Women and the Sex Trade

Among the issues troubling both reformers and radicals during the early 20th century, prostitution was high on the list. To middle-class women concerned with the abuse of women by men, the commercial sale of women’s bodies was an evil demanding the immediate attention of the national and international community. Feminist reformers, as well as many Protestant Churches, were especially horrified by sensational press reports depicting the forceable removal and trafficking in young girls under the rubric of what was called the “White Slave Trade.” Prostitution was a central concern of the powerful social purity campaigns of the pre-World War I period, which warned of moral decay and physical degeneration if sex education, chastity and purity for men and women alike, were not embraced by all citizens.

Working-class and radical left commentators often had a different interpretation of prostitution, but they too could respond to the issue with moral revulsion and calls for a complete end to the sex trade. Contributors to the Woman Worker shared in the alarm about prostitution and the white slave trade, while remaining suspicious of the motives and methods behind middle-class reformers’ attempts to stamp out these “social evils.” (See also “Feminism and Social Reform” section.) In its wholesale acceptance of the League of Nations report the Women’s Labor League seemed to accept without question that the trade was very extensive, and Communist women condemned it in the same moralistic style as many of the reformers.

Also like the moral reformers, the WLLs did not question an underlying fear which fuelled the international discussion on white slavery: the claims that white, European girls were being tricked or coerced into the business, sent to Latin America or Mediterranean countries to be used, and cast off, by men there. Racist imagery and
ideology fed the panic about white slavery—indeed the very term spoke to visions of endangered white womanhood yet ignored the ongoing sexual exploitation of women of colour. This racist ideology was used by Canadians like Magistrate Emily Murphy whose alarmist book, *The Black Candle*, published in 1922, linked the increase in prostitution to the presence of male, Asian immigrants and their promotion of narcotic use.

Even if the *Woman Worker* evidenced some of the prevailing ethnocentrism and racism which focused public concern narrowly on white women being pushed into prostitution, the WLL paper was a far cry from *The Black Candle*. For one thing, the WLLs refused to blame the victim. Ever present in the discussions of prostitution was the insistence that its root cause was capitalist-induced poverty. Popular narratives in Communist women’s circles featured respectable working-class girls who were anxious to lead moral lives but were driven into prostitution by unemployment or insufficient wages. Sometimes innocent girls were duped by “vicious men” (and even women) promising decent employment (a ruse of immigrant agents/procurers) or a “little joy.” Who could blame the poor girl portrayed in one article who had known only hardship and struggle and whose final downfall was precipitated by a quest for pleasure? (See “A London Girl.”)

In consistently pointing to class injustice as the cause of prostitution and the white slave trade, the *Woman Worker* clashed with many reformers like Emily Murphy, who may have bitterly denounced pimps, but often also cast blame on prostitutes themselves for their selfish desire for luxuries, or for getting into problem situations by going to “indecent” public establishments frequented by foreigners, such as “Sicilian ice cream parlours.” Working-class mothers too were blamed by Murphy for not instilling in their daughters proper judgement and morals. Other reformers, like Methodist Church speaker Beatrice Brigden, who was more sympathetic to the prostitutes’ plight, pointed their finger at the double standard of sexual morality for men and women. Some reformist women’s groups, like the National Council of Women, recognized economic insecurity as a factor, but only among the Left was there an insistence that the abolition of prostitution depended on the destruction of capitalism.

References to male “licentiousness” and “bestial sexual appetites” found in the *Woman Worker* ring of moral distaste for prostitution, but they may also suggest an abhorrence of men’s sexual domination of women. Moreover, at least one writer made the specific connection between prostitution and bourgeois marriage,
where women legally sold their bodies for "an easier time or for title or social position." The feeling that the sex trade involved women's victimization at the hands of men can even be found in the reprinted review by Harold Begbie, in which men are described in stereotypical ways as aggressors often callously intent on sexually using women. In general, though, Communists were more suspicious of the upper class man who was seen to be more likely to seduce or abuse working-class women, with little or no moral conscience.

