

**Resistance Marxist Library**

**On the  
Emancipation  
of Women**

**V.I Lenin**

*Acknowledgement:* “Methods and Forms of Work Among Communist Party Women”  
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# Introduction

*By Lisa Macdonald*

The persistence of gender inequality in the most advanced capitalist societies, with the most complete bourgeois democracy in which women have full formal equality, has put paid to the idea that women's liberation is possible within the framework of capitalism, even in its "healthiest" periods of expansion. Today, in a period of global capitalist stagnation and crisis, as the "gender gap" widens and women, especially in the Third World, bear the brunt of the capitalist class's neoliberal offensive against the working class as a whole, the correctness of the Marxist analysis of women's oppression as a cornerstone of class society and its revolutionary approach to achieving women's liberation is clearer than ever before.

Since Karl Marx and Frederick Engels first developed their materialist conception of history in the 1840s, Marxism has sought to understand and combat the specific oppression of women. Engels' explanation of the roots of women's oppression in the main institutions of class society — private property and the family — rather than in the realm of the natural or biological, was an enormous advance, laying the foundations for a scientific approach to women's plight which posed, for the first time, liberation as possible.

In his 1884 work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*,<sup>1</sup> Engels identified the source of the oppression of women as their exclusion from social production and the conversion of household tasks into a private service. Both resulted from the replacement of collective production and communal property ownership with private male ownership of the basic means of production during the emergence of class society.

In preclass societies, there was no material basis for exploitative relations between the sexes. Males and females participated in social production, the labour of both sexes being necessary to ensure the survival of the human group as a whole. The social

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status of men and women reflected the indispensable roles that each played.

The change in women's status occurred alongside the growing productivity of human labour as a result of developments in productive technologies, and the private appropriation of the resulting economic surplus. With the possibility for some humans to prosper from the exploitation of the labour of others, women, because of their role in reproduction (both to maintain the existing generation and reproduce the next generation), became valuable property. Like slaves and cattle, they were a source of wealth: they alone could produce new human beings whose labour power could be exploited.

Thus the purchase of women by men, along with all rights to their future offspring, arose as one of the economic and social institutions of the new order based on private property. Women's primary social role was increasingly defined as domestic servant and child-bearer until, with the development of urban centres based on crafts and trade, their independent role in social production was excluded altogether.

The oppression of women was thus institutionalised through the family system. Women's role in production came to be determined by the family to which they belonged, by the man to whom they were subordinate. They were rendered economically dependent. In the words of Engels:

The modern individual family is based on the open or disguised domestic enslavement of the woman; and modern society is a mass composed solely of individual families as its molecules. Today, in the great majority of cases, the man has to be the earner, the breadwinner of the family, at least among the propertied classes, and this gives him a dominating position which requires no special legal privileges. In the family, he is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat.

The class divisions of society — between those who possessed property and those who, owning no property, had to work for others to live — were perpetuated through the legal institution of monogamous marriage, which enabled private property to be passed from one generation to the next. The consolidation of the sexual division of labour in the family also enabled the propertied class to abrogate responsibility for the upkeep of members of society they could not immediately exploit (children, the elderly and sick).

In so far as the family, founded on the oppression of women, arose as an indispensable pillar of class society, it follows that women cannot be liberated without dismantling class society itself. While the development of industrial capitalism created the material conditions that made gender equality possible by incorporating women into waged work and giving them a degree of economic independence from men, and while advanced capitalism granted women full legal rights, women have and will remain the "second sex" for so long as private property, and the economic and social shackles

of the family which prop it up, remain intact. In Engels' words:

The democratic republic does not abolish the antagonism between the two classes; on the contrary, it provides the field on which it is fought out. And, similarly, the peculiar character of man's domination over woman in the modern family, and the necessity, as well as the manner, of establishing real social equality between the two, will be brought out in full relief only when both are completely equal before the law. It will then become evident that the first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry; and that this again demands that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unit of society be abolished.

That is, for gender inequality to be abolished, not only must women be brought fully into production, but private domestic labour must be replaced by socialised services.

With the passage of the means of production into common property, the individual family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of children becomes a public matter.

It was this understanding of the origins of women's oppression, and therefore the path to women's full liberation, that informed the most thoroughgoing and successful program yet implemented for the emancipation of women — in the early years of the Russian Revolution.

## Deconstructing the family

The Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia indicated the potential for the liberation of women that comes from a successful struggle against capitalist rule. The measures enacted by the new Marxist government under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky demonstratively showed that the proletarian revolution meant immediate and substantial steps forward for women.

Between 1917 and 1927, the Soviet government passed a series of laws giving women legal equality with men for the first time. Striking at the heart of women's oppression, the 1918 Code on Marriage, the Family and Guardianship was the most progressive family legislation the world has yet seen. It recognised only civil marriage which, by 1927 was a simple registration process based on mutual consent, and enabled divorce at the request of either partner. In 1926, de facto relationships were given legal equality.

The code abolished illegitimacy and endeavoured to make familial relations independent of the marriage contract. It also abolished adoption as the first step in transferring child-care from the family to the state, and separated property ownership and inheritance from marriage.

All children were entitled to financial support when their parents separated, and

women with children consistently won significant payments through the courts. For single mothers, where individual paternity could not be established, often all the men named by the woman as possible fathers were ordered to pay support.

Abortion was made free and legal at any stage in pregnancy and laws giving the foetus human rights were abolished. Antihomosexual laws were eliminated in 1918. Gender discrimination in hiring and firing workers was forbidden, prostitution was decriminalised and legislation gave women workers special maternity benefits.

Even given this enormous progress, the Bolsheviks understood clearly the limitations of formal gender equality. They recognised that only when the household tasks performed by millions of individual unpaid women are transferred to the public sphere, taken over by paid workers, would women be free to enter the public sphere on an equal basis with men — equally educated, waged and able to pursue their own individual goals and development. Under such circumstances, free union would gradually replace marriage as relationships were constructed and deconstructed unrestrained by the deforming pressure of economic dependency. The family, stripped of its previous social functions, would gradually wither away, leaving in its place fully autonomous, equal individuals living in relationships based on love and mutual respect.

In his 1919 speech “A Great Beginning”, reprinted in this collection, Lenin emphasised the centrality to women’s emancipation of socialising domestic labour:

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a domestic slave, because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real emancipation of women, real communism, will begin only where and when an all out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its wholesale transformation into a large scale socialist economy begins.

### **The limitations of backwardness**

While considerable resources were allocated to establishing public child-care, kitchen and laundry facilities, especially during the period of war communism, the Bolsheviks were acutely aware that the facilities were insufficient and not nearly of high enough quality. Many of the speeches by Lenin and Trotsky reprinted here reflect the Bolsheviks’ frustration at the material limitations on their ability to implement their program for dismantling the family and freeing women.

The catastrophic decline of the productive forces in Russia as a result of the civil war and the imperialist military intervention and economic blockade that followed the revolution had created terrible conditions of scarcity in the country. At the end of the



civil war in 1920, national income was less than one-third of the 1913 figure and industrial production less than one-fifth of the prewar level. And as the civil war ended, Russia's chief agricultural regions were hit by drought; the resulting famine claimed 2 million lives.

At the time of the revolution, the overwhelming bulk of Russia's population were peasants (consequently the family was still the main unit of production); only 30% were literate; and far fewer had the knowledge and skills needed to rebuild an industrial economy. While a certain economic revival began with the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921, the situation in postrevolutionary Russia can only be described, to use Marx's term, as one of "generalised want".

In his chapter "Thermidor in the Family" in *The Revolution Betrayed* (Appendix 7), Trotsky remarked:

Taking the old family by storm proved impossible. This was not for lack of determination, or because the family was so close to people's hearts. On the contrary, after a brief period of mistrust of the state, and of its creches, child-care centres and similar institutions, women workers, and after them forward-looking peasant women as well, realised the immeasurable advantages of socialised child-care, and of the socialisation of the whole family economy. Unfortunately, Soviet society proved too poor, and its cultural level too low, for this goal to be reached. The actual resources of the state did not match the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. The family could not be "abolished"; it had to be replaced. The real liberation of women was unattainable on the basis of "collectivised scarcity".

In her book *Women, the State and Revolution*,<sup>2</sup> Wendy Z. Goldman documents in some detail the huge barriers that the economic underdevelopment of the country presented to implementing the Bolsheviks' program for women's liberation. In every sphere — from divorce and alimony arrangements, to abortion access, to affirmative action in the workplace — the ability of Soviet women to make full use of their new rights was undermined by the inability of the government to rapidly solve the larger social problems of extensive poverty, unemployment and lack of social services.

The limitations imposed by economic underdevelopment were exacerbated by the backward social relations and attitudes that prevailed at the time. Feudal traditions and customs still imbued society, not only in the peasantry but also in significant sections of the unskilled workers who had only recently been drawn into industrial production.

The 1919 program of the Russian Communist Party stated: "The party's task at the present moment is primarily work in the realm of ideas and education so as to destroy utterly all traces of the former inequality and prejudices, particularly among backward

strata of the proletariat and peasantry.” At the centre of this battle against backward ideas about women’s and men’s roles in society was the Bolsheviks’ tireless struggle to involve more women directly in politics. In his speech, reprinted in this collection, “The Tasks of the Working Women’s Movement in the Soviet Republic”, presented to a conference of working women in 1919, Lenin said:

In order to be active in politics under the old, capitalist regime special training was required, so that women played an insignificant part in politics, even in the most advanced and free capitalist countries. Our task is to make politics available to every working woman ... The participation of working women is essential — not only of Party members and politically conscious women, but of the non party women and those who are least politically conscious. ... The work that Soviet power has begun can only make progress when, instead of a few hundreds, millions and millions of women throughout Russia take part in it. We are sure that the cause of socialist development will then become sound.

Despite the massive economic and social difficulties the Bolsheviks confronted after the revolution, the advances for women of the Soviet Union between 1917-1930 were remarkable. Just how remarkable is made clear when the situation of Soviet women in the 1920s is compared to the state of women’s rights in the far more technologically and economically advanced capitalist societies almost a century later — where women in parts of the United States may soon be charged with infanticide for having an abortion, where employed men get rewarded with tax discounts if their wife stays at home full time, where single mothers are being increasingly penalised for not being economically dependent on the fathers of their children, and where almost all public policy extends rather than ameliorates women’s unpaid familial tasks.

Indeed, in the advanced capitalist countries, it was not until the “second wave” of feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s, after the “first wave” had won for western women the basic democratic rights, that many elements of the Bolsheviks’ program for women’s liberation became core demands of the movement.

## **A question of consciousness**

The Bolsheviks did not conceive of and implement such a thoroughgoing program for women’s liberation because they themselves were all or mostly women. In fact, while around 10% of party members in 1917 were women, and while the October revolution mobilised millions more women, the prevailing social conditions, which made participation in politics very difficult for women, meant that the new government was comprised largely of men.

Nor were the advances for women forced out of the Bolsheviks by mass pressure. On

the contrary, to the extent that there was any feminist movement in Russia at the time, it was largely composed of, and led by, bourgeois women, whose demands for rights only for women of property reflected their lack of concern for the conditions of life for the majority of peasant and working-class women. The Bolsheviks therefore had to lead strongly from the front, against both the limits of liberal reformism and the generally backward attitudes on gender relations, not least among the mass of exploited women.

Rather, such progress towards the emancipation of women was made because the Bolshevik revolution was a profoundly conscious revolution led by Marxists who had a thorough understanding of the foundations and character of class oppression in all its forms, and how to dismantle it by mobilising all the oppressed for their own interests.

At the heart of Marxists' singularly consistent championing of women's rights is their understanding that the struggle for women's liberation is central to the struggle for socialism — both before and after the socialist revolution. It is not just that, as Lenin put it, "The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women". It is also that the process of constructing that complete liberty is a thoroughly conscious one and requires the active involvement of the majority of society. Freeing and encouraging women to organise in every sphere against their specific oppression as women provides the best conditions within which they can develop class consciousness and join the struggle to overthrow capitalism and then to build a socialist society.

## **Women & the revolutionary party**

In the course of the many debates and experiments undertaken in carrying out this perspective in the new Soviet Union, the basic elements of a Marxist party's approach to women's liberation work were worked out. Reviewing these reveals that most of the questions we confront today regarding the relationship between a revolutionary party and an independent feminist movement, and its leadership, are not new.

The Bolsheviks' point of departure was that socialist women should be in the socialist party, not organised separately. The Theses on Methods and Forms of Work among Communist Party Women that were adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International in July 1921, and are reprinted in this collection, noted: "All women who fight for the emancipation of woman and the recognition of her rights must have as their aim the creation of a communist society. But communism is also the final aim of the proletariat as a whole and therefore, in the interests of both sides, the two struggles must be fought as 'a single and indivisible struggle'." In this framework, the Bolsheviks campaigned tirelessly to recruit women activists to their organisation

and leadership.

The correctness of this emphasis on integrating women and the struggle for women's liberation fully into the socialist project and therefore the party is revealed most clearly in the consequences of later communist parties' departure from this approach under the influence of the bourgeois feminist movements. In the Communist Party of Australia, for example, but also in many other communist parties, the separate organisation of women members — in women-only party caucuses and committees — resulted in the marginalisation and ghettoisation of both many women activists and “women's issues”.

The Bolsheviks were adamant that the winning of women's emancipation must be the work of the whole party, not just the women in the party. As Lenin constantly pointed out, Marxists' approach to organisational questions must flow from their political analyses, and there is no “women's issue” that is not also of vital importance to the entire revolutionary movement and struggle.

Lenin had to fight for this antiseparatist approach within the Third International. As he told Zetkin:

[The national sections] regard agitation and propaganda among women and the task of rousing and revolutionising them as of secondary importance, as the job of just the women communists. None but the latter are rebuked because the matter does not move ahead more quickly and strongly. This is wrong, fundamentally wrong! It is outright separatism. It is equality of women ... reversed ... In the final analysis, it is an underestimation of women and of their accomplishments.

At the same time as insisting on an antiseparatist approach to party members, the Bolsheviks stressed the need for special sections in all socialist parties to organise women from all social layers into a mass movement, win its leadership and convince women that building socialism is the only path to meeting their special needs. As Lenin noted in a discussion with Zetkin before the third congress of the International (reprinted in this collection in Zetkin's “My Recollections of Lenin”):

The communist women's movement itself must be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movements ... She who is a communist belongs as a member of the party, just as he who is a communist ... However, we must not shut our eyes to the facts. The party must have organs — working groups, commissions, committees, sections or whatever else they may be called — with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact with the party and keeping them under its influence. This naturally requires that we carry out systematic work among the women. We must teach the awakening women, win them over for the proletarian class struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party, and equip them for it. When I

say this I have in mind not only proletarian women, whether they work in mills or cook the family meal. I also have in mind the peasant women and the women of the various sections of the lower middle class. They too are victims of capitalism ... We must have our own groups to work among them, special methods of agitation, and special forms of organisation. This is not bourgeois 'feminism'; it is a practical revolutionary expediency.

To achieve this, the 1921 congress resolution, reaffirmed in 1922, directed every member party to organise "special apparatuses" at every level of their party to: "strengthen the will" of working women by drawing them into all forms and types of struggle; fight the prejudices against women held by the mass of proletarian men and increase the awareness of working men and women that they have common interests; educate women in communist ideas and recruit them to the party; put on the party's agenda questions directly concerning the emancipation of women; and conduct a well planned struggle against the power of tradition, bourgeois customs and religious ideas.

The communist parties were directed to make available whatever resources the departments needed to do this work, which they characterised as "agitation and propaganda through action". This meant:

... above all encouraging working women to self activity, dispelling the doubts they have about their own abilities and drawing them into practical work ... teaching them through experience to know that every action ... directed against the exploitation of capital, is a step towards improving the position of women.

Concretely, this involved ensuring that women were represented in all organisations which strengthened revolutionary activity. It also involved intervening in all public meetings and debates on issues relating to women's oppression; doing house to house agitation to reach unemployed women; having special supplements and regular articles in the party and trade union press on the question; distributing leaflets and pamphlets on women's liberation; and making effective use of all educational institutions in the party.

The Comintern discouraged special courses and schools for women only, but stressed that all general party schools must "... without fail include a course on the methods of work among women" and should be attended by representatives chosen by the women's department.

Of course, these approaches to doing women's liberation work were carried out unevenly by the communist parties, reflecting the unevenness of their Marxist understanding and development. But the leadership of the International always led, striving to educate and convince the member parties through discussion and example. In every case where their orientation was carried out it was proven correct.

## The Stalinist counter-revolution

Tragically, the Russian revolutionaries' vision, program, policies and methods of work for women's liberation were never fully developed; indeed they were substantially reversed under the bureaucratic leadership that had, by the late 1920s, wrested power from the original Bolshevik leadership of the revolution.

Establishing and maintaining working-class political power in a backward, peasant-based economy through the vicissitudes of civil war, foreign intervention and economic blockade exacted a huge toll on the revolutionaries in Soviet Russia. The decimation of this layer and the crushing of postwar revolutionary upsurges in more industrialised countries in Western Europe weakened and demoralised the Soviet working class, and laid the basis for the usurpation of political power by a bureaucratic caste, headed by Joseph Stalin.

While the economic foundations of the new workers' state were not destroyed, a privileged social layer that appropriated for itself many of the benefits of the new economic order grew rapidly in the fertile soil of generalised poverty. To protect and extend its new privileges, the bureaucracy reversed the policies of the Bolsheviks in virtually every sphere and murdered, exiled or imprisoned almost the entire surviving Bolshevik leadership. For women, this political counter-revolution led to a policy of reviving and fortifying the family.

Under Stalin's policies of forced collectivisation and industrialisation, women poured into the labour force and by the end of the first five-year plan, the falling birthrate and growing number of "unsupervised" children provided the ammunition the new bureaucratic leadership needed to move against the idea that the state should assume the functions of the family. Official propaganda began instead to glorify the family system, and measures which bound families together through legal restrictions and economic compulsion were introduced.

In 1936, the year before the principle author of the Bolsheviks' 1918 family code was imprisoned in a mental institution, a new law was drafted and passed with virtually no opportunity for public discussion that made divorce more difficult, increased penalties for non payment of alimony, criminalised abortion, instituted a wide range of pronatalist measures, and recriminalised prostitution and homosexuality.

In 1944, the Family Edict eradicated the last vestiges of the 1926 code, withdrawing recognition of de facto relationships, banning paternity suits and reintroducing the category of illegitimacy.

These legal changes were accompanied by a reneging on the provision of socialised alternatives to domestic labour and a propaganda campaign which simultaneously exhorted women to participate fully in the effort to increase industrial productivity

and appealed to the need for “social stability”, emphasised the importance of individual family responsibility, and lectured on the joys of motherhood and the happiness of the worker-mother.

Trotsky explained the process in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

The triumphal rehabilitation of the family, taking place simultaneously ... with the rehabilitation of the rouble, is caused by the material and cultural bankruptcy of the state. Instead of openly saying, “we have proven still too poor and ignorant for the creation of socialist relations among men, our children and grandchildren will realise this aim”, the leaders are forcing people to glue together again the shell of the broken family, and not only that, but to consider it, under threat of extreme penalties, the sacred nucleus of triumphant socialism. It is hard to measure with the eye the scope of this retreat.

By the 1940s, while Soviet women made up more than half of the waged work force, the cooking, cleaning, child-care, laundry — all aspects of the maintenance and reproduction of labour power — fell almost exclusively on their shoulders. The result was that the overwhelming majority of women became less able to participate in social, economic and political life, let alone on an equal basis with men.

The Stalinist bureaucracy reinforced the family system for the same reasons it is maintained by capitalist society — as a means of inculcating attitudes of submission to authority, perpetuating the division within the working class between man as head of the household and woman as domestic servant, encouraging the attitude of “each family for itself”, and minimising the costs of social service provision. All these outcomes served to reinforce the bureaucracy and maintain its privileges.

In its drive to shore up the family system, the Soviet bureaucracy laid part of the groundwork for the eventual restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union from the 1990s. Having entrenched and extended (rather than whittled away) the bourgeois norms of distribution that are unavoidable in the transition period between capitalism and socialism, the next step for a self-serving bureaucratic elite was to restore bourgeois economic relations and thereby transform themselves into a new capitalist class.

Even given the huge step backward that Stalin’s defeat of the Bolsheviks represented for Soviet women, it was not until the process of restoring capitalism was well under way that the gains women had made as a by-product of the 1917 revolution’s socialisation of production became starkly evident.

UNICEF’s “Women in Transition” report, released in October 1999, surveyed a wide range of social indicators among women and children in 27 former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries. It found that considerably more than half of the 26 million jobs lost to privatisation between 1989 and 1997 were women’s jobs. In Russia alone,

between 1990 and 1995, women lost 7 million jobs while men lost 1 to 2 million. The report shows that the rate of decline in women's employment between 1989-97 was greatest in those countries furthest along the path of capitalist "reform". It also reveals that women's unemployment rate was directly proportional to the number of children they had. With a rapidly rising rate of single motherhood and declining economic security, it is not surprising that maternal and infant mortality rates began to increase and the number of women in prostitution skyrocketed.

## Conclusion

There are enormous lessons to be learnt about the path towards women's liberation from both the positive and negative experiences in Soviet history. The progress achieved by the Bolsheviks, as well as the defeats inflicted on women in terms of their life conditions and choices during the subsequent counter-revolution, demonstrate the absolute correctness of Engels' analysis that because women's oppression is rooted in the family as the basic unit of class society, the liberation of women will require not only their complete re-integration into social production, but also the socialisation of all of the functions of the family.

Having overthrown capitalist property relations, granted women full legal equality, begun the process of socialising domestic labour (albeit with major limitations), and consciously striven to eradicate the backward social attitudes and ideological justifications for women's second-class status, the Bolsheviks' program for women's liberation remains the most radical, thorough and successful yet seen. This collection of writings, which documents the main ideas, debates and experiences in the Bolsheviks' struggle for the emancipation of women, is therefore essential reading for any serious socialist and feminist. ■



# Articles & Speeches by V.I. Lenin

## *From The Development of Capitalism in Russia*<sup>3</sup>

### **VI. Capitalist manufacture & capitalist domestic industry**

Further, capitalist domestic industry inevitably entails extremely insanitary working conditions. The utter poverty of the worker, the utter impossibility of controlling working conditions by regulations of any kind, and the combination of the living and working premises, such are the conditions that convert the dwellings of the home workers into hotbeds of infection and occupational disease. In the large establishments one can fight such things; domestic industry, however, is in this respect the most “liberal” form of capitalist exploitation.

