters. As Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker highlight '[t]he point in time in which organized women's emancipation movements evolved coincides with the formation of the modern nation-state. Gender and national identity were intertwined.'⁴¹

³⁵ Hirsch, *Barbara*, pp. 89-90.

³⁶ All three sisters' lives are discussed by the Oxford DNB: see Deborah Sara Gorham, 'Hill, Rosamond Davenport (1825-1902)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [accessed 20 Jan 2011: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38756>].

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), 481-486, here p. 481.

³⁹ 'The Lette-Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), pp. 487 ff.

⁴⁰ The City and Guilds of London Institute 'consented to cooperate with the committee of the society and to set apart £300 annually for the technical instruction of women' according to the society's annual report for 1879: Annual Report, 1879. GCIP SPTW 2/1, GCA.

⁴¹ Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, 'Concepts and Issues', in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker (eds),

Evidence for the links between the Society and the Lette-Verein forged at the Women's Congress, though undiscovered until now, can be found in the Blackburn collection at Girton College archive in Cambridge. A pamphlet entitled 'The Lette-Verein' described the congress and how 'Dr Frances Hoggan from London' and 'a lady with introductions from the Secretary of the Employment of Women's Society, 22 Berners Street' attended it in October 1880.⁴² When this article, minute book entries for the Society, and articles which appeared in the *Englishwoman's Review* and *Der Frauenanwalt* are pieced together they outline the nature of the relationship between women in London and Berlin. They highlight the impressions they gained of each other's work to improve the working lives of women and how their efforts were simultaneously sustained by their transnational collaboration with women abroad.

Women's Emancipation Movements, p. 5.

⁴² Minutes for the Managing Committee, 12 November 1880. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA. I am most grateful to the archivists at Girton College who discovered this pamphlet for me. At the time the provenance of it was unclear as no author's name appeared on it. Only subsequently did I find that it had been published in the *Englishwoman's Review* as one of two articles on the Women's Congress in Berlin. I presume it is the draft written by Helen Ogle Moore and referred to in the Society's minutes which was distributed to committee members for their perusal, prior to its publication: see 'The Lette Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880). The Blackburn collection is entirely separate from the Society's archive. Without further investigation, the pamphlet might easily be overlooked, as indeed it has been until now.

7.4 'Introductions from Mrs Fischer-Lette'

Marie Fischer-Lette was once more a key figure in explaining how Society delegates came to attend the Women's Congress in Berlin. Miss Moore's attendance was clarified by the Society's committee meeting minute books in an entry for November 1880 which identified Marie as an intermediary:

A proof of an article written by Miss Moore for the *Englishwoman's Review* describing her visit to the work of the Lette-Verein in Berlin was submitted. Resolved that copies of this article be sent to the committee. Miss J. Boucherett explained that Miss Moore did not go intentionally as representative of the society, not having been appointed by the Committee, though she was treated as such in Berlin. She had gone with introductions from Mrs Fischer-Lette, a lady who had been known to the society for many years, who was the daughter of Dr Lette, the founder of the Lette Verein and the sister of Frau Schepeler Lette who for the last ten years has devoted both means and energy to the work.⁴³

Whilst it would appear that Dr Frances Hoggan was eminent enough for her attendance to need no explanation, Miss Moore's reasons for going were explained in more depth to the Society committee members in the General Committee meeting minutes on 29 October 1880. The record confirms that:

(...) a friend of Miss Jessie Boucherett's had at her request attended the congress held lately at Berlin to consider questions relating to the technical training and employment of women. She had been furnished with introductions to the principal ladies connected with the Lette-Verein, the Berlin Society for Promoting the Employment of Women who had shown her all their schools etc. She had visited the Crown Princess who is the

⁴³ Minutes for the Managing Committee, 12 November 1880. GCIP SPTW 1/2, GCA.

Patroness of the Berlin Society. Miss Moore had described to them the work done in England, had distributed several copies of the report of this Society in which all expressed much interest. Miss Moore is going to describe her visit for a paper in the *Englishwoman's Review*, copies of which paper Miss Biggs offered for circulation.¹⁴⁴

Miss Moore's attendance in Berlin may have ruffled some feathers amongst committee members, yet Boucherett had sound practical reasons for her attending. Helen Ogle Moore was a close associate of Boucherett's with strong and proven research skills. She worked as Boucherett's secretary,⁴⁵ a fact confirmed by the 1901 census which lists Ogle Moore as residing with Boucherett at the family estate in Lincolnshire.⁴⁶ According to the committee meeting minutes for the Society she visited the chain and nail making districts to investigate women's work in 1891.⁴⁷ In 1895 she wrote an article with Edith Hare called 'Report to the Society for the Employment of Women on the work of women in the white lead trade, at Newcastle-on-Tyne' which was published in Jessie Boucherett and Helen Blackburn's book, *The condition of working women and the factory acts* in 1896.⁴⁸ Boucherett was clearly keen to send a delegate whom she could trust and one who

⁴⁴ Minutes for the General Committee, 29 October 1880. GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA.

⁴⁵ I am indebted to Anne Bridger for identifying Miss Moore's full name and her role as one of Boucherett's close friends and her secretary. Her role as Boucherett's secretary is confirmed by the census record for 1901 which records Helen Ogle Moore as a 'secretary' living with Jessie Boucherett.

⁴⁶ National Census, 1901, p. 6.

⁴⁷ 13 March 1891, GCIP SPTW 1/1/1, GCA. She did so in light of a proposed amendment to the Factories Workshops Act of 1878 which would prohibit women from using a particular tool called an 'Oliver' on the grounds that it was too heavy. Her research showed that the tool was worked 'with the greatest ease by the foot' and that 4000 women were employed in this trade. She was asked by the committee to 'work up her report into the form of an article'. For more on the chainmaking industry, see S. Blackburn, 'Working-Class Attitudes to Social Reform: Black Country Chainmakers and Anti-Sweating Legislation, 1880-1930', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1988), 42-69.

⁴⁸ H.O. Moore and E. Hare, 'Report to the Society for the Employment of Women on the work of women in the white lead trade, at Newcastle-on-Tyne', in J. Boucherett and H. Blackburn, *The condition of working women and the factory acts* (London, 1896), pp. 77-84. Ogle Moore and her colleague had visited women in factories and interviewed them about their work, noting the conditions they worked in. They argued that if legally prevented from such work they would have no way of earning a living. For further discussion about Moore and Hare's research into the white lead trade, see C. Malone, 'The Gendering of Dangerous Trades: Government Regulation of Women's Work in the White Lead Trade in England, 1892-1898', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 8 (1996), 15-35.

would report back with an insightful account regarding Germany's efforts to train women for work.⁴⁹

The entry in the committee meeting minutes highlighted that Miss Moore had made contact with women at the highest level of leadership within the Lette-Verein. Not only had she met its 'principal ladies', but she had also spoken with its patron, the Crown Princess Victoria and daughter of the British monarch. The Society reminded those present that the Lette-Verein was still the 'Berlin Society for Promoting the Employment of Women', and therefore owed its existence to the model provided by the London Society. Helen Ogle Moore's report was published in the *Englishwoman's Review* in November 1880 and followed another article called 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', presumably written by Frances Hoggan.⁵⁰ These two articles form the basis for exploring the nature of cooperation and exchange between the women of these two institutions.