Although its gender analysis was limited, the Woman Worker developed a straight-forward economic analysis of prostitution. This is not to say that it was seen as a form of work like any other, but rather prostitution was portrayed as an evil by-product of capitalist social relations and the pursuit of profit by procurers and white slave consortiums. This view echoed editorials in socialist papers predating the Woman Worker. Both the Socialist Party of Canada and the Social Democratic Party, for example, portrayed prostitution as a direct result of women's "wage slavery." Although a few socialist women provided a muted critique of women's sexual oppression by men, most socialist papers before World War I concentrated on the economic causes of prostitution, also offering images of innocent working women seduced by wealthy, uncaring men. Likewise, the Woman Worker tended to ignore evidence that all classes of men could be found buying sexual services. When this was admitted, it was often excused by saying these working-class men were left with little alternative outlet for their sexual energies since poverty prevented them from marrying. The Woman Worker was quite correct in seeing working-class women as more prone to becoming sex trade workers. Subsequent studies of many Canadian cities have confirmed that those arrested as prostitutes were predominantly poor or working-class women, often in the lowest paid jobs (such as domestic work), and in some cases more likely to be recent immigrants, without friends, relatives and resources to see them through hard times. There is also no doubt, of course, that the sexual lives of working-class women were more intensely surveyed and policed at this time. Indeed, working-class teens could be sentenced to reform institutions simply on the basis of their perceived sexual "promiscuity."

It is possible that beneath the surface of the Woman Worker's analysis of prostitution lay other, less easily articulated ideas and unexpressed concerns. It is not surprising that the reader advocating sex education urged women to instruct their daughters, making no mention of educating sons to their responsibilities in sexual matters. A direct critique of the double standard, which allowed men
more sexual freedom than women, was almost entirely absent, but the double standard may have nonetheless unsettled some women readers. The WLL analysis also led them to ignore the continuing existence of prostitution in post-revolutionary USSR. In only one article, excerpted from the writing of a male comrade who visited the Soviet Union, is it admitted that prostitution existed in every country, capitalist or not. Many anti-prostitution reformers exaggerated working-class women's victimization, seduction and capture, ignoring women's involvement in "consensual" prostitution, their agency in choosing this trade, though admittedly from a very narrow list of options. The *Woman Worker* clearly adopted a similar approach, and overall, like the reformers, stressed themes of sexual "danger" rather than sexual emancipation for women. There is emerging evidence that a minority of working-class women, especially those living alone and working for wages, may have been pushing on the bounds of sexual propriety at this time. Their rebellion against middle-class notions of sexual purity make them the "vanguard" for the more affluent flappers who then became linked to ideas of sexual experimentation and liberation. But sexual freedom before marriage was not something Communists could or would advocate openly (even if some practised it quietly), for it would only confirm the claims of the mainstream press that Bolsheviks were destroying decency and the family and in the process perhaps alienating the "respectable" working class. Sexual "danger," therefore, remained the dominant theme in the paper, and the editor as well as contributors remained bound to the notion that a class revolution would bury the evil of prostitution once and for all.

*Further Reading:*


"A London Girl" is the story of the downfall of a girl of the working class. Mr. Begbie wrote this book with the intention of bringing to public notice the way girls fall from the path of the "recognized standard of morality and virtue" to lives of prostitution, and the hideousness of that life. In portraying this life he contends that the fate of "A London Girl" is the fate of hundreds of others. He does not fail to show that poverty is at the root of the evil, and that human beings crave for joy, for happiness, for gaiety. If these are withheld or denied, then these desires are expressed in other ways.

"Baby," the girl of the story, does not want to "be good"; this is enforced. She wants to "feel good," which is quite natural. She admires the strong and resolute, but she hates the preacher. She responds quickly to kindness, but brutality crushes her spirit. She must have brightness, laughter, joy. This, to her, is life. And this is so, because all she knew in her childhood days was semi-starvation, a broken home, miserable surroundings, exploitation by a shop-keeper, long hours of toil and poor wages. Work became repulsive. She ran away, got work as a barmaid, and through this means became acquainted with the "so-called brightness of a public drinking place."

At the commencement of the story one is inclined to blame the girl for her forwardness and apparent laxity of morals, but as we proceed we lose this in our indignation against those who set themselves to destroy the lives and beautiful bodies of young girls. Baby moves in the circles of the very rich, and descends to the depths of dives, want and misery. Her end is untimely. She is the victim of a vicious condition and the brutality of vicious men.

The only good man to her was her father—whom she left with the care of children deserted by their mother. His picture was always with her. The types of men in the story are common types. One is the vicious, conceited, over-dressed and wordy middle-class youth, who lives by his wits, and spares neither his mother nor the girl he deliberately ruins. Another is the staid scientist, who forever preaches goodness and moralizes to the point of aggravating his victim, so that she makes up her mind to be more daring than ever in her ways of life. Another is the impulsive Frenchman who considers women creatures for the amusement of men. It is he who discovers Baby and is struck by her great beauty and vivacity. He undertakes to train her, to make her cultured. Then there is the rich man who buys her beauty and vivacity. He pays well for this pleasure until he discovers that Baby belongs to the gutter, the ranks of the despised workers.
The brute, a depraved seaman, is another character. It is he who bargains in shillings, and even pence, for the wreck of "The Girl," and finally gives her blows, and kicks her into unconsciousness.