An excessively long working day is also an essential feature of domestic work for the capitalist and of the small industries in general. Instances have been given illustrating the comparative length of the working day in the “factories” and among the “handicraftsmen”.

The drawing of women and of children of the tenderest age into production is nearly always observed in domestic industry. To illustrate this, let us cite some facts from a description of the women’s industries of Moscow Gubernia. There are 10,004 women engaged in cotton winding; children start work at the age of 5 or 6 (!); daily earnings are 10 kopeks, yearly 17 rubles. The working day in the women’s industries in general is as much as 18 hours. In the knitting industry children start work from the age of six, daily earnings are 10 kopeks, yearly 22 rubles. Altogether 37,514 females are employed in the women’s industries; they begin working from the age of 5 or 6 (in 6 out of 19 industries, which 6 industries account for 32,400 female workers); the average

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Written in 1896-99.

daily earnings are 13 kopeks, yearly 26 rubles 20 kopeks.<sup>a</sup>

One of the most pernicious aspects of capitalist domestic industry is that it leads to a reduction in the level of the worker's requirements. The employer is able to recruit workers in remote districts where the popular standard of living is particularly low and where the worker's connection with the land enables him to work for a bare pittance. For example, the owner of a village stocking establishment explains that in Moscow rents are high and that, besides, the knitters "have to be ... supplied with white bread ... whereas here the workers do the job in their own cottages and eat black bread ... Now how can Moscow compete with us!"<sup>b</sup> In the cotton-winding industry the explanation of the very low wages is that for the peasants' wives, daughters, etc., this is merely a supplementary source of income. "Thus, the system prevailing in this trade forces down to the utmost limit the wages of those for whom it is the sole means of livelihood, reduces the wages of those who obtain their livelihood exclusively by factory labour below their minimum needs, or retards the raising of their standard of living. In both cases it creates extremely abnormal conditions."<sup>c</sup> "The factory seeks cheap weavers," says Mr. Kharizomenov, "and it finds them in their native villages, far from the centres of industry ... That wages drop steadily as one moves from the industrial centres to the outer regions is an undoubted fact."<sup>d</sup> Hence, the employers are perfectly well able to take advantage of the conditions which artificially tie the population to the rural districts.

## VII. The development of large-scale machine industry

Large-scale machine industry, which concentrates masses of workers who often come from various parts of the country, absolutely refuses to tolerate survivals of patriarchalism and personal dependence, and is marked by a truly "contemptuous attitude to the past". It is this break with obsolete tradition that is one of the substantial conditions which have created the possibility and evoked the necessity of regulating production and of public control over it. In particular, speaking of the transformation brought about by the factory in the conditions of life of the population, it must be stated that the drawing of women and juveniles into production<sup>a</sup> is, at bottom,

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<sup>a</sup> Mme. Gorbunova, who has described the women's industries, wrongly gives the earnings as 18 kopeks and 37 rubles 77 kopeks respectively, for she takes only the average figures for each industry and leaves out of account the different numbers of women working in the different industries.

<sup>b</sup> *Statistical Returns for Moscow Gubernia*, Vol. VII, Pt. II, p. 104.

<sup>c</sup> *Statistical Returns for Moscow Gubernia*, Vol. VIII, Pt. II, p. 285.

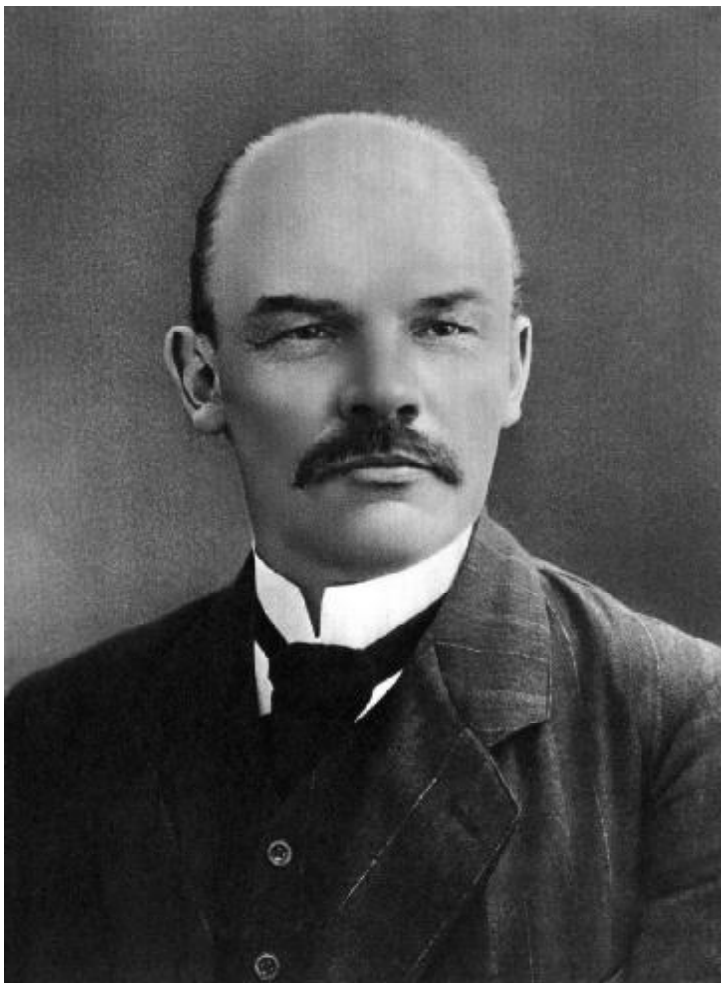
<sup>d</sup> *Industries of Vladimir Gubernia*, III, 63. Cf. *ibid.*, 250.

progressive. It is indisputable that the capitalist factory places these categories of the working population in particularly hard conditions, and that for them it is particularly necessary to regulate and shorten the working day, to guarantee hygienic conditions of labour, etc.; but endeavours completely to ban the work of women and juveniles in industry, or to maintain the patriarchal manner of life that ruled out such work, would be reactionary and utopian. By destroying the patriarchal isolation of these categories of the population who formerly never emerged from the narrow circle of domestic, family relationships, by drawing them into direct participation in social production, large-scale machine industry stimulates their development and increases their independence, in other words, creates conditions of life that are incomparably superior to the patriarchal immobility of precapitalist relations.<sup>b</sup> ■

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<sup>a</sup> According to the *Directory*, the factories of European Russia in 1890 employed a total of 875,764 workers, of whom 210,207 (24%) were women, 17,793 (2%) boys, and 8216 (1%) girls.

<sup>b</sup> “The poor woman-weaver follows her father and husband to the factory and works alongside of them and independently of them. She is as much a breadwinner as the man is.” “In the factory ... the woman is quite an independent producer, apart from her husband.” Literacy spreads among the women factory workers with remarkable rapidity. (*Industries of Vladimir Gubernia*, III, 113, 118, 112 and elsewhere.) Mr. Kharizomenov is perfectly right in drawing the following conclusion: industry has destroyed “the economic dependence of the woman on the family ... and on the husband ... At the factory, the woman is the equal of the man; this is the equality of the proletarian ... The capitalisation of industry is an important factor in the woman’s struggle for her independence in the family.” “Industry creates a new position for the woman in which she is completely independent of her family and husband.” (*Yuridichesky Vestnik*, 1883, No. 12, pp. 582, 596.) In the *Statistical Returns for Moscow Gubernia* (Vol. VII, Pt. 11, Moscow, 1882, pp. 152, 138-39), the investigators compare the position of women engaged in making stockings by hand and by machine. The daily earnings of hand workers is about 8 kopeks, and of machine workers, 14 to 30 kopeks. The working woman’s conditions under machine production are described as follows: “... Before us is a free young woman, hampered by no obstacles, emancipated from the family and from all that constitutes the peasant woman’s conditions of life, a young woman who at any moment may leave one place for another, one employer for another, and may at any moment find herself without a job ... without a crust of bread ... Under hand production, the knitter’s earnings are very meagre, insufficient to cover the cost of her food, earnings only acceptable if she, as a member of an allotment-holding and farming family, enjoys in part the product of that land; under machine production the working woman, in addition to food and tea, gets earnings which enable ... her to live away from the family and to do without the family’s income from the land ... Moreover, the woman worker’s earnings in machine industry, under present conditions, are more secure.”



V.I Lenin (1870-1924)

# *From The Draft Program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party*<sup>4</sup>

[B]

XIII. The tsarist autocracy is the most outstanding of these remnants of the serf-owning system and the most formidable bulwark of all this barbarism. It is the bitterest and most dangerous enemy of the proletarian emancipation movement and the cultural development of the entire people.

[C]

For these reasons<sup>a</sup> the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party advances as its immediate political task the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy and its replacement by a *republic* based on a democratic constitution that would ensure:

1. The people's sovereignty, i.e., concentration of supreme state power in the hands of a legislative assembly consisting of representatives of the people;
2. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage, both in elections to the legislative assembly and in elections to all local organs of self-government, for every citizen who has reached the age of 21; the secret ballot at all elections; the right of every voter to be elected to any of the representative assemblies; remuneration for representatives of the people;
3. Inviolability of the person and domicile of citizens;
4. Unrestricted freedom of conscience, speech, the press and of assembly, the right to strike and to organise unions;
5. Freedom of movement and occupation;
6. Abolition of social-estates; full equality for all citizens, irrespective of sex, religion or race;
7. Recognition of the right to self-determination for all nations forming part of the

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Written in January-February 1902; published in *Iskra* No. 21, June 1, 1902.

<sup>a</sup> The theoretical part (sections A and B) of the draft program was put forward by Lenin (pseudonym *Frey*). The practical part (section C) was put forward by the whole *Iskra* drafting committee. — *Ed.*

state;

8. The right of every citizen to prosecute any official, without previously complaining to the latter's superiors;

9. General arming of the people instead of maintaining a standing army;

10. Separation of the church from the state and of the school from the church;

11. Universal, free, and compulsory education up to the age of 16; state provision of food, clothing, and school supplies to needy children.

[D]

To protect the working class and to raise its fighting capacity,<sup>a</sup> the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands:

1. That the working day be limited to eight hours for all wage-workers;

2. That a weekly rest period of not less than 36 consecutive hours for wage-workers of both sexes employed in all branches of the national economy be established by law;

3. That all overtime be prohibited;

4. That night-work (from 9pm to 5am) in all branches of the national economy be prohibited, with the exception of those branches in which it is essential for technical reasons;

5. That employers be forbidden to employ children under the age of 15;

6. That female labour be forbidden in industries specifically injurious to the health of women;

7. That the law establish employers' civil liability for workers' complete or partial disability caused by accidents or by harmful working conditions; that the worker should not be required to prove his employer's responsibility for disability;

8. That payment of wages in kind be prohibited;<sup>b</sup>

9. That state pensions be paid to aged workers, who have become incapacitated;

10. That the number of factory inspectors be increased; that female inspectors be appointed in industries in which female labour predominates; that observance of the factory laws be supervised by representatives elected by the workers and paid by the state; piece rates and rejection of work done should also be supervised by elected representatives of the workers;

11. That local self-government bodies, in cooperation with elected representatives of the workers, supervise sanitary conditions in living quarters provided for workers

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<sup>a</sup> Frey moved that the beginning of this paragraph be altered to read as follows: "To safeguard the working class from physical and moral degeneration, and also to raise its fighting capacity in the struggle for its emancipation ..."

<sup>b</sup> Frey moved that the following be inserted here (in the same clause): "that the law should establish weekly payment for all workers employed on a contract basis."

by employers, and also see to the observance of rules operating in such living quarters and the terms on which they are leased, with the object of protecting the wage-workers from employers' interference in their lives and activities as private persons and citizens;

12. That a properly organised and comprehensive system of sanitary inspection be instituted to supervise working conditions at all enterprises employing wage-labour;

13. That the Factory Inspectorate's activities be extended to artisan, home, and handicraft industries, and to state-owned enterprises;

14. That any breach of the labour protection laws be punishable by law;

15. That employers be forbidden to make any deductions from wages, on any grounds or for any purpose whatsoever (fines, rejections, etc.);

16. That factory courts<sup>5</sup> be set up in all branches of the national economy, with equal representation of workers and employers. ■

## *From The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart*<sup>6</sup>

The resolution on women's suffrage was also adopted unanimously. Only one Englishwoman from the semibourgeois Fabian Society defended the admissibility of a struggle not for full women's suffrage but for one limited to those possessing property. The congress rejected this unconditionally and declared in favour of women workers campaigning for the franchise, not in conjunction with the bourgeois supporters of women's rights, but in conjunction with the class parties of the proletariat. The congress recognised that in the campaign for women's suffrage it was necessary to uphold fully the principles of socialism and equal rights for men and women without distorting those principles for the sake of expediency.

In this connection an interesting difference of opinion arose in the commission. The Austrians (Viktor Adler, Adelheid Popp) justified their tactics in the struggle for universal manhood suffrage: for the sake of winning this suffrage, they thought it expedient in the campaign not to put the demand for women's suffrage, too, in the foreground. The German social-democrats, and especially Clara Zetkin, had protested against this when the Austrians were campaigning for universal suffrage. Zetkin declared in the press that they should not under any circumstances have neglected the demand for women's suffrage, that the Austrians had opportunistically sacrificed principle to expediency, and that they would not have narrowed the scope of their agitation, but would have widened it and increased the force of the popular movement had they fought for women's suffrage with the same energy. In the commission Zetkin was supported wholeheartedly by another prominent German woman social-democrat, Zietz. Adler's amendment, which indirectly justified the Austrian tactics, was *rejected* by 12 votes to 9 (this amendment stated only that there should be no abatement of the struggle for a suffrage that would really extend to all citizens, instead of stating that the struggle for the suffrage should always include the demand for equal rights for men



and women). The point of view of the commission and of the congress may be most accurately expressed in the following words of the above-mentioned Zietz in her speech at the International Socialist Women's Conference (this conference took place in Stuttgart at the same time as the congress):

“In principle we must demand all that we consider to be correct”, said Zietz, “and only when our strength is inadequate for more, do we accept what we are able to get. That has always been the tactics of social-democracy. The more modest our demands the more modest will the government be in its concessions ...” This controversy between the Austrian and German women social-democrats will enable the reader to see how severely the best Marxists treat the slightest deviation from the principles of consistent revolutionary tactics. ■

## Civilised Europeans & Savage Asians<sup>7</sup>

The well-known English social-democrat, Rothstein, relates in the German labour press an instructive and typical incident that occurred in British India. This incident reveals better than all arguments why the revolution is growing apace in that country with its more than 300 million inhabitants.

Arnold, a British journalist, who brings out a newspaper in Rangoon, a large town (with over 200,000 inhabitants) in one of the Indian provinces, published an article entitled: "A Mockery of British Justice." It exposed a local British judge named Andrew. For publishing this article Arnold was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, but he appealed and, having connections in London, was able to get the case before the highest court in Britain. The government of India hastily "reduced" the sentence to four months and Arnold was released.

What was all the fuss about?

A British colonel named McCormick had a mistress whose servant was an 11-year-old Indian girl, named Aina. This gallant representative of a civilised nation enticed Aina to his room, raped her and locked her up in his house.

It so happened that Aina's father was dying and he sent for his daughter. It was then that the village where he lived learned the whole story. The population seethed with indignation. The police were compelled to order McCormick's arrest.

But Judge Andrew released him on bail, and later acquitted him, following a disgraceful travesty of justice. The gallant colonel declared, as gentlemen of noble extraction usually do under such circumstances, that Aina was a prostitute, in proof of which he brought five witnesses. Eight witnesses, however, brought by Aina's mother were not even examined by Judge Andrew.

When the journalist Arnold was tried for libel, the President of the Court, Sir ("His Worship") Charles Fox, refused to allow him to call witnesses in his defence.

It must be clear to everyone that thousands and millions of such cases occur in India. Only absolutely exceptional circumstances enabled the "libeller" Arnold (the

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son of an influential London journalist) to get out of prison and secure publicity for the case.

Do not forget that the British Liberals put their “best” people at the head of the Indian administration. Not long ago the Viceroy of India, the chief of the McCormicks, Andrews and Foxes, was John Morley, the well-known radical author, a “luminary of European learning”, a “most honourable man” in the eyes of all European and Russian liberals.

The “*European*” spirit has already awakened in Asia, the peoples of Asia have become democratic-minded. ■

## A Great Technical Achievement<sup>8</sup>

The world-famous British chemist, William Ramsay, has discovered a method of obtaining gas directly from a coal seam. Ramsay is already negotiating with a colliery owner on the practical application of this method.

A great modern technical problem is thus approaching solution. The revolution that will be effected by this solution will be a tremendous one.

At the present time, to utilise the energy contained in it, coal is transported all over the country and burned in numerous factories and homes.

Ramsay's discovery means a gigantic technical revolution in this, perhaps the most important, branch of production in capitalist countries.

Ramsay has discovered a method of transforming coal into gas right where the coal lies, without hauling it to the surface. A similar but much simpler method is sometimes used in the mining of salt: it is not brought to the surface directly, but is dissolved in water, the solution being pumped to the top.

Ramsay's method is to transform, as it were, the coal mines into enormous distilling apparatuses for the production of gas. Gas is used to drive gas engines which extract *twice as much* energy from coal as steam engines can. Gas engines, in their turn, transform the energy into electricity, which modern technology can already transmit over enormous distances.

Such a technical revolution would reduce the cost of electricity to *one-fifth* or even *one-tenth* of its present price. An enormous amount of human labour now spent in extracting and distributing coal would be saved. It would be possible to use even the poorest seams, now not being worked. The cost of lighting and heating houses would be greatly reduced.

This discovery will bring about an enormous revolution in industry.

But the consequences this revolution will have for social life as a whole under the present capitalist system will be quite different from those the discovery would yield under socialism.

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Under capitalism the “release” of the labour of millions of miners engaged in extracting coal will inevitably cause mass unemployment, an enormous increase in poverty, and a worsening of the workers’ conditions. And the profits of this great invention will be pocketed by the Morgans, Rockefellers, Ryabushinskys, Morozovs, and their suites of lawyers, directors, professors, and other flunkeys of capital.

Under socialism the application of Ramsay’s method, which will “release” the labour of millions of miners, etc., will make it possible immediately to shorten the working day *for all* from eight hours to, say, seven hours and even less. The “electrification” of all factories and railways will make working conditions more hygienic, will free millions of workers from smoke, dust and dirt, and accelerate the transformation of dirty, repulsive workshops into clean, bright laboratories worthy of human beings. The electric lighting and heating of every home will relieve millions of “domestic slaves” of the need to spend three-fourths of their lives in smelly kitchens.

Capitalist technology is increasingly, day by day, *outgrowing* the social conditions which condemn the working people to wage-slavery. ■

## Capitalism & Female Labour<sup>9</sup>

Present-day capitalist society conceals within itself numerous cases of poverty and oppression which do not immediately strike the eye. At the *best* of times, the scattered families of poor townspeople, artisans, workers, employees and petty officials live in incredible difficulties, barely managing to make both ends meet. Millions upon millions of women in such families live (or, rather, exist) as “domestic slaves”, striving to feed and clothe their family on pennies, at the cost of desperate daily effort and “saving” on everything — except their own labour.

It is these women that the capitalists most willingly employ as home-workers, who are prepared for a monstrously low wage to “earn a little extra” for themselves and their family, for the sake of a crust of bread. It is from among these, women, too, that the capitalists of all countries recruit for themselves (like the ancient slave-owners and the medieval feudal lords) any number of concubines at a most “reasonable” price. And no amount of “moral indignation” (hypocritical in 99 cases out of 100) about prostitution can do anything against this trade in female flesh; so long as wage-slavery exists, inevitably prostitution too will exist. All the oppressed and exploited classes throughout the history of human societies have always been forced (and it is in this that their exploitation consists) to give up to their oppressors, first, their unpaid labour and, second, their women as concubines for the “masters”.

Slavery, feudalism and capitalism are identical in this respect. It is only the *form* of exploitation that changes; the exploitation itself remains.

An *exhibition* of the work of “women exploited at home” has opened in Paris, the “capital of the world”, and the centre of civilisation.

Each exhibit has a little tag showing how much the woman working at home *receives* for making it, and how much she can make per day and per hour on this basis.

And what do we find? *Not on a single article* can a woman working at home earn more than 1.25 francs, i.e., 50 kopeks, whereas the earnings on the vast majority of jobs are very much smaller. Take lampshades. The pay is 4 kopeks per dozen. Or paper

bags: 15 kopeks per thousand, with earnings at *six* kopeks an hour. Here are little toys with ribbons, etc.: 2.5 kopeks an hour. Artificial flowers: *two or three* kopeks an hour. Ladies' and gentlemen's underwear: from *two* to six kopeks an hour. And so on, without end.

Our workers' associations and trade unions, too, ought to organise an "exhibition" of this kind. It will not yield the colossal profits brought in by the exhibitions of the bourgeoisie. A display of proletarian women's poverty and indigence will bring a different benefit: it will help wage-slaves, both men and women, to understand their condition, look back over their "life", ponder the conditions for emancipation from this perpetual yoke of want, poverty, prostitution and every kind of outrage against the have-nots. ■

## The Working Class & Neomalthusianism<sup>10</sup>

At the Pirogov Doctors' Congress<sup>11</sup> much interest was aroused and a long debate was held on the question of abortions. The report was made by Lichkus, who quoted figures on the exceedingly widespread practice of destroying the foetus in present-day so-called civilised states.

In New York, 80,000 abortions were performed in one year and there are 36,000 every month in France. In St. Petersburg the percentage of abortions has more than doubled in five years.

The Pirogov Doctors' Congress adopted a resolution saying that there should never be any criminal prosecution of a mother for performing an artificial abortion and that doctors should only be prosecuted if the operation is performed for "purposes of gain".

