Marriage, the Family, and Domestic Labour

If discussions about prostitution tended to stress sex as a potential danger to women, discussions of marriage in the *Woman Worker* at least hinted at the possibility of altering heterosexual and marital relationships to women's benefit. Though the paper tended to stress an economic analysis of the marriage relationship, it also recognized that marriage and family relations were fraught with difficulty and stress under capitalism, and that these familial relations reflected and reproduced women's subordination. If there was hope for more egalitarian and loving relations between husbands and wives, and for happier children and families, it would emerge, it was suggested, after a major social and economic transformation—much like the one in Soviet Russia.

Communists in the 1920s relied heavily on Frederick Engels' classic book, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, to explain women's subordination in the family. Engels in turn had drawn on the late 19th century findings of anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose studies included the history of Iroquois peoples. In a series of articles entitled "The Story of Our Family" Custance presented this position, arguing that the advent of private property had transformed familial ties. Monogamous marriage emerged to ensure the ready identification of legitimate heirs to property, and women lost their equality with men and were expected to trade their former independence in more "primitive" societies for a glorified motherhood role. Excerpts from this series are reproduced as an example of the Women's Labor Leagues' theoretical basis for thinking on the marriage question, and also to indicate the extent to which Custance considered an intellectual education in Marxist thought essential to the socialist movement.
Although the WLLs, like the Communist Party, were critical of existing marital relations, most would not have endorsed the view of one male contributor who, in September 1927, rejected outright the modern family as "legalized prostitution," a mere "convenience" for the working class, and a "weapon in the hands of the masters." According to this view, working-class wives and mothers became the unwitting collaborators of capitalists by making the "wage slave" existence of husbands and sons more comfortable and by exerting a conservative political influence on their families. Although the Woman Worker sometimes shared the view that women were more conservative than men, WLLers argued that women would be radicalized and new family relationships would develop when women participated fully in wage work and the labour movement.

Certainly, women correspondents were fully aware that all was not well with marriage and family relations. On the one hand, articles like "Cruelty to Women" and "An Interesting Court Decision" indicate their aversion to the assumptions of male superiority and authority in the family, embedded in the legal and social system. They also worried about their children, particularly the way in which class status prevented their full access to education, steered them into early wage labour and cut short the experience of childhood. For young women, this also made the prospect of marriage an economic necessity—as for the women in the story "Something is Wrong Somewhere"—and one that might well become simply joyless drudgery.

The Woman Worker, like the Communist Party in the 1920s, displayed some tolerance for alternative marriage patterns. Indeed, in private, Communists sometimes eschewed marriage as a restrictive, bourgeois institution, attempting to establish freer love and sexual partnerships. Finnish WLL locals passed resolutions calling for the institution of civil marriage, indicating their objection to the imposition of Christian marriage on individuals, and one woman wrote to the paper urging the League women to publicly defend the right of Finnish socialists to live common law. (As the Hollinger Mine Disaster revealed all too tragically, however, Finnish common law wives were left with no legal rights as widows.) A fictionalized story, reprinted in the paper, also defended a woman's decision to live common law with her new found "pal" after escaping from an intolerable marriage. Social conventions accepting only legal marriages, argued the author, could be hypocritical and destructive; instead, women and men should seek equal, loving, companionate relationships. Companionate marriages—based on friendship, closeness and sexual fulfilment—were increasingly the ideal promoted in wider society at this time. But as Janet Inman, a Labour Party mem-
ber from Hamilton wrote in her submission, such ideals might be difficult to attain within a capitalist society. If the editor and contributors were open to considering alternative heterosexual relationships, nowhere in the Woman Worker was there any indication of such tolerance for same-sex love relationships. The paper’s silence on the lives and rights of these couples revealed the writers’ own heterosexual ideals of family life.

The experience of post-revolutionary Russia was continually hailed as confirmation of the potential transformation of the working-class family. While WLLers did not claim that Soviet family life was perfect, they focused their attention on the positive changes taking place, particularly legal and social reforms, leaving the remaining problems unexamined. It is significant that so many articles on the “new” family in the Soviet Union were reprinted, stressing things such as socialized domestic labour and communal kitchens, legal reforms undoing patriarchal authority, challenges to the stigma of illegitimacy, and the new “candor” about sex. This vision of a transformed family life clearly appealed to women readers of the paper.

Communists were aware that these reforms were very radical by the standards of the day. They also knew that the mainstream press was anxious to portray the wholesale destruction of the family in the USSR, and the “nationalization of wives” by the “wicked Bolshies.” The Woman Worker, though, was arguing quite the opposite about post-revolutionary Russia. In Russia, the Leagues contended, marriage no longer entailed “economic slavery” for women as they were free to marry for love rather than for economic security as was the case in Canada and other capitalist nations. Moreover, the fact that female workers, married or not, were welcomed into the public sphere had far reaching positive implications for the family. Legal reforms protected women and children within the family, ensuring, for instance, that fathers could not escape child support duties.

Women correspondents to the Woman Worker clearly hoped that marital relationships, freed from economic stresses, would become loving and equal partnerships, and women the “intelligent companions” rather than the “sweeties” noted in the chapter on women and wage work. Many of the fictional pieces celebrate the devotion and unity of long-term, heterosexual, monogamous relationships. Contributors did acknowledge women’s oppression within the family, but saw this primarily as a consequence of the economic relations between classes. Absent from the analysis was a thorough-going critique of the gender conflict and inequality in the family which were rooted both in material and ideological patterns of family life. For instance, the darker side of family life, such as domestic violence, was
largely sidestepped by the editor of the paper. But blatant realities sometimes intervened, forcing her to comment. Women’s frustration with power inequalities within the working-class family did occasionally surface, especially in some fiction and in letters to the editor. In reply, Custance’s editorials warned against blaming the working-class husband for sexual tensions and inequality when its root causes were to be found at capitalism’s door.

The WLL also remained committed to the idea that domestic labour and children’s needs were fundamentally the province of women. Their notion of marriage and gender roles betrayed an assumption that women were responsible for care of the home—cooking, cleaning, managing the family finances, overseeing the emotional life of the family and raising children. As a result, many editorials appealed to women on the basis of their daily domestic duties.

Because the Party put most emphasis on getting women into social production, they never welcomed a thorough-going analysis of domestic labour, both the way in which it sustained capitalism, and the notion that it was women’s work. This had both positive and negative consequences for women’s political activities and status in the Party. On the one hand, the Woman Worker provided an invaluable role, giving public significance to women’s domestic labour and describing, with sharp realism, the lives of housewives in mining towns, the difficulties in balancing the family budget, the importance of housewives’ daily work to family survival. There was also considerable stress put on providing political education for housewives, and the necessity of organizing them into Labor Leagues or union auxiliaries which might promote the union label, lobby to keep food prices down or press school boards to end militaristic education of children (see “Peace and War” chapter). In the daily activities reports in the Woman Worker many local WLLs, comprised primarily of housewives, concentrated on this kind of political activity which recognized the need to draw women into socialism based on their daily, lived experiences of work (see the chapter, “The Local Women’s Labor Leagues at Work”). This was a theme which persisted not only within the Communist Party, but within the Left generally for decades to come.

In the last resort, though, the unexamined assumption that domestic labour was women’s work meant that women remained more isolated from the centres of political decision making, which put more emphasis on organizing wage earners in the ‘socially productive’ sector of the economy. It also contributed to an ideal image of the family, shared by the mainstream, conservative union move-
merit, that a male breadwinner was the ideal, making women temporary, secondary workers. A more thorough-going critique of women's responsibility for domestic work would await a much later socialist and feminist movement.

Further Readings:
- Ruth Frager, “Politicized Housewives in the Jewish Communist Movement of Toronto, 1923-33,” in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, eds., *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).
THE STAGES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANKIND

We are very fond of calling ourselves “civilized.” This is more often than not said to distinguish us from others we desire to belittle. We are apt to think this name places us in the position of being “cultured.”

But civilization has a deeper meaning, and is connected with a development upon which culture itself depends.

When tracing the stages of the development and progress of mankind, Lewis Morgan gives three main stages which are again divided into sub-stages, according to the degree of progress along the line of invention and discovery. These three main stages are: Savagery, Barbarism and Civilization.

THE GENS

The earliest groupings of mankind are known as gentes. The single gens was a group of human beings whose bond was that of blood relationship. This bond was very strong. It held the individuals as a unit—and an injury to one was an injury to all.

No doubt, fear, and the need of protection, also had some bearing on the unity of the gens.

It is to Lewis Morgan, to whom we have already referred, that we owe much for the insight he has given us of the life of our tribal forefathers. Lewis Morgan spent a number of years with the Iroquois Indians. He lived their life, studied their customs, rooted out the origin of those customs, and has shown us that we, too, are playing our tiny part in that long, long process of Social Evolution.

MARRIAGE—THE EARLIEST INSTITUTION

As far as can be ascertained, the first act of restriction placed by human beings upon themselves was that in relation to the sexes. In the very early gens, marriage or sex relationship, was unrestricted; that is, no regard was paid to blood relationship or age. The first restriction placed on sexual intercourse was that in connection with age. This restriction disallowed marriage outside the generation. For example, let us say, the fourth genera-
tion great grand children would be entitled to marry among themselves, the third likewise, the second and so on.