The story gives a little insight into "The Trade." In the elegant salons of the rich, its character is hidden, and rich men compete with each other for the smiles of the courtesan.

In the hotel rotundas and theatre entrances it is respectable even if a little showy. But on the streets it is unmasked and shown in all its sordidness. Here competition is rife between women who are supervised by evil-looking, depraved types of men and even women. Here the man who has a grudge against a girl in the profession can give her into the hands of the law and laugh at his smartness. Here the newcomers in the profession, if they are not licensed, are hounded from pillar to post. They have no place on which to stand. Here drink plays its part in reviving vivacity, which died early because it was abused.

The prostitute of the story knows she is despised. She tried to console herself with the thought that her kind existed even among the highest in the land, the duchesses and fine ladies. But her experiences with human nature of all kinds hardens her against all influences other than those of drink, and that form of sympathetic kindness she sometimes found with in the ranks of "The Trade."

The story is by no means far-fetched. But, beyond showing the root of evil—poverty—and its horridness, the author does not go. This must be left to those who do not fear, and to those who will not fear to destroy a system of exploitation which brings forth such vicious social results.

A MODERN VIRGIN
By A.D.A.

January 1927, pp. 9-12.

"What have you on your books for out-of-town help?" The man seated at the desk looked up at the questioner. After eyeing her up and down, replied slowly, "Nothing, I'm afraid, that'll suit you."

Again, the girl asked, this time with a desperate note in her voice, "But, you have something, haven't you? I'm willing to take anything."

The man at the desk looked at the girl kindly. He knew, only too well, that all the jobs on his books needed strong, sturdy women, women who could keep going for ten and more hours a day and then get up the next morning prepared for the same tasks. He knew only certain types of women were capable of doing the work required in the hotels and roadhouses of suburban and rural Ontario, and at the moment only this kind of work was on his books.
The apparent anxiety of the girl touched the man. His experience as an employment agent brought him in touch with all sorts of types of women and girls. Some were of the sensitive type; these shivered at the sound of a harsh voice and were quite unfitted for the tough kind of jobs that found their way on his books. Others had become quite hardened to the come-day go-day form of existence that prevailed these days and could cheek a foreman or even a boss without any prick of conscience.

Now here was a girl with grit, but, it was too bad, without the physical strength to do the work he had on his books. So, as kindly as he could speak, he said to the girl, "Isn't there anything you would care to do in the city? Are you really compelled to leave the city? For a minute the girl could not reply, her eyes filled with tears, she tried to swallow the big lump that gathered in her throat. At last, in a broken voice which told the effort she made to speak, she answered with rising passion in her words, "I want to go out of the city. I want to forget this place. I must go away and bury myself."

"Now, now, see here," said the man, "give me your name and address; I'll let you know as soon as anything comes in that will suit you." "My name is Mary Mason. I'm living in a room on ______ Street. But I'm leaving there to-morrow. Indeed I must get something to do at once. Won't you tell me where those jobs are out of town?"

The pitiful way the girl spoke, her white face and tearful eyes, told the man something was troubling the girl. He felt that the girl needed a cheery word and a little sympathy as much as she needed a job, so he said, "Look here, Miss Mason, you're in trouble of some kind, I can see it. I'm only a plain kind of chap, an old bachelor at that, but I know the ways of the world. I know the pitfalls that lie in the path of working girls just as yourself, so if I can help you I will. Treat me as your brother. Now, what's the matter?"

Mary's Trouble

Mary Mason clasped her hands, closed her eyes for a second as if to battle against her nervousness and gain composure. Then she said, bitterly, "I've lost all trust in men, but you do seem a little different from some of those who have crossed my path. I do not know whether you can help me. I do not think so. I shall tell you my story only that you may know why I must get work at once. If I do not get something to do at once I know I shall feel like doing something desperate to myself."

"Now, surely," said the man, kindly and in a soothing tone, "surely things are not as bad as all that. Come round here and sit down and then you can tell me all about your trouble."