In the discussion the majority agreed that abortions should not be punishable, and the question of the so-called neomalthusianism (the use of contraceptives) was naturally touched upon, as was also the social side of the matter. Mr. Vigdorichik, for instance, said, according to the report in *Russkoye Slovo*,<sup>12</sup> that "contraceptive measures should be welcomed" and Mr. Astrakhan exclaimed, amidst thunderous applause:

We have to convince mothers to bear children so that they can be maimed in educational establishments, so that lots can be drawn for them, so that they can be driven to suicide! If the report is true that this exclamation of Mr. Astrakhan's was greeted with thunderous applause, it is a fact that does not surprise me. The audience was made up of bourgeois, middle and petty bourgeois, who have the psychology of the philistine. What can you expect from them but the most banal liberalism?

From the point of view of the working class, however, it would hardly be possible to find a more apposite expression of the completely reactionary nature and the ugliness of "social neomalthusianism" than Mr. Astrakhan's phrase cited above.

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... “Bear children so that they can be maimed ...” For that alone? Why not that they should *fight* better, more unitedly, consciously and resolutely than we are fighting against the present-day conditions of life that are maiming and ruining our generation?

This is the radical difference that distinguishes the psychology of the peasant, handicraftsman, intellectual, the petty bourgeois in general, from that of the proletarian. The petty bourgeois sees and feels that he is heading for ruin, that life is becoming more difficult, that the struggle for existence is ever more ruthless, and that his position and that of his family are becoming more and more hopeless. It is an indisputable fact, and the petty bourgeois protests against it.

But *how* does he protest?

He protests as the representative of a class that is hopelessly perishing, that despairs of its future, that is depressed and cowardly. There is nothing to be done ... if only there were fewer children to suffer our torments and hard toil, our poverty and our humiliation — such is the cry of the petty bourgeois.

The class-conscious worker is far from holding this point of view. He will not allow his consciousness to be dulled by such cries no matter how sincere and heartfelt they may be. Yes, we workers and the mass of small proprietors lead a life that is filled with unbearable oppression and suffering. Things are harder for our generation than they were for our fathers. But in one respect we are luckier than our fathers. *We have begun to learn and are rapidly learning to fight* — and to fight not as individuals, as the best of our fathers fought, not for the slogans of bourgeois speechifiers that are alien to us in spirit, but for our slogans, the slogans of our class. We are fighting better than our fathers did. Our children will fight better than we do — and *they will be victorious*.

The working class is not perishing, it is growing, becoming stronger, gaining courage, consolidating itself, educating itself and becoming steeled in battle. We are pessimists as far as serfdom, capitalism and petty production are concerned, but we are ardent optimists in what concerns the working-class movement and its aims. We are already laying the foundation of a new edifice and our children will complete its construction.

That is the reason — the only reason — why we are unconditionally the enemies of neomalthusianism, suited only to unfeeling and egotistic petty-bourgeois couples, who whisper in scared voices: “God grant we manage somehow by ourselves. So much the better if we have no children.”

It goes without saying that this does not by any means prevent us from demanding the unconditional annulment of all laws against abortions or against the distribution of medical literature on contraceptive measures, etc. Such laws are nothing but the hypocrisy of the ruling classes. These laws do not heal the ulcers of capitalism, they merely turn them into malignant ulcers that are especially painful for the oppressed

masses. Freedom for medical propaganda and the protection of the elementary democratic rights of citizens, men and women, are one thing. The social theory of neomalthusiansim is quite another. Class-conscious workers will always conduct the most ruthless struggle against attempts to impose that reactionary and cowardly theory on the most progressive and strongest class in modern society, the class that is the best prepared for great changes. ■

## Fifth International Congress Against Prostitution<sup>13</sup>

The *fifth* international congress for the suppression of the white slave traffic recently ended in London.

Duchesses, countesses, bishops, priests, rabbis, police officials and all sorts of bourgeois philanthropists were well to the fore! How many festive luncheons and magnificent official receptions were given! And how many solemn speeches on the harm and infamy of prostitution!

What means of struggle were proposed by the elegant bourgeois delegates to the congress? Mainly two methods — religion and police. They are, it appears, the most valid and reliable methods of combating prostitution. One English delegate boasted, according to the London correspondent of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*,<sup>14</sup> that he had introduced a bill into parliament providing for *corporal punishment* for pimps. See the sort he is, this modern “civilised” hero of the struggle against prostitution!

One lady from Canada waxed enthusiastic over the police and the supervision of “fallen” women by policewomen, but as far as raising wages was concerned, she said that women workers did not deserve better pay.

One German pastor reviled present-day materialism, which, he said, is taking hold among the people and promoting the spread of free love.

When the Austrian delegate Gärtner tried to raise the question of the social causes of prostitution, of the need and poverty experienced by working-class families, of the exploitation of child labour, of unbearable housing conditions, etc., he was forced to silence by hostile shouts!

But the things that were said about highly-placed personages — among groups of delegates — were instructive and sublime. When, for example, the German Empress visits a maternity hospital in Berlin, *rings are placed on the fingers* of mothers of “illegitimate” children in order that this august individual may not be shocked by the

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sight of unmarried mothers!

We may judge from this of the disgusting bourgeois hypocrisy that reigns at these aristocratic-bourgeois congresses. Acrobats in the field of philanthropy and police defenders of this mockery of poverty and need gather “to struggle against prostitution”, which is supported precisely by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie ... ■

## Petty Production in Agriculture<sup>15</sup>

The peasant question in modern capitalist states most frequently gives rise to perplexity and vacillation among Marxists and to most of the attacks on Marxism by bourgeois (professorial) political economy.

Petty production in agriculture is doomed to extinction and to an incredibly abased and downtrodden position under capitalism, say the Marxists. Petty production is dependent on big capital, is backward in comparison with large-scale production in agriculture, and can only keep going by means of desperately reduced consumption and laborious, arduous toil. The frittering away and waste of human labour, the worst forms of dependence of the producer, exhaustion of the peasant's family, his cattle and his land — this is what capitalism everywhere brings the peasant.

There is *no* salvation for the peasant except by joining in the activities of the proletariat, primarily those of the wage-workers.

Bourgeois political economy, and the Narodniks and opportunists who champion it (though they may not always be conscious of the fact), on the contrary, try to prove that petty production is viable and is more profitable than large-scale production. The peasant, who has a firm and assured position in capitalist society, must gravitate, not towards the proletariat, but towards the bourgeoisie; he must not gravitate towards the class struggle of the wage-workers but must try to strengthen his position as a proprietor and master — such, in substance, is the theory of the bourgeois economists.

We will try to test the soundness of the proletarian and bourgeois theories by means of precise data. Let us take the data on *female* labour in agriculture in Austria and Germany. Full data for Russia are still lacking because the government is unwilling to take a scientifically based census of all agricultural enterprises.

In Austria, according to the census of 1902, out of 9,070,682 persons employed in agriculture 4,422,981, or 48.7%, were women. In Germany, where capitalism is far more developed, women constitute the *majority* of those employed in agriculture — 54.8%. The more capitalism develops in agriculture the more it employs female labour,

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that is to say, *worsens* the living conditions of the working masses. Women employed in German industry make up 25% of the total labour force, but in agriculture they constitute more than 50%. This shows that industry is absorbing the *best* labour and leaving the weaker to agriculture.

In developed capitalist countries agriculture has already become mainly a women's occupation.

But if we examine statistics on farms of various sizes we shall see that it is in *petty* production that the exploitation of female labour assumes particularly large proportions. On the other hand, even in agriculture, large-scale capitalist production employs mainly male labour, although in this respect it has not caught up with industry.

The following are the comparative figures for Austria and Germany:

Type of farm	Group according to size of farm	% women employed	
		Austria	Germany
Proletarian	Up to half a hectare <sup>a</sup>	52.0	74.1
	1/2 to 2 hectares	50.9	65.7
Peasant	2 to 5	49.6	54.4
	5 to 10	48.5	50.2
	10 to 20	48.6	48.4
Capitalist	20 to 100	46.6	44.8
	100 hectares and over	27.4	41.0
<i>For all farms</i>		48.7	54.8

In both countries we see the operation of the same law of capitalist agriculture. The smaller the scale of production the *poorer* is the composition of the labour force, and the greater the number of women among the total number of persons employed in agriculture.

The general situation under capitalism is the following. On proletarian farms, i.e., those whose "proprietors" live mainly by means of wage-labour (agricultural labourers, day-labourers, and wage-workers in general who possess a tiny plot of land), *female labour predominates over male labour*, sometimes to an enormous extent.

It must not be forgotten that the number of these proletarian or labourer farms is enormous: in Austria they amount to 1,300,000 out of a total of 2,800,000 farms, and in Germany there are even 3,400,000 out of a total of 5,700,000.

On peasant farms male and female labour is employed in nearly equal proportions.

Finally, on capitalist farms, male labour *predominates over female labour*.

<sup>a</sup> One hectare=0.9 of a dessiatine, or 3.28 acres — *Ed.*

What does this signify?

It signifies that the composition of the labour force in petty production is inferior to that in large-scale capitalist production.

It signifies that in agriculture the working woman — the proletarian woman and peasant woman — must exert herself ever so much more, must strain herself to the utmost, must toil at her work to the detriment of her health and the health of her children, in order to keep up as far as possible with the male worker in large-scale capitalist production.

It signifies that petty production keeps going under capitalism only by *squeezing out* of the worker a *larger* amount of work than is squeezed out of the worker in large-scale production.

The peasant is more tied up, more entangled in the complicated net of capitalist dependence than the wage-worker. He thinks he is independent, that he can “make good”; but as a matter of fact, in order to keep going, he must work (for capital) harder than the wage-worker.

The figures on *child* labour in agriculture prove this still more clearly. ■

## To Inessa Armand (1)<sup>16</sup>

Dear Friend,

I very much advise you to write the plan of the pamphlet<sup>17</sup> in as much detail as possible. Otherwise too much is unclear.

One opinion I must express here and now:

I advise you to throw out altogether §3 — the “demand (women’s) for freedom of love”.

That is not really a proletarian but a bourgeois demand.

After all, what do you understand by that phrase? What *can* be understood by it?

1. Freedom *from* material (financial) calculations in affairs of love?
2. The same, *from* material worries?
3. From religious prejudices?
4. From prohibitions by Papa, etc.?
5. From the prejudices of “society”?
6. From the narrow circumstances of one’s environment (peasant or petty-bourgeois or bourgeois intellectual)?
7. From the fetters of the law, the courts and the police?
8. From the serious element in love?
9. From childbirth?
10. Freedom of adultery? Etc,

I have enumerated many shades (not all, of course). You have in mind, of course, not nos. 8-10, but either nos. 1-7 or something *similar* to nos. 1-7.

But then for nos. 1-7 you must choose a different wording, because freedom of love does not express this idea exactly.

And the public, the readers of the pamphlet, will *inevitably* understand by “freedom of love”, in general, something like nos. 8-10, even *without your wishing it*.

Just because in modern society the most talkative, noisy and “top-prominent” classes understand by “freedom of love” nos. 8-10, just for that very reason this is not



a proletarian but a bourgeois demand.

For the proletariat nos. 1-2 are the most important, and then nos. 1-7, and those, in fact, are not “freedom of love”.

The thing is not what you *subjectively* “mean” by this. The thing is the *objective logic* of class relations in affairs of love.

Friendly shake hands!<sup>a</sup>

WI

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<sup>a</sup> The beginning and ending of the letter were written by Lenin in English. — *Ed.*

## To Inessa Armand (2)<sup>18</sup>

Dear Friend,

I apologise, for my delay in replying: I wanted to do it yesterday, but was prevented, and I had no time to sit down and write.

As regards your plan for the pamphlet, my opinion was that “the demand for freedom of love” was unclear and — independently of your will and your wish (I emphasised this when I said that what mattered was the objective, class relations, and not your subjective wishes) — would, in present social conditions, turn out to be a bourgeois, not a proletarian demand.

You do not agree.

Very well. Let us look at the thing again.

In order to make the unclear clear, I enumerated approximately 10 *possible* (and, in conditions of class discord, inevitable) different interpretations, and in doing so remarked that interpretations 1-7, in my opinion, would be typical or characteristic of proletarian women, and 8-10 of bourgeois women.

If you are to refute this, you have to show (1) that these interpretations are wrong (and then replace them by others, or indicate which are wrong), or (2) incomplete (then you should add those which are missing), or (3) are not divided into proletarian and bourgeois in that way.

You don't do either one, or the other, or the third.

You don't touch on points 1-7 at all. Does this mean that you admit them to be true (on the whole)? (What you write about the prostitution of proletarian women and their dependence: “impossibility of saying no” fully comes under points 1-7. No difference at all can be detected between us here.)

Nor do you deny that this is a *proletarian* interpretation.

There remain points 8-10.

These you “don't quite understand” and “object” to: “I don't understand how it is possible” (that is what you have written!) “to *identify*” (!!?) “freedom of love with”

point 10 ...

So it appears that I am “identifying”, while you have undertaken to refute and demolish *me*?

How so?

*Bourgeois women* understand by freedom of love points 8-10 — that is my thesis.

Do you deny this? Will you say what *bourgeois* ladies understand by freedom of love?

You don’t say that. Do not literature and life really *prove* that that is just how bourgeois women understand. They prove it completely! You tacitly admit this.

And if that is so, the point is their class position, and it is hardly possible and almost naïve to “refute” *them*.

What you must do is *separate* from them clearly, *contrast* with them, the proletarian point of view. One must take into account the objective fact that otherwise *they* will snatch the appropriate passages from your pamphlet, interpret them in their own way, make your pamphlet into water pouring on their mill, distort your ideas in the workers’ eyes, “*confuse*” the workers (sowing in their minds the fear that *you* may be bringing them *alien* ideas). And in their hands are a host of newspapers, etc.

While you, completely forgetting the objective and class point of view, go over to the “offensive” against *me*, as though I am “identifying” freedom of love with points 8-10 ... Marvellous, really marvellous ...

“Even a fleeting passion and intimacy” are “more poetic and cleaner” than “kisses without love” of a (vulgar and shallow) married couple. That is what you write. And that is what you intend to write in your pamphlet. Very good. Is the contrast logical? Kisses without love between a vulgar couple are *dirty*. I agree. To them one should contrast ... what? ... One would think: kisses *with* love? While you contrast them with “fleeting” (why fleeting?) “passion” (why not love?) — so, logically, it turns out that kisses without love (fleeting) are contrasted with kisses without love by married people ... Strange. For a popular pamphlet, would it not be better to contrast philistine-intellectual-peasant (I think they’re in my point 6 or point 5) vulgar and dirty marriage without love to proletarian civil marriage with love (adding, *if you absolutely insist*, that fleeting intimacy and passion, too, may be dirty and may be clean). What you have arrived at is, not the contrast of class *types*, but something like an “incident”, which of course is possible. But is it a question of particular incidents? If you take the theme of an incident, an individual case of dirty kisses in marriage and pure ones in a fleeting intimacy, that is a theme to be worked out in a novel (because there the whole *essence* is in the *individual* circumstances, the analysis of the *characters* and psychology of *particular* types). But in a pamphlet?

You understood my idea very well about the unsuitable quotation from Key, when you said it is “stupid” to appear in the role of “professors of love”. Quite so. Well, and what about the role of professors of fleeting, etc.?

Really, I don’t want to engage in polemics at all. I would willingly throw aside this letter and postpone matters until we can talk about it. But I want the pamphlet to be a good one, so that *no one could* tear out of it phrases which would cause you unpleasantness (sometimes *one single* phrase is enough to be the spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey), *could misinterpret* you. I am sure that here, too, you wrote “without wishing it”, and the only reason why I am sending you this letter is that you may examine the plan in greater detail as a result of the letters than you would after a talk — and the plan, you know, is a very important thing.

Have you not some French socialist friend? Translate my points 1-10 to her (as though it were from English), together with your remarks about “fleeting”, etc., and watch her, listen to her as attentively as possible: a little experiment as to what *outside* people will say, what their impressions will be, what they will expect of the pamphlet.

I shake you by the hand, and wish you fewer headaches and to get better soon.

VU

PS [...]

## From A Caricature of Marxism & Imperialist Economism<sup>19</sup>

P. Kievsky does not understand the difference between “negative” slogans that stigmatise *political* evils and *economic* evils. The difference lies in the fact that certain economic evils are part of capitalism as such, whatever the political superstructure, and that it is *impossible* to eliminate them economically without eliminating capitalism itself. Not a single instance can be cited to disprove this. On the other hand, political evils represent a departure from democracy which, economically, is fully possible “on the basis of the existing system”, i.e., capitalism, and by way of exception is being implemented under capitalism — certain aspects in one country, other aspects in another. Again, what the author fails to understand is precisely the fundamental conditions necessary for the implementation of democracy in general!

The same applies to the question of divorce. The reader will recall that it was first posed by Rosa Luxemburg in the discussion on the *national* question. She expressed the perfectly justified opinion that if we uphold autonomy within a state (for a definite region, area, etc.) we must, as centralist social-democrats, insist that all major national issues — and *divorce* legislation is one of them — should come within the jurisdiction of the central government and central parliament. This example clearly demonstrates that one cannot be a democrat and socialist without demanding full freedom of divorce now, because the lack of such freedom is additional oppression of the oppressed sex — though it should not be difficult to realise that recognition of the *freedom* to leave one’s husband is not an *invitation* to all wives to do so!

P. Kievsky “objects”:

“What would this right [of divorce] be like if in *such* cases (when the wife *wants* to leave the husband) she could *not* exercise her right? Or if its exercise depended on the will of *third* parties, or, worse still, on the will of claimants to her affections? Would we advocate the proclamation of *such* a right? Of course not!”

That objection reveals complete failure to understand the relation between democracy *in general* and capitalism. The conditions that make it impossible for the oppressed classes to “exercise” their democratic rights are not the exception under capitalism; they are typical of the system. In most cases the right of divorce will remain unrealisable under capitalism, for the oppressed sex is subjugated economically. No matter how much democracy there is under capitalism, the woman remains a “domestic slave”, a slave locked up in the bedroom, nursery, kitchen. The right to elect their “own” people’s judges, officials, schoolteachers, jurymen, etc., is likewise in most cases unrealisable under capitalism precisely because of the economic subjection of the workers and peasants. The same applies to the democratic republic: our program defines it as “government by the people”, though all social-democrats know perfectly well that under capitalism, even in the most democratic republic there is bound to be bribery of officials by the bourgeoisie and an alliance of stock exchange and the government.

Only those who cannot think straight or have no knowledge of Marxism will conclude: so there is no point in having a republic, no point in freedom of divorce, no point in democracy, no point in self-determination of nations! But Marxists know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their “domestic slavery” is capitalism, not lack of rights. The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights. The fuller national equality (and it is *not* complete without freedom of secession), the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights, etc.

It must be said again and again: It is embarrassing to have to drive home the ABC of Marxism, but what is one to do if Kievsky does not know it?

He discusses divorce in much the same way as one of the secretaries of the Organising Committee<sup>20</sup> abroad, Semkovsky, discussed it, if I remember rightly, in the *Paris Golos*.<sup>21</sup> His line of reasoning was that freedom of divorce is not, it is true, an invitation to all wives to leave their husbands, but if it is proved that all other husbands are better than yours, madame, then it amounts to one and the same thing!!

In taking that line of argument Semkovsky forgot that crank thinking is not a violation of socialist or democratic principles. If Semkovsky were to tell a woman that all other husbands are better than hers, no one would regard this as violation of democratic principles. At most people would say: There are bound to be big cranks in a big party! But if Semkovsky were to take it into his head to defend as a democrat a

person who opposed freedom of divorce and appealed, for instance, to the courts, the police or the church to prevent his wife leaving him, we feel sure that *even* most of Semkovsky's colleagues on the Secretariat Abroad, though they are sorry socialists, would refuse to support him!

Both Semkovsky and Kievsky, in their "discussion" of divorce, fail to understand the issue and avoid its substance, namely, that under capitalism the right of divorce, as *all* other democratic rights without exception, is conditional, restricted, formal, narrow and extremely difficult of realisation. Yet no self-respecting social-democrat will consider anyone opposing the right of divorce a democrat, let alone a socialist. That is the crux of the matter. *All* "democracy" consists in the proclamation and realisation of "rights" which under capitalism are realisable only to very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is *impossible*. ■

# *From* Tasks of the Left Zimmerwaldists in the Swiss Social-Democratic Party<sup>22</sup>

## **III. Pressing Democratic Reforms & Utilisation of the Political Struggle and Parliamentarism**

17. Abolition of *all* restrictions without exception on the political rights of women compared with those of men. It must be explained to the masses why this reform is particularly urgent at the present time, when the war and the high cost of living are agitating the minds of the broad masses and, in particular, are rousing the interest and the attention of women towards politics. ■



## *From The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*<sup>23</sup>

12. The substitution of a people's militia for the police is a reform that follows from the entire course of the revolution and that is now being introduced in most parts of Russia. We must explain to the people that in most of the bourgeois revolutions of the usual type, this reform was always extremely short-lived, and that the bourgeoisie — even the most democratic and republican — restored the police of the old, tsarist type, a police divorced from the people, commanded by the bourgeoisie and capable of oppressing the people in every way.

There is only one way to *prevent* the restoration of the police, and that is to create a people's militia and to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the entire people). Service in this militia should extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of 15 and 65 without exception, if these tentatively suggested age limits may be taken as indicating the participation of adolescents and old people. Capitalists must pay their workers, servants, etc., for days devoted to public service in the militia. Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism. And such "police" functions as care of the sick and of homeless children, food inspection, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on an equal footing with men, not merely nominally but in reality.

The tasks which the proletariat must put before the people in order to safeguard, consolidate and develop the revolution are to prevent the restoration of the police and to enlist the organisational forces of the entire people in forming a people's militia. ■

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First published in September 1917 as a pamphlet.

