

Chapter 6

RADICAL REFORM

Helene Stöcker, Ruth Bré, and Lily Braun



The female surplus had radical potential. If spouses were scarce, might marriage itself be diminished? If unwed women atrophied, might it mean that they should pursue a sexual life outside of marriage? Moderate activists did not ask such questions. But other figures in the reformist milieu of Imperial Germany seized onto the *Frauenüberschuß* (female surplus) as an issue that supported radical, sometimes even subversive, calls for a different society. In critiques of the social and economic structure, the female surplus was utilized as one of a series of indicators of much broader decrepitude. This chapter explores the ways in which three female activists, Helene Stöcker, Ruth Bré, and Lily Braun, argued that the foundations of German society needed to be transformed if the female surplus were to be ameliorated. The perceived oversupply of bourgeois females plainly was not the springboard from which radical social critique emerged. But among women's rights advocates who stood outside of the moderate mold of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (BDF), the female surplus served as a fitting vessel by which to demonstrate the infirmity of traditional institutions.

The moderate women's movement employed the female surplus as a reason for change within the confines of the world in which they lived.¹ While maternalism offered a way to transform the public sphere, it did not emerge from a subversive agenda. Moderates such as Helene Lange and Alice Salomon objected to the damage wrought by the male freedom to choose when and whom they married, but they never suggested that traditional patriarchal patterns ought to be overthrown. Maternalist activists offered practical responses to a series of circumstances with which they believed they had to live. But not everyone was willing to accept the

terms of the extant social order. As historian Richard Evans has argued, “moderate feminism in Germany was unusually moderate, radical feminism exceptionally radical.”² This chapter considers how radicals expanded upon and challenged moderate views of female redundancy. The conceptualized surplus woman was enlisted as a malleable entity in support of widespread reform, though it would be an exaggeration to say that the *alleinstehende Frau* (woman standing alone) stood at the foundation of radical social critique. Rather, subversive activists employed the *Frauenüberschuß* as one of many issues that demonstrated a society in crisis and that served as proof of the need for expansive social reform. The perceived presence of an abundance of “old maids” among the middle-class provided evidence of the ill effects of sexual abstinence for those who wanted to reform the rules of sexual morality and the binding commitments of marriage.

The chapter focuses on Helene Stöcker, the key proponent of the *Neue Ethik* (New Ethic) that advocated a new approach to sexuality and social policy; Ruth Bré, who believed only single motherhood could relieve the stigma and loneliness of female singlehood; and Lily Braun, a critic of marital and moral strictures who sought to liberate women from confinement. The writings and activism of these women did not reach an audience nearly as large as did the moderate and religious organizations of women.³ Nonetheless, radical feminism had significant impact on the evolution of the discourse surrounding women’s rights in Germany. Stöcker’s focused advocacy of new thinking in the women’s movement created bitter debate within the BDF and ultimately led, in 1910, to the ouster of those who favored the legalization of abortion and the advancement of the New Ethic. While a less known figure, Bré’s passion led to the founding of the *Bund für Mutterschutz* (BfM; Federation for the Protection of Mothers), an organization that ultimately was taken over by Stöcker. And Braun’s prolific commentary on gender roles and rights provided a singular touchstone, albeit often extreme, in the women’s movement of the *Kaiserreich* (Imperial Germany). By establishing a vocal, unyielding, and organized branch of female activism, radical voices informed the discursive stream surrounding women’s rights and the positions of both anti-feminists and moderate organizations such as the BDF.⁴ In the pursuit of starkly different paths toward women’s rights, moderates and radicals shared the conviction that the surplus of unwed women demonstrated a problem in need of solving.

Helene Stöcker and the *Neue Ethik*

Helene Stöcker (1869–1943) led the movement for a *Neue Ethik*. Stöcker was born in Elberfeld, trained as a teacher, and was one of the first women in Germany to receive a doctoral degree. She lived in Berlin in the 1890s and became active in the women’s movement. Over time and influenced by her study of Friedrich Nietzsche, Stöcker came to believe that the German women’s movement was too focused on specific objectives to achieve anything of broader cultural significance.

Stöcker yearned for a movement that would “create a synthesis between the free, spiritually independent female personality who could also be a loving woman and mother.”⁵ While she supported the goals of educational expansion and professional development, Stöcker maintained that reformers needed to push further; the modern age required a new vision of woman and man. The developing field of sexology provided the catapult from which to advance such a vision. Institutionally, Stöcker proclaimed her point of view through an organization that bore her imprint for much of its existence: the BfM was established in 1904 and came under Stöcker’s leadership in 1905.⁶ During these same years, Stöcker met Berlin attorney Bruno Springer; the two entered into a lifelong partnership that they viewed as a ‘free marriage’ and that lasted until Springer’s death in 1931.⁷

In its simplest manifestation, Stöcker’s *Neue Ethik* called for the “right to free intellectual development and the right to love.”⁸ The nuances and perceived consequences of the second claim made the *Neue Ethik* controversial. Stöcker and her peers in the BfM had been influenced by sexology; like Iwan Bloch, Sigmund Freud, August Forel, and Magnus Hirschfeld, they believed that sex was healthy and natural. Yet this basic premise had subversive potential in the culture of Imperial Germany. If sexuality was natural, did it not follow that female sexuality was good, even beautiful? Such a view of sex decried the prudish view that female sexuality existed only as an instrument of procreation and male pleasure. In the inaugural editorial of the BfM’s publication, *Mutterschutz*, Stöcker defined her life’s work as the “critical examination, renewal, and expansion of ethics overall ... The old conventional moral views come from a cultural epoch otherwise vanquished and therefore burden us with such great weight today under completely changed conditions. We all suffer under them, whether we realize it or not.”⁹ The consequences of economic and demographic change underlay Stöcker’s description of ‘completely changed conditions.’ Her movement sought a new morality that would transform male/female relations in the same way that industrialization had remade family life.

Stöcker envisioned a world in which all people embraced their sexual selves. Such an awakening would require a thoroughgoing reassessment of the human condition. Stöcker’s studies of Nietzsche made clear to her the need for new ethical categories that rejected the restrictions of conventional bourgeois morality. Under the *Neue Ethik*, “we could construct our lives as happy or unhappy, worthy or unworthy. If humans no longer consider themselves bad, as the old morality forced upon us!—[Then] it stops being so.” Living solely for material gain and egocentric self-advancement thwarted human potential. Stöcker argued that modern society had to “modify our old concept of morality so that it is [intended] for happiness ... for the elevation and refinement of humankind. Strong, happily healthy humans of body, of elevated convictions, of intellectual maturity, of affluent souls, this indeed seems to us the highest goal.”¹⁰

The movement for a *Neue Ethik* drew upon the findings of sexology for its view of sexuality. Iwan Bloch and Hermann Rohleder, members of the BfM, provided a bridge between the *Neue Ethik* and *scientia sexualis*. Yet for the most part, the

two movements, borne out of a shared understanding of the primacy of human sexuality, remained estranged. The historian Edward Ross Dickinson has argued that this distance emerged out of the fact that “‘sexologists’ generally espoused a much more conservative conception of men’s and women’s ‘natural’ social and biological roles; the New Ethic, and feminism more broadly, appeared to them altogether too individualist to be eugenically sound.”¹¹ Certainly, the caution with which sexologists viewed female sexual hyperaesthesia suggests the conservative strain within sexual science.¹² Sexologists also evinced skepticism regarding the philosophical and spiritual nature of the *Neue Ethik*. The clinical eye set forth in the late-nineteenth century case histories of Richard Krafft-Ebing became the predominant mode by which sexologists described the sexual landscape of the early twentieth century. Helene Stöcker, however, considered sexuality to be a repository of human potentiality rather than as a category of psycho-medical analysis.