Mary walked to the chair the man placed for her. She threw herself wearily into it. Clasping and unclasping her hands, with eyes cast down, and in words which came from trembling lips, she told her new friend her sorry story.
She was a domestic servant, alone in Canada. She had worked as a general servant for a family who had lived in one of the best sections of the city. Her mistress was one of those good housewives who make hard taskmasters. She was an exacting kind of woman who made a servant feel she was a servant. Kind words were few, and kind acts were even fewer. She made Mary feel she was only a tool to perform work in that household.

The master, a business man, was one of the average type who was attracted by a pretty face. So from passing the time of day with her, he began to speak in friendly terms. Then he fell to commenting upon her attractive ways. As time went on his manner grew more and more friendly towards her. Sometimes his friendliness was shown by a pat on the cheek; sometimes he bought her a trifling present.

At first his kindness appealed to her. She had no friends; she seldom went out to cultivate acquaintances. So more and more she was thrown back to shelter in the warmth of her master’s assumed friendship and sympathy.

Then came that terrible moment when she had been unable to resist his power over her, when he had broken through her power of resistance with his soft words and gentle voice, and she had succumbed to his passion. He promised her his protection. He sealed her lips by making her promise not to tell his wife because Mary had his love. He, her master, protected himself at her expense.

As the months passed on and her baby was about to arrive, and at the time when she needed more sympathy than at any time in her life, she received instead indifference. Her master’s kindness turned to brutality. He ceased to speak to her, treated her as a stranger. Her mistress learned of her plight, gave her long lectures on the awfulness of her immoral conduct, and then, when she went into the hospital to have her baby, wiped her hands of her completely.

Out of her small wages she had paid all the expenses connected with her confinement. Her baby had been placed in a home. This was why she must find work, not for herself alone, but for her baby.

As poor Mary told her story, her listener bit his lips and clenched his hands. When she was through, he swore under his breath. Aloud he said, “The dirty cur! The miserable coward! The despicable rogue!” Then, as if a thought has suddenly struck him, he said, “Would you be prepared to repeat this story to a lawyer?”

“Why,” said the girl, “what good will it do?” “This,” said the man, “that this man who did his best to ruin you shall pay for his pleasure.” “Will you do this?” asked the man again. “If you will, I know a lawyer chap who is a decent kind of fellow, we’ll let him handle your master; we’ll show the devil that he cannot ruin a girl, leave her stranded, and all for nothing.”

Taking it for granted that Mary had given her consent, the man put on his coat and hat, and saying “Come” to the girl, they both made for the door. The man locked the door. He took the girl to a building a couple of blocks away. Fortunately his lawyer acquaintance was in.
The girl repeated her story for the benefit of the lawyer, her new friend encouraging her with kindly words when she faltered. "And your master never gave you a cent to help you through the trouble he brought upon you?" asked the lawyer. "No, not a cent," said Mary. "Well, we'll make him pay. I know the type of man; he'll pay rather than be exposed. This type is cowardly. Such as he want to appear good, faithful husbands to their wives, loving fathers to their children, and respectable to everyone, but are ready to victimize any pretty girl who crosses their path. I pity the domestic servants in the homes of such men."

There and then he prepared a statement which Mary signed. He sent the statement and a letter demanding a sum of money which would tide Mary over for a little while.

When Mary and the man left the lawyer's office, Mary turned to her companion, and holding out her hand said, "Friend, thank you. You do not know it, but you have been my saviour to-day. I went to your office this morning with my mind in a state of despair. When you said you had no work I could do my only thought was suicide. Tell me, please, why you have taken such an interest in me; I'm a perfect stranger to you."

"All right, Mary, I'll tell you this as we walk back to the office." They walked slowly along the street. The man, with a touch of bitterness in his words, told her how all his experiences with the life of the workers make him hate the conditions that made life so wretched for them. He hated the class society of to-day. He despised the rich who took advantage of their position to beat the workers down and down. He detested those wealthy skunks that took advantage of the poverty and loneliness of working girls, using them for their passion and pleasure, then casting them on one side as soon as that passion had subsided. He told how he despised the women of the class of the idle rich; he hated their sham, their inhumanity. I have thrown in my lot with the working class. I am fighting the masters who despise the workers, and I helped you because you are a member of the working class. You have been up against it. But you are worth while. You had courage. This is what all the workers want. Not so much the courage of forbearance as the courage to struggle against those who oppress them."

After this little speech Mary knew that this man was different from any other that she had met. He was a real man. Not one of the kind that was to be met with even in her own ranks. He did not do a kindness and expect some sort of personal favor in return. This man did a kind turn for a fellow-being and member of the class of workers because he had a special mission in life; that mission was to help the workers save themselves.