This was an important step, as it forbid marriage between mother and son, father and daughter, etc. To-day, we look askance when we see age mated to youth, and the relationship of parents to children is simply that of guardians.

The next restriction was that of prohibition of marriage between brother and sister. To avoid this it was necessary for marriage to extend outside the individual unit called the gens. Therefore, this next marriage custom extended the range of blood relations, because men of one gens were the husbands of the women of another gens.

The forms of marriage just described are called “Group Marriage Forms.” The forms known as Polygamy and Polyandry might be called transition stages, the latter means a marriage condition where a woman has more than one husband, and the former a marriage condition which allowed a man to have more than one wife.

The group marriage existed for the most part as a custom among the savage tribes: The barbaric tribes developed to the point of recognizing the “pairing family.” This important development was the forerunner of the present marriage form—monogamy.

THE Matriarch

The period of the group marriage forms known as the Matriarch. This is called so because the ancestry of children was traced through the mother. This does not prevail to-day. To-day ancestry is traced through the father.

THE Part Played by Discoveries

We must of necessity again refer to the method of food producing and the discoveries of our primitive forefathers, for it is through these we get our answer.

It has been shown already that the struggle for life was very hard for our early ancestors. Their struggle was the struggle against “Nature.” This struggle kept them together in their tribal units. Each member of the tribe was but a part of the whole, all were equal, all shared alike in times of plenty, all suffered alike in times of scarcity. In their wars against tribal foes, all would fight to the bitter death. In some cases whole tribes would be wiped out.

The division of labor was a sex division, the men were hunters, the women were the home builders.

We have seen that the discovery of fire, the domestication of animals, and the cultivation of food plants did away with the fear of insecurity which was forever facing the early hunters. But these discoveries brought in their train new needs. Fire gave courage to the early hunters so that they moved about to seek new hunting grounds. Flocks and herds required food, so the pas-
toral tribes were kept continually on the move for new pastures. But, later, agriculture compelled a more permanent abode or settled habitation. It was under this latter condition that more rapid progress began to take place.

So, as the tribes became possessed of more wealth (cattle and all that could be obtained through cattle) new methods of living developed.

In this development women played little part. Their duties were confined to the communal home and the needs of the big communal family. There was no way for them to acquire possessions in their own right. Women's occupations were now looked upon as inferior and dependent on what the men obtained. This outlook prevails to-day so far as the work of the women of the homes is concerned.

**TRIBAL WEALTH INCREASES**

Unlike the primitive hunting tribes who always killed their enemy tribesmen, the pastoral tribes preserved the lives of their foes, but put them to work. They were slaves and became a new form of wealth for their captors. This condition brought its difficulties into tribal life.

It will be readily understood that our primitive forefathers, the hunters, had little beyond the barest necessities of life. A man might possess his own bow and arrow, but at his death this would be buried with him, as it was thought he might need his weapon in the happy hunting ground to which he had gone, but which those left behind could not see.

At a later stage, the personal possessions a man acquired were inherited by the tribe, that is, it passed to the tribe to which he belonged, to that of his brothers and sisters, and not to that he belonged to by marriage. His children did not receive any benefit from his personal wealth, this was because they belonged to their mother's tribe.

**PRIVATE PROPERTY MAKES ITSELF FELT**

Gradually the desire of a man who had wealth, that this wealth should be the inheritance of his own children, and not the possession of his nephews, gained ground. But in order that this could be possible another requirement was necessary, and this was, that a new marriage condition must be imposed upon women. The liberty of the group marriage tie must be denied her. Her purpose now must be to raise children for a husband to whom she must be bound, in order that these children shall be the heirs to his property.

From that period of time until to-day this has been at the root of the marriage bond between man and woman. All law relating to private property has been based upon this. The monogamous family (mono—single, gamous—marriage), the family of to-day, was founded on male supremacy, and was for the purpose of having children of indisputable paternal lineage.
The monogamous marriage became a bond of slavery to the woman. To compensate her for her loss of individual freedom, her function of motherhood became glorified. She was urged to have children as numerous as the sands on the sea shore. And if these were sons she was one of the blest. The barren woman was soon cast on one side.

The marriage restriction forced upon the woman by no means applied to the men. The right to group marriage has remained the right of men. In the early days it was practised very openly. There are many biblical examples of this, the story of Abram, Sara and Hagar is but one. To-day it is practised undercover. It is, for the most part, a special luxury of the rich. According to the law, there can be only one marriage, but actually it is only lack of wealth or disinclination on the part of a man which prevents its greater prevalence. [...]
Nearly everywhere women are struggling against the fetters that chain
them to traditions, and are making a stand for their freedom. The forms of
struggle depend upon their status in society. [...]  

MODERN VALUES STRUGGLE
By A. D. A.


Her home was always spick and span—her three children always looked
as if they had come out of a "bandbox"—and she, herself, was always a pic­
ture of neatness.

She was a marvellous housekeeper, too; she knew how to make a dollar
go as far as some women made two. She could turn an old garment into a
new one. She could remodel an old hat into one the latest fashion. She
could make a delicious meal out of a soup bone. And she was an artist, for [s]he
knew just how to set a chair to make it inviting to a visitor, and how to place
a few ornaments and pictures so that the effect was beautifully home-like.
Yes, indeed, this little woman was economical, practical and artistic, a com­
bination seldom found wrapped up in a single person.

All this is the more wonderful when one learns that she had always been a
victim of poverty. Poverty dogged her, no matter what she did or how she
strived. Her childhood days were joyless, loveless days. Her mother died
when she was a mere baby, and she was thrust into the factory at an early
age. And as a poor little victim of Child Labor she labored for a shilling a
week in the factories of that dreadful Chain-making, Black Country District
of Old England.

Perhaps it was her childhood experiences that developed her hatred of
poverty and a form of society that caused that poverty, and created a thirst
for beauty, affection and love, as well as made her the practical and me­
thodical wife and mother of later years.

As is usual in cases where a girl has no home love, she married when she
was barely twenty. Soon after the birth of her first baby she and her husband
decided that they would leave the misery of the Black Country and go to
Canada, thinking that her ambitions would be satisfied in a country which
was praised by the papers and call the "Land of Promise."

But a stranger in a strange land is lost, and immigrants who are assisted
have to take what they can get without a murmur. So she and her husband
found themselves on a farm as the general help, she to help the farmer's
wife, and her husband to help the farmer in the fields. A new and strange ex­
perience, but all experiences teach their lessons.
After the term of farm slavery was over they came into the city to live. Then another baby came along, and then a third. As her family increased, so did her misfortunes. Her husband was often out of work, as his trade was not a flourishing one in Canada. During these times her husband mixed with bad companions and got into difficulties, and her mind was always in a turmoil and full of fear. In addition to this she was compelled to carry the burden of being the bread winner. Early morning she could be seen hurrying to her work, which was to slave in the homes of the wealthy. After her work in these homes she would slave until bedtime in her own home. And this was her life year in and year out until her children reached the age of youth.

There were times when she upbraided her husband for his indifference to his duties and responsibilities. For it seemed to her that as long as she supplied the food, kept the roof above their heads, and stitched her fingers sore making clothes for the family, that he was quite content. His indifference would not have been so bad had he helped her in the house, but even here he took his ease and left things to her.

So battling and fighting her way through all her difficulties this little woman raised her family. And bright, healthy children they were. They were her pride. No one will ever know of all the sacrifices she made to keep them to school, to give them a little pleasure, and to have them looking as well as the children whose fathers brought home good wages to their mothers. She looked upon this as her duty, and besides, she had always vowed that if she ever had children they should never know what suffering was like, that is the suffering she had experienced in her childhood days. How she planned! How she pinched and screwed! But always the thought was with her that her children would repay her when they grew older and she was worn out; they would love her always for her care of them and her sacrifices for them.

But she had reckoned without her host. Her care and sacrifice, her devotion and love, fell on barren soil. This she did not detect all the time her children were under her wing and she was their authority. It was when they started out into the world of work that she discovered this. Demands, always demands, they made upon her. They looked upon her now in the light of a servant, to cook for them, to sew for them, to wait upon them hand and foot. They even begrudged giving her money for their board, and it often happened that she was compelled to go out to work to keep up with their demands.

Is it any wonder that when she saw through the selfishness of her family that she rebelled? But even this rebellion did not come before she found herself worn out, her health broken, and with one foot in the grave.

Then she told her husband that he could not depend upon her labor any more, that he must support himself henceforth. She told her children they must start to depend upon their own efforts and not look to her for everything. This brought the climax. She discovered that all her sacrifice had
been in vain. Her husband left home; he got work, but instead of sending her money he wrote her letters which cut her to the heart, letters of revenge, letters of spite. Her children, unwilling to share poverty with her, one after the other found excuses for leaving home. At last she was left alone.