Before Stöcker and the BfM came along, *Kaiserreich* social reformers had been concerned with aspects of the “sexual problem.” Indeed, the BDF in the 1890s had expressed commitment to some of the issues that the BfM later would take on as their own.¹³ The abolition movement, directed toward eliminating state-sanctioned prostitution, had long been an important agenda item for the moderate women’s movement.¹⁴ An early BDF pamphlet addressed another concern dear to Stöcker and her colleagues: the protection of unwed mothers. The BDF decried the fact that “the rights of unmarried mothers and children are entirely insufficiently protected” by law.¹⁵ But the moderates characterized prostitution and unwed motherhood as symptoms of a culture in need of maternal care, rather than as a component of the discourse surrounding sexuality.

The discussion took a very different turn when the BfM addressed these same issues. Instead of calling for reform within the given social constraints, Helene Stöcker and the BfM advocated a redefinition of what constituted moral behavior: “In this way we can hope to gain gradually the foundation for a new ethics, how it comes out of our changed understanding of human development, into the connections between intellectual and economic factors.” Such an understanding had political implications: “It is perfectly clear to us that we today still do not know any universal remedy, an infallible solution of the sexual problem. We do not claim that ‘if the regulation of prostitution stops, or sexual diseases are exterminated, or illegitimate mothers and children are provided for, or all excessive consumption of alcohol is renounced, or capitalism is destroyed, then the sexual problem is solved,’ as one might well hear said. We know only that redressing all of these grievances belongs to that which initiates a solution.”¹⁶ Policy changes would mark the path to a new understanding of human development, an understanding that was essential to fully actualized human existence.

Stöcker’s visionary appeal eschewed the temperate tone of the moderates, yet her calls for social change shared with them a belief in the vindicating potential of motherhood. Maternalism served as the foundation of Stöcker’s understanding of the female. In refuting charges that educated women renounced their maternal instinct, Stöcker wrote that, “today we know that motherliness lives as the deep-

est, most fundamental drive of the female even in intellectually and artistically distinguished women.”¹⁷ Examination of the rhetoric of the BfM and the BDF demonstrates the extent to which spiritual motherhood extended beyond the organizational chasms in the German women’s movement.¹⁸

The importance of motherhood to Stöcker and her associates is revealed in the name and work of the *Bund für Mutterschutz*, the organization that developed into the most important sex reform organization of Wilhelmine Germany.¹⁹ An association for the protection of mothers necessarily championed maternal rights. The BfM took this much further than did the moderates of the BDF, asserting that the rights of unwed mothers were fundamental to women’s rights. In its expansive agenda, the BfM sought to establish homes for unwed mothers and their children, campaigned for maternity insurance, disseminated information regarding birth control, called on mothers to nurse their children, and combated infant mortality through discussions of hygiene, child care, and maternal health during pregnancy.

Recent work on the BfM by Edward Ross Dickinson has identified a “double-edged” tone to the work of the organization, which attempted “to develop an explicitly feminist and democratic vision of the relationship between the sexes, and of the human condition, centered on the dominant scientific dogma of the day: the theory of evolution.”²⁰ By both condemning the repression of bourgeois sexual morality and extolling reproduction as the apex of human nature, Stöcker advocated a position that stood on precarious intellectual grounds when viewed by the modern eye. Stöcker celebrated reproduction as the ultimate expression of human sexuality. Her writings linked female freedom with eugenic creation through the pursuit of human perfection via the free choice of partners to form new life.²¹ This understanding of womanhood as so firmly embedded in the reproductive capacity had downsides that later in the century would be incorporated into the family politics of National Socialism.²² The BfM operated in an ideological sphere that asserted Nietzschean visions of human potentiality while simultaneously promoting a practical agenda of reform that advocated birth control (arguing that reproductive glory could only be achieved if it were chosen), sexual education, and legal protections for single mothers and their children. A recognition of men and women as equally sexual creatures stood at the forefront of this work. In flowery prose, Stöcker described her greatest ambition as to “plant the love of life in all its forms—to stamp the image of the eternal on our lives—to live as if one were to live forever. Thus ... the strongest expression of the love of life, sexuality, can no longer be considered sinful in the new age.”²³

Stöcker’s emphasis on the ‘love of life’ was too sybaritic for many. Initially a supporter of the BfM, Max Weber wrote in 1907 to his friend Robert Michels that “the specific *Mutterschutz* gang is an utterly confused bunch. After the babble of Stöcker, Borgius, etc., I withdrew my support. Crass hedonism and an ethics that would benefit only men and the goal of women ... that is simply nonsense.”²⁴ The historian Kevin Repp uses the case of Gertrud Bäumer to demonstrate the views of the moderate BDF regarding the BfM. Bäumer “scorned the fashionable

'hyper-modern decadents' of Berlin's salons, where supposed radicals wistfully indulged in fantasies of 'a world order that gives 'flowers and sunshine to every existence' while spending 'hours of their lives remote from any meaningful social activism' ... True radicalism was certainly not to be found in 'free love.'²⁵

Though they differed on their views of female sexuality, the BDF and Helene Stöcker both employed the sad image of the *alte Jungfer* (old maid) to help demonstrate the dire need for a new morality.²⁶ Stöcker used Frank Wedekind's 1903 play, *Hidalla*, to show how the old maid represented the "deep barbarity that still reigns in the area of love."²⁷ *Hidalla*'s Karl Hetmann (a character that has been described as the Wedekind role "most identifiable with the author"),²⁸ described German womanhood as a typology of "three barbarian life forms ... The prostitute run out of the human community like a wild animal; the betrayed old maid, condemned to physical and intellectual debilitation for her entire love life; and the untouchable young woman protected for the purpose of as favorable a marriage as possible."²⁹ Each of these female forms fell into a category of sexual misuse. Stöcker argued that Wedekind's trio of the whore, the *alte Jungfer*, and the pristine virgin made transparent the ways in which contemporary morality could warp female sexuality. She lamented that those images also lived outside of theatrical invention: "Just as drama articulates an awareness of the enormous sacrifice that marriage based on paternal rights demands, so this view today emerges not only in other fiction, but also is expressed in numerous cases by the academy."³⁰ The culprit institution of marriage produced these debased forms of womanhood, each alternatively waiting for or spurned—but also completely defined—by wedlock. Stöcker attacked each of the archetypes, arguing against the stultified frigidity of the girl awaiting marriage and vilifying a society that accepted prostitution as an acceptable outlet for sex.