Then Mary had to listen to a little bit of advice from this friend. This man advised Mary not to go back to service. He told her that girls met more temptations in service than they did in the factories. "It is true," said he, "factory conditions of labor are bad enough, but at least numbers give some form of
protection to a working girl. Servants are unprotected. The shelter of a good home is so much bunkum. More servant girls are betrayed by their masters or masters' sons than any other class of working girl."

When he held out his hand to her to say "good-bye," Mary could not help saying, "Friend, you are a real man. What a wonderful world this would be if there were more like you."

A New Outlook

A few days later Mary received a letter from the lawyer who had become interested in her case. As she unfolded the letter she saw a cheque between the folds. The letter informed her that her former master had acknowledged his responsibility and had sent a cheque for the amount named by the lawyer.

That day it was a very different Mary who entered the office of the Private Employment Agency. This Mary had come to thank the man who had befriended her and to tell him how much she owed to his interest in her case.

After a little friendly talk, the man said in parting, "Mary, girl, remember, virgins do not give birth to saviours these days to be worshipped by generations to come. These are days when girls must guard their virginhood, must be their own saviours, must be on the watch against the trickery of wealth, or else pay the price. And, remember, Mary, too, why I took an interest in you, you belong to the only useful class and the best people, for as uncouth and unpolished as most of our class are, they are the people who make life possible." With a shake of the hand the man bent his head over his task at the desk, and the girl closed the door and walked out into the street.

"This man is a new kind of saviour, and his advice is new, but I will heed it, because I have learned by experience it is true."

PROSTITUTES


Why should I starve while other dine
And breath of man is fire?
Why shouldn't I live on their wealth
As price of their desire?
My body yields—is sold for gold;
My soul is free—is mine,
Is clean and strong and seeks alone
The truth you call divine.
The truth you never learn. I live
An outcast, and your hate
Is sanctioned by the holy Church
And paid for by the State.
Your preachers preach a lie for gain,
Your statesmen war for loot,
But only I in all the world
Am called a prostitute.

—A Reader.

THE GREATER THE EVIL, THE HARDER WE FIGHT

[Editorial]
September 1927, pp. 3-4.

BECAUSE prostitution is vile—people fear to talk about it.
Because it makes people shudder—they close their eyes to it. But because it concerns the working class and the daughters of the working class in particular—we must not only face the evil—but we must fight it.

Some of the horrors of organized prostitution, known as the White Slave Traffic, are mentioned in an article in this issue of The Woman Worker. "The Trade," as it is commonly called, is but the organized side of the evil. The unorganized side, that which we know exists in our midst, at our very doors, is just as hideous.

The reports given at Geneva, before the League of Nations, gives no room for saying that "only a bad girl becomes a prostitute." Rather, it shows that prostitutes are first of all made, after that they become "bad."

Because prostitutes are made we should be concerned with the conditions and the agencies that make them. These we ought to fight with all our might and main.

Not only must a war be waged against "bogus agencies," but every other agency must be fought that prevents working-class girls living moral lives, lives they wish for themselves.

And among these agencies we must include those immigration agents who entice girls to new countries for the sake of commission for themselves and with no thought of the outcome for the immigrant girls. We must include employers who do not pay their working girls a maintenance wage. We must include those who would deny the right of healthful pleasure to working girls. We must include those who would keep the whole of the working class in the gutter. All these are the promoters of prostitution, and all these must be fought.

We dare to be bolder than the League of Nations. We are not afraid to publish the names of the countries guilty of wholesale prostitution in their midst. IT EXISTS IN EVERY CAPITALIST COUNTRY. Canada is not to
be excepted. Reports exist showing the conditions which prevailed, up to quite recently, in the Port of Montreal. We have only to read the newspapers, and every day the evil is proclaimed.

War is horrid, beastly—but it has at least a show of glory.
Prostitution is hideous, vile—it is absolutely sordid.
The uglier the evil the greater energy must we put into the fight.
The organized labor movement must take a hand in the struggle.
Working women must wake up to the horrors, not merely shudder, but must buckle on their armour for the fray.
And working girls must organize to get higher wages for a surer maintenance. They must fight this indignity to their sex and to their class.
Words will not avail to fight the evil. Action is necessary.

**HOW THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DEALS WITH THE WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC**

September 1927, pp. 9-10.

“A THRILL OF HORROR runs through the correspondents at Geneva at the revelations in the report of the League of Nations’ Commission on the White Slave Traffic, news of which lately began to filter through the press.”