7.5 'The so-called Frauen-tag'

The opening of the Women's Congress in Berlin was announced in the liberal newspaper, the *Vossische Zeitung*.⁵¹ A series of articles subsequently published in *Der Frauenanwalt* gave a summary of the proceedings. The *Vossische Zeitung* encouraged citizens of Berlin to attend, emphasising the free entry that would give

⁴⁹ Crawford, *The women's suffrage movement*, p. 73. Crawford reveals that Helen Ogle Moore inherited Jessie Boucherett's dog. Jordan and Bridger show that she also inherited £200 from Boucherett upon her death in 1905, see Jordan and Bridger, "'An Unexpected Recruit'". How Ogle Moore came to work with Boucherett and the Society is unclear. According to the census, Helen Ogle Moore was the daughter of Anna Alicia Moore who she lived with in 1881. Published family records show that the family were Irish and Helen Ogle Moore's mother Anna was married to reverend William Ogle Moore, see J.J. Howard and F.A. Crisp (eds), *Visitation of Ireland* (London, 1897), p. 7. Although initially from Dublin, the family moved to England and in 1881 were residing in Shepton Mallett, Somerset. Helen Ogle Moore's brother, Frank was head of the household following the death of her parents and registered as a lime and cement merchant. By 1891 Helen Ogle Moore and her brother's family had moved to Middlesex, London. At this point her brother was listed as a 'journalist' and Helen Ogle Moore was described as '[l]iving on her own means': see national census, 1881 and 1891.

⁵⁰ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880).

⁵¹ *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 284, 12 October 1880.

people the chance to enter the hidden world of middle-class women's work; according to the article, the Ladies' Restaurant would be admitting men for the first time in its history. Those attending would not only attend a series of speeches, but be given a tour of training establishments and charitable institutions, as women's training and employment was put on display. The newspaper announcement seemed to pay off and the congress was well-attended. On the evening of the first day, speeches were given at the Rathaus, where hundreds assembled to hear the speakers, though 'hundreds, it is said, failed to obtain admission'.⁵² Described in the *Englishwoman's Review* as the 'so-called Frauentag',⁵³ the congress ran for four days. Delegates were wined and dined by their hosts, firstly at a royal reception held at the Neues Palais at Potsdam and subsequently at a series of banquets and opera visits. The most illustrious members of Berlin society joined with women from Germany and England to discuss women's education and employment and, significantly, to showcase Berlin's current success in this field.

According to the *Englishwoman's Review* the speeches made were 'earnest' and 'full of thought'.⁵⁴ Professor Gneist, president of the Centralverein, gave the opening speech and reminded the audience that 'their aim was to encourage and develop womanly arts and industries, not forgetting the higher culture of the intellect; which latter far from hindering a woman in the performance of her duties towards her family and society in general, materially aided her to fulfil the same in an intelligent manner'. He asserted that 'there was much to hope from the future; much of course being due to the energy and perseverance of the lady pioneers of this good work'.⁵⁵ The German speakers focused on German successes: Dr. Goldschmidt of Leipzig discussed the 'kindergarten idea as the corner stone of sound education' whilst Dr. Reutsch described the industrial and lace-making

⁵² 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 481.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Gneist had become president of the Centralverein upon Wilhelm Lette's death in 1868. He too was very interested in English reform and in particular its constitutional law and history, see O. Giercke, *Gedächtnisrede gehalten in der juristischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin am 19. October 1895* (Berlin, 1896).

schools of Saxony. Ideas for further reforms were mooted: Auguste Schmidt⁵⁶ talked of the need for a 'scientific culture for women' whilst Theodor von Bunsen proposed the emigration of single women as a solution to the 'surplus woman' problem, mirroring British initiatives.⁵⁷

Having listened to the speeches on work in Germany, the British delegates were keen to describe their successes at home. Whilst Miss Moore distributed reports for the Society in London, Dr Frances Hoggan was described by the *Englishwoman's Review* as reading 'a long paper on women's work in England during the last ten years', a paper which was published in *Der Frauenanwalt*.⁵⁸ The introduction to her speech in *Der Frauenanwalt* described the paper as 'exceptionally interesting in its content' and commented on the 'speaker's full command of the German language'. Hoggan began by stating that, 'I have seen English women in their moments of greatness and misery, in weakness and tragedy; and therefore I feel justified in speaking about our special conditions in England and about the progress made in the last decade to my sisters abroad.'⁵⁹ She went on to describe what she perceived as the lack of education and skill amongst women in England and how it had become a country 'over-run with half-educated women, incapable of their jobs'. She briefly outlined the work of the Society and applauded its efforts to ensure women received the basic preparation for a job as well as its exhortation for parents to fulfil their duties and ensure their daughters were trained. After touching on their work to train women in compositorship and law copying, Hoggan gave an overview of work done throughout the country. She applauded the work of the Ladies Educational Association, the founding of Girton and Newnham College, the Training College for Teachers, the establishment of

⁵⁶ Schmidt alongside Louise Otto helped to found the ADF. For more on Auguste Schmidt's role in founding the ADF and in the German women's movement, see Evans, *The Feminist Movement*, p. 26 and p. 30.

⁵⁷ Theodor von Bunsen was an associate of Bessie Rayner Parkes. See M.B. Lowndes, *I, too, have lived in Arcadia* (London, 1942). Parkes' daughter Marie Belloc Lowndes described how her mother 'knew Germany too; had made a pilgrimage to Goethe's Weimar; and stayed with the de Bunsens, the delightful family who had, even then, a considerable place in European society', p. 13.

⁵⁸ 'Die Frauenthätigkeit in England während der letzten Jahrzehnte', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1881), pp. 107 ff.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Board Schools and the National Health Society to convey the extent of innovation in England.

Hoggan's report simultaneously acknowledged the problems Britain faced in solving the woman question. She recognized openly that the proliferation of separate institutions, each duplicating the other's work, posed a danger in that their impact would be 'splintered and scattered' (*zersplittert und zerstreut*).⁶⁰ Acknowledging that a lack of centralization resulted in heavy administrative costs, she hoped that England would eventually have a school similar to the Lette-Verein's thus saving money, time and energy. Hoggan's candid criticism of conditions in England and her explicit admiration for the Lette-Verein's efforts conveyed her belief that Britain could benefit from following Germany's example. A brief paragraph in 'The Women's Congress at Berlin' summarised some of the speech given by Hoggan for the readers of the *Englishwoman's Review*.⁶¹

British progress was implicitly highlighted by both the *Englishwoman's Review* and *Der Frauenanwalt* in their description of Dr Lammers' speech on women working in the 'public care of the poor'. He stated that they should be discouraged 'strongly against any attempt being made at present to (...) make out their own reports of the cases they investigated', and that such tasks should be left to the public authorities. The women present disagreed with his views which according to the British author showed that 'women were far from acquiescing in his view of the passive and subordinate position which they ought to accept in the matter'.⁶² Dr Frances Hoggan in particular was described as speaking out against his remarks, using the examples of British women, Octavia Hill and Mrs Nassau Senior as those with renowned professional status and responsibility in the 'public care of the poor'.⁶³ In doing so, she not only conveyed that the more scientific, 'masculine' skill of reporting was one women could master just as easily as the 'feminine' skill

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 486.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ 'Das Kuratorium des Viktoria-Lyceums, der Sanitätsverein für Lehrerinnen, der Fröbelverein und der Frauenverein für Belehrung und Unterhaltung', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 10, no. 11 (1880), p. 349.

of nurturing the needy, but that British women already led the way with regard to poor law administration.⁶⁴

The Women's Congress revealed that on the one hand, British and German women wished to share their experiences and find support from one another. The reports given were exchanged in an open manner, and those present recognized that their efforts were new and experimental. Women providing training of this kind had few precedents to rely upon. Exchange thus took place in a spirit which was based upon ideas of unity and common purpose. There was, however, an underlying need for competition. Women delegates were thus subject to the 'double consciousness' described by Young-Sun Hong in her studies on transnationalism.⁶⁵ They found mutual support from foreign women committed to the same goals, alongside an awareness of and desire to deal with national fears regarding education. The articles written by the British women highlighted this sense of unity and simultaneous rivalry.