Perplexities

Words cannot describe the anguish this little woman suffered. She cried, yes, cried bitter tears. Anguish gnawed at her very heart, the pain almost suffocated her. For days during this terrible period she was prostrated. But hers was not the spirit to give up without a battle, even with herself. She realized that to live she must exert herself. But what should she do?

There was one or the other of two things she could do. Should it be to send for her husband and her children and tell them that all she had said to them she would take back, she would work hard for them, give them all her energy as she had before? Or, should she leave them to their own resources to fend for themselves, while she would look after herself and be free, unhampered, to live peacefully without the hundreds of burdens, and the constant "I want this" and "I want that" of her children?

She pondered long over this perplexity. She dreaded the uncertainty of the future, and she revolted against the old slavery. At last she determined that even the uncertainty of the future might hold some hope of happiness in store for her, while a return to the old state of affairs would certainly put her in her grave.

Having thus decided she had to start about the business of getting rid of her home, and looking for something to do, for her purse was empty. For several days she scanned the newspapers looking for work. At last she struck an advertisement that caught her fancy.

"A woman wanted to assist on farm. Small family. (Somewhere in the heart of the Prairies.)"

She applied for the position. In doing so she was able to state that she had had some experience on a farm, so her farm experience now stood her in good stead. She got the position. Then she left the city for this new experience, hoping to gain peace of mind, recovery of her health, but happiness was too much to expect.

The New Experience

And what a place was that farm house in the heart of the Prairies! It was rough, poorly built, and everything in it had been neglected. She discovered that the family was made up of a middle-aged farmer, his wife, and son. The farmer was a man who had taken up a government section; he had come from England and was totally unable to cope with the difficulties of Western Canada farming. His wife laid claim to being an invalid, this explained the condition of the home. The son, a man nearly thirty years old, had shoul-
dered the entire burden. Everything was left to him, and everything that went wrong was a crime laid at his door.

Well, things did not look very cheery for our little woman. She found out that it was the son who had advertised for help. The neglected home was more than he could stand. He warned her what to expect from his parents. And she soon found out that he was the only person worth while in the farm household. Always were the father and mother of the man yearning to return to the Homeland; always did their conversation turn to the thing of their desire; never did they consider their son.

And so months passed. The little woman worked wonders on that farm. As she recovered her health, she brought new life into the humdrum existence of the farm household.

And as is to be expected, the two lonely human beings, each the victims of others' selfishness, found pleasure in each other's company. They often exchanged confidences. They talked of their adversities. A deep comradeship developed. And this friendship became sweet to the woman who had never had genuine words of cheer, much less of affection. Life now seemed more bearable.

Just as she was becoming used to this experience, and accustomed to the conditions of farm life, and hoping that she could make good out of the small wages paid her, a great calamity happened. The farmer and his wife decided they would return to England. They also decided that they would get rid of the farm; their son would have the first offer to buy.

Hopes again dashed to the ground. Again a change—why was there no peace for her?

A Way Out

The Pals, as they called themselves, discussed the new situation. Yes, every phase of it was discussed, particularly as it affected themselves and their newly-found comradeship.

So far as the world was concerned they were alone. Those who should have been their nearest and dearest had new interests, and were living in an environment that, seemingly, gave them more pleasure. The bonds that bind parents to children, and children to parents, were flimsy and fragile threads in these mercenary days. They were only wanted so long as they could be used. Truly, they were the victims of this selfish age of individualism. The only thing that counted was appearance. And so-called respectability covered a multitude of sins. Everything to-day was veneered. People were hypocrites. Only rarely were the true and real discovered.

So they argued, why should they sacrifice happiness and their comradeship for the sake of appearances? Why wait for the time when people would place new and better values on human relationship? This paradise would not be in their day. Now mercenary motives were at the root of marriage.
The relationship of child to parent, and parent to child, and human beings to each other were valued in dollars and cents. A hateful condition, but a condition which made every one its victim.

The Pals decided to remain together, to make their own happiness, despite the world and the wag of tongues. They decided that to themselves they would have true values, the values of friendship, comradeship, love, born out of a mutual appreciation of each other. And in this, the god, Money, and all that could be got through the worship of this god, should have no part.

So, somewhere in the Prairies, two persons are working out their own destinies. Shall slaves of convention blame them? Perhaps, who knows, the Pals may be the pioneers of a new conception of Human Values.

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CRUELTY TO WOMEN

[Editorial]

January 1927, pp. 2-3.

THE TORONTO GLOBE calls the attention of women to the fact that there is an old law on the statute books of Ontario of 1790 which permits a husband to go to any length in the treatment of his wife. The Globe advises women's organizations to work for repeal of this law.

Most women know already that before they can get a divorce from their husbands for adultery and desertion, that danger to life, limb and health must be proofs of their husbands' cruelty. On the other hand, a man has only to prove adultery on the part of his wife in order to get legal freedom.

The Globe further states that "although the relations of husbands and wives have changed in many respects since 1790, the law relating to cruelty has not changed." While the Globe makes this statement it does not give the reason for the change that has come about in spite of the law. But we can.

The reason for this change of relations between husband and wife is due to the fact that a certain means of independence has come to women. By this is meant they can go out into the world of work and earn their own living; they are not so entirely dependent upon their husbands. This independence has been in itself a protection against physical cruelty as well as a recognition of sex equality.

But this new condition has brought women in contact with a new relationship, that of being employed by an employer, and they have now to face a new form of cruelty, this is the cruelty of those who exploit their labor. This new condition places them on an equal footing with the men of their class. And this condition will make a new relationship develop, that of comradeship in the struggle against the greed of an employing class.
While women will continue to struggle against all sex inequalities, they will not let themselves be blinded. They will not struggle against men because of old traditions only, but will struggle with their husbands and sons against the common enemy of both, their masters, who rob them of the fruits of their toil.

AN INTERESTING COURT DECISION

February 1927, p. 5.

Property or No Property—Woman is Inferior

That a man is the legal and responsible head of the family, despite the fact that his wife is the property owner, is shown in a recent decision made by Judge Tytler, Toronto. The decision was made in the case of school taxes. Religion, as we know, is the means by which responsibility is placed for the maintenance of the public schools and the separate schools. In placing the responsibility the taxpayer or tenant is always asked, "What religion are you?" One must be either a Protestant or a Roman Catholic. If one ventures to mention any other form of thought other than religious, the assessors look at that person as if he or she had dropped from Mars.

However, in this particular case the religions of husband and wife differed. The wife—the property owner—was a Roman Catholic, the husband—only a tenant—was a Protestant.

The judge ruled that the school taxes on property owned by a Roman Catholic wife of a Protestant husband go to the public school.

It was claimed that this decision did not favor one side more than the other so far as religion was concerned, since another case might be the opposite, a Protestant wife of a Roman Catholic husband.

It is clear that this decision was made in the light of the legal understanding of what constitutes a family to-day and upon whom the law fastens responsibility. The father is still the head of the household, the mother merely bearer of children.

SOLVING THE MARRIAGE PROBLEM

A Review

February 1927, pp. 10-11.

When the land of the Soviets has been placed under a cloud over the marriage question, when the women in this land are supposed to be nationalized, it will be a revelation to those who believe these unfounded
accusations when they read what actually has taken place in this land of the New Freedom in connection with the human institution known as marriage.

G.G.L. Alexander, of Moscow, an authority on this subject, supplies this information. She writes the splendid article which is the subject of our review. In this article she not only deals with the actual fact of marriage in Soviet Russia, but also compares the Soviet conception of marriage with the conception of marriage of the German intellectuals, which is also the general conception outside Soviet Russia.

Intellect That is Afraid of the Natural and True

The attitude of the writer towards the German intellectuals is one of ridicule. This is because they place marriage outside the sphere of SOCIAL LIFE. These German writers use any expression other than "social." They write of marriage as "An ethical and cosmic problem," "marriage as a work of art," "Marriage as fulfilment and sacrament." They never attempt to place marriage where it naturally belongs, nor do they treat it as question of life and progeny (offspring) and of personal happiness.

To do this would be to bring marriage within the scope of natural life and this would be to show mankind that they are part of the fulfilment of natural law. This, unfortunately, would reduce the EGO, or the great I Am of man, to the sphere of the animal kingdom.

This would, no doubt, hurt the intellectual feelings of the great intellects, who prefer to talk about marriage as "Modern Man's Affliction"—something that must be put up with—because it is LIFE'S TRAGEDY.

The writer deals with the German intellect, Keyserling, in particular. She claims that he only endeavors to make the risks and misery of "marriage of to-day" palatable by declaring that "tragedy is a part of human life which must be accepted and marriage the ground on which it can be fulfilled."

Keyserling's statement makes Alexander retort: "Marriage in the true sense is first of all community which fulfils its 'tragic' meaning. Neither cabbage nor cow knows anything about tragedy. But on the other hand, everyone knows, even the most primitive being, that it is only at the 'tragic' stage that marriage begins to fulfil its meaning."