So commences an article in The Literary Digest, May 14th, 1927, issue. The report is described by one correspondent, H.J. Greenwall, as “one of the most terrible indictments against humanity ever compiled.”

From the article we obtain the following facts:
That this international trade in women for immoral sex purposes is permitted by the governments of some countries.
That four classes of persons profit from the trade, while the victim receives ill treatment, virtual slavery, and in the end a dishonored grave in an alien land.
That the extent of this vicious trade was disclosed when investigators interviewed 5,000 persons interested in the commercial side of the vice.
That the victims are gathered by the white slavers from the cabarets of European countries.
That the movement of tourists is followed. For instance: women are sent into Egypt and Northern Africa during the winter months for the benefit of tourists, and then sent elsewhere for the summer.
The report discloses the misery of the victims. The following are but two examples:
A troupe of fifteen girls, all under age, were taken by a German woman to dance in an Athens cabaret. Seven of them were sent home in a “pitiable condition” to relate how they were forced into vice to save themselves from starvation.
Another troupe of four girls was sent to Buenos Aires, and was there stranded. One committed suicide, another attempted suicide, a third disappeared, and a fourth accepted the situation forced on her.

The methods used to ensnare these unwary victims are said to be bogus matrimonial agencies, and bogus employment agencies. It is shown that white slave procurers, who pose as theatrical agents, have offices in Belgrade, Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest, Marseilles, Paris, Vienne and Zagreb. Portugal is cited as one of the worst countries in respect to the traffic. There the girls given over to commercialized vice range in age from sixteen to twenty.

It is claimed that licensed commercialized vice is the chief cause of the white slave traffic. The supply of the necessary victims is kept up by importation.

Some of the victims know why they are being imported; others do not. Few fully understand the conditions before them. In foreign lands, friendless, ignorant of the laws and of the language, they are practically defenceless.

As to the remedy of the evil, the report asks the governments to exercise more care in permitting girls under a certain age to accept employment abroad. Also the governments are reminded that it is their duty to see that places of entertainment to which foreign entertainers are brought are properly conducted.

A British newspaper, the London Times, being moved by the horrors of the report, goes a little further. It urges the League of Nations to "pursue the destruction of this traffic to the end, and not to conceal the names of those countries which countenance the evil, including those which, although signatories to the international conventions for its suppression, have not acted up to their obligations."

And this is all that is suggested to wipe out this horrible evil. This is all the League of Nations has to offer.

Knowing the League of Nations to be but a League of Masters, and we say this despite the good intentions of some of those who associate with it, we know that to suggest more than it did would be too dangerous for it.

Were the case not so serious we could laugh at such puny remedies. The remedy of the League of Nations is as if it asked a cub lion to kill its mother.

Had the League dared to strike at the root of the evil it would have been compelled to strike at the foundation of the present social system, the capitalist system which stands on the rock of slavery—wage-slavery. The capitalist system exists on the profit it wrings from the labor of workers, and everything that is, is valued in terms of profit; not a thing exists but is a thing of trade. From this condition springs all the social evils of to-day.

The "white slave traffic," with its hideous purpose, prostitution, is the trade in the flesh of women for the satisfaction of bestial sexual appetites. But this trade produces "profit" unearned wealth, for four classes of persons, therefore the trade is moral. And where does the trade begin? We see
the profiteers looking at each other and challenging each other to throw "the first stone." Not one among them dares, for fear of the consequences, the loss of profit unto themselves.

So the great "tragedy," the sale of women's flesh, will go on until the day the workers wake up and dare to destroy the whole profit system.

**AS MR. CALVERTON SEES NEW RUSSIA'S MORALS**

[Editorial]

November 1927, p. 6.

[...]

**The Campaign Against Prostitution**

"The same attitude has prevailed in regard to every economic and social problem that confronts the Soviet Republic. Let us take a social evil as malignant as prostitution and observe how it is handled. Every one who knows European civilization realizes how serious and grave is the problem of prostitution. It is impossible to evade it. It glares at you on every side. Every country is festered with it, and Soviet Russia is certainly not immune. Those who come back from the U.S.S.R. with the optimistic report that prostitution has been destroyed one must condemn as either blind or sentimental.

Prostitution does remain, but it is no longer official. In fact, prostitution under the Soviets has been rendered illegal. But the decree does not make it cease. It is true, one must remember, that prostitution was once a profession in old Russia. Brothels were licensed, opened with ceremonies by the police, and blessed by the Church. This evil thus had a sanction which it has now entirely lost.