7.6 Opening the doors: A showcase of women's work

The congress was designed to provide an insight into the practical workings of Berlin's institutions for women, and on the first day delegates were given a tour of the Lette-Haus at 90 Königgrätzerstrasse. The women in attendance on behalf of the Society described how at the 'invitation of Frau Schepeler-Lette' the 'assembled delegates, guests and associates' were shown the drawing classes, modelling classes, embroidery classes and those for 'plain needlework, cutting out, millinery and flower making'.⁶⁶ They then watched women training in the commercial and industrial school (*Handels- und Gewerbeschule*) and toured the Viktoria-Stift. A descent into 'subterranean regions' gave them an insight into the 'various processes of ironing, starching and the getting up of fine linen'. The tour highlighted to the

⁶⁴ For more on poor law administration and the work of Mrs Nassau Senior, see S. Oldfield, *Jeanie, an 'Army of One': Mrs Nassau Senior, 1828-1877, the First Woman in Whitehall* (Brighton, 2008).

⁶⁵ Hong, 'The challenge of transnational history'.

⁶⁶ 'The Lette-Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), pp. 487 ff.

guests the high levels of technical skill women acquired through their training with the Lette-Verein and the organizational excellence of this institution in providing it. The article in the *Englishwoman's Review* commented that 'there is a side of the (woman) question which German women are solving more practically than we are doing'.⁶⁷

Aside from such obvious displays of German education and skill, the hospitality shown to the English guests by their German hosts became a means to communicate German women's technical proficiency. To conclude the tour of the Lette-Haus 'the pupils of the School of Cookery gave a most agreeable and practical demonstration of their powers in an excellent luncheon prepared by them, and subsequently partaken of at the restaurant for ladies, attached to the Lette-Verein, to which the assembled company were most cordially invited'.⁶⁸ This 'excellent luncheon', deemed superior to that received in the Hotel Centrale,⁶⁹ was a visual and culinary demonstration of technical skill amongst trainee women at the cookery school. German women were portrayed as efficient, knowledgeable, practical and professional and British women described how 'all the dishes which were excellent in quality' had been 'cooked by the pupils (...) under the superintendence of their respective teachers'.⁷⁰

Emphasis was placed on the scientific knowledge women acquired as part of their training. On the last day during a visit to the kitchens of the Hausfrauen-Verein, the visitors were 'rewarded by a sight of the remains of the previous day's luncheon, laid out for view, in various stages of ruin. Each pupil then gave a detailed and unassisted account of the dish that she specially had prepared, enumerating the various ingredients of which it was composed, how it was made and the time it took to cook, etc.'⁷¹ After a week of feasting the English delegates may have felt their stomachs churn as the pupils were 'vigorously cross-examined'

⁶⁷ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 486.

⁶⁸ 'The Lette-Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), pp. 487 ff.

⁶⁹ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 485.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ 'The Lette-Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), pp. 487 ff.

about the 'methods of detecting deleterious and poisonous substances in all kinds of foods'. In addition to German women's knowledge of food hygiene, students received training in human nutrition: Lina Morgenstern gave 'in a most able manner, a lecture on anatomy - there was a bust at hand for illustrative purposes'.⁷² Women's scientific and technical training was complemented by principles of domestic economy, as the article explained that in Lina Morgenstern's 'School of Cookery' and 'People's Kitchens' 'on a hundred portions only one penny is gained beyond cost price, and yet that penny is, by means of voluntary aid, careful management and skilful organisation, made to cover all the working expenses'.⁷³ These 'lady pioneers' thus provided training which, whilst conforming to gendered ideas that suitable work for women was founded in the domestic realm, simultaneously challenged the limits of such perceptions. It presented the acquisition of more traditionally masculine, scientific forms of knowledge as important for women. Domestic skills typically deemed as feminine would be combined with scientific knowledge surrounding food composition and hygiene, to professionalize hospitality as an area of work suitable for women. German women's ability as cooks provided guests with a welcome, but also gave them evidence of Germany's superior technical ability.

Hospitality thus played a complex part in the construction of women's working identities, and German women played out a number of roles using hospitality as a means to highlight their skill. Aside from creating an image of female trainees as technically proficient in the science of domestic economy, it presented the women who ran the Lette-Verein with an opportunity to emphasize their own class status and professional expertise. Congress delegates attended the Neues Palais on the first day where they received '[t]ea, coffee, chocolate and cakes' and subsequently a cold collation.⁷⁴ On the evening of the second day the delegates were given dinner 'on a sumptuous scale (...) at the Hotel Centrale (...) [where] nearly two

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 485.

⁷⁴ 'The Lette-Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), pp. 487 ff. Rupp is keen to highlight that social events at congresses rewarded delegates for their attendance with 'receptions, teas, pageants, dinners, filling rare moments of leisure': see Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, p. 172.

hundred ladies and gentlemen were present'.⁷⁵ In addition, *Der Frauenanwalt* reported that '[i]n the afternoon one assembled for a charming coffee hour, established by Dr Frau Tiburtius Hirschfeld, Berlin's Dentist, and her sister-in-law Fraulein Dr Tiburtius who had the guests in their beautiful rooms. Apart from the two known doctors there was Mrs Dr Hoggan from London, who during her local stay received hospitality from her colleagues (...) The gathering was lovely but brief, because the Theatre trip began.'⁷⁶ Hoggan and Moore were entertained at every meal, meals which Gordon and Nair argue were 'spectacles' where middle-class women wielded an important position as 'the arbiters of taste and the managers of display'.⁷⁷ As Gordon and Nair go on to explain '[h]ospitality was a means of affirming who one's peers were' and indeed the *Englishwoman's Review* confirmed to its readers that the Lette-Verein was 'managed by ladies, themselves well-known in the literary world or connected with some other higher professional or educational work'.⁷⁸

Furthermore, the provision of good quality food and their enjoyment of dining together conveyed a sense of closeness and commonality between the women. The '[t]aste and good fellowship' described in the article confirmed their equal social status and a feeling of mutual respect. As an author remarked in an earlier article written in the *English Woman's Journal*, there was indeed 'no better way of showing honour to guests than by presenting them with a succession of good things to eat'.⁷⁹ However, in addition to the goodwill such hospitality fostered it also contributed to an image of German women as advanced, efficient and professional.

⁷⁵ 'The Lette-Verein', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), pp. 487 ff.

⁷⁶ 'Das Kuratorium', *Der Frauenanwalt*, vol. 10, no. 11 (1880), p. 350.

⁷⁷ E. Gordon and G. Nair, *Public lives: women, family, and society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 2003), p. 6. Gordon and Nair argue that this was the case with regard to the provision of entertainment and elaborate meals for guests in the middle-class home.

⁷⁸ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 486.

⁷⁹ 'A German coffee party in 1862', *English Woman's Journal*, vol. 10, no. 58 (1862), p. 264.

7.7 Royal patronage

The need for both solidarity of purpose and competition between English and German women, was given symbolic representation through reference to the presence of the Crown Princess at the Women's Congress. She embodied English and German unity, as both the daughter of Queen Victoria of England - who was the Society's patron - and wife of the heir to Germany's throne. However, as a controversial and sometimes unpopular figure amongst conservative circles in Germany, she also highlighted the potential antagonism between the two nations. On the one hand she was a unifying presence, welcoming all those attending, and added to the proceedings 'the aegis of imperial favour, by receiving at Potsdam the delegates of the various societies represented'.⁸⁰ However, discussions of the Princess's role in the *Englishwoman's Review* convey the Society's desire to emphasize her particular links to the Society and how '[h]er Imperial Highness was pleased to enquire specially as to the progress and present position of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, of which she is a patroness.' Expressions of unity between England and Germany on this occasion went hand in hand with the British delegates' competitive desire to highlight royal approval of their work on the woman question.