Attacks against the *alte Jungfer* formed an important component of the *Neue Ethik*. Stöcker accused the German state of participating in the marginalization of unwed women through regulations requiring female teachers to remain unmarried.³¹ By forcing women to choose between profession and marriage (should it be an option), Stöcker charged that "even the most professionally competent women ... would have the possibility of establishing a family [but] they are condemned to celibacy by the state." Coerced celibacy was abnormal as well as unfair: "There is absolutely no abstinence among normally predisposed people, but forced asceticism leads ... to an unnatural satisfaction of natural needs." Enter the spook of the aberrant *alte Jungfer*! Stöcker attempted to lobby support for her cause by calling forth the reliable image of the unpleasant old maid, made deviant by the revelation of her repressed sexual drive. She tied this discussion of the *alte Jungfer* to the fact that marriage often "is not possible for economic reasons." If she could not marry, and ought not to behave unnaturally, what was left to her? Sex without marriage. But this prescription only worked if the New Ethic took hold and society moved toward "enhancing comradely interaction between man and woman."³² In asserting the necessity of the *Neue Ethik*, Stöcker made vivid the *alte Jungfer* as a symptom of a decrepit society in need of change.

The old maid not only provided fuel for the cause. She also stood as the most prominent symbol of the damage caused by bourgeois ethics. Robert Michels described the middle-class *alte Jungfer* as the prostitute's alter ego: "The old maids of the higher classes correspond to the prostitutes of the proletariat. Only the causes and effect of both occurrences are different." As physical embodiments of sexuality gone awry, the old maid and the prostitute were the sour fruits of a hypocritical age: "It is one of the cruelest ironies of our current social order that while the unmarried bourgeois girl is forced to silence her love and suffer from an unsatisfied sexual drive, the unmarried proletariat girl sees herself compelled in exactly the reverse, to satisfy sexual overstimulation and love's lust for sale."³³ Capitalism was responsible for these lives of sexual disuse and abuse. The market economy callously had left unwed females without domestic sanctuary, enabling middle-class men to exploit the prostitute and lampoon the old maids. Michels saw the *alte Jungfer* as a bourgeois entity who simply did not exist among the lower classes. Working-class men needed wives to manage the household and supplement male income. But the middle-class man took longer to get established; a wife and family only drained his income. Moreover, the unwed female proletariat (primarily prostitutes, according to Michels) could be relied upon to satisfy the sexual needs of the bourgeois bachelor. The prostitute thus literally replaced the middle-class wife. Both female categories resulted from the same phenomenon of economic displacement from the home, and each suffered in tandem with the other.

In depicting the dismal duo of the *alte Jungfer* and the prostitute, Michels demonstrated the cruelty of the existing ethical system. The pathos of his analysis could be understood only if one accepted the importance of sexuality to the human condition; the BfM sought to foster this understanding. Prostitutes and old maids might be considered unfortunate under most circumstances, but their reciprocally created lots were all the more despairing because of their mutually debased sexuality. Michels stirringly described the "thousands upon thousands of good old *Fräuleins* in the good or better-situated classes remaining aunts and older sisters, who forego marriage and, as things now stand, and which still means very much more—completely forego sexual pleasure their life long."³⁴ The image of 'the good old *Fräuleins*' relied on the conventional iconography of the old maid³⁵ well-known to his readers, perhaps through the fiction of Gabriele Reuter, Thomas Mann, or Frank Wedekind. The insights of sexology had further given dysfunctional depth to representations of the *alte Jungfer*.³⁶ The sexual pleasure—which naturally should have been hers—could never be experienced because of an antiquated moral code that denied an essential part of the old maid's identity and burdened the prostitute with it. "Our current social order refuses girls of the bourgeoisie the *right* to sexual love, while at the same time it refuses the girls of the proletariat the right to *renounce* this sexual love, a new proof . . . that the system of capitalism oppresses not only the proletariat of both sexes, but also large fractions of the female bourgeoisie."³⁷ The repressed *alte Jungfer*, alongside the prostitute, demonstrated the need for a *Neue Ethik*.

Michels, Stöcker, and the BfM called for the German nation to undergo ‘a changed understanding’ of the human condition in order to redress the barbarities of the modern age. Through New Ethics that considered sexuality to be healthy and natural, women and men of both classes would be able to approach marriage differently. Ultimately, Stöcker’s movement aimed for a partnership in which each independent individual would attain “a richer, more intimate interaction ... [with] a finer ability to discriminate all the nuances of camaraderie, friendship, and love.”³⁸ Stöcker believed that woman and man, mother and father (though not necessarily wife and husband) were essential to establishing the family. And she believed that the family was the most important pillar of the future and the most appropriate vessel through which to disseminate her philosophy.³⁹

Even so, some women would remain alone; demography assured as much. But Stöcker believed that the *Neue Ethik* would release such a woman from the repression of *Altjungferntum*. The awareness that she need not live her life as a restrained and renounced individual would change her forever. The old maid would instead become, “an independent person and at the same time continually develop in her female nature ... conscious of her individual humanity—her feeling for the future, because she is something special, *Alleinstehendes*, who no longer fits into any category.”⁴⁰ The single woman as seen through the lens of a fresh ethical system truly could stand alone, unique and blossoming with potentiality. The old maid would be eliminated by the *Neue Ethik*. But until that illusory time, the *alte Jungfer* remained an opportune figure to pity, chastise, or ridicule in calls for a new social and moral order.

Ruth Bré and the Anguish of the Childless

Many bourgeois women of the *Kaiserreich* believed that marriage would provide them with security and the fulfillment of their natural callings as mothers and wives. It also would give them the only route to socially sanctioned sex. Yet marriage as the ticket to sex became increasingly debated in the early twentieth century. The BfM asserted that such an understanding of marriage prohibited the formation of truly human relationships. In the reformist milieu of the *Kaiserreich*, women’s rights advocate Ruth Bré offered a unique challenge to the institution of marriage. Bré was a utopian thinker who championed ‘free love’ and the establishment of communal households for unmarried mothers and their children. In her extensive critique of bourgeois marriage, Bré imagined communities as a response to the female surplus.

An obituary for Ruth Bré, a pseudonym for Elisabeth Bounness, described her as “an unsuccessful and impecunious poetess.”⁴¹ Not a great deal is known about Bré. Her own experience as an illegitimate child led her to become active in the campaign for rights for unmarried mothers. Bré was a socialist who wrote prolifically on the subject of maternal protection and was an original founder of the BfM in 1904. One of Bré’s most central preoccupations was the establishment

of state-supported enclaves for single mothers and their children.⁴² Her stridency regarding these plans ultimately resulted in her dismissal from the organization she had originated.⁴³ Shrillness characterized Bré's writing as well. Throughout her texts on motherhood, the tone is uncompromising, challenging, and emotional.⁴⁴ Bré's personal life informed her advocacy. A 1903 publication expressed her deep desire for children: "My yearning for a child comes from such depths,—from the depth of my *unhappy*, foregone life that it can only be understood by those who have struggled and renounced like I have, and who are of the warm maternal nature as I am, with desire for personal and maternal happiness."⁴⁵ In this passionate declaration, Bré reflected an era suffused by the ideology of spiritual motherhood. But her appropriation of the female surplus would ultimately condemn maternalist ideology. Indeed, Bré believed that rhetorical attempts to provide a replacement for physical motherhood amounted to apostasy. Bré combined the maternal spirit with an insurgent faith in the *Neue Ethik* in order to form her own interpretation of the *Frauenüberschuß*.