"A constant propaganda is carried on all over the U.S.S.R. against prostitution. Every means of meeting the masses in this matter is utilized, from the printed sheet to the movie. In a photoplay, entitled 'The Prostitute,' for example, the whole career of the courtesan is portrayed, with a direct attempt to show the dangerous consequences of her life for both herself and those who frequent her haunts.

One of the most direct ways that has been employed to combat this evil has been the organization of homes for unemployed house-working girls. ... The problem has been discussed in detail in many papers and in the edition of Working Paper of Jan. 25, 1927, a resolution was submitted to the Moscow Soviet to the effect that single working women should not be laid off and then prostitution will decrease. It has now been decided that single women must be "laid off" last. In other words, the moment prostitution is suspected from any one or a multitude of causes, an immediate method is applied to destroy it. ... As a result of these methods, prostitution is on the decline, and one of the best statistical proofs of this fact is that the percentage of infection from prostitutes is far below that of the pre-war period.
MOTHERS MUST TEACH THEIR GIRLS

November 1927, p. 16.

The Woman Worker.

Dear Editor,

I am not good at making speeches, but I feel I want to express myself concerning the case of the Picton minister and the orphan girl he betrayed.

It seems to me that we have been too long the victims of mock modesty on questions pertaining to sex and life. I consider it is about time that mothers knew how and what to tell their daughters on this subject. While this knowledge may not wipe out many of the evils that beset the path of girls to-day, yet knowledge will make them more wary when confronted with difficult situations.

It is about time the church woke up, not only to preach against the "white slave traffic" but to clear some of the traffickers out of its own ranks. There is something more to be done than paying such persons to tell us to be good. Presently this man will be able to roam the world where no one will know him, and folks will think he is all right. The girl, on the other hand, will be shunned, and the finger of scorn will be pointed to her all her life.

While I know it will be difficult for many mothers to educate her child, yet I think this education will have to be done at home. I think this because I am afraid much goes on in our schools that some of us in the days gone by would blush about.

I was an orphan and had to fight my way through life alone. I know something of the conditions which face working girls. Education is the means to fight vice. So let every mother consider this and feel it her duty to instruct her children.

Wishing the Woman Worker every success,

Mrs. A. Trenchard.

GENEVA WHITEWASHES WHITE SLAVE TRADING

[Editorial]

December 1927, pp. 2-3.

WHEN the experts' report on the investigation into the White Slave Traffic was completed the name of one expert was missing, Dr. Pauline Luisi, of Uruguay, had refused to sign the report as important evidence had been suppressed.

Dr. Pauline Luisi has rendered a great social service to the world by her courageous act. White slave international rings and threatening governments did not put fear into her. She knew outrageous things took place in her
own country and was not afraid to say so. She refused to help whitewash a most despicable and contemptible trade—the trade in the bodies of young women and girls for bestial appetites.

There is no doubt that conditions revealed in the report of expert investigators were such that governments were so thoroughly ashamed that some denied the truth of the reports, while others demanded their suppression.

We are not surprised that governments want to suppress these facts, they are as deep in the mud as the traders are in the mire, they cannot be blind as to what goes on in their respective countries. They know quite well that the poverty-stricken countries of Europe are sending armies of young girls over to wealthy America and to sub-tropical health resorts for no other reason than to satisfy the cravings of the idle rich and their hangers-on.

It has been admitted that Canada is not without sin, but claims the sin is at a minimum. It is claimed that the trade is confined to seasonal visits of women from the U.S. We know, of course, that this is nonsense. The evil is an every-day evil and right in our midst. The seasonal migrations do occur. When are these seasonal migrations? Do these occur when big conventions are held in Canada? Are exhibitions and race seasons the attractions? We have in mind an advertisement that appeared in a Montreal paper some time ago just before a big convention was to be held in that city that “attractive girls were wanted to act as companions”—the number was definitely stated.

We are of the opinion that Canada, too, has been whitewashed.

And this is our wonderful civilization! What price glory for the defence of womanhood!

THE TRUTH WILL OUT

February 1928, p. 8.

A few weeks ago in the city of London, England, a woman was being tried for “soliciting,” that is, for being a prostitute. In Canada, by the way, we are not so frank in our language, we call this “vagrancy.” After the police had given evidence the magistrate made the following remarkable statement. Addressing the police, he said, “If I were you I don’t think I would press the charges against women like the prisoner, because prostitution is inevitable under this system, and if we drive these women off the streets we will only drive this thing into the home, where dreadful results will follow.”