Another writer who is criticized is Jacob Wasserman. This writer, speaking through his novels, shows up the abyss of misery and torment, crime and degeneration of marriage. Every case with which he deals is the marriage of the middle class and well-to-do. The marriage of the working class is never considered. In giving advice through his writings, he claims, writes Alexander, that "the individual is no longer important to the whole." To him it is the couple which is important and that for every man there is but one opportunity to find his affinity—thus—search and you will find.
To sum up the whole conception of marriage as intellectuals would have us regard it would be that marriage to them is a "Thing of the Spirit," something "Eternal," something outside the ability of man to rectify or amend.

(To be continued).

SOLVING THE MARRIAGE PROBLEM
A Review (Continued)

March 1927, pp. 15-16 and back cover.

The Natural, Therefore, the True

In Soviet Russia, writes Alexander, where everything depends upon unmasking the false and presenting the true, marriage is not treated with levity, as the world at large is led to believe, but instead the marriage question is looked upon as an important social question of the first order, especially by women themselves.

The marriage question is handled in the same logical way, as are all other questions. The first contention in connection with the question is that the first need of a healthier state of affairs is a change in the social structure of society. This change has taken place in Soviet Russia, hence the changes that can be made in the relationship of individuals.

It is contended, too, that apart from the social side, the marriage problem in Soviet Russia remains and will remain the individual problem, and this will be so even when the most favorable social conditions will have been created.

But it must not be forgotten, and this is an extremely important fact, fully recognized in word and deed in Soviet Russia, that Society has to bear the responsibility for the coming generation.

Alexander states "That it is just the treatment of the new aspects of the marriage question in Soviet Russia which has been discussed with so much zest during the last few months, has shown that the new Soviet laws are not rigid forms. They are constantly regulated by the development of the life of the young state, which brings all the time new result and new tasks to the fore, and are continually altered in accordance with newly arising requirements and necessities. This attitude is explained by the fact that Soviet legislation does not recognize marriage to be an 'eternal problem' but as a question which is capable of being solved by society organized on a new basis."

In this solution of the marriage question one factor plays a great part; this is, that marriage in Soviet Russia no longer provides a means for material advantage to women, and neither are women brought into economic slavery through marriage.
Marriage and motherhood no longer bar a woman from participation in any form of work she desires to do. Far-reaching laws for the protection of mother and child, together with women's equality with men, make wives so independent of their husbands as cannot possibly be the case in any other country. Not the dead letter of the law, but the newly established institutions, speak the new forms of life under which marriage ceases to play the role of women's only refuge.

The development which shows the tendency towards communal responsibility are communal eating in co-operative or municipal dining halls, communal upbringing and education of children in homes, children's settlements, club life, the Pioneer Movement, etc. On the other hand we see in capitalist countries that the marriage question and problems are at the same time family and property questions.

A Protection Before Unknown

The main question raised during the big discussions on marriage in Soviet Russia was that of legal obligation with respect to unregistered marriages, which, according to the new draft laws, are to be considered marriages in fact with respect to the legal position of the wife and children.

It is interesting to note that the question of payment of alimony for the child born out of wedlock has been newly regulated in such a manner as to show that Soviet legislation supports the principle that the weaker or weakest party stands most in need of protection, a fact which has already made men complain that women have more rights than they.

Men no Longer Privileged Sex

According to the law of 1918, the father had to pay one-third of his income for the child born out of wedlock. Whoever was claimed by the woman as the father had to pay. If, in order to deny his fatherhood, the man brought forward one or more friends who also declared themselves to be the father of the child, each one of them had to pay. Naturally, this practice soon disappeared of its own accord when it was discovered that no advantage was to be gained by it. For no longer is this Czarist Russia, or a capitalist state, where no one had to pay as soon as fatherhood became doubtful.

And as it was found that harm would accrue to the child if it could be said that it had several fathers, it was decreed in the new law that whoever is designated by the mother as the father must pay. In doubtful cases the party who is in a better economic position is held responsible. If the father is unemployed the first debt he has to settle as soon as he obtains work is the upkeep of the child.

As in cases of divorce, so also here, the court proceedings are short, and every aid is given to the woman and the child as the weaker parties.
In dealing with these questions existing conditions are taken into account. At the All Union Conference of Communal Women Organizers held recently the Conference expressed itself unanimously for the legal protection for unregistered marriages.

Conclusions

The writer concludes her remarkable article with the words “Unhappy wives, unhappy husbands, brutality out of love, unhappy marriages—all are disappearing in the Soviet Union. The martyred figure of the peasant woman who ‘for love’s sake allows herself to be exploited, ill-treated and oppressed,’ is also disappearing, because she has the protection of the Soviet against the brutalities of the husband. Unhappy marriages ordained by the parents into which sons and daughters (especially daughters) are forced because of material consideration, are also disappearing, because the sons and daughters have now the protection of the Soviets against the parents. The selling of daughters and wives in the East is also disappearing, and with it a portion of the middle ages, a source of misery and suffering for thousands of women.”

All of these are already hard facts in Soviet Russia which are confirmed a thousand-fold by the new life, by its new forms of community of interests, which have their own source in an utterly different organization of production.

In the Workers’ State the solution of the marriage problems is not attempted by paper decrees, by high-brow reflections, which are utterly helpless in the face of decay within the family of capitalist society. It is accomplished by revolutionizing deeds, by practical construction work of the Soviets, which is cultural and educational, by improving the existing reality and existing facts on the basis of practical experience.

It is this that makes the way in which problems are dealt with in the Workers’ State so different from the way the marriage problem is treated in the rest of the countries of the world.

F.C.

SOMETHING WRONG SOMEWHERE
By Trevor Maguire

March 1927, pp. 6-8.

When the six o’clock whistle blew the girls in the laundry went to the locker room and changed into street clothes. They were too tired to talk much. Since seven in the morning each hour, except lunch time, had been filled with monotonous toil in a stifling atmosphere.
Lizzie Lindsay and her friend, Anna Banks, left the building together. "Well, my dear," said Anna, "I'm darn glad that my days in that dump are about ended."

"What do you mean?" asked Lizzie. "Have you got another job?"

"Not exactly another job, Liz, but I'm going to leave. If you promise not to say a word about it to any of the other girls I'll tell you a secret."

"Alright," agreed Lizzie, "I'll promise."

Slipping her hand beneath her friend's arm Anna said softly: "I'm going to be married two weeks from tonight."

"Married!" Lizzie was very much surprised. "Who to? Tell me all about it."

"To a boy that drives one of the company's trucks."

"How long have you been going together, Anna? You have kept it pretty quiet."

"About three months," said Anna. "And he's just crazy about me. He wasn't anxious to marry me at first, but I saw what he wanted and stood him off, and one night he popped the question, and I said yes."

"Do you love him very much, Anna?"

"Oh, yes, I think I do. I tell you what, Liz," Anna added fiercely, "I'm so darn sick of working I'd do anything to get away from it. What kind of a life have you and I got? Working six days a week and resting up on Sundays! Every day, every week, every month, every year, it's just the same, no matter what kind of a job we have. If we want a new dress we have to half starve ourselves for months to save the price. I'm fed up looking through the papers for sales. I'd like to go into a store for once and buy what I needed without waiting to see if there was a sale on some place. And remember, Liz, you and I are not getting any younger, and I for one want to have a little fun before I get too old. I'm going to have one grand bustup anyway. Sometimes ago I made up my mind I'd marry the first nice boy I met, and if you take my advice you'll do the same. If you are careful and play a good game you can always land them."

"Well, good-bye, dear, I have to hurry home and get ready. Bill and I are going to look for rooms tonight."

When Lizzie reached the small single room she called home she threw her hat on a table, kicked off her shoes, and dropped on the bed. Closing her eyes she thought of what Anna had said.

Lizzie had few girl friends and no intimate boy friends. She was not what is called "a good mixer." She had a speaking acquaintance with some young men, but none of them interested her, and she had refused so often invitations to go dancing and boating that she was no longer asked. At times in the evenings the loneliness of her little room enveloped her like a cloud, and then, unable to shake off the terrible depression, she walked the city streets for hours, walked herself into a condition of physical exhaustion so that on
her return, sleep would come quickly and be sound. On those lonely excursions she unconsciously made mental notes of the young men she noticed, picking out ones she fancied she might like, or even love. The sight of a young couple chattering light-heartedly on their way to some place of amusement was an actual blow to her depressed spirit.

As Lizzie lay now on her bed trying to rest her fatigued body, her mind became unusually restless. Anna was going to be married, had deliberately and cold-bloodedly enticed a young man into marriage so that she might have a little fun, get a kick out of life. He also had to undertake to feed, clothe and shelter Anna for life, and perhaps they would have a family. Was Anna fair in this? Was it fair to burden her lover, whose wages were rather small, and who might be thrown out of employment any time, with such a tremendous responsibility? Lizzie knew some married women working in the laundry who had either to support an unemployed husband or assist him in providing for their children. All those women said they wished they had never got tied up. “If I had only know then what I know now!” they would say. There was something wrong, Lizzie realized; something wrong somewhere, either with people themselves or with their ideas of life and their customs, but the solving of the great problem was beyond her. Marriage might be a relief to a young girl’s loneliness, but how often did it bring happiness?