Unlike moderate activists, and far more than her peers in the BfM, Bré attacked marriage as the root of society's ills. Bré's pursuit of legal and institutional protection of unwed mothers and children was accompanied by an assault on the institution of marriage in the hopes of unseating it from its commanding presence in Imperial German culture and society. She formulated her offensive against marriage by describing the trauma inflicted upon those who had been excluded from society's prescribed arrangement of the family. Bré argued that of all of the creatures on the planet, only the human female had been forcibly prevented by custom from meeting her calling: "The female alone is shut out. She may not follow the laws and requirements of nature freely. She may not by her own will and selection arrive at maternity, the highest completion of her nature, but only through a certain condition. This condition is called marriage." Should a woman pursue or arrive at "maternity without marriage [it would be] called dishonor. The law which prescribes this in our current civilized states is called the law of custom."⁴⁶ Bré viewed the female essence as innately sexual and maternal; tradition, law, and false morality had combined in a pernicious mix to suppress the female nature.

Ruth Bré shared Helene Stöcker's belief in the transformative power of a new morality to conquer the abuses of custom. But she disagreed with Stöcker about the male role in this fresh ethical order. Beyond his indispensable seed, Bré considered the man to be inessential both to her utopian visions of community and to her definition of the family: "Who made this law of custom that contradicts all of nature? The man."⁴⁷ But if men had created the archaic tradition of marriage, both sexes inertially had perpetuated it into the modern age until the custom of marriage no longer had meaning, and, in fact, had created great harm.

That damage was best demonstrated by the perils of the female surplus. Bré's account of the *Frauenüberschuß* reflected the demographic discourse established by moderate women's rights advocates: "A marriage is absolutely not possible for every woman, because the women are in the greater numbers. Consequently, already

solely through their abundance, women are excluded from motherhood.”⁴⁸ The surplus woman thus was destined to languish in an unnatural state, fearing the disgrace of unwed motherhood and unable to fulfill her natural destiny.

Unwillingness to wed had worsened the female surfeit. Bré described three categories of men hesitant or unable to marry: very young men without enough wealth to establish a home; wealthy men who wanted to squander their fortunes while still in their prime; and mid-level male professionals who needed to negotiate a marriage very carefully due to limited resources—if they could do so at all. To these she added a female cohort: those who simply did not want to marry.⁴⁹ These conditions had combined to create a profusion of artificially repressed women, most of whom harbored intense maternal desires. Having once experienced romantic love only made the pain that much more acute: “Sadness for the woman, if she . . . cannot possess lifelong love and may not possess at least one child out of her love.”⁵⁰

What was to be done? Bré offered a unique and startling response by assessing her own experience: “I am today of the age in which I may quietly speak about these things. I do not fight for me, but for those ‘who come after.’ Today I can go without a man, but with a look at a one of the sweet little ones around his mother, the tears come. I deeply lament that I did not have the courage to salvage out of the time of my happiness a child, a future. But I belong to the caste of educated women, ‘that were left hungering for a child.’”⁵¹ Spiritual motherhood could not assuage the anguish that emerged from renouncing children. Unlike Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne’s nightingale,⁵² Bré’s pain evoked nothing beautiful. In a discussion of adopting orphans, she wrote:

You think one should practice ‘spiritual’ motherhood, in which one takes in a strange child. Why, if *I can have my own*? I do not borrow and panhandle an object that I can rightfully possess. You think one can love a strange child as much as one’s own—I call on all mothers (that is, the physical ones) to manifest whether that is possible for them. Moreover, it is one’s *own* child who would be the continuation of myself and its father. In my *own* children I live on. Not through strange ones . . . Is there anything more simple than the question: Why should we not become mothers *ourselves*? Why should we not have our own children?⁵³

Bré challenged the dominant feminist sensibility of her age by labeling maternalism as artifice and rejecting the notion that the maternal instinct could be fulfilled via teaching, social work, or nursing. She argued instead that whether left single due to their own volition or to the unwillingness of prospective mates, women should be able to take charge of their futures and their bodies by bearing children; only in this way could they meet the female calling.

Bré’s defiant stance alienated her from both moderates and radicals. She was forced out of the BfM not long after she published this call to reproduction without marriage. Helene Stöcker had no patience for impractical calls that might create factions and with which she personally disagreed. Stöcker defended the content of the family, if not its legal form. She wrote that the *Neue Ethik* did

not entail “the dissolution of the marriage, the partnership, the family. It would be an insult to human nature and all happy marriages, if one stated that it was only obligation that held them together.” Stöcker believed that family life represented the apex of human existence: “The permanent living together of people personally drawn to one another, the trinity of father, mother, and children will always remain the highest ideal. In that, I must contradict the opinion that, for instance, the woman with a child already represents a totally complete family.”⁵⁴ Even amongst her nearest ideological counterparts, Ruth Bré stood as a peculiar outsider. Her views about the artificiality of spiritual motherhood held little resonance in her own era. Yet in her radical appeal for the rights of *alleinstehende* women to reproduce, Bré foreshadowed the feminist agenda of later generations. Ruth Bré’s writing represents one of the *Kaiserreich’s* most subversive views of female emancipation. In order to make her case for single motherhood, Bré declared as unjust the marital order that prevented too many good women from motherhood. Bré’s appropriation of the female surplus demonstrates the elasticity of the *Frauenüberschuß* in supporting calls for change and forming the rhetoric of women’s rights.

Lily Braun and the Case for Social Renewal

Another reformer who defies easy categorization is the socialist gadfly, Lily Braun (1865–1916). Born an aristocrat, Braun never seemed able to shed her elevated aura, despite her leftist politics. An anonymous obituary in 1916 captured the enigma that enveloped Braun: “When I think of her, I see a tall woman striding with her head raised high, in a rustling black silk robe, a lush red rose on her breast ... Lily Braun had no intention whatever of evoking bad feelings among her comrades. But she was, as it were, born with a black silk robe on; it would have rustled around her even if it had been made of cheap cotton.”⁵⁵ Braun, born Lily von Kretschmann in 1865, inherited her style from her maternal grandmother, Jenny von Gustedt, an illegitimate daughter of Jerome Bonaparte and an important figure in the culture of nineteenth-century Weimar. Von Gustedt was a close associate of the Goethe family until her death in 1889.⁵⁶ That same year, Lily moved from an aristocratic household near Magdeburg to Weimar in order to compile her grandmother’s papers. In the city of Goethe and Schiller, Lily honed her enthusiasm for all things literary and artistic. In 1893, she moved to Berlin where she resided until her death in 1916.