## *From Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Program*<sup>24</sup>

The constitution of the Russian democratic republic must ensure:

1. The sovereignty of the people; supreme power in the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber.

*1. The sovereignty of the people, i.e., the concentration of supreme state power in the hands of a legislative assembly, consisting of the representatives of the people and constituting a single chamber.*

2. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage for all citizens, men and women, who have reached the age of twenty, in the elections to the legislative assembly and to the various bodies of local self-government; secret ballot: the right of every voter to be elected to any representative institution; biennial parliaments; salaries to be paid to the people's representatives; **proportional representation at all elections; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.**

3. Local self-government on a broad scale; regional self-government in localities where the composition of the population and living and social conditions are of a specific nature; **the abolition of all state-appointed local and regional authorities.**

4. Inviolability of person and domicile.

5. Unrestricted freedom of conscience, speech, the press, assembly, strikes, and association.

6. Freedom of movement and occupation.

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Written in April-May 1917. Those parts of the old program which remained unchanged in the new one are set in ordinary type; those parts of the old program which were to be completely deleted are given in *italics*; those parts of the new program which were not in the old program are given in **bold**. — *Ed.*

7. Abolition of the social-estates; equal rights for all citizens irrespective of sex, creed, race, or nationality.

8). The right of the population to receive instruction in their native tongue in schools to be established for the purpose at the expense of the state and local organs of self-government; the right of every citizen to use his native language at meetings; the native language to be used *on a level with the official language* in all local public and state institutions; **obligatory official language to be abolished.**

*9. The right of self-determination for all member nations of the state.*

**9. The right of all member nations of the state to freely secede and form independent states. The republic of the Russian nation must attract other nations or nationalities not by force, but exclusively by voluntary agreement to form a common state. The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries is incompatible with the use of force, direct or indirect, against other nationalities.**

10. The right of all persons to sue any official in the regular way before a jury.

*11. Election of judges by the people.*

**11. Judges and other officials, both civil and military, to be elected by the people with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors.**

*12. Replacement of the standing army by the universally armed people.*

**12. The police and standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people; workers and other employees to receive regular wages from the capitalists for the time devoted to public service in the people's militia.**

13. Separation of the church from the state, and schools from the church; schools to be absolutely secular.

*14. Free and compulsory general and vocational education for all children of both sexes up to the age of 16; poor children to be provided with food, clothing, and school supplies at the expense of the state.*

**14. Free and compulsory general and polytechnical education (familiarising the student with the theoretical and practical aspects of the most important fields of production) for all children of both sexes up to the age of 16; training of children to be closely integrated with socially productive work.**

**15. All students to be provided with food, clothing, and school supplies at the cost of the state.**

**16. Public education to be administered by democratically elected organs of local self-government; the central government not to be allowed to interfere with the arrangement of the school curriculum, or with the selection of the teaching staffs; teachers to be elected directly by the population with the right of the latter to remove**

**undesirable teachers.**

As a basic condition for the democratisation of our country's national economy, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands the abolition of all indirect taxes and the establishment of a progressive tax on incomes and inheritances.

**The high level of development of capitalism already achieved in banking and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere evoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all staple products, on the other, induce the party to demand the nationalisation of the banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.**

To safeguard the working class from physical and moral deterioration, and develop its ability to carry on the struggle for emancipation, the party demands:

*1. An eight-hour working day for all wage-workers.*

**1. An eight-hour working day for all wage-workers, including a break of not less than one hour for meals where work is continuous. In dangerous and unhealthy industries the working day to be reduced from four to six hours.**

2. A statutory weekly uninterrupted rest period of not less than 42 hours for all wage-workers of both sexes in all branches of the national economy.

3. Complete prohibition of overtime work.

*4. Prohibition of night work (from 9pm to 6am) in all branches of the national economy except in cases where it is absolutely necessary for technical reasons endorsed by the labour organisations.*

**4. Prohibition of night work (from 8pm to 6am) in all branches of the national economy except in cases where it is absolutely necessary for technical reasons endorsed by the labour organisations — provided, however, that night work does not exceed four hours.**

*5. Prohibition of the employment of children of school age (under 16) and restriction of the working day of adolescents (from 16 to 18) to six hours.*

**5. Prohibition of the employment of children of school age (under 16), restriction of the working day of adolescents (from 16 to 20) to four hours, and prohibition of the employment of adolescents on night work in unhealthy industries and mines.**

*6. Prohibition of female labour in all branches of industry injurious to women's health; women to be released from work for four weeks before and six weeks after childbirth, without loss of pay.*

**6. Prohibition of female labour in all branches of industry injurious to women's health; prohibition of night work for women; women to be released from work eight weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth, without loss of pay and with free medical and medicinal aid.**

*7. Establishment of nurseries for infants and young children at all factories and other enterprises where women are employed; nursing mothers to be allowed recesses of at least half-hour duration at intervals of not more than three hours.*

**7. Establishment of nurseries for infants and young children and rooms for nursing mothers at all factories and other enterprises where women are employed; nursing mothers to be allowed recesses of at least half-hour duration at intervals of not more than three hours; such mothers to receive nursing benefit and their working day to be reduced to six hours.**

*8. State insurance for workers covering old age and total or partial disablement out of a special fund formed by a special tax on the capitalists.*

**8. Full social insurance of workers:**

**a. for all forms of wage-labour;**

**b. for all forms of disablement, namely, sickness, injury, infirmity, old age, occupational disease, childbirth, widowhood, orphanhood, and also unemployment, etc.;**

**c. all insurance institutions to be administered entirely by the insured themselves;**

**d. the cost of insurance to be borne by the capitalists;**

**e. free medical and medicinal aid under the control of self-governing sick benefit societies, the management bodies of which are to be elected by the workers.**

*9. Payment of wages in kind to be prohibited; regular weekly pay-days to be fixed in all labour contracts without exception and wages to be paid in cash and during working hours.*

*10. Prohibition of deductions by employers from wages on any pretext or for any purpose whatsoever (fines, spoilage, etc.).*

*11. Appointment of an adequate number of factory inspectors in all branches of the national economy; factory inspection to be extended to all enterprises employing hired labour, including government enterprises (domestic service also to be liable to inspection); women inspectors to be appointed in industries where female labour is employed; representatives elected by the workers and paid by the state to supervise the enforcement of the factory laws, the fixing of rates and the passing or rejection of raw materials and finished products.*

**9. The establishment of a labour inspectorate elected by the workers' organisations and covering all enterprises employing hired labour, as well as domestic servants; women inspectors to be appointed in enterprises where female labour is employed. ■**

# From Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?<sup>25</sup>

The proletariat, we are told, will not be able to set the state apparatus in motion.

Since the 1905 Revolution, Russia has been governed by 130,000 landowners, who have perpetrated endless violence against 150 million people, heaped unconstrained abuse upon them, and condemned the vast majority to inhuman toil and semistarvation.

Yet we are told that the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party will not be able to govern Russia, govern her in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 are already backed by no less than a million votes of the adult population, for this is precisely the proportion between the number of party members and the number of votes cast for the party that has been established by the experience of Europe and the experience of Russia as shown, for example, by the elections to the Petrograd City Council last August. We therefore already have a “state apparatus” of *one million* people devoted to the socialist state for the sake of high ideals and not for the sake of a fat sum received on the 20th of every month.

In addition to that we have a “magic way” to enlarge our state apparatus *tenfold* at once, at one stroke, a way which no capitalist state ever possessed or could possess. This magic way is to draw the working people, to draw the poor, into the daily work of state administration.

To explain how easy it will be to employ this magic way and how faultlessly it will operate, let us take the simplest and most striking example possible.

The state is to forcibly evict a certain family from a flat and move another in. This often happens in the capitalist state, and it will also happen in our proletarian or socialist state.

The capitalist state evicts a working-class family which has lost its breadwinner and cannot pay the rent. The bailiff appears with police, or militia, a whole squad of them. To effect an eviction in a working-class district a whole detachment of Cossacks is

required. Why? Because the bailiff and the militiaman refuse to go without a very strong military guard. They know that the scene of an eviction arouses such fury among the neighbours, among thousands and thousands of people who have been driven to the verge of desperation, arouses such hatred towards the capitalists and the capitalist state, that the bailiff and the squad of militiamen run the risk of being torn to pieces at any minute. Large military forces are required, several regiments must be brought into a big city, and the troops must come from some distant, outlying region so that the soldiers will not be familiar with the life of the urban poor, so that the soldiers will not be “infected” with socialism.

The proletarian state has to forcibly move a very poor family into a rich man’s flat. Let us suppose that our squad of workers’ militia is 15 strong: two sailors, two soldiers, two class-conscious workers (of whom, let us suppose, only one is a member of our party, or a sympathiser), one intellectual, and eight from the poor working people, of whom at least five must be women, domestic servants, unskilled labourers, and so forth. The squad arrives at the rich man’s flat, inspects it and finds that it consists of five rooms occupied by two men and two women — “You must squeeze up a bit into two rooms this winter, citizens, and prepare two rooms for two families now living in cellars. Until the time when, with the aid of engineers (you are an engineer, aren’t you?), we have built good dwellings for everybody, you will have to squeeze up a little. Your telephone will serve 10 families. This will save 100 hours of work wasted on shopping, and so forth. Now in your family there are two unemployed persons who can perform light work: a citizeness 55 years of age and a citizen 14 years of age. They will be on duty for three hours a day supervising the proper distribution of provisions for 10 families and keeping the necessary account of this. The student citizen in our squad will now write out this state order in two copies and you will be kind enough to give us a signed declaration that you will faithfully carry it out.”

This, in my opinion, shows, by means of striking examples, how the distinction between the old bourgeois and the new socialist state apparatus and state administration could be illustrated.

We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration. In this we agree with the Cadets, with Breshkovskaya, and with Tsereteli. We differ, however, from these citizens in that we demand an immediate break with the prejudiced view that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families, are capable of *administering* the state, of performing the ordinary, everyday work of administration. We demand that *training* in the work of state administration be conducted by class-conscious workers and soldiers and that this training be begun at once, i.e., that a *beginning* be made at once in training all the

working people, all the poor, for this work.

We know that the Cadets are also willing to teach the people democracy. Cadet ladies are willing to deliver lectures to domestic servants on equal rights for women in accordance with the best English and French sources. And also, at the very next concert-meeting, before an audience of thousands, an exchange of kisses will be arranged on the platform: the Cadet lady lecturer will kiss Breshkovskaya, Breshkovskaya will kiss ex-minister Tsereteli, and the grateful people will therefore receive an object-lesson in republican equality, liberty and fraternity ...

Yes, we agree that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya and Tsereteli are in their own way devoted to democracy and are propagating it among the people. But what is to be done if our conception of democracy is somewhat different from theirs?

In our opinion, to ease the incredible burdens and miseries of the war and also to heal the terrible wounds the war has inflicted on the people, *revolutionary* democracy is needed, *revolutionary* measures of the kind described in the example of the distribution of housing accommodation in the interests of the poor. Exactly the same procedure must be adopted in both town and country for the distribution of provisions, clothing, footwear, etc., in respect of the land in the rural districts, and so forth. For the administration of the state in *this* spirit we can *at once set in motion a state* apparatus consisting of 10 if not 20 million people, an apparatus such as no capitalist state has ever known. We alone can create such an apparatus, for we are sure of the fullest and devoted sympathy of the vast majority of the population. We alone can create such an apparatus, because we have class-conscious workers disciplined by long capitalist "schooling" (it was not for nothing that we went to learn in the school of capitalism), workers who are *capable* of forming a workers' militia and of *gradually* expanding it (beginning to expand it at once) into a militia *embracing the whole people*. The class-conscious workers must lead, but for the work of administration they can enlist the vast mass of the working and oppressed people.

It goes without saying that this new apparatus is bound to make mistakes in taking its first steps. But did not the peasants make mistakes when they emerged from serfdom and began to manage their own affairs? Is there any way other than practice by which the people can learn to govern themselves and to avoid mistakes? Is there any way other than by proceeding immediately to genuine self-government by the people? The chief thing now is to abandon the prejudiced bourgeois-intellectualist view that only special officials, who by their very social position are entirely dependent upon capital, can administer the state. The chief thing is to put an end to the state of affairs in which bourgeois officials and "socialist" ministers are trying to govern in the old way but are incapable of doing so and, after seven months, are faced with a peasant



revolt in a peasant country! The chief thing is to imbue the oppressed and working people with confidence in their own strength, to prove to them in practice that they can and must themselves undertake the *proper*, most strictly regulated and organised distribution of bread, all kinds of food, milk, clothing, housing, etc., *in the interests of the poor*. Unless this is done, Russia *cannot* be saved from collapse and ruin. The conscientious, bold, universal move to hand over administrative work to proletarians and semiproletarians, will rouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the people, will so multiply the people's forces in combating distress, that much that seemed impossible to our narrow, old, bureaucratic forces will become possible for the millions, who will *begin to work for themselves* and not for the capitalists, the gentry, the bureaucrats, and not out of fear of punishment.



[...]

To fear the resistance of the capitalists and yet to call oneself a revolutionary, to wish to be regarded as a socialist — isn't that disgraceful? How low must international socialism, corrupted by opportunism, have fallen ideologically if such voices *could* be raised!

We have already seen the strength of the capitalists' resistance; the entire people have seen it, for the capitalists are more class-conscious than the other classes and at once realised the significance of the soviets, at once exerted *all their efforts* to the utmost, resorted to everything, went to all lengths, resorted to the most incredible lies and slander, to military plots in order to *frustrate the soviets*, to reduce them to nought, to prostitute them (with the aid of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), to transform them into talking-shops, to wear down the peasants and workers by months and months of empty talk and playing at revolution.

*We have not yet seen*, however, the strength of resistance of the proletarians and poor peasants, for this strength will become fully apparent only when power is in the hands of the proletariat, when tens of millions of people who have been crushed by want and capitalist slavery see from experience and *feel* that state power has passed into the hands of the oppressed classes, that the state is helping the poor to fight the landowners and capitalists, is breaking their resistance. *Only* then shall we see what untapped forces of resistance to the capitalists are latent among the people; only then will what Engels called "latent socialism" manifest itself. Only then, for every 10,000 overt and concealed enemies of working-class rule, manifesting themselves actively or by passive resistance, there will arise *a million* new fighters who have been politically dormant, suffering in the torments of poverty and despair, having ceased to believe

that they are human, that they have the right to live, that they too can be served by the entire might of the modern centralised state, that *their* contingents of the proletarian militia can, with the fullest confidence, also be called upon to take a direct, immediate, daily part in state administration.

The capitalists and landowners, with the benevolent assistance of Plekhanov, Breshkovskaya, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co., have done *everything* in their power to *defile* the democratic republic, to defile it by servility to wealth to such a degree that the people are being overcome by apathy, indifference; *it is all the same to them*, because the hungry man cannot see the difference between the republic and the monarchy; the freezing, barefooted, worn-out soldier sacrificing his life for alien interests is not able to love the republic.

But when every labourer, every unemployed worker, every cook, every ruined peasant sees, not from the newspapers, but with his own eyes, that the proletarian state is not cringing to wealth but is helping the poor, that this state does not hesitate to adopt revolutionary measures, that it confiscates surplus stocks of provisions from the parasites and distributes them to the hungry, that it forcibly installs the homeless in the houses of the rich, that it compels the rich to pay for milk but does not give them a drop until the children of *all* poor families are sufficiently supplied, that the land is being transferred to the working people and the factories and banks are being placed under the control of the workers and that immediate and severe punishment is meted out to the millionaires who conceal their wealth — when the poor see and feel this, no capitalist or kulak forces, no forces of world finance capital which manipulates thousands of millions, will vanquish the people's revolution; on the contrary, *the socialist revolution* will triumph all over the world for it is maturing in all countries.

Our revolution will be invincible if it is not afraid of itself, if it transfers all power to the proletariat, for behind us stand the immeasurably larger, more developed, more organised world forces of the proletariat which are temporarily held down by the war but not destroyed; on the contrary, the war has multiplied them. ■

# Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women<sup>26</sup>

Comrades, in a certain sense this congress of the women's section of the workers' army has a special significance, because one of the hardest things in every country has been to stir the women into action. There can be no socialist revolution unless very many working women take a big part in it.

In all civilised countries, even the most advanced, women are actually no more than domestic slaves. Women do not enjoy full equality in any capitalist state, not even in the freest of republics.

One of the primary tasks of the Soviet Republic is to abolish all restrictions on women's rights. The Soviet government has completely abolished divorce proceedings, that source of bourgeois degradation, repression and humiliation.

It will soon be a year now since complete freedom of divorce was legislated. We have passed a decree annulling all distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children and removing several political restrictions. Nowhere else in the world have equality and freedom for working women been so fully established.

We know that it is the working-class woman who has to bear the full brunt of antiquated codes.

For the first time in history, our law has removed everything that denied women rights. But the important thing is not the law. In the cities and industrial areas this law on complete freedom of marriage is doing all right, but in the countryside it all too frequently remains a dead letter. There the religious marriage still predominates. This is due to the influence of the priests, an evil that is harder to combat than the old legislation.

We must be extremely careful in fighting religious prejudices; some people cause a lot of harm in this struggle by offending religious feelings. We must use propaganda and education. By lending too sharp an edge to the struggle we may only arouse

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Speech delivered November 19, 1918.

popular resentment; such methods of struggle tend to perpetuate the division of the people along religious lines, whereas our strength lies in unity. The deepest source of religious prejudice is poverty and ignorance; and that is the evil we have to combat.

The status of women up to now has been compared to that of a slave; women have been tied to the home, and only socialism can save them from this. They will only be completely emancipated when we can get rid of the small peasant farms to proceed to cooperative farming and use collective methods to work the land. That is a difficult task. But now that Poor Peasant Committees<sup>27</sup> are being formed, the time has come when the socialist revolution is being consolidated.

The poorest part of the rural population is only now beginning to organise, but socialism is acquiring a firm foundation in these organisations of poor peasants.

Before, often the town became revolutionary and then the countryside.

But the present revolution relies on the countryside, and therein lie its significance and strength. The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it. The Soviet government is doing everything in its power to enable women to carry on independent proletarian socialist work.

The Soviet government is in a difficult situation because the imperialists of all countries hate Soviet Russia and are preparing to go to war with her for kindling the fire of revolution in a number of countries and for taking determined steps towards socialism.

Now that they are out to destroy revolutionary Russia, the ground is beginning to burn under their own feet. You know how the revolutionary movement is spreading in Germany. In Denmark the workers are fighting their government. In Holland and Switzerland the revolutionary movement is getting stronger. The revolutionary movement in these small countries has no importance in itself, but it is particularly significant because there was no war in these countries and they had the most "constitutional" democratic system. If countries like these are stirring into action, it makes us sure the revolutionary movement is taking a hold all over the world.

No other republic has so far been able to emancipate woman. The Soviet government is helping her. Our cause is invincible because the invincible working class is rising in all countries. This movement signifies the spread of the invincible socialist revolution. (*Prolonged applause. All sing the Internationale.*)■

## *From Draft Program of the RCP(B)*<sup>28</sup>

### **First paragraph of section of the program on the courts**

On the road to communism through the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Communist Party, rejecting democratic slogans, completely abolishes also such organs of bourgeois rule as the old courts and replaces them by class courts of workers and peasants. After taking all power into its hands, the proletariat puts forward, instead of the old vague formula, “Election of judges by the people”, the class slogan, “Election of judges from the working people by none but the working people”, and carries it into practice throughout the judicial system. With regard to the election of judges from workers and peasants only who do not employ wage labour for profit, the Communist Party makes no distinction on account of sex but allows men and women completely equal rights both in electing judges and in exercising judicial functions. Having repealed the laws of the overthrown governments, the party gives the judges elected by soviet electors the slogan: enforce the will of the proletariat and apply its decrees or, in the absence of a suitable decree, or if the relevant decree is inadequate, take guidance from your socialist sense of justice, ignoring the laws of the deposed governments. ■

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The new program was adopted by the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) in March 1919.

## *From A Great Beginning*<sup>29</sup>

### **Heroism of the workers in the rear. 'Communist subbotniks'**<sup>30</sup>

We must all admit that vestiges of the bourgeois-intellectual phrase-mongering approach to questions of the revolution are in evidence at every step, everywhere, even in our own ranks. Our press, for example, does little to fight these rotten survivals of the rotten bourgeois-democratic past; it does little to foster the simple, modest, ordinary but virile shoots of genuine communism.

Take the position of women. In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We actually razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilised countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field. But the more *thoroughly* we clear the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the more we realise that we have only cleared the ground to build on, but are not yet building.

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist

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First published as a pamphlet in Moscow in July 1919.

economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which in theory every communist considers indisputable? Of course not. Do we take proper care of the *shoots* of communism which already exist in this sphere? Again the answer is no. Public catering establishments, nurseries, kindergartens — here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can *really emancipate women*, really lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism. But under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and secondly — which is particularly important — either *profit-making* enterprises, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or “acrobatics of bourgeois charity”, which the best workers rightly hated and despised.

There is no doubt that the number of these institutions in our country has increased enormously and that they are *beginning* to change in character. There is no doubt that we have far more *organising talent* among the women workers and peasant women than we are aware of, that we have far more people than we know of who can organise practical work, with the cooperation of large numbers of workers and of still larger numbers of consumers, without the abundance of talk, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc., with which our bigheaded “intellectuals” or half-baked “communists” are “affected”. But we *do not nurse* these shoots of the new as we should.

Look at the bourgeoisie. How very well they know how to advertise what *they* need! See how millions of copies of *their* newspapers extol what the capitalists regard as “model” enterprises, and how “model” bourgeois institutions are made an object of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly ever, to describe the best catering establishments or nurseries, in order, by daily insistence, to get some of them turned into models of their kind. It does not give them enough publicity, does not describe in detail the saving in human labour, the conveniences for the consumer, the economy of products, the emancipation of women from domestic slavery, the improvement in sanitary conditions, that is achieved with *exemplary communist work*, that can be achieved and can be extended to the whole of society, to all working people.