How’s that for truth? Here we have a man who occupies a public position admitting that women must sell their bodies in order to live under this system.

Then why persecute these women? Why send them to jail when they are the victims of a social system? How are they worse than women who are
looked upon as social superiors merely because they went through a ceremony that legalizes the act, when even they sold themselves for an easier time or for title or social position? Who is worse, she who hides what she really is or she who defies convention and shows the world that she is the victim of a vicious social system?

This makes one wonder what is going to become of the crowds of young women who are being brought to this country as immigrants? I know women who have been out of work four months. Women who employ domestic servants are becoming more exacting in their demands and more stingy with the wages.

There is one thing that can be done to help make our demands for a living wage for women and protection when unemployed by paying unemployment insurance, and this is for women to join the Women's Labor League.

Some people are bound to say when we talk unemployment insurance, "Oh, you mean the dole." That, of course, is only a name given unemployment insurance in order to appeal to the empty pride of the people who don't understand that more people of the so-called upper class are getting a dole than they would ever dream of, but with this difference, the upper classes never did anything in their lives which entitled them to "their dole," that is, they never worked to earn it.

Now, women, it rests with you, are we going to get justice for the women of the working class or are we going to let them cry in vain for help when we know how to help remedy the evil? Join the Women's Labor League and speed the day.

Elizabeth.

A VICTIM OF VICE

[Editorial]
April 1928, p. 4.

THERE comes to us the story of a young girl who was violated—and, by a perfectly respectable, law-abiding citizen. The case is even worse than that of the orphan girl of Picton, Ontario, who was the victim of a minister of the gospel.

The man in this case is reputed to be a Justice of the Peace. In his position, as upholder of the law, he should have been aware of the content of the law in connection with his brand of crime.

The girl in the case is a Ukrainian girl living in Western Canada. This girl, because of the poverty of her father, who, by the way, is a dirt farmer, was forced to go into service at the age of fourteen. The master of the house in which she became a servant, without any regard for her age, fourteen years;
without any regard for her ignorance of the facts of life; without any regard for the fact that the girl was away from her protectors (her parent)—violated this girl, and continued this until, at the age of sixteen, the girl had a child. Her employer sent her to an hospital. When her father asked where his daughter was, the employer informed him that his daughter was at the hospital being treated for appendicitis.

It was only after the girl returned to her father's home that the story of the treatment she received at the hands of her employer leaked out.

The residents of the district were up in arms about the case. Their feeling ran so high that they called a meeting to discuss action. They took the case to the court. But, as was expected, the Court exonerated the man. It is claimed by those interested in this case that the Judge was a personal friend of the accused.

And now, the girl, the daughter of a poor farmer, a Ukrainian immigrant, is left to bear the burden of this man's vice.

Surely this is a case for the Labor Defense League, since "protection of the foreign-born" is one of its objectives. And this, because the girl, as a domestic servant, has no union to help her obtain protection and aid.

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**IMMIGRANT DOMESTICS THE VICTIMS OF THE WHITE SLAVE AGENTS**

[Editorial]

December 1928, p. 2.

WE are not surprised at the charges made by Abbe Casgrain, Chaplain attached to the Immigration Service at Quebec. The Abbe just recently made the startling charge that "immigrant girls from Europe frequently failed to report at their destination after their arrival in Canada, disappearing completely in some cases."

The charge has made the government demand a report from Abbe Casgrain, and the Chaplain is preparing one.

At every port white slave agents are to be found at their job. Women and men alike ply their trade among new arrivals, who are nearly always young and pretty girls. By means of promises of assistance and the like these girls are decoyed, only to be used in cabarets, dance halls, and houses of ill-repute to satisfy lust.

The white-slaver is to be detested. But not the white-slaver alone. Abbe Casgrain gives his opinion on the matter and condemns the present system of immigration, inasmuch as it is left largely to the railway companies.

But what do railway companies care about the fate of young girls of the working class so long as they get passage money?
We are compelled to ask, "What are all the various religious, charitable, and fraternal organizations doing?" "Is it possible that they are all in the swim, and care more about the Almighty Dollar than the lives and security of young working girls? From reports we receive from time to time we know that every immigrant girl who comes to this country, even under the auspices and protection of an organization such as the Young Women's Christian Association, has to pay her way or she finds herself alone.

Let us watch for Abbe Casgrain's report. We must demand Protection for immigrant girls.