The move to Berlin marked the beginning of Lily’s political shift to the left; there, she associated with like-minded individuals, including economists, theologians, and political exiles. In 1893, she married one of these intellectuals: Georg von Gizycki, a philosopher and publisher of the journal *Ethische Kultur* (Ethical Culture). The marriage, which lasted until Gizycki’s 1895 death, introduced Lily to the fields of philosophy, economics, and statistics. While her family accepted the marriage, they did not condone Lily’s writing. Her articles and pamphlets

began to espouse a radical approach to the women's movement while also criticizing Christianity, exploring questions of sexuality, and toying with socialist ideology.⁵⁷

Such topics did not intrigue the average aristocrat. But Lily von Gizycki had throughout her youth exhibited concern for the working-class in response to her contempt for the frivolous lifestyle she had witnessed in her childhood. Her 1896 marriage to Heinrich Braun punctuated the break from her past. Raised in a middle-class Jewish household in Bohemia, Braun was a Marxist and member of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD; Social Democratic Party of Germany).⁵⁸ Though well connected, Heinrich Braun never became a major party leader. His personal history no doubt had something to do with his failure to rise to an authoritative position in the SPD.

The Braun marriage was sensational. Heinrich was twice-divorced and his union with Lily had occurred under outrageous circumstances. After protracted divorce negotiations with his first wife, Heinrich received custody of his two sons in January 1895. Soon thereafter he married the housekeeper who had been hired to look after the children. By late 1895, Heinrich had fallen in love with the widow von Gizycki. The housekeeper-wife was divorced, allowing Lily and Heinrich to marry in June, 1896. Members of the SPD viewed the affair as scandalous.⁵⁹ Yet the marriage gained them both notice. As a widely published writer, the 'other woman' in a shocking love story, and the wife of a prominent, if problematic, party member, Lily Braun quickly became a recognizable figure in the SPD.

Though both husbands influenced her political development, Braun's social agenda was distinctly her own. She was a prolific writer of essays, fiction, and biography. Her most significant work, *Die Frauenfrage* (1901), provides a theoretical analysis of women's lives at the turn of the century.⁶⁰ The book investigates the nature of female labor in the industrial epoch, relying on economic models to explain the social problems that emerged under capitalism. The publication of *Die Frauenfrage* marked Braun's entrance into the debate over women's issues. She played a unique role in the discussion of women's rights by espousing socialist ideals without fully committing to Marxist politics; participating in discussions of the *Neue Ethik* and joining the BfM, but ultimately distancing herself from the organization in the midst of internal disputes; and attempting to create a bridge between the radical and moderate women's movements.

Braun viewed the German women's movement as being split into "two camps; on one side, the 'class-conscious proletarian women' stand in closed ranks, on the other side, the female representatives of bourgeois society in separate little detachments." She admired the goals and camaraderie of the proletariat movement and criticized the bourgeois women: "On one side, many thousands of women fight, shoulder to shoulder with their male comrades, a joint fight for equal rights, on the other side, hundreds of females, accompanied by a few men, fight for equal education, often against the men." Identifying a split between the two camps suited her intellectual peculiarity as well as her ego, for it allowed her to carve out a unique niche for herself: "Since I am neither a man nor a millionaire, I will have to do

without the dueling privilege. At this time I am somewhat like a war reporter trying to arrive at an objective judgment about the battle tactics of both armies.”⁶¹

A mixture of moderate and radical advocacy formed Braun’s agenda. Causes dear to Braun included the welfare of prostitutes, expansion of work opportunities, fair compensation for actresses, curricular reform in girls’ schools, greater sexual freedom, and the establishment of communal households for single women.⁶² She pursued legislative reforms in the areas of family law, maternity insurance, and female labor. The wide scope of Braun’s reformist activities dismayed some of her fellow socialists, most notably Clara Zetkin, who accused her of embracing an agenda too expansive to be effective.⁶³

Braun’s views on marriage especially demonstrated a desire to blur ideological divides. Her critique of the marital institution combined *Neue Ethik* philosophy with both a socialist interpretation of economic evolution and a moderate maternalist vision. Braun believed that marriage in its traditional form would become obsolete as women gained experience in the world: “The old form of marriage, its peace and its duration, depended first, on the support it provided for the woman and, second, on the subordination of the wife to the husband.”⁶⁴ Capitalism had only made disparities between men and women more conspicuous. Braun contended that “once the female has turned into a human being, that is, an individual personality, with views, judgments and life goals of her own, then she has been spoiled for the average marriage. And the conflict between the traditional economic dependence on the man and her new intellectual independence is inevitable.”⁶⁵ Capitalism exposed the problems within marriage and made women wary of wedding. Braun believed that women of all social levels would feel the constraints of marriage as they became increasingly engaged in the world beyond their doorsteps. Essential to Braun’s analysis was the belief that economic change had left women with no choice but to step outside of those doors.

The capitalist marketplace had pushed women beyond the private sphere. Braun described the consequences of capitalism and industrialization in terms similar to moderate maternalists, though her description encompassed both working-class and bourgeois women. A 1901 essay focusing on the emergence of consumer textiles demonstrates the ways in which Braun’s socialism combined with an awareness of the displaced female: “Next to the cooking ladle it was the sewing needle which according to the old traditions was the mainstay of the household. It was replaced by the sewing machine ... This too, however, is coming to an end.” Consumer culture depended upon the buying power of both men and women, for “even the better situated worker, male or female, today can clothe him/herself more cheaply by buying ready-made clothing.” The erosion of domestic clothing production in the wake of the garment industry brought about a demand for abundant pools of female labor: “The precondition of this, of course, is the availability of a sufficiently large labor force, preferably female. Nor is there any dearth of them: Unemployed domestics and redundant daughters, the children and wives or workers, provide more recruits than this call to service can use.”⁶⁶ While the essay emphasized working-class experience (wage labor in the homes

of the poor as well as the work of domestic servants and day workers), Braun included “redundant daughters” in her consideration of those women dislodged and forced into the workplace.

Along with socialists August Bebel and Clara Zetkin,⁶⁷ Braun argued that capitalism had created the women’s movement: “The driving force behind the women’s movement was essentially economic necessity, which drove women into seeking gainful employment, forcing them into a competitive struggle with men.” In the process, females had been obliged to realize their estrangement from men: “Only gradually, as women . . . grew in experience and knowledge and began to analyze their own intellectual and emotional lives, did they realize increasingly that gender differences are not limited to the purely physiological aspects but that they also exert a most profound influence on women’s emotional life and intellectual development.”⁶⁸ Female and male estrangement preceded industrialization, but it had been forced into the open by the changes wrought during the capitalist epoch. Independent women confronting their own choices compelled the women’s movement into life and provided harbingers of a marital institution doomed to failure.