Feeling another fit of the blues coming on, Lizzie sprang up, dressed and went out. She decided to dissipate to the extent of going to a movie; perhaps the comedy film would brighten her up. But the comedy, instead of being funny, was a piece of ridiculous buffoonery, and failed to amuse. The feature film, however, aroused her to hatred and then self-pity. As the photographs flicked by on the screen Lizzie felt a strong hate for the heroine, not because of her rare beauty, but because she had so much of everything; servants of all kinds, beautiful gowns and jewels, an elaborately furnished home, gorgeous motor cars. This fortunate woman did not have to sweat in a laundry all day, and to cap a life of ease and luxury the woman had added happiness in love; the closing scene showed her and her lover in a close embrace, lip to lip, arms about each other. Why, questioned Lizzie, should some people have so much of everything and others so little? There was something wrong somewhere.

More depressed than when she left it Lizzie returned to her room and went to bed. For hours she lay wide awake. One thought went through her mind again and again: Anna is going to be married. She turned and twisted until, towards dawn, she got up and took asperin tablets to induce sleep.

The next morning, being Sunday, Lizzie slept late, and after making a cup of tea over the gas ring in her room, prepared to make her weekly visit to a married sister, Mrs. Watson, who lived in a distant part of the city. Usually the journey was made on foot, but to-day Lizzie was feeling so fagged out
she took a street car. Before starting out she had applied a little rouge to her cheeks and powdered the dark circles under her eyes.

Mr. Watson was a factory worker with a fairly steady job, for which he devoutly thanked God. He was very religious, going to church Sunday morning and evening, teaching a class in Sunday school in the afternoon, and attending the men's club of the church Wednesday night, and prayer meeting Friday night. He liked to talk to Lizzie about the state of her soul and where she was going to spend eternity, and during the Sunday dinner would tell what the morning text had been, how the preacher had developed it and the lesson to be learned therefrom. After dinner, when he left for Sunday school, he took the two oldest children with him.

When he had gone Mrs. Watson and Lizzie cleared the table and washed and dried the dishes.

"Did you know Anna Banks was going to be married?" Lizzie asked her sister.

"No," replied Mrs. Watson.

"Well, she is, but don't tell anybody, for I promised her to keep it a secret."

"Just think of that!" exclaimed Mrs. Watson. "What on earth does she want to get married for? You young girls don't know when you are well off."

"What did you get married for, then?" asked Lizzie.

"Because I wanted a man, I suppose, but if I could have seen ahead a dozen years I would have died an old maid, believe me. I tell you, Lizzie, marriage is not worth it. Here I am with five children, that came one after the other as fast as they could. I hardly ever get out of this house, and it nearly drives me mad sometimes thinking that I have GOT to be here and get three meals every day; I have GOT to wash and dress the children every morning and undress and put them to bed every night; I have GOT to make the beds and sweep and sew. I can't see any rest ahead until they are grown up, and by that time I'll be so worn out I won't feel like doing anything else, even if I want to."

"You don't intend to have any more, do you?" Lizzie asked.

"Not much," said Mrs. Watson emphatically, "not me! I was a fool to have so many. But Watson says it is God's will, let them come. I asked him if it was God's will to make a human incubator out of me, why didn't He get Watson a job that paid more money so we could bring them up right and give them a good education. We aren't bringing them up—we're dragging them up! And all Watson could say was: 'We mustn't question God's will.' It's me that has the kids, not Watson; it's me that has to slave sixteen hours a day for them, not him. I might just as well be tied to a stone wall with a ball and chain! I tell you, Lizzie, things are not right for we women; there's something wrong somewhere!"
After tea Lizzie went back to her room and at nine o’clock went to bed, wanting to get a good night’ rest, for the next day was work day.

Sleep, however, would not come to her. There was no doubt about it, marriage was not worth while, but what was a young girl to do? Was she to spend her life alone living like a hermit? Over and over her mind insisted that Anna was going to get married soon. It pictured Anna and her husband in intimate scenes, lavishing caresses on each other.

At eleven, in a condition bordering on hysteria, Lizzie rose and dressed carefully, put on her one pair of silk stockings, used lipstick and powder puff recklessly, and then went out.

Walking along the street she met a man who eyed her closely. When she smiled at him he approached, and raising his hat said: “Good-night. Are you walking or going some place?”

“Oh, I am just walking,” Lizzie replied.

“That’s good! So am I! But where do we go from here?”

“Can you suggest a place?”

“Oh, that’s easy, girlie,” he said with a smile. Stepping to the curb he hailed a passing taxi, and after assisting Lizzie in, muttered an address to the driver; got in himself and pulled the door shut with a bang.

A WORKING MAN SPEAKS HIS MIND ABOUT WORKING-CLASS MARRIAGES

September 1927, pp. 12-14.

I read the following article in a paper called The Western Tribune. This paper poses as a conservative, liberal, labor, progressive paper, but is actually a humbug. The article is entitled, “Married Men Ahead in Attaining Wealth.” Now read it.

“Marriage is the best financial investment a man can make, according to a survey just completed in Chicago, an average being struck from 700,000 returns. The survey was made on the tax situation with a view of reaching conclusions on economy and money-saving.

“The survey shows that at 24 years of age, the average husbands have about five per cent. less property, money in bank and taxable wealth than the average bachelor of the same age.

“But when both reach the age of 28, the married man is three per cent. ahead and continues to distance the bachelor each succeeding year. The cost of marriage sets the husbands back a trifle at the start. But when both reach the age of 38, the married man will average, in proportion to numbers, 17 per cent. more taxable wealth than the bachelor, and at 48 he will be 20 per
cent. ahead, despite the expense of larger home, children, heavier wardrobe and living costs.

"The deduction is that the married man works harder and steadier, saves more and is more intensive in developing his business ability."

Taking this from the working-class point of view, we know that the great mass of the workers are not able to save much from the meagre wages they receive. It also shows the role women of the working class are forced to play under capitalism. She is, in many cases, used as a lure to make a better slave of the male slave, or that is what is expected of her.

During the great massacre of 1914-18 she was used to get him to go to war, to slaughter and to be slaughtered.

I have been in the position of seeing hundreds of girls working in departmental stores and factories, girls of fifteen to twenty, getting tired of slaving for such small pay and long hours, and hanging on to the job hoping some guy will come along and marry them. I have even seen a girl of sixteen ask a boy of nineteen, at a place where I was one time working, if he would marry her, as her home life was a misery to her.

But the great number of these girls do not seem to think of the greater slavery and misery of marriage, under a wage slave system, turns out to be in 85 per cent. of cases—the getting up in the early hours of the morning to get what is generally termed "the bread-winners' breakfast," getting the kids off to school, and then, in a great many cases going to work daily themselves, having to come home and do another day's work there, cleaning, mending, washing, etc.

Marriage, as constituted under this capitalist system, is just a convenience for most of the working class, and the last war to end war proves my statement, as any one who takes the trouble will find by looking up the statistics of the quick marriages performed in those days. I could write some very interesting things, and also some very disgusting matter on that subject, especially of England, France and Belgium.

In Canada we have seen workers interested in the Labor Movement who have become holders of property, that is, possessed of a wife (for that is what most of them look upon the woman as) who have dropped right out of the movement, as they did not want to interest their wives in the Labor Movement, for they feared they might lose a little of the interest in them.

Unless both sexes understand their class position beforehand, I consider marriage, as constituted under this wage slave system, a useful weapon in the hands of the masters, as they are the ones who profit by it. First there is the cannon fodder, and slaves, created by the children of such marriage; second, the male slaves are better and more easily satisfied; and third, the male slave can be more easily used to scab in times of lockout and strikes.

Marriage, to-day, for the working class, and for that matter for the other class, is based upon what "gain" we can get out of it. It is not for "comrades-
ship." It seems to me to be just what Madam Kolanti definitely named it, "legalized prostitution."

I recognize that there are some few exceptions to the general rule in spite of the system of capitalism. I am one of those who want a change.

A. Padgham

"AS MR. CALVERTON SEES NEW RUSSIA'S MORALS"
[Excerpt]

[Editorial]

November 1927, pp. 6-7.

[...]  

**Marriage and Divorce Laws**

"Under the Czar marriage had fallen entirely into the hands of the clergy.... Marriage now is entirely a civil function. All the old impediments to marriage—religions, prohibitions and the like, are destroyed. The empty noise about the 'nationalization of women' is nothing more than myth. Instead of the nationalization of women, what is to be found is the emancipation of women. The marital laws of the U.S.S.R. give no right to the man which is not granted to the woman.

"The inequality of sexes which is prevalent throughout the rest of the Western World, the double code of morality, have no existence in Russia of To-day. The laws of nineteenth century England, which reduced woman to a chattel, without the semblance, economic or legal rights, seem the attributes of a barbarous civilization compared with the rights and freedom of the new woman in Soviet Russia.