The dual role of the Crown Princess as both a German and English dynastic figurehead is important in understanding what women attending the congress in Berlin achieved. Quataert has concluded that '[p]hilanthropy (...) was a stage on which to enact wider state identities around issues of community obligations and responsibilities' and this can be applied to the women of the Society and the *Lette-Verein*. Women like them, in 'voluntary philanthropic service under dynastic state patronage (...) acquired a civic identity through the public roles and activities that were named 'patriotic' by the dynasty.'⁸¹ Although Quataert concentrates purely on philanthropic activity aimed at specifically patriotic causes, English and German

⁸⁰ 'The Women's Congress at Berlin', *Englishwoman's Review*, vol. 11, no. 91 (1880), p. 481.

⁸¹ Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy*, p. 6.

women exchanged ideas on how best to deal with improving women's employment opportunities at a congress where similarly, dynastic state authority sanctioned their work. Women reporting on their activities at the Women's Congress showed that as Quataert says 'notions of the state (...) were being shaped by the activities of these women on the ground'.⁸² British and German women's reports aimed to communicate that their endeavours were sanctioned by the state, symbolised by the support they received from the Crown Princess. Each tried to claim her as their own unique figurehead.

Yet German and English women's collaboration at the congress suggested that they were united by common goals which went beyond these national boundaries. The linking of English and German 'voluntary philanthropy (...) to the dynastic court and its symbolic rituals and practices', a dynastic court which connected Germany and England through marriage and consanguinity, allows us to understand the deepening of 'a sense of community beyond the legal definitions of membership in a sovereign or mapped territorial polity' that these women shared.⁸³ Yet like the creation of any new 'nation', the community they built here was vulnerable, and sometimes patriotic feeling reared its head above their shared goals.

7.8 Marie Fischer-Lette and the international women's movement

In 1893, almost twenty years after the publication of the letter concerning Marie Fischer-Lette's situation in London, she was sent as the delegate for the Moral Reform Union in London to appear at the International Council of Women's Quinquennial and World's Congress of Representative Women in Chicago organised by May Wright Sewall. The earlier, informal relationships Fischer-Lette had formed as a German woman living in London seem to have developed and

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

grown into more institutionalized transnational behaviour. In a sense, Fischer-Lette's development from a foreign migrant seeking employment in London into an international activist represents how a woman's involvement in McFadden's 'pre-organizational matrix' became participation in the 'recognized infrastructure' of the international women's movement. At the congress in Chicago, Marie gave a speech written by Helen Taylor, the stepdaughter of John Stuart Mill. The decision to send her was explained in the proceedings: 'we have selected a German lady as our representative, in token of the union of nations we desire to see engaged in this sacred work'.⁸⁴

Fischer-Lette sent a letter to Helen Taylor which expressed the excitement she felt about entering this world. She described her 'great satisfaction and pleasure' at having been asked by Madame Emily de Morsier of Paris to speak before the Social Purity Congress. She reported that it gave Madame de Morsier 'great pleasure to ask *me* as a *German* (...) to represent her *french* (sic) work. I can assure you that this signe (sic) of true reconciliation is to me the best the most dear reward of all fatigue and labor of these last weeks.'⁸⁵ Congresses served as 'inspiration for workers'⁸⁶ and '[I]lavish social events (...) entertained and rewarded attendees for their hard work.'⁸⁷ According to Rupp, women in attendance had to change quickly if they wished to wear 'the exact right dress on each occasion'.⁸⁸ This was confirmed in Fischer-Lette's letter which described to Helen Taylor how '[y]ou will observe that there took place a great deal of bustling about, changing of dress (from the short skirt touching the knee, to the train sweeping the ground).'⁸⁹

⁸⁴ M.W. Sewall, *The World's Congress of Representative Women: a historical résumé for popular circulation of the World's Congress of Representative Women, convened in Chicago on May 15, and adjourned on May 22, 1893, under the auspices of the Women's Branch of the World's Congress Auxiliary* (Chicago, 1893), p. 388,

<http://www.archive.org/stream/worldscongressof00worluoft#page/n5/mode/2up> (accessed 17 December 2009).

⁸⁵ Letter to Helen Taylor from Marie Fischer-Lette, 23 May 1893, pp. 247-250. MILL-TAYLOR/10/103, LSEA.

⁸⁶ Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, pp. 172-173.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Letter to Helen Taylor from Marie Fischer-Lette, 23 May 1893, pp. 247-250. MILL-TAYLOR/10/103, LSEA.

In addition to creating new bonds, women attending congresses reaffirmed existing ones.⁹⁰ Delegates from both the Lette-Verein and the Society were in attendance at the World's Congress of Representative Women in Chicago. As one of the English delegates, Fischer-Lette possibly travelled with other English women, which included both Jessie Boucherett and Emily Faithfull who represented the Society and the Victoria Press respectively. Considering that Faithfull's relationship with the women at Langham Place had broken down in 1865 following her involvement in a series of scandals, it was surprising that she was chosen as a representative to accompany Boucherett. Information was exchanged and the Society was mentioned as Harriet Taylor Upton of Ohio read a paper written by Helen Blackburn on its work. She described how 'a small band of young and earnest women, possessed of culture, of ardor, and of independent means (...) set their heads, their hands and hearts, their money, their strength and time, to obtain the amendment of the laws relating to married women, to open new avenues of employment for women, and to combat false prejudices against women's earning for themselves'.⁹¹ Frau Kaselowsky, the secretary of the Lette-Verein and Frau Anna Schepeler-Lette who attended as representatives of the Lette-Verein may well have heard this speech. Kaselowsky spoke about the work of the Lette-Verein which Boucherett and Faithfull possibly listened to with interest.⁹²

Fischer-Lette's letter to May Wright Sewall written in 1899, six years after the congress, included a report entitled 'The World's Congress of representative women at Chicago'. This described both the hard work and enjoyment delegates experienced whilst attending such congresses. It explained how the congress opened on the 15 May 1893 and that on '[t]uesday we assembled in the Art Building on Michigan Avenue and Adams Street Corner to begin work'. A series

⁹⁰ Rupp explains that women attending congresses 'did not see each other on a daily, weekly, or even annual basis. Yet the leaders and most active members did manage to find ways to make what might be very intermittent contact into something quite pervasive in their lives': see Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, p. 159.

⁹¹ Sewall, *The World's Congress*, p. 680.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 554-558.

of lectures took place in a number of halls in the building with the 'subjects announced on a plackard (sic) at the entrance door'. The 'greatest harmony reigned' and Fischer-Lette hoped that many of the speeches would be 'rendered into other languages' for others to benefit from them.⁹³ Some present did sacrifice their health. Frau Kaselowsky was described by Frau Dr Tibertius-Hirschfeld in a letter to May Wright Sewall as writing 'doleful accounts, I think she has suffered a great deal, and I hope with all my heart that she may feel better by this time, and that she finally may be able to enjoy something in Chicago'.⁹⁴ She hoped that Sewall would 'look after her once in a while' suggesting that she had been unwell either physically or emotionally during her time there.

Rupp believes that women involved in the late nineteenth-century international women's movement 'engaged in a personalized politics that sealed their collective identity'.⁹⁵ However, the example of Marie Fischer-Lette and the women of the Society indicate that women also developed a sense of collective identity through earlier, less formal, non-institutionalized networks. The international women's movement can therefore be more fully understood in light of connections made between women involved in institutions such as the Society and the Lette-Verein within Europe: women became recruits to the institutionalized international women's movement through the earlier creation of informal transnational links.