Braun privileged sex over class in this argument and struck a path different from that of more orthodox socialists. Braun could not shed the worldview gleaned from a life of privilege, nor did she desire to do so. While Braun wrote with passion about working-class subjugation, she also recognized the despair that characterized elite idleness and the constricting confines of bourgeois morality. Her intellectual concerns as well as what historian Stanley Pierson has described as an “imperious nature and . . . egoism” kept her well outside of the mainstream of female activism in the SPD.⁶⁹

In assessing bourgeois society, Braun suggested that financial impediments to marriage forced expectant brides either to hope for an inheritance or to actively pursue professional development so that they would be more attractive as wives: “Middle-class incomes have not kept pace with growing demands; marriage, still today seen in bourgeois circles essentially as an institution to provide support, has become more and more unattainable for the growing number of girls without independent means.” Unable to find husbands, surplus women had been forced to gain independent sensibilities: “Add to this fact that a justified striving toward freedom and autonomy has developed in them, and that its fulfillment became possible when universities and many new professions opened up for women.” Braun’s casual citation of marital scarcity makes clear that she accepted the *Frauenüberschuß* as a reality. Braun also believed that the obstacles to marriage would be eased if a woman had a job: “Once these wage-earning girls enter marriage, their labor power today is often their most valuable dowry, just as in the case of the woman worker.”⁷⁰ Earning potential made for a fine dowry, but it also made clear that the essence of marriage was contractual and financial. Work not only enhanced a woman’s candidacy for marriage, but it also provided her with a vital sense of “freedom and autonomy.” That psychological development played a significant role in Braun’s broader critique of marriage as an institution.

Female lives had been made more difficult by the double burden of work and family, an affliction that affected both classes: “The conflict between domestic and professional duties which is very evident in the female proletariat exists also in the world of the bourgeois woman.” In fact, only work could reform the misguided elite female who had spent her youth amidst vanities while awaiting marriage: “A painter cannot spend her time in the kitchen, a writer cannot jump up every moment to see whether the soup is boiling over; not a single woman who is seriously devoted to her science or her art and who wants to eradicate dilettantism, that most dangerous enemy of her sex, has the understanding, the time, or the interest which would be required if she wanted to be a really good housewife.”⁷¹ Braun’s aristocratic background shades this passage, for the work of a female intellectual or artist evokes a rather different aura than that of a social worker or teacher. Braun wanted women to maintain a professional identity alongside the traditional occupations of wife and mother. She thus considered mainstream maternalist advocacy to be shortsighted in its assertion of marriage and family as the best and most natural female calling.

Braun championed motherhood and aimed many of her reformist appeals toward improving the lot of all mothers. She believed that the double burden of work and family ought to be alleviated by those social reforms that would allow households to share responsibilities and limit the demands of the workday.⁷² Indeed, Braun faulted the moderate women’s movement for a narrow focus: “The bourgeois women’s movement, forcefully and skillfully fighting for the right to work, had no better defense against its enemies than the constantly repeated argument that professional work would not in the least threaten the ‘sole profession’ of women.” The agenda of the mainstream women’s movement was woefully limited: “It was right in so far as, in the world of bourgeois women, wage work in most cases is no more than a substitute for the ‘sole profession’ and is abandoned as soon as the girl gets married.” But in settling for a notion of work as substitute, Braun charged that the moderate women’s movement had missed the boat: “As long as women’s work, like that of men, is not regarded as a lifetime career, it is condemned to get stuck in dilettantism; if that is to be prevented, the bourgeois woman, too, must be freed from the excess burden of her double duties.”⁷³ Once again, the surplus woman kept vigil as a prospective dilettante. To guard against this fate, Braun called for married women to work alongside single women. She argued that moderate maternalists had denied both the exigencies of many married women’s lives as well as the spiritual passions that might compel certain women (especially artists and poets) to work: “The German bourgeois women’s movement from its very beginning has been very timid and has not had the courage to demand full equal rights for the female sex.”⁷⁴

In emphasizing the double burden, Braun’s feminism adopted a wider lens than those moderate activists focused upon the experiences of single women. One of her more interesting ideas for broad scale social change was the proposal of *Einküchenhäuser* (one-kitchen households or cooperatives). These imagined quarters primarily were intended to ease the double burden by pooling resources,

distributing responsibilities, and consolidating housekeeping.⁷⁵ Braun did not intend these houses to be sanctuaries for single women displaced from the bosom of the family. The structures instead would relieve the hardships faced by mothers in a reconfiguration of family life. The *Einküchenhäuser* responded to both socialist and moderate feminist articulations of the ruptured domestic sphere, since neither the bourgeois nor the proletariat home guaranteed security to women, whether single or married.

Braun saw the surplus woman as one of many figures sharing in the dilemmas facing women at the turn of the century. Her socialist interpretation of economic change included the conviction that bourgeois institutions inevitably decayed in the capitalist age. The anxious, unmarried woman displaced from the home offered evidence of that decay. Braun also went beyond Marxist ideology and joined with Helene Stöcker in connecting bourgeois degeneration to human sexuality. Braun believed that the right to love freely was just as important as political and economic equality. “The right to work, the right to [participation in] public activity mean little for the liberation of woman and for the full flourishing of her personality as long as she has not fought for, and won, the right to love.” Braun echoed Iwan Bloch and August Forel by claiming that “the healthy woman needs love no less than the man. After all, for her, her sex life is of far more trenchant importance, for, as the precondition of motherhood, it constitutes not only the most important physical but also the chief emotional contents of her life.”⁷⁶ Braun’s amended maternalist line held that the importance of sex has more to do with reproduction than freedom. Extant morality, reinforced by legal marriage, prevented women from full freedom. In this way, Braun used the surplus woman to demonstrate the despair of a life led without love.

In a 1905 article, Braun conveyed the afflictions experienced by the female middle-class unwed. Economic redundancy served as a backdrop to this depiction of the surplus woman ailing as a result of her physical solitude: “All too often today we see respectable bourgeois daughters in full consciousness envy the poor servant girl or seamstress who at least has experienced a bit of love in an hour’s ecstasy. Some of them, idle at home, wait in vain for a man; others seek to smother their yearning in professional work.” The contrast between Braun’s own notorious romantic history and the straitlaced lives of the former schoolteachers populating the moderate women’s movement pervaded her estimation of old maidenhood: “All of them are branded with the stigma of the crime against nature: hysteria, melancholy, neuroses, masturbation, and finally that sorry surrogate of lesbian love which is spreading so terribly among the lonely and which in the vast majority of cases is not likely to have sprung from an innate contrary sexuality.” Normativity and homophobia energized her evaluation of such contrariness. Still, all of these disorders could be chalked up to the brutality of the capitalist epoch: “Countless women have had to repress their young strong love because they lack a dowry for a household fit for their social class, or else a lengthy engagement with all its secret excitement and its much-admired celibate faithfulness eats at her strength and cheats her and her man of the best in life.”⁷⁷

Braun's account of the bourgeois single woman echoes a familiar iconography, detailing the idle *Mädchen* (girl) at home, destined for a life of stagnation. Inertia and the lack of a dowry ascertained the ultimate status of *alte Jungfer*, as did the exaggerated physical symptoms of atrophy. Braun also provided a turn-of-the-century homophobic note (evocative of the sexology of Richard Krafft-Ebing and Otto Weininger),⁷⁸ by claiming that sexual disuse led to sexual dysfunction. Repressed sexuality demonstrated the moral bankruptcy of bourgeois marriage. Braun believed that because marriage was primarily an economic contract, the institution necessarily damned some women to psychological and physical isolation.