Exemplary production, exemplary communist subbotniks, exemplary care and conscientiousness in procuring and distributing every pood of grain, exemplary catering establishments, exemplary cleanliness in such-and-such a workers’ house, in such-and-such a block, should all receive 10 times more attention and care from our press, as well as from *every* workers’ and peasants’ organisation, than they receive now. All

these are shoots of communism, and it is our common and primary duty to nurse them. Difficult as our food and production situation is, in the 18 months of Bolshevik rule there has been undoubted progress *all along the line*: grain procurements have increased from 30 million poods (from August 1, 1917, to August 1, 1918) to 100 million poods<sup>a</sup> (from August 1, 1918, to May 1, 1919); vegetable gardening has expanded, the margin of unsown land has diminished, railway transport has begun to improve despite the enormous fuel difficulties, and so on. Against this general background and with the support of the proletarian state power, the shoots of communism will not wither; they will grow and blossom into complete communism. ■

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<sup>a</sup> Pood — an old Russian measure of weight equal to 16.381kg. — *Ed.*



# The Tasks of the Working Women's Movement in the Soviet Republic<sup>31</sup>

## Speech delivered at the Fourth Moscow City Conference of Nonparty Working Women

Comrades, it gives me pleasure to greet a conference of working women. I will allow myself to pass over those subjects and questions that, of course, at the moment are the cause of the greatest concern to every working woman and to every politically conscious individual from among the working people; these are the most urgent questions — that of bread and that of the war situation. I know from the newspaper reports of your meetings that these questions have been dealt with exhaustively by Comrade Trotsky as far as war questions are concerned and by Comrades Yakovleva and Svidersky as far as the bread question is concerned; please, therefore, allow me to pass over those questions.

I should like to say a few words about the general tasks facing the working women's movement in the Soviet Republic, those that are, in general, connected with the transition to socialism, and those that are of particular urgency at the present time. Comrades, the question of the position of women was raised by Soviet power from the very beginning. It seems to me that any workers' state in the course of transition to socialism is faced with a double task. The first part of that task is relatively simple and easy. It concerns those old laws that kept women in a position of inequality as compared to men.

Participants in all emancipation movements in Western Europe have long since, not for decades but for centuries, put forward the demand that obsolete laws be annulled and women and men be made equal by law, but none of the democratic European states, none of the advanced republics have succeeded in putting it into effect, because wherever there is capitalism, wherever there is private property in land

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Speech delivered September 23, 1919.

and factories, wherever the power of capital is preserved, the men retain their privileges. It was possible to put it into effect in Russia only because the power of the workers has been established here since October 25, 1917. From the very onset Soviet power set out to be the power of the working people, hostile to all forms of exploitation. It set itself the task of doing away with the possibility of the exploitation of the working people by the landowners and capitalists, of doing away with the rule of capital. Soviet power has been trying to make it possible for the working people to organise their lives without private property in land, without privately-owned factories, without that private property that everywhere, throughout the world, even where there is complete political liberty, even in the most democratic republics, keeps the working people in a state of what is actually poverty, and wage-slavery, and women in a state of double slavery.

Soviet power, the power of the working people, in the first months of its existence effected a very definite revolution in legislation that concerns women. Nothing whatever is left in the Soviet Republic of those laws that put women in a subordinate position. I am speaking specifically of those laws that took advantage of the weaker position of women and put them in a position of inequality and often, even, in a humiliating position, i.e., the laws on divorce and on children born out of wedlock and on the right of a woman to summon the father of a child for maintenance.

It is particularly in this sphere that bourgeois legislation, even, it must be said, in the most advanced countries, takes advantage of the weaker position of women to humiliate them and give them a status of inequality. It is particularly in this sphere that Soviet power has left nothing whatever of the old, unjust laws that were intolerable for working people. We may now say proudly and without any exaggeration that apart from Soviet Russia there is not a country in the world where women enjoy full equality and where women are not placed in the humiliating position felt particularly in day-to-day family life. This was one of our first and most important tasks.

If you have occasion to come into contact with parties that are hostile to the Bolsheviks, if there should come into your hands newspapers published in Russian in the regions occupied by Kolchak or Denikin, or if you happen to talk to people who share the views of those newspapers, you may often hear from them the accusation that Soviet power has violated democracy.

We, the representatives of Soviet power, Bolshevik communists and supporters of Soviet power are often accused of violating democracy and proof of this is given by citing the fact that Soviet power dispersed the Constituent Assembly. We usually answer this accusation as follows: that democracy and that Constituent Assembly which came into being when private property still existed on earth, when there was no equality between people, when the one who possessed his own capital was the boss

and the others worked for him and were his wage slaves — that was a democracy on which we place no value. Such democracy concealed slavery even in the most advanced countries. We socialists are supporters of democracy only insofar as it eases the position of the working and oppressed people. Throughout the world socialism has set itself the task of combating every kind of exploitation of man by man. That democracy has real value for us which serves the exploited, the under-privileged. If those who do not work are disfranchised that would be real equality between people. Those who do not work should not eat.

In reply to these accusations we say that the question must be presented in this way — how is democracy implemented in various countries? We see that equality is proclaimed in all democratic republics but in the civil laws and in laws on the rights of women, those that concern their position in the family and on divorce, we see inequality and the humiliation of women at every step, and we say that this is a violation of democracy specifically in respect of the oppressed. Soviet power has implemented democracy to a greater degree than any of the other, most advanced countries because it has not left in its laws any trace of the inequality of women. Again I say that no other state and no other legislation has ever done for women a half of what Soviet power did in the first months of its existence.

Laws alone, of course, are not enough, and we are by no means content with mere decrees. In the sphere of legislation, however, we have done everything required of us to put women in a position of equality and we have every right to be proud of it. The position of women in Soviet Russia is now ideal as compared with their position in the most advanced states. We tell ourselves, however, that this is, of course, only the beginning.

Owing to her work in the house, the woman is still in a difficult position. To effect her complete emancipation and make her the equal of the man it is necessary for housework to be socialised and for women to participate in common productive labour. Then women will occupy the same position as men.

Here we are not, of course, speaking of making women the equal of men as far as productivity of labour, the quantity of labour, the length of the working day, labour conditions, etc., are concerned; we mean that the woman should not, unlike the man, be oppressed because of her economic position. You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most savage and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.

In pursuance of the socialist ideal we want to struggle for the full implementation of socialism, and here an extensive field of labour opens up before women. We are

now making serious preparations to clear the ground for the building of socialism, but the building of socialism will begin only when we have achieved the complete equality of women and undertake the new work together with women who have been emancipated from that petty, stultifying, unproductive work. This is a job that will take us many, many years.

This work cannot show any rapid results and will not produce a scintillating effect.

We are setting up model institutions, dining rooms and nurseries, that will emancipate women from housework. And the work of organising all these institutions will fall mainly to women. It has to be admitted that in Russia today there are very few institutions that would help woman out of her state of household slavery. There is an insignificant number of them, and the conditions now obtaining in the Soviet Republic — the war and the food situation about which comrades have already given you the details — hinder us in this work. Still, it must be said that these institutions that liberate women from their position as household slaves are springing up wherever it is in any way possible.

We say that the emancipation of the workers must be effected by the workers themselves, and in exactly the same way the emancipation of working women is a matter for the working women themselves. The working women must themselves see to it that such institutions are developed, and this activity will bring about a complete change in their position as compared with what it was under the old, capitalist society.

In order to be active in politics under the old, capitalist regime special training was required, so that women played an insignificant part in politics, even in the most advanced and free capitalist countries. Our task is to make politics available to every working woman. Ever since private property in land and factories has been abolished and the power of the landowners and capitalists overthrown, the tasks of politics have become simple, clear and comprehensible to the working people as a whole, and to working women as well. In capitalist society the women's position is marked by such inequality that her participation in politics is only an insignificant fraction of man's participation. The power of the working people is necessary for a change to be wrought in this situation, for then the main tasks of politics will consist of matters directly affecting the fate of the working people themselves.

Here, too, the participation of working women is essential — not only of party members and politically conscious women, but also of the nonparty women and those who are least politically conscious. Here Soviet power opens up a wide field of activity to working women.

We have had a difficult time in the struggle against the forces hostile to Soviet Russia that have attacked her. It was difficult for us to fight on the battlefield against

those forces who went to war against the power of the working people and in the field of food supplies against the profiteers, because the number of people, the number of working people, who came wholeheartedly to our aid with their own labour was much too small. Here, too, there is nothing Soviet power can appreciate as much as the help given by masses of nonparty working women. They may know that in the old bourgeois society, perhaps, a complicated training was necessary for participation in politics and that this was not available to women. The political activity of the Soviet Republic is mainly the struggle against the landowners and capitalists, the struggle for the elimination of exploitation; political activity, therefore, is made available to the working woman in the Soviet Republic and it will consist in the working woman using her organisational ability to help the working man.

What we need is not only organisational work on a scale involving millions; we need organisational work on the smallest scale and this makes it possible for women to work as well. Women can work under war conditions when it is a question of helping the army or carrying on agitation in the army. Women should take an active part in all this so that the Red Army sees that it is being looked after, that solicitude is being displayed. Women can also work in the sphere of food distribution, on the improvement of public catering and everywhere opening dining rooms like those that are so numerous in Petrograd.

It is in these fields that the activities of working women acquire the greatest organisational significance. The participation of working women is also essential in the organisation and running of big experimental farms which should not be a task for individuals. This is something that cannot be carried out without the participation of a large number of working women. Working women will be very useful in this field in supervising the distribution of food and in making food products more easily obtainable. This work can well be done by nonparty working women and its accomplishment will do more than anything else to strengthen socialist society.

We have abolished private property in land and almost completely abolished the private ownership of factories; Soviet power is now trying to ensure that all working people, nonparty as well as party members, women as well as men, should take part in this economic development. The work that Soviet power has begun can only make progress when, instead of a few hundreds, millions and millions of women throughout Russia take part in it. We are sure that the cause of socialist development will then become sound. Then the working people will show that they can live and run their country without the aid of the landowners and capitalists. Then socialist construction will be so soundly based in Russia that no external enemies in other countries and none inside Russia will be any danger to the Soviet Republic. ■

## Soviet Power & the Status of Women<sup>32</sup>

The second anniversary of Soviet power is an occasion for taking stock of what has been done during this period and for reflecting on the significance and the aims of the revolution that has been accomplished.

The bourgeoisie and its supporters charge us with having violated democracy. We, on the other hand, assert that the Soviet revolution has given an unprecedented impulse to the development of democracy in breadth and in depth, democracy, that is, for the working people oppressed by capitalism, democracy for the overwhelming majority of the people, socialist democracy (for the working people), as distinct from bourgeois democracy (for the exploiters, for the capitalists, for the rich).

Who is right?

To give proper thought to this question and achieve a deeper understanding of it one must take stock of the experience of these two years and make better preparations for its further development.

The status of women makes clear in the most striking fashion the difference between bourgeois and socialist democracy and furnishes a most effective reply to the question posed.

In a bourgeois republic (i.e., where there is private ownership of land, factories, shares, etc.), be it the most democratic republic, women have never had equal rights, *anywhere in the world, in any one of the more advanced countries*. And this despite the fact that more than 125 years have passed since the French (bourgeois-democratic) Revolution.

In words bourgeois democracy promises equality and freedom, but in practice *not a single* bourgeois republic, even the more advanced, has granted women (half the human race) and men complete equality in the eyes of the law, or delivered women from dependence on and the oppression of the male.

Bourgeois democracy is the democracy of pompous phrases, solemn words, lavish promises and high-sounding slogans about *freedom and equality*, but in practice all

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this cloaks the lack of freedom and the inequality of women, the lack of freedom and the inequality for the working and exploited people.

Soviet or socialist democracy sweeps away these pompous but false words and declares ruthless war on the hypocrisy of “democrats”, landowners, capitalists and farmers with bursting bins who are piling up wealth by selling surplus grain to the starving workers at speculation prices.

Down with this foul lie! There is no “equality”, nor can there be, of oppressed and oppressor, exploited and exploiter. There is no real “freedom”, nor can there be, so long as women are handicapped by men’s legal privileges, so long as there is no freedom for the worker from the yoke of capital, no freedom for the labouring peasant from the yoke of the capitalist, landowner and merchant.

Let the liars and the hypocrites, the obtuse and the blind, the bourgeois and their supporters, deceive the people with talk about freedom in general, about equality in general and about democracy in general. We say to the workers and peasants — tear the mask from these liars, open the eyes of the blind. Ask them:

Is there equality of the two sexes?

Which nation is the equal of which?

Which *class* is the equal of which?

Freedom from what yoke or from the yoke of which class? Freedom for which class?

He who speaks about politics, democracy and freedom, about equality, about socialism, *without posing* these questions, without giving them priority, who does not fight against hushing them up, concealing and blunting them, is the worst enemy of the working people, a wolf in sheep’s clothing, the rabid opponent of the workers and peasants, a lackey of the landowners, the tsars and the capitalists.

In the course of two years of Soviet power in one of the most backward countries of Europe more has been done to emancipate woman, to make her the equal of the “strong” sex, than has been done during the past 130 years by all the advanced, enlightened, “democratic” republics of the world taken together.

Education, culture, civilisation, freedom — all these high-sounding words are accompanied in all the capitalist, bourgeois republics of the world by incredibly foul, disgustingly vile, bestially crude laws that make women unequal in marriage and divorce, that make the child born out of wedlock and the “legally born” child unequal, and that give privileges to the male, and humiliate and degrade womankind.

The yoke of capital, the oppression of “sacred private property”, the despotism of philistine obtuseness, the avarice of the small property-owner — these are the things that have prevented the most democratic bourgeois republics from abolishing these

foul and filthy laws.

The Soviet Republic, the republic of workers and peasants, wiped out these laws at one stroke and did not leave standing a single stone of the edifice of bourgeois lies and bourgeois hypocrisy.

Down with this lie! Down with the liars who speak about freedom and equality *for all*, while there is an oppressed sex, oppressing classes, private ownership of capital and shares and people with bursting bins who use their surplus grain to enslave the hungry. Instead of freedom for all, instead of equality for all, let there be *struggle* against the oppressors and exploiters, *let the opportunity* to oppress and exploit be abolished. That is our slogan!

Freedom and equality for the oppressed sex!

Freedom and equality for the workers and labouring peasants!

Struggle against the oppressors, struggle against the capitalists, struggle against the kulak profiteers!

This is our fighting slogan, this is our proletarian truth, the truth of the fight against capital, the truth that we hurl in the face of the world of capital with its honeyed, hypocritical and pompous phrases about freedom and equality *in general*, about freedom and equality *for all*.

And it is because we have laid bare this hypocrisy, because, with revolutionary vigour, we are ensuring freedom and full rights for the oppressed and working people, against the oppressors, against the capitalists, against the kulaks — precisely because of this Soviet rule has become so dear to the workers of the whole world.

It is because of this, the sympathies of the working masses, the sympathies of the oppressed and exploited in all countries of the world, are with us on this occasion of the second anniversary of Soviet rule.

Because of this, on the occasion of the second anniversary of Soviet rule, despite the famine and cold, despite all the suffering caused by the imperialists' invasion of the Russian Soviet Republic, we are fully convinced of the justness of our cause, firmly convinced of the inevitable victory of Soviet power on a world scale. ■



## To the Bureau of the Women's Congress in Petrograd Gubernia<sup>33</sup>

Comrades, since I have no opportunity of attending your Congress I should like to send you in writing my greetings and my best wishes for success.

We are now happily ending the civil war. The Soviet Republic is becoming stronger through its victories over the exploiters. The Soviet Republic can and must, from now on, concentrate its forces on a more important task, one that is nearer and dearer to us, to all working people—on a bloodless war, a war for victory over hunger, cold and economic chaos. In this bloodless war, women workers and peasants have an especially big role to play.

May the Women's Congress in Petrograd Gubernia help found, consolidate and organise an army of working women for this bloodless war which should and will bring still greater victories to Soviet power.

With communist greetings,

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin)*

## To the Working Women<sup>34</sup>

Comrades, the elections to the Moscow Soviet show that the Communist Party is gaining ground among the working class.

Working women must take a bigger part in the elections. The Soviet government is the first and only government in the world to have completely abolished all the old, despicable bourgeois laws which placed women in a position of inferiority to men, which placed men in a privileged position, for example, in respect of marital rights and of children. The Soviet government, the government of the working people, is the first and only government in the world to have abolished all the privileges of men in property questions, privileges which the laws on marriage and the family in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic, still preserve.

Wherever there are landowners, capitalists and merchants, women cannot be the equal of men even before the law.

Where there are no landowners, capitalists or merchants, and where the government of the working people is building a new life without these exploiters, men and women are equal before the law.

But that is not enough.

Equality before the law is not necessarily equality in fact.

We want the working woman to be the equal of the working man not only before the law but in actual fact. For this working women must take an increasing part in the administration of socialised enterprises and in the administration of the state.

By taking part in administration, women will quickly learn and will catch up with the men.

Elect more working women to the soviet, both communist women and nonparty women. As long as they are honest working women capable of performing their work sensibly and conscientiously, even if they are not members of the party — elect them to the Moscow Soviet!

Send more working women to the Moscow Soviet! Let the Moscow proletariat show that it is prepared to do everything, and is doing everything, to fight for victory, to fight the old inequality, the old bourgeois humiliation of women!

The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.

*N. Lenin*

February 21, 1920

# On International Working Women's Day<sup>35</sup>

Capitalism combines formal equality with economic and, consequently, social inequality. That is one of the principal features of capitalism, one that is deliberately obscured by the supporters of the bourgeoisie, the liberals, and is not understood by petty-bourgeois democrats. This feature of capitalism, incidentally, renders it necessary for us in our resolute fight for economic equality openly to admit capitalist inequality, and even, under certain conditions, to make this open admission of inequality the basis of the proletarian statehood (the Soviet constitution).

But even in the matter of formal equality (equality before the law, the “equality” of the well-fed and the hungry man, of the man of property and the propertyless), capitalism *cannot* be consistent. And one of the most glaring manifestations of this inconsistency is the *inequality* of women and men. Complete equality has not been granted even by the most progressive republican and democratic bourgeois states.

The Soviet Republic of Russia, on the other hand, at once swept away all legislative traces of the inequality of women without exception, and immediately ensured their complete equality before the law.

It is said that the best criterion of the cultural level is the legal status of women. This aphorism contains a grain of profound truth. In this respect only the dictatorship of the proletariat, only the socialist state could attain, and has attained, the highest cultural level.

The new, mighty and unparalleled upsurge in the working women's movement is therefore inevitably associated with the foundation (and consolidation) of the first Soviet Republic — and, in addition to and in connection with this, with the Communist International.

Since mention has been made of those who were oppressed by capitalism, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, it must be said that the soviet system, and only the

soviet system, guarantees democracy. This is clearly shown by the position of the working class and the poor peasants. It is clearly shown by the position of women.

But the soviet system is the last decisive struggle for the *abolition of classes*, for economic and social equality. Democracy, even democracy for those who were oppressed by capitalism, including the oppressed sex, is not enough for us.

The chief task of the working women's movement is to fight for economic and social equality, and not only formal equality, for women. The chief thing is to get women to take part in socially productive labour, to liberate them from "domestic slavery", to free them from their stupefying and humiliating subjugation to the eternal drudgery of the kitchen and the nursery.

This struggle will be a long one, and it demands a radical reconstruction both of social technique and of morals. But it will end in the complete triumph of communism. ■

# Message of Greetings to the All-Russia Conference of Gubernia Departments For Work Among Women<sup>36</sup>

## Telephone message

Comrades, I very much regret that I have not been able to attend your congress. Please convey to the delegates, both men and women, my sincere greetings and wishes for every success.

The participation of women in party and Soviet activities has acquired a gigantic significance today, when the war has ended, and the peaceful work of organisation has — for a long time to come, as I hope — advanced into the foreground. In this work the women must play a leading part, and will of course do so.

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin)*

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

## International Working Women's Day<sup>37</sup>

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and the plunder of the people's labour by the capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way — and there can be no other way — out of the wage slavery and bondage of capitalism.

But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing the women into politics as well. For the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed under capitalism. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly — and this is the main thing — they remain in “household bondage”, they continue to be “household slaves”, for they are over-burdened with the drudgery of the most squalid and backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the individual family household.

No party or revolution in the world has ever dreamed of striking so deep at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as the Soviet, Bolshevik revolution is doing. Over here, in Soviet Russia, no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law. The Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and

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inequality in respect of children.

This is only the first step in the liberation of woman. But none of the bourgeois republics, including the most democratic of them, has dared to take even this first step. The reason is awe of “sacrosanct private property”.

The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from “household slavery” through the transition from petty individual housekeeping to a large-scale socialised domestic services.

This transition is a difficult one, because it involves the remoulding of the most deep-rooted, inveterate, hidebound and rigid “order” (indecent and barbarity, would be nearer the truth). But the transition has been started, the thing has been set in motion, we have taken the new path.

And so on this international working women’s day countless meetings of working women in all countries of the world will send greetings to Soviet Russia, which first tackled this unparalleled and incredibly hard but great task, a task that is universally great and truly liberatory. There will be bracing calls not to lose heart in face of the fierce and frequently savage bourgeois reaction. The “freer” or “more democratic” a bourgeois country is, the wilder the rampage of its gang of capitalists against the workers’ revolution, an example of this being the democratic republic of the United States of North America. But the mass of workers have already awakened. The dormant, somnolent and inert masses in America, Europe and even in backward Asia were finally roused by the imperialist war.

The ice has been broken in every corner of the world.

Nothing can stop the tide of the peoples’ liberation from the imperialist yoke and the liberation of working men and women from the yoke of capital. This cause is being carried forward by tens and hundreds of million working men and women in town and countryside. That is why this cause of labour’s freedom from the yoke of capital will triumph all over the world.

March 4, 1921



# Message of Greetings to the Conference of Representatives of Women's Departments of the Peoples of Soviet Regions & Republics in the East<sup>38</sup>

I deeply regret that I am unable to attend your conference because of the pressure of work. Please accept my heartfelt greetings and best wishes of success, particularly in preparing for the forthcoming First All-Russia Nonparty Congress of Women of the East, which, correctly prepared and conducted, must greatly help *the cause of awakening the women of the East and uniting them organisationally*.