"The new sex attitude in Soviet Russia is based upon the principle that the matter of sex relationship in itself does not constitute a social problem unless children are involved. Marital relationships between the sexes are regulated by registration, the same as in any other country. It is in divorce that the U.S.S.R. deviates from the Western standard. The first consideration in the case of divorce is that of the children. This is the social side of the problem. If there are no children divorce is singularly simple. If two people find their marital life marred by incompatibility of temperament and reaction, they can get a divorce on that ground.
HOW THE WICKED BOLSHIES NATIONALIZE THEIR WOMEN

January 1928, pp. 10-11.

Gee, how I shuddered when I used to read that women were nationalized in the Land where the Bolshies live!

I must admit I was not altogether sure what was meant by this. But the newspapers gave me the impression that when women walked along the street that men, vicious and ugly looking, simply grabbed them and took them off somewhere and used them as they liked. Honestly, I thought that nationalization of women meant a terrible, terrible sort of prostitution.

As you may suppose, my fear caused me to read everything I could lay my hands on about the Bolsheviks and the Soviets. And so little by little I found out the truth, for truth will out, you know.

I found out that it was all bunkum about the women being nationalized in a harem sort of way. From what I have read from books and articles written by reliable persons who have been to Soviet Russia, I really should not mind the kind of nationalization they have there.

Only the other day I read an article that was in one of our local papers (it astonished me to find it in a master-class paper) and this article told that Soviet Russia was the only country that has a woman ambassador and women as heads of important state departments, to say nothing of the numbers of women who were members of the local Soviets.

Sure, women are nationalized, but so is everything else. That’s the beauty of the whole thing. Nothing is left out. Everyone and everything is taken care of. The railways are nationalized, they belong to the people. The factories, mills and mines are nationalized; they too, belong to the people. In fact, everything of social value is nationalized, all belong to the people, and mark you, the people are the workers and peasants, or farmers, as we say in Canada.

Now it is easy to see that this nationalization of things means that the people must fit themselves into this nationalization process, and so they, too, have the appearance of being nationalized, and this means not only the women, but the men and children, too, bless you.

And it seems that all this nationalization is done through the workers’ and peasants’ state, that is, the institution of the workers’ and peasants’ government. And as this government is elected by the workers and peasants themselves you will quite understand why those who work receive the benefits.

In other countries the opposite is the case. Were it not a serious matter it would make one laugh, but in other countries, and Canada is one, the work-
ers send their masters or their masters’ representatives, the lawyers, to parliament and put them into power. And what do the masters do when they get there? Why they look after themselves. And the poor, silly workers, have to cry on the outside, “Please give us old age pensions.” “Please give us unemployment insurance.” “Please do not let the soldiers shoot at us when we are on strike.” And “Please say we can strike.”

It is clear to me now that the governments of the masters only wanted to frighten us so that the women would not want to have a government like the one they have in Soviet Russia. Well, one day, I am sure, they will wake up and find they have been fooled. Speed the Day.

A.I.

THE HOLLINGER MINE DISASTER.
The Federation’s Letter to the Timmins League.

March 1928, pp. 6-7.

February 15th, 1928.

TO THE TIMMINS WOMEN’S LABOR LEAGUE

Dear Sisters and Comrades:

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Federation of Women’s Labor Leagues, we extend through you our deepest sympathies to the wives and children of those who were the victims of the Timmins mining disaster. We are filled with sorrow, because of the suffering this terrible disaster has brought to the mining community of Timmins and especially to the Finnish section of that community.

But, dear comrades, mere sympathy is not enough—it is but a feeling that overwhelms for the moment and then passes away. We must recognize the fact that the early days of sorrow which our bereaved sisters and their children will endure will be followed by the stern realities of life—the Struggle to Live.

It is in this connection we desire to bring to your attention the fact that we note already a question has been raised concerning Compensation and the right of our Finnish women comrades to this Compensation because their marriage form is not recognized by Canadian law. We ask your League to take this matter up immediately with the Union representatives in Timmins and ask them to see to it that our Finnish women comrades are not put on one side because of this. They have a right to the full Compensation and must dispute any decision that is made by the authorities which would rob them of that right.
And the future, comrades, is before you, too. All of us have been too indifferent to the chief safety device the workers have, which is UNIONISM. We have not encouraged our husbands to join the Union, or to attend to the business of the Union if they are already members. And yet it is through the Union that working conditions as well as wage rights are demanded. Therefore, it is up to you, at this time, to use all the influence you have to help along Unionism in your district, for as you can see clearly now, it is Unionism and safety for your husbands, or golden profits for Hollinger investors.

We ask you not to hesitate to call upon us for any assistance you may need to help along your work.

We remain, your Sisters and Comrades,

The Executive Committee of the C. F. of W. L. L.
President, Ellen Machin,
Secretary, Florence Custance.

COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE


Ben B. Lindsay, Judge of the Juvenile Court of Denver, originator of the term “Companionate Marriage,” has been much criticized for his ideas and conclusion of companionate marriage, and legalized birth control, as a remedy for the “failures” of youth that have passed before him during his many years in the Juvenile Court.

One of the criticisms has appeared in a recent number of the Outlook—written by Dr. Joseph Collins, of New York, a medical practitioner and author. While we could not agree to all that Dr. Collins has to say, yet it is not without interest. He says in part “his opposition to birth control is because it makes youth selfish, and that in the event of children being born to the “companionate” married that their parents assume the responsibility of caring and providing for them. This could only be done by those that could afford it, and not by the working class.”

This shows us that the remedy of companionate marriage, like all other social service remedies, does not meet the need of the working class.

This is why we need a working-class movement, working-class literature and The Woman Worker, as an educator for working women. But we believe Judge Lindsay had this in mind when he asked for legalized birth control with it.

Dr. Collins, after debating the inconstancy of human nature and how it might be helped, says: “There is one instrument to shape the human race,
enlightenment; it might be called education were not that word used syn-
onymously with learning—when the fundamental principles of biology,
physiology, psychology and sociology are taught in the schools at the ex-
pense of algebra, history and rhetoric. Then race improvement and
individual happiness will gain momentum.” This we agree to, beginning
with sociology; in fact it takes in all the others.

Dr. Hardie, of the Social Hygiene Organization of Toronto, is a great ad-
vocate of early marriages as a stabilizer of youth.

But when Dr. Hardie lectured before a Hamilton audience—on social
hygiene—he did not touch upon the economic side of it. We ask: How can
young men earning $17 dollars per week provide for a future home to
bring his bride to? How could a girl earning but the Ontario minimum
wage of $12.50 per week—without unemployment—without mornings
off in the dull season—provide a full “Hope Chest” no matter how full of
hope her own chest might be? We know it is not sufficient to pay board and
appear as a business girl is expected to, and which is an economic neces-
sity these days.

Judge Lindsay says he is in favor of Al Smith for the Presidency of the
United States, provided the Governor does not let his religion dictate his at-
titude towards marriage and birth control.

Meanwhile, let us march forward to economic liberty—the only way to
solve the working-class youth problem, but also the problems connected
with childhood, middle life and old age.

Janet Inman.

LETTERS WE HAVE RECEIVED

Too Dear at Twenty a Month — So Married

April 1928, p. 16.

Some time ago I met a friend of mine whose wife had died and left him
with three small children and he had to hire a housekeeper to look after
them, paying her $20 a month. I happened to run into him again the other
day and, after the usual greeting, he said, “You know, I’m married again.” I
said I had not heard about it. So he said, “You know I had a housekeeper and
was paying her $20 a month, but I couldn’t afford to keep it up, so we got
married.” Is not this interesting?

A.P.
Mistress Housewife—when you go to shop to buy food and clothing for your family, and tools for your own work, and furnishings for your home, etc., do you give any thought to your purchases beyond their price and their use? Well, if you do not, you should.

We know, as a rule, the average housewife, like the good housewife she is buys the most of the best for the least amount of money. This is good buying.

But how does our good housewife know she is getting value for her money? Well, she has become accustomed to rely on certain goods and these goods are known to her by their trade marks or their labels. These trade marks and labels are manufacturers' signs. These signs are registered with the Government, and by this means they obtain protection for their products. Also, these signs aid the manufacturers in advertising their wares. We all know that attractive advertising takes the product more than half-way to the consumer. This is why so much money is spent on advertising.

But there are labels and labels, as the saying goes. There is another kind of label—for the moment, we admit, a rather uncommon label, but a label that should have a more significant meaning to working women than the trade marks and labels of the manufacturers. This label is THE UNION LABEL. Look on the front cover of THE WOMAN WORKER and you will see a label with the number 35 beside it. This label speaks volumes. It tells us that the place where THE WOMAN WORKER is printed is a FAIR SHOP. This means that the men are paid the UNION RATE OF WAGES and that ALL OTHER CONDITIONS OF LABOR ARE FAVORABLE TO THE UNION.

In the great majority of cases when we buy goods without a union label it will be almost safe to say that these goods were made under sweatshop conditions, that is, by workers working for low wages and, in many cases, in unsanitary surroundings.

Some times manufacturers put on campaigns for HOME INDUSTRY. BUY IN CANADA is their slogan. This is all very well. But when we buy we want to know that the workers are receiving more than work only. We want to know that for that work they are receiving wages that will allow them to live decent lives.