Like her moderate contemporaries, Braun's appeals for change did not shy away from presenting unwed women as pariahs: "Without doubt there is profound meaning in that ridicule-cum-contempt to which popular wisdom subjects the 'old maids:' the instinctive recognition that a woman who cannot follow her sexual destiny must become crippled in an important part of her being." Though sympathetic, Braun nonetheless granted verity to the stereotype: "People here are as unjust as kids who jeer at a hunchback. They should bemoan a tragic fate instead of mocking it."⁷⁹ She might have condemned the ridicule, but Braun offered the *alte Jungfer* no possibility of relief. The old maid's fate would be tragic. By utilizing the much lampooned cultural icon, Braun registered her familiarity with the surplus woman as a signifier of social and economic upheaval. At the same time, Braun, like Ruth Bré, contributed another layer to the discourse of the *Frauenüberschuß* by showing how the plight of excessive women provided tinder for a very expansive critique of marriage.

Braun believed that subservience lay at the root of the marital institution. She argued that most married women were quick to find "that matrimonial peace—and within a marriage peace is a blessing even if it has nothing at all to do with genuine happiness—depends on the subordination of one partner to the other, hence, according to tradition, of the woman to the man."⁸⁰ Braun unleashed some of her most scathing rhetoric for those who celebrated marriage as a vessel of true love: "What often is the fate of those who marry out of love? It almost seems as if they are punished for thus violating the general rule!" Mundanities would kill romance between husband and wife: "the difficult struggle for daily bread, the breathless wrestling with that gray ogress, worry, extinguish everything in them that was pure, great, and strong. Concern for the family makes them into climbers, cowards, and ass kissers." Braun's conclusion was severe: "Marriage flaws their character as it flaws their lives."⁸¹

Such a cynical view raises questions about the nature of Braun's own marriage. Unable to escape the taint of scandal that surrounded their union, the bond between Heinrich and Lily eroded through the years. The Brauns seldom lived together and the object of Lily's affection became their son, Otto, born in 1897.⁸² Motherhood fulfilled where love had failed. Braun incorporated her personal history into a view of marriage as an antiquated economic arrangement that would one day be supplanted by cohabitation of the sexes and communal households.

Ultimately, the departure of women from home to work would sound the death knell for the institution of marriage.

Lily Braun's writings portray a new woman transformed by the economy and no longer willing to accept subordination in marriage. Braun believed that marriage had lost its value in the modern era; *alleinstehende Frauen* need no longer marry once they recognized their worth outside of the domestic sphere. Not quite as radical as Bré's advocacy of truly single motherhood, Braun's utilization of contemporary anxiety about women's roles advanced an agenda that questioned the very foundations of the social fabric. Abandoned by wedlock, the surplus woman emerged as a forceful and important challenger to the institution of marriage itself.

* * *

This chapter has addressed the use of the female surplus among three social reformers, each of whom articulated calls for radical change. Helene Stöcker, Ruth Bré, and Lily Braun engaged in subversive rhetoric, though their ultimate goals differed. As was the case among more moderate advocates of social reform, these women agreed that economic upheaval had brought about the women's movement. They saw the *Frauenüberschuß* as a deeply meaningful element of the dynamic social fabric that had emerged during the era of industrialization. The constructed surplus woman offered a lens into multifaceted interpretations of the nature of change. She also served a catalyst for disparate visions of social reconfiguration.

In embracing the female surfeit as such an important component of the women's movement, moderate maternalists had described the plight of single women so well that they opened up inevitable questions about the very legitimacy of the society and culture that created such an imbalance. Ideologies that preceded discussion of the female surplus found in this new concept evidence of a society in decline. Moreover, they found a useful figure to employ in arguing for radical change: the old maid. The repressed *alte Jungfer* offered a compelling image in calls for transforming the moral vision of German society. The malleable surplus woman transcended the boundaries of the bourgeois women's movement and became an insurgent presence in the struggle for pervasive ethical, cultural, and social change.

Notes

1. See chapter 5.
2. Richard Evans, *The Feminists* (Totowa, NJ, 1977), 112.
3. Helene Stöcker's *Bund für Mutterschutz* had a membership of approximately 3,800 in 1907. BDF membership numbered 70,000 in 1901 and increased to 500,000 by the late 1920s, by which time the largest religious women's associations of German women stood at approxi-

- mately 200,000 (Protestant) and 250,000 (Catholic). See Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1991), 175; Evans, *Feminists*, 106; and Ute Frevert, *Women in German History*, trans. Stuart McKinnon–Evans (New York, 1989), 173.
4. Richard Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany* (Beverly Hills, CA, 1976), 138; on anti-feminism, see chapter 5.
 5. Helene Stöcker, “Lebensabriss,” 5, Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.
 6. Stöcker also edited the BfM’s magazine, *Mutterschutz*, initiated in 1905. Andrew Bonnell, “Robert Michels, Max Weber, and the Sexual Question,” *The European Legacy* 3(6) (1998): 98, lists the diverse group of reformers who supported the establishment of the BfM, including Max Weber, Werner Sombart, “prominent liberals such as Friedrich Naumann and Anton Erkelenz, doctors such as Alfred Blaschko, Iwan Bloch, and Max Marcuse, along with well-known feminists such as Hedwig Dohm, Minna Cauer, Lily Braun, and Marie Stritt”; Weber’s support for the group would wane as its focus on sexual reform increased.
 7. Stöcker and Springer’s relationship was criticized by some in the BfM; see Leila Rupp, “Sexuality and Politics in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of the International Women’s Movement,” *Feminist Studies* 23(3) (1997): 593–594; on Stöcker, see Amy Hackett, “Helene Stöcker: Left-Wing Intellectual and Sex Reformer,” in *When Biology became Destiny*, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan (New York, 1984), 109–130; Gudrun Hammelmann, *Helene Stöcker, der “Bund für Mutterschutz” und “Die Neue Generation”* (Frankfurt a.M., 1992), and Christl Wickert, *Helene Stöcker, 1869–1943: Frauenrechtlerin, Sexualreformerin, und Pazifistin: Eine Biographie* (Bonn, 1991).
 8. Helene Stöcker, *Die Liebe und die Frauen* (Minden in Westf., 1905), vi.
 9. Helene Stöcker, “Zur Reform der sexuellen Ethik,” in *Mutterschutz* 1(1) (1905): 3.
 10. *Ibid.*, 3–4.
 11. Edward Ross Dickinson, “Reflections on Feminism and Monism in the *Kaiserreich*, 1900–1913,” *Central European History* 34(2) (2001): 196.
 12. See chapter 2.
 13. On the opposition between advocates of Stöcker’s *Neue Ethik* and the BDF see Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 119–128, and Dickinson, “Reflections,” 196–199.
 14. Nancy Reagin, “‘A True Woman Can Take Care of Herself’: The Debate over Prostitution in Hanover, 1906,” *Central European History* 24(4) (1991): 348–353.
 15. Helene Lange Archiv, Nachlass Bund deutscher Frauenvereine. Karton 54, Mappe 245. “Was die Frauenbewegung für die Frauen will,” 1898.
 16. Stöcker, “Reform,” 5.
 17. Stöcker, *Liebe*, 85.
 18. See Allen, *Feminism* (1991), 173–187.
 19. Dickinson, “Reflections,” 191.
 20. *Ibid.*
 21. *Ibid.*, 216.
 22. Dickinson, “Reflections,” 199–206, summarizes the extensive historical debate on the extent to which the radical feminist milieu of the *Neue Ethik* forms the “prehistory” (2001, 200) of Nazi racial and gender policy; I share his view that the BfM and Stöcker need to be viewed from a historical perspective in which eugenics, the celebration of female reproductive capacity, sexual freedom, and female autonomy, came together in a monistic vision of human potentiality and not solely as a *post facto* precursor to fascist politics.
 23. Helene Stöcker, “Von neuer Ethik,” in *Mutterschutz* 2(1) (1906): 4.
 24. Max Weber to Michels, 11 January 1907, quoted in Bonnell, “Michels,” 99. For Weber’s (1864–1920) views on the women’s movement, see Lawrence A. Scaff, “The ‘Cool Objectivity of Sociation’: Max Weber and Marianne Weber in America,” *History of the Human Sciences* 11(2) (1998): 61–82. Michels (1876–1936) was a member of the BfM and a leading figure in