*Lenin*

## *From The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution*<sup>39</sup>

What were the chief manifestations, survivals, remnants of serfdom in Russia up to 1917? The monarchy, the system of social estates, landed proprietorship and land tenure, the inferior status of women, religion, and national oppression. Take any one of these Augean stables, which, incidentally, were left largely uncleansed by all the more advanced states when they accomplished *their* bourgeois-democratic revolutions 125, 250 and more years ago (1649 in England); take any of these Augean stables, and you will see that we have cleansed them thoroughly. In a matter of *10 weeks*, from October 25 (November 7), 1917, to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (January 5, 1918), we accomplished a thousand times more in this respect than was accomplished by the bourgeois democrats and liberals (the Cadets) and by the petty-bourgeois democrats (the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries) *during the eight months* they were in power.

Those poltroons, gasbags, vainglorious Narcissuses and petty Hamlets brandished their wooden swords — but did not even destroy the monarchy! We cleansed out all that monarchist muck as nobody had ever done before. We left not a stone of that ancient edifice standing, the social-estate system (even the most advanced countries, such as Britain, France and Germany, have not completely eliminated the survivals of this system to this day!). We have torn out the deep-seated roots of the social-estate system, namely, the remnants of feudalism and serfdom in the system of landownership, to the last. “One may argue” (there are plenty of quill-drivers, Cadets, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries abroad to indulge in such arguments) as to what “in the long run” will be the outcome of the agrarian reform effected by the Great October Revolution. We have no desire at the moment to waste time on such controversies, for we are deciding this, as well as the mass of controversies connected with it, by struggle. But the fact cannot be denied that the petty-bourgeois democrats

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“compromised” with the landowners, the custodians of the traditions of serfdom, for eight months, while we completely swept the landowners and all their traditions from Russian soil in a few weeks.

Take religion, or the denial of rights to women, or the oppression and inequality of the non-Russian nationalities. These are all problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats talked about them for eight months. Not in a *single* one of the most advanced countries in the world have *these* questions been *completely* settled on *bourgeois-democratic* lines. In our country they have been settled completely by the legislation of the October Revolution. We have fought and are fighting religion in earnest. We have granted *all* the non-Russian nationalities *their own* republics or autonomous regions. We in Russia no longer have the base, mean and infamous denial of rights to women or inequality of the sexes, that disgusting survival of feudalism and medievalism which is being renovated by the avaricious bourgeoisie and the dull-witted and frightened petty bourgeoisie in every other country in the world without exception.

All this goes into the content of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. A hundred and fifty and 250 years ago the progressive leaders of that revolution (or of those revolutions, if we consider each national variety of the one general type) promised to rid mankind of medieval privileges, of sex inequality, of privileged state religions (or “the idea of religion”, or “religiosity” in general) and of national inequality. They promised, but did not keep their promises. They could not keep them, for they were hindered by their “respect” — for the “sacred private property”. Our proletarian revolution was not afflicted with this accursed “respect” for this thrice-accursed medievalism and for the “sacred right of private property”. ■

## *From On the Significance Of Militant Materialism*<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, I will cite an example which has nothing to do with philosophy, but does at any rate concern social questions, to which *Pod Znamenem Marxizma*<sup>41</sup> also desires to devote attention.

It is an example of the way in which modern pseudoscience serves in effect as a vehicle for the grossest and most infamous reactionary views.

I was recently sent a copy of *Ekonomist*<sup>42</sup> No. 1 (1922), published by the Eleventh Department of the Russian Technical Society. The young communist who sent me this journal (he probably had no time to acquaint himself with its contents) rashly expressed an exceedingly sympathetic opinion of it. In reality the journal is — I do not know how deliberately — an organ of the modern feudalists, disguised of course under a cloak of science, democracy and so forth.

A certain Mr. P.A. Sorokin publishes in this journal an extensive, so-called “sociological”, inquiry on “The Influence of the War”. This learned article abounds in learned references to the “sociological” works of the author and his numerous teachers and colleagues abroad. Here is an example of his learning.

On page 83, I read:

For every 10,000 marriages in Petrograd there are now 92.2 divorces — a fantastic figure. Of every 100 annulled marriages. 51.1 had lasted less than one year, 11% less than one month, 22% an two months, 41% less than three to six months and only 26% over six months. These figures show that modern legal marriage is a form which conceals what is in effect extraconjugal sexual intercourse, enabling lovers of “strawberries” to satisfy their appetites in a “legal” way”. (*Ekonomist*, No. 1, p. 83)

Both this gentleman and the Russian Technical Society which publishes this journal and gives space to this kind of argument no doubt regard themselves as adherents of democracy and would consider it a great insult to be called what they are in fact,

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namely, feudalists, reactionaries, “diploma’d flunkeys of clericalism”.

Even the slightest acquaintance with the legislation of bourgeois countries on marriage, divorce and children born out of wedlock, and with the actual state of affairs in this respect, is enough to show anyone interested in the subject that modern bourgeois democracy, even in all the most democratic bourgeois republics, exhibits a truly feudal attitude in this respect towards women and towards children born out of wedlock.

This, of course, does not prevent the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, a part of the anarchists and all the similar parties in the West from shouting about democracy and how it is being violated by the Bolsheviks. But as a matter of fact the Bolshevik revolution is the only consistently democratic revolution in respect to such questions as marriage, divorce and the position of children born out of wedlock. And this is a question which in a most direct manner affects the interests of more than half the population of any country. The Bolshevik revolution, in spite of the vast number of bourgeois revolutions which preceded it and which called themselves democratic, was the first and only revolution to wage a resolute struggle in this respect both against reaction and feudalism and against the usual hypocrisy of the ruling and propertied classes.

If 92 divorces for every 10,000 marriages seem to Mr. Sorokin a fantastic figure, one can only suppose that either the author lived and was brought up in a monastery so entirely walled-off from life that hardly anyone will believe such a monastery ever existed, or that he is distorting the truth in the interest of reaction and the bourgeoisie. Anybody who has some slight acquaintance with social conditions in bourgeois countries knows that the real number of actual divorces (of course, not sanctioned by church and law) is everywhere immeasurably greater.

The only difference between Russia and other countries in this respect is that our laws do not sanctify hypocrisy and the debasement of the woman and her child, but openly and in the name of the government declare systematic war on all hypocrisy and all debasement.

The Marxist magazine will have to wage war also on these modern “educated” feudalists. Not a few of them, very likely, are in receipt of government money and are employed by our government to educate our youth, although they are no more fitted for this than notorious perverters are fitted for the post of superintendents of educational establishments for the young.

The working class of Russia has succeeded in winning power; but it has not yet learned to utilise it, for otherwise it would have long ago very politely dispatched such teachers and members of learned societies to countries with a bourgeois “democracy”. That is the proper place for such feudalists.

But it will learn, given the will to learn. ■

## **To the Nonparty Conference of Factory & Peasant Women of Moscow City & Moscow Gubernia<sup>43</sup>**

Dear Comrades,

I thank you cordially for your kind wishes and greetings. I am very sorry that I am unable to attend in person. Congratulations on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the revolution and all best wishes for the success of your conference.

Yours,

*Lenin*

Appendix 1  
*From The Program of the*  
**Communist Party of Russia<sup>44</sup>**

Bourgeois democracy has repeatedly proclaimed the equality of individuals independently of sex, race, religion, and nationality; but capitalism has nowhere been able to realise this equality of rights in practice, and in its imperialistic phase it has brought about an extreme intensification of racial and national oppression. Simply for the reason that the Soviet power is the workers' power, it has been able completely and in all spheres of life to effect for the first time in the world the entire abolition of the last traces of the inequality of women in the spheres of conjugal and family rights. At the present moment, it is the task of our party to labour in the field of ideas and in the field of education pre-eminently to this end, that it may effect the final destruction of all traces of former inequality and prejudice, especially among the backward strata of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Not content to proclaim a formal equality of rights for women, the party endeavours to free them from the material burdens of the old domestic economy by substituting for that economy communal housing, communal dining rooms, central wash houses, creches, etc. ■

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Adopted by the Eighth Party Congress, March 18-23, 1919.

## Appendix 2

# *From The ABC of Communism*

*By Nikolai Bukharin & Evgeny Preobrazhensky*

### **The equality of the workers, irrespective of sex, creed, & race**

Bourgeois democracy proclaims in words a whole series of freedoms, but from the oppressed these freedoms are safeguarded by five locks and seven seals. Among other things, bourgeois democracy has often declared that people are equal irrespective of sex, creed, race, and nationality. Proudly has the pledge been given that under the bourgeois democratic system all are equals: women and men; whites, yellows, and blacks; Europeans and Asiatics; Buddhists, Christians, and Jews. In reality, the bourgeoisie has failed to carry out these pledges. During the imperialist epoch, there has been all over the world a terrible increase in racial and national oppression. (For details see the next chapter.) But even as concerns women, bourgeois democracy is far from having realised equality. Woman has remained a being without rights, a domestic animal, part of the furniture of the marital couch.

The working woman in capitalist society is peculiarly oppressed, peculiarly deprived of rights. In all matters she has even less than the beggarly rights which the bourgeoisie grants to the working man. The right to the parliamentary vote has been conceded in a few countries only. As regards the right of inheritance, woman everywhere receives the beggar's portion. In family life she is always subject to her husband, and everything that goes wrong is considered to be her fault. In a word, bourgeois democracy everywhere exhibits as regards women laws and customs which strongly remind us of the customs of savages, who exchange, buy, punish, or steal women just as if they were chattels, dolls, or beasts of burden. Our Russian proverb runs, "A hen is not a bird, and a woman is not a person"; here we have the valuation of a slave society. This state of

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*The ABC of Communism* was written in 1919; it was subtitled "A Popular Explanation of the Program of the Communist Party of Russia".



affairs is extremely disadvantageous to the proletariat. There are more women than men amongst the workers. It is obvious that the struggle of the proletariat must be greatly hindered by the lack of equality between the two halves of which it is composed. Without the aid of the women of the proletariat, it is idle to dream of a general victory, it is idle to dream of the “freeing of labour”. For this reason, it is greatly to the interest of the working class that there should be complete fighting comradeship between the female and the male portions of the proletariat, and that this comradeship should be strengthened by equality. The Soviet power is the first to have realised such equality in all departments of life: in marriage, in the family, in political affairs, etc. In all things, throughout Soviet Russia, women are the equals of men.

It is incumbent upon our party to effect the realisation of this equality in actual life. Before all, we must make it clear to the broad masses of the workers that the subjection of women is extremely harmful to them. Hitherto among the workers it has been customary to look upon women as inferiors; as for the peasants, they smile when a “mere woman” begins to take an interest in social affairs. In the Soviet Republic the working woman has exactly the same rights as the working man; she can elect to the soviets and be elected to them; she can hold any commissar’s office; can do any kind of work in the army, in economic life, and in the state administration.

But in Russia, working women are far more backward than working men. Many people look down upon them. In this matter persevering efforts are needed: among men, that they may cease blocking women’s road; among women, that they may learn to make a full use of their rights, may cease to be timid or diffident.

We must not forget that “every cook has to be taught to take her share in governmental administration”. We have learned above that the really important matter is not the right that is written on paper, but the possibility of realising a right in practice. How can a working woman effectively realise her rights when she has to devote so much time to housekeeping, must go to the market and wait her turn there, must do the family washing, must look after her children, must bear the heavy burden of all this domestic drudgery?

The aim of the Soviet Republic and of our party must be, to deliver working women from such slavery, to free the working woman from these obsolete and antediluvian conditions. The organisation of house communes (not places in which people will wrangle, but places in which they will live like human beings) with central wash-houses; the organisation of communal kitchens; the organisation of communal nurseries, kindergartens, playgrounds, summer colonies for children, schools with communal dining rooms, etc. — such are the things which will enfranchise woman, and will make it possible for her to interest herself in all those matters which now

interest the proletarian man.

In an era of devastation and famine, it is, of course, difficult to do all these things as they ought to be done. Nevertheless, our party must in this manner do its utmost to attract the working woman to play her part in the common task. ■

## Appendix 3

# *From My Recollections of Lenin*<sup>45</sup>

*By Clara Zetkin*

Comrade Lenin repeatedly discussed with me the problem of women's rights. He obviously attached great importance to the women's movement, which was to him an essential component of the mass movement that in certain circumstances might become decisive. Needless to say he saw full social equality of women as a principle which no communist could dispute.

We had our first lengthy talk on this subject in the autumn of 1920, in Lenin's big study in the Kremlin. Lenin sat at his desk, which was covered with books and papers, indicating study and work without the "brilliant disorder" associated with genius.

"We must by all means set up a powerful international women's movement on a clear-cut theoretical basis", he began after greeting me. "It is clear that without Marxist theory we cannot have proper practice. Here, too, we communists need the greatest clarity of principle. We must draw a sharp line between us and all other parties. Our Second International Congress<sup>46</sup> unfortunately did not come up to expectations in discussing the question of women. It posed the question but did not get around to taking a definite stand. A committee is still in charge of the matter. It is to draft a resolution, theses and directives but has made little progress so far. You must help it."

I had already heard from others what Lenin was now telling me and I expressed my amazement. I was full of enthusiasm for everything Russian women had done during the revolution and what they were doing now for its defence and further development. As for the standing and activity of women in the Bolshevik Party, I thought that it was a model party — indeed, *the* model party. It alone supplied the international communist women's movement with a valuable trained and experienced force and set a great example for history.

"That is true, it's wonderful", Lenin remarked with a faint smile. "In Petrograd,

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First published 1925.

here in Moscow, and in other cities and industrial centres, proletarian women showed up splendidly during the revolution. We would not have won without them, or hardly. That is my opinion. What courage they showed and how courageous they still are! Imagine the suffering and privation they are enduring. But they are holding out because they want to defend the soviets, because they want freedom and communism. Yes, our working women are magnificent class fighters. They are worthy of admiration and love. In general, it must be acknowledged that even the ladies of the 'Constitutional Democrats' in Petrograd showed greater courage in fighting us than those wretched military Cadets.<sup>47</sup>

"It's true that we have reliable, intelligent and tireless women in our party. They hold important posts in the soviets, executive committees, people's commissariats, and public offices of every kind. Many of them work day and night either in the party or among the workers and peasants or in the Red Army. That is of great value to us. It is important for women all over the world, as it is evidence of the capacity of women, of the great value of the work they do for society. The first proletarian dictatorship is truly paving the way for the complete social equality of women. It eradicates more prejudice than volumes of feminist literature. However, in spite of all this, we do not yet have an international communist women's movement and we must have one without fail. We must immediately set about starting it. Without such a movement, the work of our International and of its parties is incomplete and never will be complete. Yet our revolutionary work has to be fulfilled in its entirety. Tell me how communist work is getting on abroad."

I did as well as I could at the time, with the links between the Comintern parties still very loose and irregular. Lenin listened attentively, leaning slightly forward, with no sign of boredom, impatience or fatigue, keenly following even details of secondary importance. I have never known anyone who was a better listener or who could coordinate and generalise all that he had heard as fast as he did. That was evident from the short and always very specific questions he asked from time to time about what I told him, and from the fact that he returned to this or that particular of my narrative later on. Lenin made some brief notes.

Naturally, I spoke in great detail about the state of affairs in Germany. I told Lenin of the vast importance which Rosa Luxemburg attached to drawing the greatest number of women into the revolutionary struggle. When the Communist Party had been founded, she insisted that a women's newspaper be published. When Leo Jogiches and I met for the last time — 36 hours before he was murdered — he discussed the party's plan of work with me. He gave me various tasks to perform, among them a plan for the organisation of work among working women. The party tackled this

question at its first illegal conference. The trained and experienced women agitators and leaders who had become prominent before and during the war had almost without exception remained social-democrats of the one or the other shade, and kept the agitated and active proletarian women under their sway. However, there was already a small nucleus of energetic, devoted women who took part in the party's every job and every battle. Furthermore, the party itself had already organised methodical activity among the working women. Of course all this was merely a start, but a good start nevertheless.

“Not bad, not bad at all”, Lenin said. “The communist women's energy, devotion and enthusiasm, their courage and intelligence during the illegal and semi-legal periods, promise well for the development of our work. It would be useful for the expansion of the party and the growth of its strength to win over the masses and carry through actions. But how about giving all the comrades a clear understanding of the fundamentals of this question and training them — how are you getting along in this respect? This is what counts most in the work among the masses. It is very important in terms of the ideas we convey to the masses, and of the things we want the masses to adopt and take inspiration from. I cannot remember at the moment who said ‘It takes inspiration to do great deeds’. We and the working people of the whole world still have really great deeds to perform. What inspires your comrades, the proletarian women of Germany? What about their proletarian class-consciousness? Do their interests and activities centre on the political demands of the moment? What is the focal point of their thoughts?

“I have heard strange things about that from Russian and German comrades. I must tell you what I mean. I understand that in Hamburg a gifted communist woman is bringing out a newspaper for prostitutes, and is trying to organise them for the revolutionary struggle. Now Rosa, a true communist, felt and acted like a human being when she wrote an article in defence of prostitutes who have landed in jail for violating a police regulation concerning their sad trade. They are unfortunate double victims of bourgeois society. Victims, first, of its accursed system of property and, secondly, of its accursed moral hypocrisy. There's no doubt about this. Only a coarse-grained and short-sighted person could forget this. To understand this is one thing, but it is quite another thing — how shall I put it? — to organise the prostitutes as a special revolutionary guild contingent and publish a trade union paper for them. Are there really no industrial working women left in Germany who need organising, who need a newspaper, who should be enlisted in your struggle? This is a morbid deviation. It strongly reminds me of the literary vogue which made a sweet madonna out of every prostitute. Its origin was sound too: social sympathy, and indignation against the moral hypocrisy of the

honourable bourgeoisie. But the healthy principle underwent bourgeois corrosion and degenerated. The question of prostitution will confront us even in our country with many a difficult problem. Return the prostitute to productive work, find her a place in the social economy — that is the thing to do. But the present state of our economy and all the other circumstances make it a difficult and complicated matter. Here you have an aspect of the woman problem which faces us in all its magnitude, after the proletariat has come to power, and demands a practical solution. It will still require a great deal of effort here in Soviet Russia. But to return to your special problem in Germany. Under no circumstances should the party look calmly upon such improper acts of its members. It causes confusion and splits our forces. Now what have *you* done to stop it?”

Before I could answer Lenin continued:

“The record of your sins, Clara, is even worse. I have been told that at the evenings arranged for reading and discussion with working women, sex and marriage problems come first. They are said to be the main objects of interest in your political instruction and educational work. I could not believe my ears when I heard that. The first state of proletarian dictatorship is battling with the counter-revolutionaries of the whole world. The situation in Germany itself calls for the greatest unity of all proletarian revolutionary forces, so that they can repel the counter-revolution which is pushing on. But active communist women are busy discussing sex problems and the forms of marriage — ‘past, present and future’. They consider it their most important task to enlighten working women on these questions. It is said that a pamphlet on the sex question written by a communist authoress from Vienna enjoys the greatest popularity. What rot that booklet is! The workers read what is right in it long ago in Bebel. Only not in the tedious, cut-and-dried form found in the pamphlet but in the form of gripping agitation that strikes out at bourgeois society. The mention of Freud’s hypotheses is designed to give the pamphlet a scientific veneer, but it is so much bungling by an amateur. Freud’s theory has now become a fad. I mistrust sex theories expounded in articles, treatises, pamphlets, etc. — in short, the theories dealt with in that specific literature which sprouts so luxuriantly on the dung heap of bourgeois society. I mistrust those who are always absorbed in the sex problems, the way an Indian saint is absorbed in the contemplation of his navel. It seems to me that this superabundance of sex theories, which for the most part are mere hypotheses, and often quite arbitrary ones, stems from a personal need. It springs from the desire to justify one’s own abnormal or excessive sex life before bourgeois morality and to plead for tolerance towards oneself. This veiled respect for bourgeois morality is as repugnant to me as rooting about in all that bears on sex. No matter how rebellious and revolutionary it may be

made to appear, it is in the final analysis thoroughly bourgeois. Intellectuals and others like them are particularly keen on this. There is no room for it in the party, among the class-conscious, fighting proletariat.”

I interposed that where private property and the bourgeois social order prevail, questions of sex and marriage gave rise to manifold problems, conflicts and suffering for women of all social classes and strata. As far as women are concerned, the war and its consequences exacerbated the existing conflicts and suffering to the utmost precisely in the sphere of sexual relations. Problems formerly concealed from women were now laid bare. To this was added the atmosphere of incipient revolution. The world of old emotions and thoughts was cracking up. Former social connections were loosening and breaking. The makings of new relations between people were appearing. Interest in the relevant problems was an expression of the need for enlightenment and a new orientation. It was also a reaction against the distortions and hypocrisy of bourgeois society. Knowledge of the modifications of the forms of marriage and family that took place in the course of history, and of their dependence on economics, would serve to rid the minds of working women of their preconceived idea of the eternity of bourgeois society. The critically historical attitude to this had to lead to an unrelenting analysis of bourgeois society, an exposure of its essence and its consequences, including the branding of false sex morality. All roads led to Rome. Every truly Marxist analysis of an important part of the ideological superstructure of society, of an outstanding social phenomenon, had to lead to an analysis of bourgeois society and its foundation, private property. It should lead to the conclusion that “Carthage must be destroyed”.

Lenin nodded with a smile.

“There you are! You defend your comrades and your party like a lawyer. What you say is of course true. But that can at best excuse, not justify, the mistake made in Germany. It remains a mistake. Can you assure me in all sincerity that during those reading and discussion evenings, questions of sex and marriage are dealt with from the point of view of mature, vital historical materialism? This presupposes wide-ranging, profound knowledge, and the fullest Marxist mastery of a vast amount of material. Do you now have the forces you need for that? Had you had them, a pamphlet like the one we spoke about would not have been used for instruction during reading and discussion evenings. It is being recommended and disseminated instead of being criticised. Why is the approach to this problem inadequate and un-Marxist? Because sex and marriage problems are not treated as only part of the main social problem. Conversely, the main social problem is presented as a part, an appendage to the sex problem. The important point recedes into the background. Thus not only is this question obscured, but also thought, and the class-consciousness of working women

in general, is dulled.