Particularly does this apply to the clothes we wear. When we women buy our hosiery and our underclothing we certainly look for the labels of the
manufacturers, but that is all. Unfortunately not any of these carry the union label. They cannot, because the workers in the textile factories in Canada are not organized. How do we know that the hundreds of girls working in these factories are getting decent wages and working under conditions which will not injure their health? WE DO NOT KNOW, but we can guess THAT ALL IS NOT AS IT SHOULD BE.

So, Mistress Housewife, when you buy husband’s clothing, your children’s clothing, and your own, as well as the other things you need, do not worry so much about the manufacturer’s label—if the UNION LABEL is there the goods are bound to be all right. You will know that the clothing was made in a sanitary shop, by workers working under fair conditions, and at the union rate of wages.

Labels may be small things, but they may have big meanings. THIS IS SO WITH THE UNION LABEL. Demand THE UNION LABEL.

DEMAND WAGES FOR WIVES

February 1927, p. 6.

The Provincial Council of Women (Ontario) visited Premier Ferguson. They presented to him a number of demands. One of the most interesting was that husbands should be compelled to give a portion of their salary or income to their wives as wages for managing the home. They presented a clear case as to the necessity for this.

This demand cannot be applied in the case of working-class housewives. It would be safe to say that the majority of workingmen after receiving their pay envelopes from their bosses, place them in the hands of their wives. The domestic problem of the workingman and his wife is to eke out the wage in food, clothing and shelter. Their struggle is the struggle for bread.

SCHOOL DEMANDS OF THE LABOR PARTY

April 1927, pp. 8-10.

“The Supremacy of Science in the Teaching of Children—The Elimination of All Religious and Semi-Religious Forms and Ceremonies.”

This demand has proven itself to be the most contentious of all the educational demands. As a matter of fact it is merely a demand for the fulfilment of the present Ontario School Act. No special provision is embodied in the Act for the receiving or giving of religious education.
Yet Bible reading, and without question Bible explanations by the teacher, as well as religious ceremonies, form a part of the education of the children of the workers.

The popular opinion on this question is that this is the source of moral training for the children. Without Bible reading our children will grow up rogues, vagabonds, and thieves.

Labor demonstrates its contrary opinion on this point by making the above quoted demand. Labor's stand on the question of morals is that these are born out of the social conditions which prevail. If these conditions are bad, then morals reflect these conditions. We cannot expect figs from thistles.

By merely arguing the point we cannot truly convince. The best way to convince is to give proof, or examples.

A few weeks ago Miss NeTannis Semmens, Field Secretary of the School of Religious Education for Children's Workers, when speaking at a large meeting of mothers in Old St. Andrew's, Toronto, made some interesting statements concerning THE RIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD. The most outstanding, and the most remarkable, because it was made by a Christian worker, was the following: "That, as a result of a national survey, it was found that THE STATUS OF THE CHILDREN IN RUSSIA IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF THE CHILDREN IN GREAT BRITAIN, WHICH, OF COURSE, INCLUDES CANADA."

Now, here we have a woman, a Christian, whose word will not be disputed because of her standing in the Christian world, declare that the standing of the children in Russia is higher than that of the children in Canada. This, to be said of a country where, as is so well known, RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND CEREMONIES are not allowed in the schools.

The speaker may not have realized to what extent she made admission to the contentions of Labor—Not religious teaching, not Bible reading, but knowledge, knowledge of LIFE ITSELF, and the conditions in which that life is placed, form the basis of the teaching in the schools in Soviet Russia.

In our schools much is taught that could very well be left alone, and much that should be learned is carefully kept from the children. No attention is paid to the life of the children, that is, their existence, and why they should safe-guard it. The social outlook on life is foreign to the children. Some may say, "Why do we not allow the children to become members of the Junior Red Cross, sell tags for Hospitals, teach them to be kind to animals?" "Are not all these social in outlook?"

These are merely apologies. They do not touch the fringe of the outlook we have in mind.

The outstanding and appalling of all the ignorances of our children is that in relation to their understanding of Life.
Our whole concern is to teach the child to be a good, docile wage-earner, or, to use the disagreeable but more popular term, wage slave. This is because our society is a society of classes, ordered and governed by the class who exploit the needs of life as well as the worker for the sake of profits.

Such a society thinks only of its own appetite. It cares little about the children of the present, and nothing about the generations of the future.

In place of Bible reading, which Labor claims can very well be left to the churches and other religious institutions, of which there are an abundance, it is required that scientific knowledge shall be imparted to the children. What more important knowledge can be imparted than the knowledge of their own bodies, how and why they function, and the process of life propagation. It is high time we ceased to deceive our children by telling them that they came from a "cabbage bed" or "the stork brought them" or "they came in the doctor's bag." Such "moral lies" show we are ashamed of ourselves, ashamed of our actions, ashamed of natural human processes, ashamed of the truth of Life Itself.

It is not without good reason that people who investigate the educational systems of Soviet Russia are astounded that children are looked upon as young human beings, having their own outlook, with their own rights. In no other country are children treated so. Rather the opposite is the case—they are looked upon as nuisances, little creatures to be tolerated because they are here.

The writer of this article spent five months in Soviet Russia in the year 1922. This stay provided a good opportunity to study the social life of the people of that country under the developing New Social Order. The most interesting study of all, that is to one interested in children and teaching, was the treatment of Child Life and its standing in the new order of things.

A visit to one of the educational institutions will never be forgotten. This particular school was the School of Natural Science. The school house was formerly the summer residence of a very rich man. It was set in spacious grounds. These grounds the children were using for their practical work. The school house itself was under the entire management of the children, the teachers were advisers. The school curriculum was one that should form a part of the education of every child. As a result of this training, all things pertaining to life and necessary for life were known to the children. Their practical work consisted of gardening and looking after pet animals. Life and its propagation was no mystery to these children. They knew its course in plant life, they knew its course in animal life, and they knew it in human life. Quite naturally and frankly one boy, a lad of fourteen, told us about their pet rabbits and their young. In fact, their knowledge of the Mendel theory would put university students to shame.

The education of the children in Soviet Russia is scientific. It is also beautiful because it is so real. Such a scheme of things would be impossible in
our public schools, because it vibrates with freedom and is freed from every form of superstition.

The demand of the Labor Party is not born out of mischievous wickedness, as many of our opponents infer, but is, instead, an attempt to make the best use of the limited years of education granted our children, so that when our children leave school we shall be assured they know something of their life’s tasks and duties other than those connected with obtaining Food, Clothing and Shelter.

F. C.

MONTREAL
League Organizes a Camp for Workers’ Children


The Women’s League in Montreal will have a camp for children this year in one of the most beautiful spots around here, in the Laurentian Mountains.

Of course there are many kinds of camps. Especially are there lots of Charity Camps, and it is painful to see how the children sent to these camps are exploited for patriotic purposes. I happened to be in one of these camps. I spoke to some of the children and they told me they will never go to such a camp again.

But our camp will be altogether different. It will be run differently and the children will learn something of the co-operative side of life, the life that they will sooner or later have to build for themselves. We want them to see something of the communal system and how it differs from the present system of society.

Therefore it should be in the interest of every class conscious worker to send his or her children to the Camp to help the work.

It is also important for every working class woman to join the Labor League Movement, because women will have to learn to struggle with the men to abolish slavery and to fight for a better system in which the working class can enjoy a fuller, better, and more enjoyable life.

B. Shachter, Secretary.

LIFE IN A MINING CAMP IN ALBERTA

November 1927, pp. 10-11.

News of the general disorder in the world comes to the apathetic miners and their wives through the press of the master class. Even this place was a little moved by the horrible murder of the two working-class victims, Sacco
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and Vanzetti, although many who came to the protest meetings heard of the case for the first time. There are some people here who never read the newspapers, so when they heard us talking of Sacco and Vanzetti they wondered why justice could not be shown these men. And what a funny idea they have of justice! They really believe that there is justice for everyone, rich and poor alike.

There is one day when our little town is full of life. This day is pay day. The people hurry and bustle about as if eager to get rid of the few pennies they earn. Much of their earnings is taken to the liquor store. It might be said that the owners of these stores ride around in big cars and they certainly think they are far superior to the miners.

I have often walked the full length of the Main Street, which, despite its shortness, has plenty of business establishments which are totally dependent on the miners. Besides the many business establishments, we have many lodges and societies which try their best to get every penny from the miners. These organizations have many dances, teas, whist drives and the like, in order to drive from the workers' minds all thoughts of their own welfare.

The union men give scarcely any regard to their wives and children. True, last year there was a picnic at which the wives and children of the miners were given ice cream and candy. Our group of women suggested to the union that it should form a woman's auxiliary, although the suggestion was greatly approved, no action has been taken as yet.