7.9 Conclusion

The World's Congress of Representative Women at Chicago in 1893 brought

⁹³ Letter from Marie Fischer-Lette to May Wright Sewall, 22 February 1899, <http://digitallibrary.imcpl.org/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/mws&CISOPTR=152&REC=2> (accessed 25 January 2011). This was a letter to Sewall from Marie Fischer-Lette thanking her for her condolences with regard to the death of her sister and Marie enclosed a lengthy account of her impressions of the World's Congress in Chicago in 1893.

⁹⁴ Letter from Frau Dr. Tiburtius-Hirschfeld to May Wright Sewall, 30 September 1893, <http://digitallibrary.imcpl.org/u?/mws,1587> (accessed 17 December 2009). She was the sister of Frau Dr. Franziska Tiburtius who attended as doctor to the women living in the Viktoria-Stift run by the Lette-Verein.

⁹⁵ Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, p. 188.

together women from the Society and the Lette-Verein after years of transnational communication. The letters written by Elisabeth Lette, the Society and Marie Fischer-Lette, the reports on the Women's Congress of 1880 published in *Der Frauenanwalt* and the *Englishwoman's Review*, all suggested that women in London and Berlin drew on each other for inspiration and support in the campaign for women's employment. Furthermore, as women developed expertise in this area, exploring foreign institutions and bringing back vital data from their expeditions they gained access to important knowledge and thus a form of citizenship.⁹⁶ This citizenship was based on advancing the status of the nation through their own forms of appropriation: the selection of crucial information that if replicated and improved upon at home would advance their nation's international position.⁹⁷ Cooperation between these women paradoxically ensured that they remained competitive on a national level. An article entitled 'Statutes and Programmes of the Lette Verein'⁹⁸ held in the Blackburn Collection aptly describes the nature of exchange between the two institutions by 1881. In a translation from German into English, the author explains how:

(...) we offer the record of our work to our English speaking sisters in England and America complying in so doing not only with the many requests that have been made to us for a translation of our statutes but also following the longfelt desire of our own hearts to constitute a still closer tie between us and our friends across the sea (...) This continual intercourse between us and those far away who follow the same purpose as we do we have always considered as of great mutual advantage and we trust and hope that our English friends may continue to help us with sympathy (...) knowing

⁹⁶ Kathleen Canning describes how 'expanded terms of citizenship provided the framework for the "woman question" of the second half of the century, in which women's labor and women's duties to the nation would figure more prominently', see K.Canning, 'The "Woman Question"', in S. Berger (ed.), *A companion to nineteenth-century Europe, 1789-1914* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 193-208, here p. 195.

⁹⁷ For women's roles in imperialist expansion, see A. Burton, *Burdens of History: British feminists, Indian women, and Imperial culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill, 1994).

⁹⁸ 'Statutes and Programmes of the Lette Verein' under the Patronage of her Imperial and Royal Highness the Crown Princess of Prussia and Germany for the promotion of higher education and industry among women'. P.396.4.14, Blackburn Collection, GCA.

that both they and ourselves work in one common cause, the welfare of the female sex.'

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Historical study more often than not takes place within national boundaries or focuses on international events predominantly with reference to the nation state. Transnational study aims to shed light on 'sub- or supra-national' behaviour; to reveal the stories of individuals who act beyond or outside national boundaries. Nineteenth-century fears about 'surplus women', an unproductive, redundant population, aberrant because of their unmarried and non-maternal status, were not restricted to one particular country. Debates grew in both Germany and England in the late 1850s and early 1860s as to how to deal with young, single women who with neither marriage to support them nor suitable training to lead to employment, faced possible destitution and moral corruption. Analyzing these debates benefits from a transnational approach for several reasons. The English debate directly affected German opinion on the subject: Martineau's assertion that one in every three women were forced to provide for their own subsistence was followed by similar claims in Germany and articles published on the subject quoted Martineau's work.² The efforts of the NAPSS and the Langham Place group, which resulted in the establishment of the Society in 1859, were analyzed and assessed by social reform activists, including Max Ring, Wilhelm Lette and Gustav Ebert. The Society thus provided German reformers in the Centralverein with the blueprint they needed to establish the Lette-Verein.

Despite the direct link between men and women investigating the apparent surplus women problem in different parts of Europe, the image of the 'redundant' woman has never been considered within a European context. Claims that the problem was 'uniquely German' because Germans lacked a strong campaign for suffrage and

¹ Hong, 'The challenge of transnational history'.

² Lucia, 'Über das Los', pp. 712-716.

followed 'a reformist path (...) including education and vocation',³ fail to recognize that this reformism prompted German men and women to look to England where they found more radical programmes for change.⁴ The campaign the Centralverein mounted to provide training opportunities for women relied on presenting evidence from England to support it. Social investigators increasingly relied upon international observation and exchange as a means of enquiry to justify their claims for reform. The work of the Society was evidence for the success of an educational programme for single women and fuelled concerns that Germany was in danger of lagging behind its foreign competitors. Correspondingly, as the work of the Lette-Verein developed and became more centralized in the 1870s, the Society looked to Germany for inspiration. These transnational connections are vital to a better understanding of how the 'surplus woman problem' was articulated over time. The notion of a female surplus underpinned national concerns surrounding changing labour patterns for women, which in turn had international implications. It was an arena in which anxieties over national status and foreign competition were expressed. Women appropriated these debates for themselves, and joined with their contemporaries abroad to offer solutions which would simultaneously improve women's access to training and employment. A transnational perspective therefore offers a richer understanding of the international basis of early feminist action that has hitherto remained neglected. Further historical research is needed into the wider transnational character of vocational training, which goes beyond the scope of this thesis. The Society's records indicate that vocational training for women in France proved to be of interest to Jessie Boucherett, though no further evidence has so far indicated communication on the subject between women in France and England.

The surplus woman problem was most certainly an imagined event. A form of

³ Dollard, *The Surplus*, p. 7

⁴ Dollard also makes the case that the surplus woman problem was a German issue, on the basis that it expressed anxiety specific to the Kaiserreich era from 1871 onwards. Her focus on a slightly later generation of feminists such as Helene Lange and her account's failure to even mention the feminists such as Lina Morgenstern and Jenny Hirsch, whose efforts were focused on the surplus woman through their work for the Lette-Verein, misrepresents the problem of the so-called 'Frauenüberschuss' as emerging later than in reality it did.

moral panic, it was, as Dollard states, 'not a real population event and (...) the notion was instead a cultural construction that was foundational to the moderate, radical, and religious German women's movements'.⁵ It was a 'cohort that was simultaneously considered vulnerable and threatening'.⁶ Levitan has similarly proposed that the surplus woman problem in Britain signified the growing importance in the nineteenth century of identifying and controlling potentially problematic populations, rather than dealing with a definite group of unmarried women in need. However, the practical responses to fears about the 'surplus woman', and the fact that these responses allowed individuals and groups in both England and Germany to pursue their own agendas for change, are of crucial interest. At a time when women with feminist beliefs were keen to find practical ways to improve women's position in society and social reformers hoped to make their mark with regard to societal change, the figure of the 'surplus woman' offered them the perfect opportunity to gather public support for their endeavours.

This cooperation between men and women rooted in social reform programmes has often been disregarded by historians who locate true feminist action elsewhere, either at a later date or in campaigns run solely by women. Some historians of the British feminist movement criticize early feminists involved with the work of the Society for acting conservatively.⁷ A number of historical accounts exploring German feminism often regard the efforts of the Lette-Verein as reactionary and antithetical to the work of the feminist ADF, overlooking the connections between the two institutions and failing to examine the Lette-Verein's achievements in any depth.⁸ Furthermore, women in Britain and Germany who worked with the men of NAPSS and the Centralverein have been condemned for avoiding direct demands for female emancipation. However, no comprehensive analysis has been carried out to assess the beliefs of men involved in these programmes for change, whether practical action taken to improve women's employment was feminist and how

⁵ Dollard, *The Surplus*, p.11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷ For a fuller discussion see chapter 1.