“Besides, and this isn’t the least important point, Solomon the Wise said there is a time for everything. I ask you, is this the time to keep working women busy for months at a stretch with such questions as how to love or be loved, how to woo or be wooed? This, of course, with regard to the ‘past, present and future’, and among the various races. And it is proudly styled historical materialism. Nowadays all the thoughts of communist women, of working women, should be centred on the proletarian revolution, which will lay the foundation, among other things, for the necessary revision of material and sexual relations. Just now we must really give priority to problems other than the forms of marriage prevalent among Australia’s aborigines, or marriage between brother and sister in ancient times. For the German proletariat, the problem of the soviets, of the Versailles Treaty and its impact on the lives of women, the problem of unemployment, of falling wages, of taxes and many other things remain the order of the day. To be brief, I am still of the opinion that this sort of political and social education of working women is wrong, absolutely wrong. How could you keep quiet about it? You should have set your authority against it.”

I told my fervent friend that I had never failed to criticise and to remonstrate with the leading women comrades in various places. But, as he knew, no prophet is honoured in his own country or in his own house. By my criticism I had drawn upon myself the suspicion that “survivals of a social-democratic attitude and old-fashioned philistinism were still strong” in my mind. However, in the end my criticism had proved effective. Sex and marriage were no longer the focal point in lectures at discussion evenings. Lenin resumed the thread of his argument.

“Yes, yes, I know that,” he said. “Many people rather suspect *me* of philistinism on this account, although such an attitude is repugnant to me — it conceals so much narrow-mindedness and hypocrisy. Well, I’m unruffled by it. Yellow-beaked fledgelings newly hatched from their bourgeois-tainted eggs are all so terribly clever. We have to put up with that without mending our ways. The youth movement is also affected with the modern approach to the sex problem and with excessive interest in it.”

Lenin emphasised the word “modern” with an ironical, deprecating gesture.

“I was also told that sex problems are a favourite subject in your youth organisations too, and that there are hardly enough lecturers on this subject. This nonsense is especially dangerous and damaging to the youth movement. It can easily lead to sexual excesses, to overstimulation of sex life and to wasted health and strength of young people. You must fight that too. There is no lack of contact between the youth movement and the women’s movement. Our communist women everywhere should cooperate methodically with young people. This will be a continuation of motherhood,



will elevate it and extend it from the individual to the social sphere. Women's incipient social life and activities must be promoted, so that they can outgrow the narrowness of their philistine, individualistic psychology centred on home and family. But this is incidental.

"In our country, too, considerable numbers of young people are busy 'revising bourgeois conceptions and morals' in the sex question. And let me add that this involves a considerable section of our best boys and girls, of our truly promising youth. It is as you have just said. In the atmosphere created by the aftermath of war and by the revolution which has begun, old ideological values, finding themselves in a society whose economic foundations are undergoing a radical change, perish, and lose their restraining force. New values crystallise slowly, in the struggle. With regard to relations between people, and between man and woman, feelings and thoughts are also becoming revolutionised. New boundaries are being drawn between the rights of the individual and those of the community, and hence also the duties of the individual. Things are still in complete, chaotic ferment. The direction and potentiality of the various contradictory tendencies can still not be seen clearly enough. It is a slow and often very painful process of passing away and coming into being. All this applies also to the field of sexual relations, marriage, and the family. The decay, putrescence, and filth of bourgeois marriage with its difficult dissolution, its licence for the husband and bondage for the wife, and its disgustingly false sex morality and relations fill the best and most spiritually active of people with the utmost loathing.

"The coercion of bourgeois marriage and bourgeois legislation on the family enhance the evil and aggravate the conflicts. It is the coercion of 'sacrosanct' property. It sanctifies venality, baseness, and dirt. The conventional hypocrisy of 'respectable' bourgeois society takes care of the rest. People revolt against the prevailing abominations and perversions. And at a time when mighty nations are being destroyed, when the former power relations are being disrupted, when a whole social world is beginning to decline, the sensations of the individual undergo a rapid change. A stimulating thirst for different forms of enjoyment easily acquires an irresistible force. Sexual and marriage reforms in the bourgeois sense will not do. In the sphere of sexual relations and marriage, a revolution is approaching — in keeping with the proletarian revolution. Of course, women and young people are taking a deep interest in the complex tangle of problems which have arisen as a result of this. Both the former and the latter suffer greatly from the present messy state of sex relations. Young people rebel against them with the vehemence of their years. This is only natural. Nothing could be falser than to preach monastic self-denial and the sanctity of the filthy bourgeois morals to young people. However, it is hardly a good thing that sex, already strongly

felt in the physical sense, should at such a time assume so much prominence in the psychology of young people. The consequences are nothing short of fatal. Ask Comrade Lilina about it. She ought to have had many experiences in her extensive work at educational institutions of various kinds and you know that she is a communist through and through, and has no prejudices.

“Youth’s altered attitude to questions of sex is of course ‘fundamental’, and based on theory. Many people call it ‘revolutionary’ and ‘communist’. They sincerely believe that this is so. I am an old man, and I do not like it. I may be a morose ascetic, but quite often this so-called ‘new sex life’ of young people — and frequently of the adults too — seems to me purely bourgeois and simply an extension of the good old bourgeois brothel. All this has nothing in common with free love as we communists understand it. No doubt you have heard about the famous theory that in communist society satisfying sexual desire and the craving for love is as simple and trivial as ‘drinking a glass of water’. A section of our youth has gone mad, absolutely mad, over this ‘glass-of-water theory’. It has been fatal to many a young boy and girl. Its devotees assert that it is a Marxist theory. I want no part of the kind of Marxism which infers all phenomena and all changes in the ideological superstructure of society directly and blandly from its economic basis, for things are not as simple as all that. A certain Frederick Engels has established this a long time ago with regard to historical materialism.

“I consider the famous ‘glass-of-water’ theory as completely un-Marxist and, moreover, as antisocial. It is not only what nature has given but also what has become culture, whether of a high or low level, that comes into play in sexual life. Engels pointed out in his *Origin of the Family* how significant it was that the common sexual relations had developed into individual sex love and thus became purer. The relations between the sexes are not simply the expression of a mutual influence between economics and a physical want deliberately singled out for physiological examination. It would be rationalism and not Marxism to attempt to refer the change in these relations directly to the economic basis of society in isolation from its connection with the ideology as a whole. To be sure, thirst has to be quenched. But would a normal person normally lie down in the gutter and drink from a puddle? Or even from a glass whose edge has been greased by many lips? But the social aspect is more important than anything else. The drinking of water is really an individual matter. But it takes two people to make love, and a third person, a new life, is likely to come into being. This deed has a social complexion and constitutes a duty to the community.

“As a communist I have no liking at all for the ‘glass-of-water’ theory, despite its attractive label: ‘emancipation of love’. Besides, emancipation of love is neither a novel

nor a communistic idea. You will recall that it was advanced in fine literature around the middle of the past century as 'emancipation of the heart'. In bourgeois practice it materialised into emancipation of the flesh. It was preached with greater talent than now, though I cannot judge how it was practised. Not that I want my criticism to breed asceticism. That is farthest from my thoughts. Communism should not bring asceticism, but joy and strength, stemming, among other things, from a consummate love life. Whereas today, in my opinion, the obtaining plethora of sex life yields neither joy nor strength. On the contrary, it impairs them. This is bad, very bad, indeed, in the epoch of revolution.

"Young people are particularly in need of joy and strength. Healthy sports, such as gymnastics, swimming, hiking, physical exercises of every description and a wide range of intellectual interests is what they need, as well as learning, study and research, and as far as possible collectively. This will be far more useful to young people than endless lectures and discussions on sex problems and the so-called living by one's nature. *Mens sana in corpore sano*. Be neither monk nor Don Juan, but not anything in between either, like a German philistine. You know the young comrade X. He is a splendid lad, and highly gifted. For all that, I am afraid that he will never amount to anything. He has one love affair after another. This is not good for the political struggle and for the revolution. I will not vouch for the reliability or the endurance of women whose love affair is intertwined with politics, or for the men who run after every petticoat and let themselves in with every young female. No, no, that does not go well with revolution."

Lenin sprang to his feet, slapped the table with his hand and paced up and down the room.

"The revolution calls for concentration and rallying of every nerve by the masses and by the individual. It does not tolerate orgiastic conditions so common among d'Annunzio's decadent heroes and heroines. Promiscuity in sexual matters is bourgeois. It is a sign of degeneration. The proletariat is a rising class. It does not need an intoxicant to stupefy or stimulate it, neither the intoxicant of sexual laxity or of alcohol. It should and will not forget the vileness, the filth and the barbarity of capitalism. It derives its strongest inspiration to fight from its class position, from the communist ideal. What it needs is clarity, clarity, and more clarity. Therefore, I repeat, there must be no weakening, no waste and no dissipation of energy. Self-control and self-discipline are not slavery; not in matters of love either. But excuse me, Clara, I have strayed far from the point which we set out to discuss. Why have you not called me to order? Worry has set me talking. I take the future of our youth very close to heart. It is part and parcel of the revolution. Whenever harmful elements appear, which creep from bourgeois society to the world of the revolution and spread like the roots of prolific weeds, it is

better to take action against them quickly. The questions we have dealt with are also part of the women's problems."

Lenin spoke with great animation and deep persuasion. I could feel that his every word came from the heart, and the expression on his face added to this feeling. From time to time he punctuated some idea with energetic gestures. I was astonished to see how much attention he devoted to trivial matters and how familiar he was with them, side by side with highly important political problems. And not only as concerned Soviet Russia, but also the still capitalist countries. Splendid Marxist that he was, he grasped the particular wherever and in whatever form it revealed itself, in its relation to, and its bearing upon, the whole. All his zest and purpose was concentrated with unshakeable singleness, like irresistible forces of nature, upon the one goal of speeding the revolution as a work of the masses. He evaluated everything in terms of its effect on the conscious motive forces of the revolution, both national and international, for while he evaluated the historically conditioned features of the individual countries and their different stages of development, he always had his eyes on the indivisible worldwide proletarian revolution.

"Comrade Lenin, how I regret", I exclaimed, "that your words have not been heard by hundreds and thousands of people. As you know, you do not have to convert me. But how important it would be for friend and foe to hear your opinion!"

Lenin smiled amiably.

"I may speak or write some day on the questions we have discussed. But later, not now. Now all our time and strength must be concentrated on other things. There are bigger and more difficult jobs to do. The struggle to maintain and strengthen the Soviet state is not yet over by any means. We have to digest the outcome of the Polish War<sup>48</sup> and to make the most we can of it. Wrangel is still hanging on in the South. It is true, I am deeply convinced that we shall cope with him. That will give the British and French imperialists and their small vassals something to think about. But the most difficult part of our task, reconstruction, is still ahead. That will also bring the problems of sex relations, marriage and the family to the foreground. In the meantime, you will have to handle it as best you can where and when it is necessary. You should not allow these questions to be handled in an un-Marxist way or to serve as the basis for disruptive deviations and intrigues. Now at last I come to your work."

Lenin consulted his watch.

"Half of the time I have at my disposal for you", he said, "has already expired. I have chatted too long. You are to work out the leading theses on communist work among women. I know your principled approach and practical experience. So our talk about this will be brief; you had better get busy. What do you think the theses should

be?”

I gave him a concise account on this score. Lenin nodded approvingly a few times without interrupting. When I was through I looked at him questioningly.

“Right”, he remarked. “It would also be a good thing if you were to inform a meeting of responsible women party comrades about it and to discuss it with them. Too bad Comrade Inessa [Armand] is not here. She is sick and has gone to the Caucasus. Put the theses in writing after the discussion. A committee will look them over and the Executive Committee will make the final decision. I give my opinion on only some of the main points, on which I fully share your views. They seem important to me also for our present agitation and propaganda work if it is to pave the way for action, for successful fighting.

“The theses must emphasise strongly that true emancipation of women is not possible except through communism. You must lay stress on the unbreakable connection between woman’s human and social position and the private ownership of the means of production. This will draw a strong, ineradicable line against the bourgeois movement for the ‘emancipation of women’. This will also give us a basis for examining the woman question as part of the social, working-class question, and to bind it firmly with the proletarian class struggle and the revolution. The communist women’s movement itself must be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movements; and not only of the proletarians, but of all the exploited and oppressed, of all victims of capitalism or of the dominant class. Therein, too, lies the significance of the women’s movement for the class struggle of the proletariat and its historic mission, the creation of a communist society. We can be legitimately proud that we have the flower of revolutionary womanhood in our party, in the Comintern. But this is not decisive, we have to win over the millions of working women in town and country for our struggle and, particularly, for the communist reconstruction of society. There can be no real mass movement without the women.

“We derive our organisational ideas from our ideological conceptions. We want no separate organisations of communist women! She who is a communist belongs as a member to the party, just as he who is a communist. They have the same rights and duties. There can be no difference of opinion on that score. However, we must not shut our eyes to the facts. The party must have organs — working groups, commissions, committees, sections or whatever else they may be called — with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact with the party and keeping them under its influence. This naturally requires that we carry on systematic work among the women. We must teach the awakened women, win them over for the proletarian class struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party, and equip

them for it. When I say this I have in mind not only proletarian women, whether they work in mills or cook the family meal. I also have in mind the peasant women and the women of the various sections of the lower middle class. They, too, are victims of capitalism, and more than ever since the war. The lack of interest in politics and the otherwise antisocial and backward psychology of these masses of women, the narrow scope of their activities and the whole pattern of their lives are undeniable facts. It would be silly to ignore them, absolutely silly. We must have our own groups to work among them, special methods of agitation, and special forms of organisation. This is not bourgeois 'feminism'; it is a practical revolutionary expediency."

I told Lenin that his arguments were a valuable encouragement for me. Many comrades, very good ones, too, vehemently opposed the party's setting up special groups for planned work among women. They denounced it as a return to the notorious "emancipation of women" movement, to social-democratic traditions. They claimed that since the communist parties gave equality to women they should, consequently, carry on work without differentiation among all the working people in general. The approach to men and to women should be the same. Any attempt to consider the circumstances which Lenin had noted concerning agitation and organisation would be branded by the exponents of this view as opportunism, as renunciation and betrayal of fundamental principles.

"This is not new and not conclusive", Lenin said. "Do not let it mislead you. Why are there nowhere as many women in the party as men, not even in Soviet Russia? Why is the number of women in the trade unions so small? These facts give one food for thought. Denial of the indispensable special groups for work among the masses of women is part of the very principled, very radical attitude of our dear friends of the Communist Workers' Party. They are of the opinion that only one form of organisation should exist — a workers' union. I know about it. Principles are invoked by many revolutionary-minded but confused people whenever there is a lack of understanding, i.e., whenever the mind refuses to grasp the obvious facts that ought to be heeded. How do such guardians of 'the purity of principles' cope with the historical necessities of our revolutionary policy? All their talk collapses in face of the inexorable necessities. We cannot exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat without having millions of women on our side. Nor can we engage in communist construction without them. We must find a way to reach them. We must study and search in order to find this way.

"It is therefore perfectly right for us to put forward demands for the benefit of women. This is not a minimum program, nor a program of reform in the social-democratic sense, in the sense of the Second International. It does not go to show that we believe the bourgeoisie and its state will last forever, or even for a long time. Nor is

it an attempt to pacify the masses of women with reforms and to divert them from the path of revolutionary struggle. It is nothing of the sort, and not any sort of reformist humbug either. Our demands are no more than practical conclusions, drawn by us from the crying needs and disgraceful humiliations that weak and underprivileged woman must bear under the bourgeois system. We demonstrate thereby that we are aware of these needs and of the oppression of women, that we are conscious of the privileged position of the men, and that we hate — yes, hate — and want to remove whatever oppresses and harasses the working woman, the wife of the worker, the peasant woman, the wife of the little man, and even in many respects the woman of the propertied classes. The rights and social measures we demand of bourgeois society for women are proof that we understand the position and interests of women and that we will take note of them under the proletarian dictatorship. Naturally, not as soporific and patronising reformists. No, by no means. But as revolutionaries who call upon the women to take a hand as equals in the reconstruction of the economy and of the ideological superstructure.”

I assured Lenin that I was of the same opinion, but that it would no doubt be opposed. Uncertain and timid minds would reject it as suspicious opportunism. Nor could it be denied that our present demands for women might be incorrectly understood and interpreted.

“What of it?” Lenin exclaimed, somewhat annoyed. “This risk exists in everything we say and do. If we are going to let fear of this stop us from doing the advisable and necessary, we might as well turn into Indian stylites. We mustn’t budge, we mustn’t budge on any account, or we shall tumble from the lofty pillar of our principles! In our case it is not only a matter of what we demand, but also of how we demand. I believe I have made that sufficiently clear. It stands to reason that in our propaganda we must not make a fetish out of our demands for women. No, we must fight now for these and now for other demands, depending on the existing conditions, and naturally always in association with the general interests of the proletariat.

“Every tussle of this kind sets us at loggerheads with the respectable bourgeois clique and its no less respectable reformist lackeys. This compels the latter either to fight under our leadership — which they do not want — or to drop their disguise. Thus, the struggle fences us off from them and shows our communist face. It wins us the confidence of the mass of women, who feel themselves exploited, enslaved and crushed by the domination of the man, by the power of their employers and by bourgeois society as a whole. Betrayed and abandoned by all, working women come to realise that they must fight together with us. Must I avow, or make you avow, that the struggle for women’s rights must also be linked with our principal aim — the

conquest of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat? At present, this is, and will continue to be, our alpha and omega. That is clear, absolutely clear. But the broad masses of working women will not feel irresistibly drawn to the struggle for state power if we harp on just this one demand, even though we may blare it forth on the trumpets of Jericho. No, a thousand times no! We must combine our appeal politically in the minds of the female masses with the sufferings, the needs and the wishes of the working women. They should all know what the proletarian dictatorship will mean to them — complete equality of rights with men, both legal and in practice, in the family, the state and in society, and that it also spells the annihilation of the power of the bourgeoisie.”

“Soviet Russia proves this”, I exclaimed. “This will be our great example!”

Lenin went on:

“Soviet Russia casts a new light on our demands for women. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat they are no longer an object of struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Once they are carried out, they serve as bricks for the building of communist society. This shows the women on the other side of the border the decisive importance of the conquest of power by the proletariat. The difference between their status here and there must be demonstrated in bold relief in order to win the support of the masses of women in the revolutionary class struggles of the proletariat. Mobilisation of the female masses, carried out with a clear understanding of principles and on a firm organisational basis, is a vital question for the communist parties and their victories. But let us not deceive ourselves. Our national sections still lack the proper understanding of this question. They adopt a passive, wait-and-see attitude when it comes to creating a mass movement of working women under communist leadership. They do not realise that developing and leading such a mass movement is an important part of all party activity, as much as half of all the party work. Their occasional recognition of the need and value of a purposeful, strong and numerous communist women’s movement is but platonic lip-service rather than a steady concern and task of the party.

“They regard agitation and propaganda among women and the task of rousing and revolutionising them as of secondary importance, as the job of just the women communists. None but the latter are rebuked because the matter does not move ahead more quickly and strongly. This is wrong, fundamentally wrong! It is outright separatism. It is equality of women *à rebours*, as the French say, i.e., equality reversed. What is at the bottom of the incorrect attitude of our national sections? (I am not speaking of Soviet Russia.) In the final analysis, it is an underestimation of women and of their accomplishments. That’s just what it is! Unfortunately, we may still say of



many of our comrades, 'Scratch the communist and a philistine appears'. To be sure, you have to scratch the sensitive spots — such as their mentality regarding women. Could there be any more palpable proof than the common sight of a man calmly watching a woman wear herself out with trivial, monotonous, strength- and time-consuming work, such as her housework, and watching her spirit shrinking, her mind growing dull, her heartbeat growing faint, and her will growing slack? It goes without saying that I am not referring to the bourgeois ladies who dump all housework and the care for their children on the hired help. What I say applies to the vast majority of women, including the wives of workers, even if these spend the day at the factory and earn money.

“Very few husbands, not even the proletarians, think of how much they could lighten the burdens and worries of their wives, or relieve them entirely, if they lent a hand in this ‘women’s work’. But no, that would go against the ‘privilege and dignity of the husband’. He demands that he have rest and comfort. The domestic life of the woman is a daily sacrifice of self to a thousand insignificant trifles. The ancient rights of her husband, her lord and master, survive unnoticed. Objectively, his slave takes her revenge. Also in concealed form. Her backwardness and her lack of understanding for her husband’s revolutionary ideas act as a drag on his fighting spirit, on his determination to fight. They are like tiny worms, gnawing and undermining imperceptibly, slowly but surely. I know the life of the workers, and not only from books. Our communist work among the masses of women, and our political work in general, involves considerable educational work among the men. We must root out the old slave-owner’s point of view, both in the party and among the masses. That is one of our political tasks, a task just as urgently necessary as the formation of a staff composed of comrades, men and women, with thorough theoretical and practical training for party work among working women.”

To my question about present-day conditions in Soviet Russia, Lenin replied:

“The government of the proletarian dictatorship — jointly with the Communist Party and the trade unions of course — makes every effort to overcome the backward views of men and women and thus uproot the old, noncommunist psychology. It goes without saying that men and women are absolutely equal before the law. A sincere desire to give effect to this equality is evident in all spheres. We are enlisting women to work in the economy, the administration, legislation and government. All courses and educational institutions are open to them, so that they can improve their professional and social training. We are organising community kitchens and public dining-rooms, laundries and repair shops, crèches, kindergartens, children’s homes and educational institutions of every kind. In brief, we are quite in earnest about carrying out the

requirements of our program to shift the functions of housekeeping and education from the individual household to society. Woman is thus being relieved from her old domestic slavery and all dependence on her husband. She is enabled to give her capabilities and inclinations full play in society. Children are offered better opportunities for their development than at home. We have the most progressive female labour legislation in the world, and it is enforced by authorised representatives of organised labour. We are establishing maternity homes, mother-and-child homes, mothers' health centres, courses for infant and child-care, exhibitions of mother and child-care, and the like. We are making every effort to provide for needy and unemployed women.