But the wives of the miners have changed considerably. They no longer stay at home contentedly to darn, wash and mend while their husbands go out for amusement. They often go to the movies, where they see the finery of the upper class women, which is such a big contrast to their own. So from the movies the women get their pleasure, while the men amuse themselves in the gambling dens and drink shops. It is a sorry thing to tell, but even the class conscious workers do not shun these places; it seems as if they are pleased to be acquainted with drink shop managers.

Here and there on the streets you may see women whose husbands are in the drink shops enjoying the company of drinkers who make a loud noise to show their enjoyment. When the husband seeks other company to that of his wife, the wife does the same thing, and thus we find many homes wrecked.

Not content with robbing the miners of their wages in drink, other forms of pleasure are organized. Just now carnivals are the rage. These are set in an open space, there is a dancing platform and all kinds of games. The men are willing to part with their money for a few hours' pleasure, no matter whether or not the wife will find it difficult to manage with his too small wage. Here we find the workers spending their money for a little but senseless pleasure, while many of the militant workers are in prison suffering confinement because they struggled against wretched conditions. Every spare penny should be spent to help them.
It does seem as if the workers could never arise from their stupor. But our hope is—the youth—the glorious youth. But you may say, how can the youth be glorious in such a life? But we who have some hope for the future should help our youth to understand their task and how they can carry on the work we know must be done for the workers' freedom.

I know this education will not be easy. We shall not receive encouragement from outside forces. It is easy to see the difference given to our teaching and that given, say, for the sake of an example, the Salvation Army. The Army is allowed to stand on the streets every night to preach, but we are not. The government is willing to have every kind of religion supported, but it must suppress every rebellious idea that enters the workers' heads.

It is true we try to agitate in the unions. I have been successful in getting locals of the union to subscribe to some workers' papers, but the members seldom if ever take the papers home to read.

The women, although not as advanced as the men, will not take much educating to have their eyes open. At the present time they are laboring under the old ideas planted through capitalist class education in the schools. But once they are started they will advance in such a manner as to force the men to take action in getting the necessary changes in this little mining camp.

A Miner's Wife.

EDUCATED HOUSEWIVES

December 1927, pp. 5-6.

So the "housewife" is about to be educated. Good! That we are in black need of much knowledge along the many lines is a sad and serious fact.

To be sure we are not entirely ignorant: most of us have taught the three R's, and we've been trained to be respectable and religious, to be patient and patriotic, and above all, to be sober and THRIFTY.

Millions of us have learned these lessons well and faithfully, but somehow the knowledge has little or no cash value. With all our thrift, our patriotism, etc., etc., very few of us are able to secure comfort and safety for our families or even moderate independence for our old age.

Our children have to work in mill or factory, often before they are fully grown, and always before they are fairly educated, and the difficulty of paying the winter's coal bill is hardly settled before the next winter is upon us.

Thus it has been—and so it continues to be.

So if there is any system of education that will explain to us why we should not be discontented with such a state of things, we are willing to listen.
But we can't help feeling that we have the right to be discriminating in our choice of teachers. Unless our education is actually related to our lives as workers we have no time to waste on it. And so, if Mrs. Flora Drummond, who was on this continent recently, or anyone else, wishes for pupils, we must demand certain qualifications—we would ask, for instance, that they first answer a few questions which occur to us at random, but which relate to our more immediate problems.

First: Why, in a rich and almost empty country like Canada, with more than a million people able and eager to work, should there be such a thing as "Hard Times," with unemployment and so much poverty?

Second: Is it even decent that we should parade this poverty by advertising its great increase in the press through FRESH AIR FUNDS in summer, and SANTA CLAUS stuff in winter?

Third: Why should the hardest and most necessary work be always poorly paid—such as the section men on the railroads?

Fourth: Why is it thought quite natural to explain to visitors when taking them through the shabby part of the town, that this is where the "working people" live?

Fifth: Why are workers frequently put in jail or even shot down, as in Colorado to-day, merely because they are insisting on the right to live decently? Does government only exist for the protection of the employer?

And we have hosts of other questions—all of them having to do with our daily lives—so you see we must claim the right to "pick" our teachers. In the meantime, however, quite a few of us are learning a little, directly, through experience, and sometimes, indirectly, after we get through reading the "bargain list" in the paper. Sometimes the description of the bargains calls to our attention the huge quantities of things that are now produced by the marvellous new machinery—the modern miracles.

And who is going to keep us from being discontented—that is, if we are not feeble-minded, when we remember who makes the machines, and who operates them, and when we wonder why life is still so hard for us.

I hate to shock Mrs. Flora Drummond, but I fear I shall when I tell her there are a few housewives, even now, who actually believe that no slaves ever produced so much and got so little as the workers of to-day. And as this belief is apt to turn into not only intelligent but an active discontent, at any moment, we doubt if we need to bother with an outside "teacher" after all. Mrs. Drummond has a tall order on hand to explain the discontent now in England and in trying to cure it.

H. D. P.
WHEN WINTER COMES — BUDGETS ARE NOT FAR AWAY

December 1927, p. 15.

Dear Editor,

Very soon the newspapers will be flooded with “Budgets” compiled by women who never kept house in their lives. Soon they will be telling us what “nourishing soup” can be made from bones. They will also tell us how to gather up cinders and wash the ashes from them and then put them back on the fire again. They will tell us how to repair our old boots and clothes.

Now really, my dear women, if this were not sarcasm it would be laughable, because the working class have been doing these things all their lives.

Last winter, in Toronto, we had a dear sweet lady who tells Bible stories in a Mission House telling us how a man, wife and five children could live on $26 per week. After rent, gas, electric light and clothes had been budgeted, she had to admit there was nothing for candy. Also she forgot sickness, reading matter, fruit, dental treatment, and the rest of those things which are necessary these days. All she thought the working class required was a shelter and the cheapest food.

What about the “rainy day” we hear so much about, and what will happen when some employers tell the breadwinner, “Sorry, but you are too old.”

These budgets are an insult to working women, and we should not heed them. Working women are always compelled to eke out their housekeeping allowance and stretch a dollar to breaking point. Instead of bothering about budgets we should spend more time thinking about organizing. We should organize to demand MEAT in place of BONES!, wages that will enable us to enjoy life as it ought to be enjoyed, and not crawl through the world thankful for the advice of those who have everything worth while. Join the Women’s Labor League—and speed the day.

E. W.

THE STRAP IN TORONTO SCHOOLS

February 1928, pp. 6-7.

During the past few weeks there has been quite a lot of discussion on the merits and the evils of corporal punishment in the schools.

Dr. James L. Hughes, for many years inspector-in-chief of the schools in Toronto, is opposed to corporal punishment. He states as his reason for this that corporal punishment implants fear, and fear has an evil influence on a child’s life; it represses and blights.
Dr. Hughes claims, too, that the home life of a child is reflected by the child's conduct at school. Often this is marked by neglect, that is, it is negative, as expressed in terms of Don't—Quit—Stop. To counteract the use of "the strap" by teachers, he urges that higher salaries should be paid to teachers who get results through kindness.

Much of what Dr. Hughes states is quite true. Often we find that home training or lack of home training and school discipline are at variance. If we inquired into this we should find that parents have too little time to spend with their children. The mother with her household cares finds she cannot spare the time to reason with her children, hence she commands and she threatens in order to obtain obedience. Those few who take the time irrespective of household duties are few and far between. Then, again, it must not be overlooked that many married women go out to work; if these women have children it can be easily seen that these children are a law unto themselves. So we see that behind the home conditions there is the larger thing—the economic condition of the home.

As much as it may be disputed, even by teachers themselves, it can be seen that a certain economic condition has a great bearing on the teacher. The teacher knows that he or she must get results. In this process the child is only an instrument, the results mean "livelihood" to the teacher. The method of obtaining results largely depends on the teacher. Some may be blessed with a forbearing nature, others may not have this, and yet this enters very largely into teaching methods.

Many of the existing difficulties could be overcome if other conditions existed, and among these can be mentioned—smaller classes, better training for the teachers, results based on the general tone of the school instead of so much per teacher, and, above all, perhaps, at this moment, higher salaries all round for teachers, for it must be remembered that the mind and temper of a teacher is affected by the stress of making ends meet.

Working-class mothers must pay more attention to this whole question. It is a much bigger thing than appears on the surface. We have a right to demand the best education for our children, and we want good teachers too. This point we want to press home, because the public schools are the places where our children spend one-half of their waking hours, and the other half bears the stamp of the influence of school training.

It is in the interests of our children that we should support the teachers when they make demands for higher wages and fairer conditions under which to get results. Teachers have many things to contend with of which the average parent has no knowledge. A case in point is that of a Toronto teacher who, on receipt of his pay cheque, found he had been stopped half a day's pay for absence from school when this absence was not his fault, but happened because he had been summoned to a court session as a witness.
The Toronto teachers are not getting a square deal all the way round from the Board of Education. The above-mentioned case is a piece of abominable treatment. It will not be far wrong to state that such an arbitrary act would not have occurred in any other place or country.

There is much to be rectified in the schools—methods of teaching, the kind of subjects taught, etc. Some of this can be done by helping the teachers to understand Labor's point of view on many things. The Women's Labor Leagues can do much to help towards this end.

F.C.