⁸ Dollard, *The Surplus*, p. 14.

women's identities as feminists developed as they tried to open up women's work opportunities with male support.

Male involvement in the work of the Lette-Verein and the Society has typically been regarded as hindering the development of a truly feminist agenda.⁹ However, male patronage was key in ensuring that the Society and the Lette-Verein were founded and able to find support for their aims in the broader business and commercial community. Men had powerful links to the employers women were trying to persuade to apprentice and appoint women. Furthermore, many of the men involved in the work of the NAPSS and the Centralverein were sympathetic to feminist beliefs. Holtzendorff and Brougham held radical views about women's rights with regard to marriage and the franchise. Furthermore, Ring believed in the value of educating women and their involvement in the public sphere. In some instances, women came to focus on practical action in light of failed attempts at more radical reform: keeping silent about wider claims for emancipation was thus pragmatic. Finally, women involved in working for the Lette-Verein and the Society gained access to transnational networks and forms of power through their cooperation with male social reformers. With time, both institutions were led by women as men took a more minor role. Congresses in both countries, especially the social science congress in England, gave these women a platform to express their views. Bessie Rayner Parkes described this sense of increasing autonomy in a letter to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, referring to how, '[o]ur Bradford (social science congress) meeting has not done echoing (...) The daily news printed my article entire.' As a postscript she stated '[d]on't think me unkind when I don't write. Remember all my work in writing. It is not actual time I want, but power.'¹⁰

Women's power certainly flourished through their role as leaders of the Society

⁹ Twellmann states that in the Lette-Verein 'the men made decisions and gave orders, the women were allowed to work with them': see Twellmann, *Die deutsche Frauenbewegung*, p. 43. Similarly, Yeo describes how women working with men to initiate reform had to adopt 'strategies which could appease men': see Yeo, *The contest*, p. xiv.

¹⁰ Bessie Rayner Parkes to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 3 and 5 November 1859, GCPP Parkes 5/94, GCA.

and the Lette-Verein. Existing studies tend to focus on the establishment of training classes and apprenticeships for women.¹¹ Yet the day-to-day administration and leadership of the institutions provided a setting for women to hone their managerial and leadership skills. Involved in a project which was truly experimental, these women risked both their finances and their reputations if they were to fail. Jessie Boucherett and Anna Schepeler-Lette both invested significant sums as leaders and took personal responsibility for the institutions' financial success or failure. Despite rhetoric and propaganda which emphasised Schepeler-Lette's motherliness and the institutions' maternal approach to its charges, its leaders were hard-working, often, in the case of Boucherett in particular, ruthless and individualistic with regard to others. The message behind Bodichon's *Women and Work*, that women needed work and that it would offer them dignity, was taken up by these leaders of the Lette-Verein and the Society. They were committed and proud of their labour; their experiences informed their feminist views as they gained first-hand knowledge of what employment offered them. Work was also where they met with prejudice and frequently a source of stress: Bessie Rayner Parkes and Maria Rye both complained in personal correspondence about the heavy workloads they carried. Bessie stated how 'no one has theoretically a greater horror than I have of allowing the life to be swallowed up in a whirl of work (...) but in London it is most difficult to avoid'.¹² These themes resonated for many of the women mentioned in this thesis. Jordan describes them as formulating 'a gospel of work' for the women they assisted, which emphasized the importance of self-help, diligence and hard work. It was, however, also a gospel they applied to their own working lives. The history of employment and that of feminism, both traditionally studied according to a divergent set of historiographies, here can be analyzed in relation to each other. Feminist ideology was, it can be argued, grounded in these practical efforts to expand employment for women rather than these efforts detracting from a 'true' feminist agenda.

¹¹ See Obschernitzki, "*Der Frau*" and Hauff, *Der Lette-Verein*.

¹² Bessie Rayner Parkes to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 1 April 1862. GCPP Parkes 5/114, GCA.

Furthermore, women emerged as entrepreneurs in relation to their work for the Society and the Lette-Verein in establishing businesses to train and employ women. Entrepreneurship exposed women to the demands of the commercial world and placed them firmly in the public gaze. The case-studies of the Viktoria-Bazar, law copying office, Victoria Press and Ladies' Restaurant presented in this thesis reveal how their female managers were forced to grapple with commercial and philanthropic pressures. Since both the Society and the Lette-Verein were founded on an ethos which emphasized self-help for women of the middle classes, women's well-being in the workplace could not be compromised nor their respectability threatened. Each business created new spaces within the city for middle-class women to occupy: their visibility and presence affected those around them.¹³ Women working as compositors aroused male anger; their offices were sabotaged as men placed ink on the stools and ruined their dresses, stools which were provided to make their work comfortable. Solicitors employed female law copyists but requested that boys collect the work rather than risk their male employees meeting Maria Rye's young female workers. The Ladies' Restaurant and the Viktoria-Bazar found women working in typically more feminine areas and the former in particular remained closed to the male gaze. Here women were protected from the potential hostility of the workplace. The restaurant provided working women in the city with a place to go; women could receive a nourishing meal away from public comment in a setting that emphasized female welfare and solidarity. Comfort and a certain institutionalized homeliness would soften the blow for women suddenly thrust into the world of work. Each of these businesses struggled to negotiate the boundary between commercial success and the provision of welfare for women at work. Both the Lette-Verein and the Society's businesses and classes not covered by this thesis would offer opportunities for more detailed investigation and case-study with regard to the theme of entrepreneurship.

Women working for the Society and the Lette-Verein simultaneously built

¹³ For more on the relationship between women and the urban environment in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Berlin, see D. Stratigakos, *A women's Berlin: building the modern city* (London, 2008)

transnational connections with women abroad. They relied in part on those established by men of the Centralverein and the men of NAPSS. However, with time they appropriated them for themselves. Individuals such as Marie Fischer-Lette, Frances Hoggan and Helen Ogle Moore were aware that their work was experimental and that their efforts might not succeed. Their own personal experiences of work confirmed that they needed foreign support in their endeavours: the prejudice they experienced often seems to have inspired them to make contact with others abroad. Contact they made was initially tentative and disorganized. They worked abroad, wrote letters, published articles on each other's efforts and formed personal friendships with one another. When thwarted in their attempts to improve women's work, knowledge of each other's successes would spur them on. Furthermore, they recognized the need for propaganda; exposure to criticism and setbacks at home signified to these women that they needed evidence that their work was important. They highlighted the advances their foreign competitors had made and the need to remain competitive with regard to women's training, so as to secure public support at home. Transnational communication and cooperation therefore influenced their development as feminists and the evolution of the institutions they worked for. Their knowledge of foreign initiatives became more organized as they visited foreign congresses on the subject of women's work and slowly emerged as experts in their field. This expertise gained through foreign exchange, signified the pivotal role they played in making the redundant middle-class woman productive. No longer a helpless, perhaps even idle, figure, the single working woman would be a disciplined, professional, skilled and useful member of society.