- German social science; see Bonnell, "Michels," and Terry R. Kandal, "Robert Michels' *Sexual Ethics*," *Society* 38(3) (2001): 60–66, for an assessment of Michels' views on gender.
25. Repp, *Reformers*, 123, citing Gertrud Bäumer, "Der moderne Individualismus und die Erziehung," *Die Frau* 9(6) (1902): 323, and Gertrud Bäumer, "Die psychischen Probleme der Gegenwart," *Die Frau* 7(7) (1900): 391; on Bäumer, see chapter 5.
 26. On moderate appropriations of the *alte Jungfer*, see chapter 4.
 27. Stöcker, *Liebe*, 179.
 28. Sol Gittleman, *Frank Wedekind* (New York, 1969), 93; Ward B. Lewis, in *The Ironic Dissident: Frank Wedekind in the View of his Critics* (Columbia, SC, 1997), 83, challenges this judgment by arguing that the similarity between author and character is limited to the ways in which they "reject the woman's movement and oppose the feudalism of love."
 29. Frank Wedekind, "Karl Hetmann, der Zwergriese (Hidalla)" (1903), in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8 (Munich, 1924), 237–238.
 30. Stöcker, *Liebe*, 179.
 31. On marriage restrictions, see chapter 5.
 32. Stöcker, "Reform," 6–7.
 33. Robert Michels, "Die Dirne als die 'alte Jungfer' des Proletariats und die Prostitution," *Mutterschutz* 1(2)(1905): 59.
 34. *Ibid.*, 58.
 35. See chapter 1.
 36. See chapter 2.
 37. Michels, "Dirne," 59–60; emphasis in text.
 38. Stöcker, "Reform," 6.
 39. *Ibid.*, 10.
 40. Stöcker, *Liebe*, 20.
 41. Cited in Evans, *Feminist Movement*, 120.
 42. *Ibid.*, 121.
 43. Allen, *Feminism* (1991), 175.
 44. Ruth Bré, *Das Recht auf die Mutterschaft* (Leipzig: Verlag der Frauen-Rundschau, 1903); *Nochmals das Recht auf die Mutterschaft* (Leipzig, 1903); *Staatskinder oder Mutterrecht* (Leipzig, 1904).
 45. Bré, *Nochmals*, 10; emphasis in text.
 46. Bré, *Recht*, 4.
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
 49. Bré, *Recht*, 5–6.
 50. Bré, *Nochmals*, 8.
 51. *Ibid.*
 52. See Introduction.
 53. Bré, *Nochmals*, 8–9; emphasis in text.
 54. Helene Stöcker, "Reform," 10.
 55. Obituary for Lily Braun, *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna: August 30, 1916); cited in Alfred Meyer, *The Feminism and Socialism of Lily Braun* (Bloomington, IN, 1985), 187; Meyer's biography was the first English-language treatment of Braun; on Braun see also Ute Lischke, *Lily Braun, 1865–1916: German Writer, Feminist, Socialist* (Rochester, NY, 2000), and Ute Speck, *Ein mögliches Ich, Selbstreflexion in der Schreiberfabrik: zur Autobiographik der Politikerinnen Lily Braun, Hedwig Dohm, und Rosa Luxemburg* (Frankfurt a.M., 1997).
 56. On von Gustedt, see Braun's biography of her grandmother: Lily Braun, *Im schatten der Tanten; ein Erinnerungsbuch an Baronin Jenny v. Gustedt* (Braunschweig, 1909).
 57. Meyer, *Feminism*, 18.
 58. On Heinrich Braun, see the biography written by his fourth wife, art historian Julie Braun-Vogelstein, *Ein Menschenleben: Heinrich Braun und sein Schicksal* (Tübingen, 1932); on his

- role in the SPD, see Stanley Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Working-Class Mentality in Germany, 1887–1912* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 69–78.
59. Meyer, *Feminism*, 23.
 60. Lily Braun, *Die Frauenfrage: Ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Seite* (Leipzig, 1901).
 61. Lily Braun, “Nach links und rechts,” *Die Frauenbewegung* 1 (5,7) 1895; in Lily Braun, *Selected Writings on Feminism and Socialism: Lily Braun*, ed. and trans. Alfred Meyer (Bloomington, IN, 1987), 43.
 62. Lily Braun, “Frauenarbeit und Hauswirtschaft” (1901), in Braun, *Writings*, 17–23.
 63. On the tensions between Braun and Zetkin, see Jean Quataert, *Reluctant Feminism in German Social Democracy, 1855–1917* (Princeton, NJ, 1979), 107–133; on Zetkin, see chapter 7.
 64. Lily Braun, “Einführung,” in *Mutterschaft*, ed. Adele Schreiber, in Braun, *Writings*, 113.
 65. Lily Braun, “Das Problem der Ehe,” *Neue Gesellschaft* 1 (10) (1905), in Braun, *Writings*, 125.
 66. Braun, “Frauenarbeit,” 6–7.
 67. See chapter 7.
 68. Lily Braun, “Das geistige Leben des Weibes,” in Braun, *Writings*, 141.
 69. Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals*, 138.
 70. Braun, “Frauenarbeit,” 11–12.
 71. *Ibid.*, 12.
 72. Lily Braun, “Die Frauen und die Politik,” in Braun, *Writings*, 85–87.
 73. Braun, “Frauenarbeit,” 17.
 74. Braun, “Nach links,” 53.
 75. Braun, “Frauenarbeit,” 17–23.
 76. Lily Braun, “Die Entthronung der Liebe,” *Neue Gesellschaft* 1(22) (1905), in Braun, *Writings*, 120; on Bloch and Forel, see chapter 2.
 77. *Ibid.*, 120–121.
 78. See chapter 2.
 79. Braun, “Entthronung,” 121.
 80. Braun, “Problem,” 126.
 81. Braun, “Entthronung,” 123.
 82. Meyer, *Feminism*, 168–170; Otto Braun (1897–1918) was killed in action in World War I, two years after his mother’s death.