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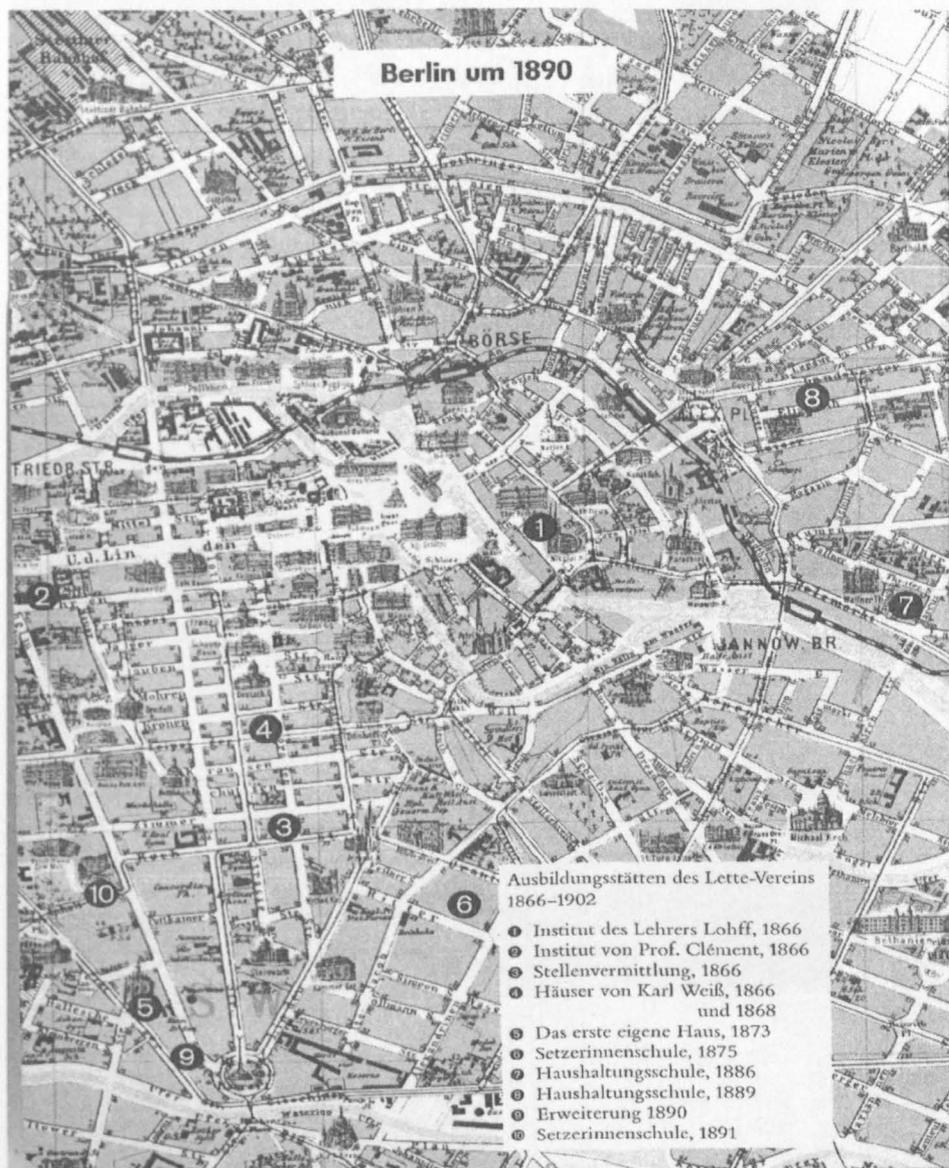
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24088>, accessed 21 December 2010].

Appendix A: Cartoon in Punch, 12 January 1850



Picture no. 10143356, Mary Evans Picture Library,
<http://www.maryevans.com/search.php> (accessed 16 November 2010)

Appendix B: Location of the Lette-Verein's institutions in Berlin, 1890



- 4 Location of 90 and 92 Leipzigerstrasse
- 5 Location of the Lette-Haus opened in 1873

Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", inside cover.

Appendix C: Artist's representation of the Lette-Verein



Obschernitzki, "Der Frau", p. 72.

Appendix D: Photographs of training classes in the cookery school and the restaurant.

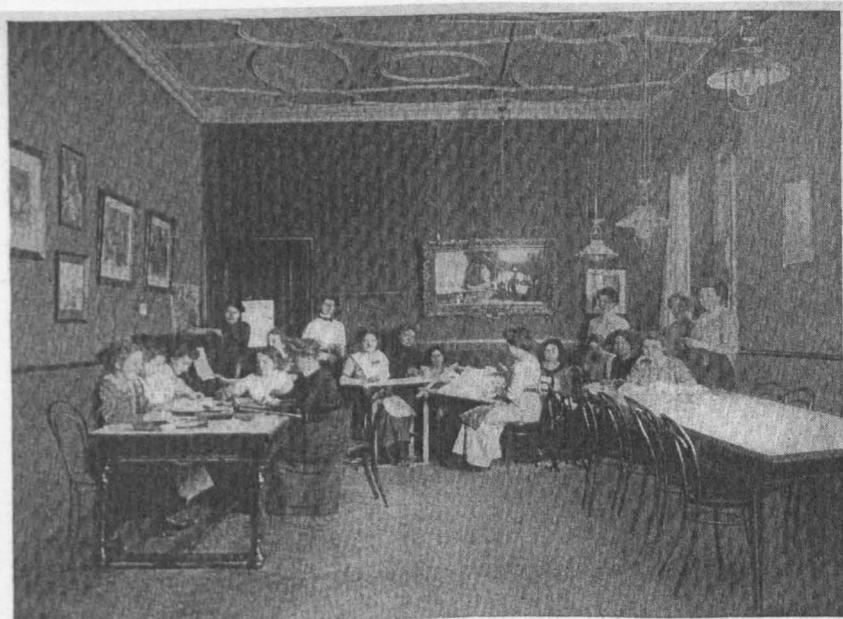


See Lette-Verein website http://www.lette-verein.de/tiki-browse_categories.php?parentId=16&type=article (accessed 16 November 2010)

**Appendix E: Photographs of the Kochschule and the Viktoria-Stift,
1912**



Kochschule



Viktoria-Stift

R. Stettiner, *Der Lette-Verein und seine Unterrichts-Anstalten* (Berlin, 1912)

Appendix F: Marie Lette and Johan Georg Paul Fischer's marriage certificate



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number COL 676433

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
186	18th April 1866	Johan Georg Paul Fischer	80 years	Widower	Artist	4 Pepper Spring Street	Carl Friedrich Fischer (deceased)	Sword maker
		Marie Henriette Lette	36 years	Spinster		3 Pepper Spring Street	Adolphus Lette	Doctor of Law

Married in the Registrar Office according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the before us.

The Marriage was solemnized before us

J. G. Fischer in the presence of us *M. Shea* Registrar *Geo. H. Balthoff*

Marie H. Lette

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of **Marylebone**
 Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the **10th** day of **January** 2008

MXD 588569

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. ©CROWN COPYRIGHT

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

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Appendix G: Biographies of leading figures

The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women

Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon

1827-1891

Bodichon was the illegitimate daughter of Benjamin Leigh Smith, a Unitarian and a Dissenter who was radical MP for Norwich. A feminist and educationalist, she wrote her *Brief Summary of the Laws of England concerning Women* in 1854 and went on to lead the campaign for the Married Women's Property Act in 1856. She wrote *Women and Work* in 1857. Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes established the *English Woman's Journal* in 1858 and alongside other women with feminist ideals they became known as the Langham Place group with Bodichon acting as its acknowledged leader. She was a keen supporter of the Society's work and provided the law copying office with her financial backing. She established Girton College for women with Emily Davies in 1866.

Bessie Rayner Parkes

1829-1925

Bessie Rayner Parkes was the daughter of Joseph Parkes, a solicitor and Unitarian. She was a close friend of Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon whom she met in 1846. In 1854 she wrote *Remarks upon the education of girls*. Alongside Bodichon she was a member of the Langham Place group and founded the *English Woman's Journal*. Furthermore, she helped Faithfull in establishing the Victoria Press in 1860. She introduced Jessie Boucherett to the women at Langham Place and despite initial misgivings, supported Boucherett in establishing the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women.

Jessie Boucherett

1825-1905

Jessie Boucherett came from a wealthy landed family background and was the daughter of Ayscoghe Boucherett, the sheriff of Lincolnshire. She helped run a cottage hospital with her sister in Market Rasen. In 1859 she travelled to London and met with the women of Langham Place where she presented them with her idea for the establishment of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women. This she helped run until her death in 1905. She was in charge of the commercial training classes for girls and women established by the Society. Boucherett founded the *Englishwoman's Review* in 1866. In 1899 she became involved in establishing the Freedom of Labour Defence Fund.

Emily Faithfull

1835-1895

Emily Faithfull was born in Headley, Surrey, and was the daughter of a rector. She met the women known as the Langham Place group in the late 1850s and with Bessie Rayner Parkes' assistance established the Victoria Press for female compositors in 1860. She was appointed Printer and Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty in 1862. By 1865 she was no longer the manager of the Victoria Press and had fallen out with the Langham Place group following her involvement in the Codrington divorce scandal. She joined the Women's Trade Union League, founded in 1875 by Emma Paterson. In 1872 she travelled to the United States and gave a series of talks which were well received. She wrote a series of novels and received £100 from the royal bounty in 1886 and an annual civil-list pension from 1889.

Maria Rye

1829-1903

Maria Rye was the daughter of a solicitor who met the women of Langham Place in the 1850s. When the Society was founded in 1859 Rye was asked to establish and manage the law copying office. In 1861 she left to establish the Female Middle Class Emigration Society which aimed to solve the surplus woman question by transporting unmarried women abroad. She was personally involved in the transportation of many young women to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In 1869 she appealed for and was successful in gaining financial support from the state to transport young girls aged 5-12 abroad from the workhouses.

Lord Henry Brougham

1778-1868

Henry Brougham was a barrister and served as a member of parliament. He was a whig who campaigned on a number of issues and was firmly opposed to slavery as well as advocating prisoners' rights. In 1818 he brought in a bill to appoint a commission to investigate all charities in England and Wales. In 1832 he set up a royal commission for poor law reform which culminated in the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834. He left party politics in the late 1830s and founded the Law Amendment Society in 1844. In 1857 he presided over the establishment of the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences serving as its president. He supported women of the Langham Place group in campaigning for a Married Women's Property Act in 1856 and was a firm supporter of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women.

George Hastings

1825-1917

George Hastings was a barrister and later a liberal politician who sat in the House

of Commons as MP for East Worcestershire from 1880 to 1892. He was the son of Sir Charles Hastings, founder of the British Medical Association. Hastings was secretary of the Law Amendment Society founded by Henry Brougham. When the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences was founded in 1857 Hastings became its secretary. He was a strong proponent of providing unmarried women with training and employment and helped the women at Langham Place to found the Society in connection with the NAPSS. He assisted Emily Faithfull and Bessie Rayner Parkes in founding the Victoria Press and later helped Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Emily Davies to establish Girton College for women.

The Lette-Verein

Jenny Hirsch

1829- 1902

Jenny Hirsch was the daughter of a businessman and founded an elementary school in her hometown, Zerbst in 1857 where she taught until she moved to Berlin in 1860. She then became the editor of *Der Bazar*, a women's periodical. She acted as secretary of the Lette-Verein from 1866 to 1883. She became the editor of *Der Frauenanwalt*, a periodical dedicated to discussing women's rights in 1872 and established the *Deutsche Hausfrauenzeitung* with Lina Morgenstern in 1872. In 1891 she translated J.S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women* into German. She was a committed supporter of women entering new forms of employment and was herself an independent author as well as proponent of women's rights until her death in 1902.

Anna Schepeler-Lette

1829-1897

Anna Schepeler-Lette was the eldest daughter of Wilhelm Adolph Lette. She

married a Frankfurt businessman, Karl Schepeler but following his death and the death of her children she moved to Berlin in 1866 to assist her father in running the Lette-Verein. She became president of the Lette-Verein in 1872. Under her leadership the Lette-Verein opened a photography school for women which later trained some of the most famous female photographers of the twentieth century. Schepeler-Lette was a firm advocate of women's rights and in 1894 became the chairperson of the Bund Deutscher Frauenverein.

Marie Fischer-Lette

1830-?

Marie Fischer-Lette was the second eldest of Wilhelm Adolph Lette's daughters. She travelled to London where she married her husband, J.G.P. Fischer in 1866. In London she tried to gain work as a medical illustrator and became friends with women involved in the work of the Society. Fischer-Lette helped to establish links between the Society and the Lette-Verein. She was a member of the Moral Reform Union in England and travelled to represent its work at the World's Congress of Representative Women in Chicago in 1893.

Lina Morgenstern

1830-1909

Lina Morgenstern was the founder of the Volksküchen from 1866 which aimed to provide poor people in Berlin with affordable meals. She worked closely with those involved in the Centralverein and the Lette-Verein. In 1859 she established the Berlin Women's Institution for the Advancement of Frobelian Kindergartens alongside Wilhelm Lette. The Volksküchen were successful and served as a model for the Lette-Verein's Ladies' Restaurant. She was a close associate of Jenny Hirsch and Anna Schepeler-Lette. In 1868 she helped to found an academy for the education of young women.

Baron Franz von Holtendorff

1829-1889

Franz von Holtendorff studied law at Berlin University from 1848. He was a prominent penologist and social reformer. A member of the Centralverein he served as president of the Lette-Verein from 1869 to 1872. In 1872 he resigned to take up a position as a professor in law at Munich University. His interest in penal reform brought him into contact with social reformers such as Thomas Lloyd Baker, a British penal reformer, and he visited his reformatory for juvenile criminals in Gloucestershire in 1861 which formed the basis for his book *An English country squire as sketched at Hardwicke Court, Gloucestershire*. Holtendorff spoke at a number of social science congresses in Britain on the subject of penal reform and thus had contact with many social reformers including the women who established the Society. Furthermore, he was a committed supporter of equal rights for women writing *Die Verbesserungen in der gesellschaftlichen und wirthschaftlichen Stellung der Frauen* in 1878. Under his presidency of the Lette-Verein the statutes were changed so that women were admitted to the board and to the governing committee for the first time.

Wilhelm Adolph Lette

1799-1868

Wilhelm Adolph Lette was the son of a landowner and trained as a lawyer. He became a judge in 1835. A national liberal, he was a deputy in the Prussian parliament in the 1850s and 1860s and was also a representative to the Frankfurt National Assembly. Lette was the president of the Centralverein from its establishment in 1844 and the founder of the Lette-Verein in 1866. Although he was firmly against women's emancipation he served as president of the Lette-Verein providing women in Berlin with training and employment until his death in 1868.

Max Ring**1817-1901**

Max Ring was an author and doctor from Breslau. He moved to Berlin and became the editor of two periodicals *Der Volksgarten* and *Die Gartenlaube* both of which were banned by the Prussian authorities. He was a visitor of Bettina von Arnim's Berlin salon. He wrote a number of novels including *Die Unversorgte Tochter* in 1876. Ring was a member of the Centralverein and a key supporter of the work of the Lette-Verein. He claimed that he had inspired Wilhelm Adolph Lette to found the Lette-Verein.

Gustav Eberty**1806-1887**

Gustav Eberty was a Jewish judge. He was passionate about penal reform and travelled to international congresses on the subject. He argued for the appointment of a general director for Prussian prisons, regular reports over the conditions in prisons and for the education of inmates. He was a member of the Prussian House of Representatives for Berlin from 1867 to 1879. He was a founding member of the Centralverein. In December 1865 he gave a report to other members of the Centralverein on the work of the Society in England which was used as a blueprint for the establishment of the Lette-Verein.