“We know perfectly well that all this is still too little, considering the needs of the working women, and that it is still far from sufficient for their real emancipation. Yet it is an immense stride forward from what there was in tsarist and capitalist Russia. Moreover, it is a lot as compared with the state of affairs where capitalism still holds undivided sway. It is a good start in the right direction, and we shall continue to develop it consistently, and with all available energy, too. You abroad may rest assured. Because with each day that passes it becomes clearer that we cannot make progress without the millions of women. Think what this means in a country where the peasants comprise a solid 80% of the population. Small peasant farming implies individual housekeeping and the bondage of women. You will be far better off than we are in this respect, provided your proletarians at last grasp that the time is historically ripe for seizure of power, for revolution. In the meantime, we are not giving way to despair, despite the great difficulties. Our forces grow as the latter increase. Practical necessity will also impel us to find new ways of emancipating the masses of women. In combination with the Soviet state, comradely solidarity will accomplish wonders. To be sure, I mean comradely solidarity in the communist, not in the bourgeois, sense, in which it is preached by the reformists, whose revolutionary enthusiasm has evaporated like the smell of cheap vinegar. Personal initiative, which grows into, and fuses with collective activity, should accompany comradely solidarity. Under the proletarian dictatorship the emancipation of women through the realisation of communism will proceed also in the countryside. In this respect I expect much from the electrification of our industry and agriculture. That is a grand scheme! The difficulties in its way are great, monstrously great. Powerful forces latent in the masses will have to be released and trained to overcome them. Millions of women must take part in this.”

Someone had knocked twice in the last 10 minutes, but Lenin had continued to speak. Now he opened the door and shouted:

“I'm coming!”

Turning in my direction, he added with a smile:

“You know, Clara, I am going to take advantage of the fact that I was conversing with a woman and will name the notorious female loquacity as the excuse for being late. Although this time it was the man and not the woman who did most of the talking. In general, I must say that you are really a good listener. But it was this that probably prompted me to talk so much.”

With this jocular remark Lenin helped me on with my coat.

“You should dress more warmly”, he suggested solicitously. “Moscow is not Stuttgart. You need someone to look after you. Don’t catch cold. Good-bye.”

He shook my hand firmly.



I had another talk with Lenin on the women’s movement about a fortnight later. Lenin came to see me. As almost always, his visit was unexpected. It was an impromptu visit and occurred during an intermission in the gigantic burden of work accomplished by the leader of the victorious revolution. Lenin looked very tired and worried. Wrangel had not yet been crushed and the question of supplying the big cities with food confronted the Soviet government like an inexorable sphinx.

Lenin asked how the theses were coming along. I told him that a big commission had been in session, which all prominent women communists then in Moscow had attended and where they had spoken their opinions. The theses were ready and were now to be discussed by a small committee. Lenin pointed out that we should strive to have the Third World Congress<sup>49</sup> examine the problem with due thoroughness. This fact alone would break down the prejudice of many comrades. Anyhow, the women communists should be the first to take things in hand, and with vigour.

“Don’t twitter like a bunch of chatterboxes, but speak out loudly and clearly like fighters should”, Lenin exclaimed with animation. “A congress is not a parlour where women display their charm, as we read in novels. A congress is a battlefield in which we fight for the knowledge we need for revolutionary action. Show that you can fight. In the first place, of course, against our enemies, but also within the party, should the need arise. After all, the broad masses of women are at stake. Our Russian party will back all proposals and measures that will help to win these masses. If the women are not with us, the counter-revolutionaries may succeed in setting them against us. We must always bear this in mind.”

“We must win the mass of women over even if they are riveted to heaven by chains, as Stralsund puts it”, I said, pursuing Lenin’s idea. “Here, in the centre of the revolution with its richly seething life, with its strong, rapid pulse, a plan has occurred to me of a big, joint international action among the working women. It was prompted

primarily by your big nonpartisan women's conferences and congresses. We should try to transform them from national into international ones. It is a fact that the world war and its aftermath have deeply shaken the bulk of the women of various classes and sections of society. They are in ferment. They have been set in motion. Their distressing worries about securing a livelihood and the search for the purpose of life confront them with problems which most of them had hardly suspected and only a small minority had grasped in the past. Bourgeois society is unable to provide a satisfactory answer to their questions. Only communism can do it. We must rouse the broad masses of women in the capitalist countries to consciousness and should for that purpose call a nonpartisan international women's congress."

Lenin did not reply at once. He sat lost in thought, considering the problem, his lips pursed, the lower lip protruding slightly.

"Yes, we ought to do it", he said finally. "The plan is good. But a good plan, even an excellent one, is worthless unless it is well executed. Have you thought about how it should be executed? What are your ideas on this score?"

I set out my ideas to Lenin in detail. To begin with, we ought to form a committee of communist women from various countries in close and constant contact with our national sections. This committee would prepare, conduct and make use of the congress. It had to be decided whether it would be desirable for the committee to work openly and officially from the very beginning. At any rate, it would be the first task of the committee members to make contact with the leaders of the organised female workers in each country, the proletarian political women's movement, bourgeois women's organisations of every trend and description, and finally the prominent female physicians, teachers, writers, etc., and to form national nonpartisan preparatory committees. An international committee would be formed from among the members of these national committees to prepare and convene the international congress, to draw up its agenda and to pick the time and place for the congress.

In my opinion the congress ought first to discuss the women's right to engage in trades and professions. In doing so it should deal with the questions of unemployment, equal pay for equal work, legislation on the eight-hour day and labour protection for women, organisation of trade unions, social care of mother and child, social measures to relieve housewives and mothers, etc. Furthermore, the agenda should deal with the status of women in marriage and family legislation and in public and political law. After substantiating these proposals I explained how the national committees in the various countries should thoroughly prepare the ground for the congress by a planned campaign at meetings and in the press. This campaign was particularly important in rousing the biggest possible number of women, to stimulate a serious study of the

problems submitted for discussion, and to draw their attention to the congress and thereby to communism and the parties of the Communist International. The campaign had to reach the working women of all social strata. It would have to secure attendance and participation in the congress of representatives of all organisations concerned, and also of delegates from public women's meetings. The congress was to be a "popular representative body" entirely different from a bourgeois parliament.

It went without saying that women communists were to be not merely the motive but also the leading force in the preparatory work, and should have the energetic support of our sections. Naturally, the same applied also to the work of the international committee, the work of the congress itself, and to its extensive use. Communist theses and resolutions on all items on the agenda should be submitted to the congress. They should be carefully worded and well reasoned with scholarly mastery of the relevant social facts. These theses should be discussed and approved beforehand by the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The communist solutions and slogans should be the focal point on which the work of the congress and public attention would concentrate. After the congress they should be disseminated among the broad masses of women by means of agitation and propaganda, so that they may become determinative for international women's mass actions. Needless to say, all this requires as an essential condition that women communists work in all the committees and at the congress itself as a firm, solid body and that they act together on a lucid and unshakeable plan. There should be no out-of-turn actions.

In the course of my explanation Lenin nodded several times in approval and interposed a few remarks.

"It seems to me, dear comrade", he said, "that you have considered the matter very thoroughly in the political sense, and also the main points of the organisational angle. I fully agree that such a congress could accomplish much in the present situation. It offers us the opportunity of winning over the broad masses of women, particularly women in the various trades and professions, the industrial women workers and home-workers, the teachers and other professional women. This would be wonderful. Think of the situation in the big economic struggles or political strikes. What a reinforcement the revolutionary proletariat would gain in the class-conscious masses of women. Provided, of course, that we are able to win them over and keep them on our side. Our gain would be great. It would be nothing short of immense. But what would you say to the following few questions? The authorities will probably frown very severely upon the idea of this congress and will try to prevent it. However they are not likely to dare suppress it by brute force. Whatever they do will not frighten you. But are you not afraid that the women communists will be overwhelmed in the

committees and at the congress itself by the numerical superiority of the bourgeois and reformist delegates and their unquestionably greater experience? Besides, and most important, do you really have confidence in the Marxist schooling of our communist comrades, and are you sure that a shock group can be picked among them that will come out of the battle with honour?"

I told Lenin in reply that the authorities were not likely to use the mailed fist against the congress. Intrigues and boorish attacks against it would only act in its favour, and ours. We communists could more than match the greater number and experience of the noncommunist elements by the scientific superiority of historical materialism with its study and illumination of social problems, the perseverance with which we would demand that they be solved, and last but not least, by references to the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia and its fundamental accomplishments in the work of emancipating the women. The weakness and lack of training of some of our comrades, their inexperience, could be compensated by planned preparation and teamwork. In this respect, I expect the very best from the Russian women comrades. They would form the iron core of our phalanx. In their company I would calmly brave much more hazardous clashes than the congress battles. Besides, even if we are outvoted, the very fact that we fought will put communism in the foreground and will have a big propaganda effect. Furthermore, it will give us points of departure for subsequent work.

Lenin laughed heartily.

"You are as enthusiastic as ever about the Russian women revolutionaries. Yes indeed, old love is not forgotten. I think you are right. Even defeat after a stubborn struggle would be a gain; it would prepare the ground for future gains among the working women. All things considered, it is a risk worth taking. It cannot possibly prove a total failure. But naturally, I hope for victory and wish you success from the bottom of my heart. It would considerably enhance our strength, it would widen and fortify our battlefield, it would put life into our ranks and set them in motion. That is always useful. Moreover, the congress would foment and increase unrest, uncertainty, contradictions and conflicts in the camp of the bourgeoisie and its reformist friends. One can just imagine who is going to sit down with the 'hyenas of the revolution', and, if things go well, to deliberate under their leadership. It will be the brave, well-disciplined female social-democrats under the supreme guidance of Scheidemann, Dittmann and Legien; the pious Christian women blessed by the pope or devoted to Luther; daughters of privy counsellors, wives of newly-appointed councillors of state, lady-like English pacifists and ardent French suffragettes. What a picture of chaos, of the decay of the bourgeois world the congress is bound to present! What a portrayal of its hopeless

conditions! The congress would add to the division and thereby weaken the forces of the counter-revolution. Every weakening of the enemy is tantamount to a strengthening of our forces. I am in favour of the congress. You will get our vigorous support. So get started, and I wish you luck in the struggle.”

We spoke then about the situation in Germany, particularly the impending “Unity Congress” of the old Spartacists and the left wing of the Independents. Thereupon, Lenin left in a hurry, exchanging friendly greetings with several comrades working in the room he had had to cross.

I set about the preparatory work with high hopes. However, the congress floundered, because it was opposed by the German and Bulgarian women comrades who were then leaders of the biggest communist women’s movements outside Soviet Russia. They were flatly against calling the congress.

When I informed Lenin of this he answered:

“It is a pity, a great pity! These comrades missed a splendid opportunity to give a new and better outlook of hope for the masses of women and thereby to draw them into the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat. Who can tell whether such a favourable opportunity will recur in the near future? One should strike while the iron is hot. But the task remains. You must look for a way to reach the masses of women whom capitalism has plunged into dire need. You must look for it on all accounts. There is no evading this imperative task. Without the organised activity of the masses under communist leadership there can be no victory over capitalism and no building of communism. And so the hitherto dormant masses of women must be finally set into motion.”



The first year spent by the revolutionary proletariat without Lenin has passed. It has shown the strength of his cause. It has proved the leader’s great genius. It has shown how great and irreplaceable the loss has been. Salvoes mark the sad hour when Lenin closed his farseeing, penetrating eyes for ever, a year ago. I see an endless procession of mourning working people, as they go to Lenin’s resting-place. Their mourning is my mourning, the mourning of the millions. My newly-awakened grief evokes overwhelming memories in me of the reality that makes the painful present recede. I hear again every word Lenin spoke in conversation with me. I see every change in his face ... Banners are lowered at Lenin’s tomb. They are banners steeped in the blood of fighters for the revolution. Laurel wreaths are laid. Not one of them is superfluous. And I add to them these modest lines. ■

## Appendix 4

# Methods & Forms of Work among Communist Party Women: Theses<sup>50</sup>

### **Basic principles**

1. The Third Congress of the Communist International, in conjunction with the Second International Conference of Communist women, confirms once again the decision of the First and Second Congresses that all the communist parties of the West and the East need to increase work amongst the female proletariat, educating the broad mass of working women in communist ideas and drawing them into the struggle for soviet power, for the construction of the soviet workers' republic.

Throughout the world the working class and consequently working women as well, are confronting the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The capitalist economic system has entered a blind alley; there is no scope for the development of the productive forces within the framework of capitalism. The sharp decline in living standards of the working people, the inability of the bourgeoisie to restore production, the rise of speculation, the disintegration of production, unemployment, price fluctuations and the gap between prices and wages, lead everywhere to the inevitable sharpening of the class struggle. This struggle decides who and which system is to lead, administer and organise production — either a small group of bourgeois or the working class basing itself on the principles of communism.

The newly emergent proletarian class must, in accordance with the laws of economic development, take the apparatus of production into its own hands and create new economic forms. Only then will it be in a position to encourage the maximum development of the productive forces, which are held in check by the anarchy of

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Adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International, July 8, 1921.



capitalist production.

While power is in the hands of the bourgeois class, the proletariat is unable to organise production. While they keep this power there are no reforms or measures that the democratic or socialist governments of the bourgeois countries could adopt to save the situation or alleviate the terrible and unbearable sufferings of the working women and men which result from the collapse of the capitalist economic system. Only by seizing power can the class of producers take hold of the means of production, thus making it possible to direct economic development in the interests of the working people.

To accelerate the inevitable and final battle between the proletariat and the obsolete bourgeois world, the working class must adhere firmly and without hesitation to the tactics outlined by the Third International. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the fundamental and immediate goal and this determines for the proletariat of both sexes the methods of work and the direction the struggle takes.

The struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most important question facing the proletariat in the capitalist countries. In those countries where dictatorship is already in the hands of the workers, the building of a communist society is the vital question. The Third Congress of the Communist International maintains that without the active participation of the broad masses of the female proletariat and the semiproletarian women, the proletariat can neither seize power nor realise communism.

At the same time, the Congress once again draws the attention of all women to the fact that without communist party support for all the projects leading to the liberation of women, the recognition of women's rights as equal human beings and their real emancipation cannot in practice be won.

2. In the present period particularly, it is in the interests of the working class that women are drawn into the organised ranks of the proletariat as it fights for communism. As the economic dislocation increases on a world scale and the consequences press more heavily on all the urban and rural poor, the question of social revolution is more sharply posed for the working class of the bourgeois-capitalist countries, while the working people of Soviet Russia face the task of creating a national economy on new communist lines. The active, conscious and determined participation of women will ensure that these goals are more easily realised.

Where the question of winning power is posed directly, the communist party has to take into account the enormous danger presented to the revolution by the masses of passive working women who are outside the movement — the housewives, office workers and peasant women who are still under the influence of the bourgeois world-view, the church and tradition, and have no links with the great liberation movement

for communism. Women that stand outside this movement are inevitably a stronghold of bourgeois ideas and a target for counter-revolutionary propaganda, both in the West and in the East. The experience of the Hungarian revolution, where women's lack of class consciousness played such a sad role, must serve as a warning for the proletariat elsewhere as it takes the road of social revolution.

On the other hand, events in the Soviet republic are a concrete example of how essential the participation of working and peasant women is in the civil war, the defence of the republic and all other areas of Soviet life. The important role that working and peasant women have already played in the Soviet republic has been clearly shown: in organising defence, strengthening the home front, combating desertion and all kinds of counter-revolutionary activity, sabotage, etc. Other countries must study and learn from the experience of the workers' republic.

It follows that the communist parties must extend their influence over the widest layers of the female population by means of organising special apparatuses inside the party and establishing special methods of approaching women, with the aim of liberating them from the influence of the bourgeois world-view or the influence of the compromising parties, and of educating them to be resolute fighters for communism and consequently for the full development of women.

3. While making the improvement of party work amongst the female proletariat an immediate task of both the Western and Eastern communist parties, the Third Congress of the Communist International at the same time points out to the working women of the whole world that their liberation from centuries of enslavement, lack of rights and inequality is possible *only through the victory of communism*, and that the bourgeois women's movement is completely incapable of guaranteeing women that which communism gives. So long as the power of capital and private property exists, the liberation of woman from dependence on a husband can go no further than the right to dispose of her own property and her own wage and decide on equal terms with her husband the future of her children.

The most radical feminist demand — the extension of the suffrage to women in the framework of bourgeois parliamentarianism — does not solve the question of real equality for women, especially those of the propertyless classes. The experience of working women in all those capitalist countries in which, over recent years, the bourgeoisie has introduced formal equality of the sexes makes this clear. The vote does not destroy the prime cause of women's enslavement in the family and society. Some bourgeois states have substituted civil marriage for indissoluble marriage. But as long as the proletarian woman remains economically dependent upon the capitalist boss and her husband, the breadwinner, and in the absence of comprehensive measures

to protect motherhood and childhood and provide socialised childcare and education, this cannot equalise the position of women in marriage or solve the problem of relationships between the sexes.

The real equality of women, as opposed to formal and superficial equality, will be achieved only under communism, when women and all the other members of the labouring class will become co-owners of the means of production and distribution and will take part in administering them, and women will share on an equal footing with all the members of the labour society the duty to work; in other words, it will be achieved by overthrowing the capitalist system of production and exploitation which is based on the exploitation of human labour, and by organising a communist economy.

Only communism creates conditions whereby the conflict between the natural function of woman — maternity — and her social obligations, which hinder her creative work for the collective, will disappear and the harmonious and many-sided development of a healthy and balanced personality firmly and closely in tune with the life and goals of the labour-collective will be completed. All women who fight for the emancipation of woman and the recognition of her rights must have as their aim the creation of a communist society.

But communism is also the final aim of the proletariat as a whole and therefore, in the interests of both sides, the two struggles must be fought as “a single and indivisible” struggle.

4. The Third Congress of the Communist International supports the basic position of revolutionary Marxism that there is no “special” women’s question, nor should there be a special women’s movement, and that any alliance between working women and bourgeois feminism or support for the vacillating or clearly right-wing tactics of the social compromisers and opportunists will lead to the weakening of the forces of the proletariat, thereby delaying the great hour of the full emancipation of women.

A communist society will be won not by the united efforts of women of different classes, but by the united struggle of all the exploited.

The masses of proletarian women must, in their own interests, support the revolutionary tactics of the communist party and take as active and direct a part as possible in mass action and in every type and form of civil war that emerges both on the national and international scale.

5. At its highest stage, the struggle of women against their dual oppression (by capitalism and by their own domestic family dependence) must take on an international character, developing into a struggle (fought under the banner of the Third International) by the proletariat of both sexes for their dictatorship and for the soviet system.

6. The Third Congress of the Communist International warns working women

against any kind of cooperation or agreement with bourgeois feminists. At the same time, it makes clear to proletarian women that any illusions that it is possible to support the Second International or opportunist elements close to it without damaging the cause of women's liberation will do serious harm to the liberation struggle of the proletariat. Women must never forget that the slavery of women is rooted in the bourgeois system and that to end this slavery a new communist society has to be brought into being.

The support working women give to the groups and parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals is a brake on the social revolution, delaying the advent of the new order. If women turn from the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals with resolution and without compromise, the victory of the social revolution will be more sure. Communist women must condemn all those who are afraid of the revolutionary tactics of the Communist International and stand firm for their exclusion from the closed ranks of the Communist International.

Women must remember that the Second International has never even tried to set up any kind of organisation to further the struggle for the full liberation of women. The international unification of socialist women was begun outside the framework of the Second International at the initiative of working women themselves. The socialist women who conducted special work amongst women had neither status nor representation nor full voting rights.

At its very first congress, in 1919, the Third International clearly formulated its attitude to the question of drawing women into the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. The congress called a conference of women communists and in 1920 an international secretariat for work amongst women was established with a permanent representative on the executive committee of the Communist International. All class-conscious working women should break unconditionally with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and give their support to the revolutionary line of the Communist International.

7. Women who work in factories, offices and fields must show their support for the Communist International by joining the communist parties. In those countries and parties where the struggle between the Second and Third International has not yet come to a head, working women must do all they can to support the party or group which is standing for the Communist International and, whatever the accepted leaders say or do, must ruthlessly fight against all who are vacillating or have gone over openly to the other side. Class-conscious proletarian women who want emancipation must not stay in parties which stand outside the Communist International.

To be against the Third International is to be an enemy of the liberation of women.

Class-conscious working women in both the West and East should support the Communist International as members of the communist parties of their countries. Any hesitation on their part, or fear of breaking with the familiar compromising parties and the recognised leaders disastrously affects the success of the great proletarian struggle which is developing into a ruthless and global civil war.

## Methods & forms of work among women

The Third Congress of the Communist International holds, therefore, that work among the female proletariat must be conducted by all communist parties on the following basis:

1. Women must be included in all the militant class organisations — the party, the trade unions, the cooperatives, soviets of factory representatives etc., with equal rights and equal responsibilities.

2. The importance must be recognised of drawing women into all areas of the active struggle of the proletariat (including the military defence of the proletariat) and of constructing in all areas the foundations of a new society and organising production and everyday life on communist lines.

3. The maternal function must be recognised as a social function and the appropriate measures to defend and protect women as child-bearers must be taken or fought for.

The Third Congress of the Communist International is firmly opposed to any kind of separate women's associations in the parties and trade unions or special women's organisations, but it accepts that special methods of work among women are necessary and that every communist party should set up a special apparatus for this work. In adopting this position, the Congress takes into consideration the following:

- a. the oppression women suffer in everyday life not only in the bourgeois-capitalist countries, but in countries with a soviet structure, in transition from capitalism to communism;

- b. the great passivity and political backwardness of the female masses, which is to be explained by the fact that for centuries women have been excluded from social life and enslaved in the family;

- c. the special function — childbirth — which nature assigns to women, and the specificities connected with this function, call for the greater protection of their energies and health in the interests of the whole collective.

The Third Congress of the Communist International therefore recognises that a special apparatus for conducting work among women is necessary. This apparatus must consist of departments or commissions for work among women, attached to every party committee at all levels, from the CC of the party right down to the urban,

district or local party committee. This decision is binding on all parties in the Communist International.

The Third Congress of the Communist International indicates that the tasks of the communist parties to be carried out through these departments include the following:

1. To educate women in communist ideas and draw them into the ranks of the party;

2. To fight the prejudices against women held by the mass of the male proletariat, and increase the awareness of working men and women that they have common interests;

3. To strengthen the will of working women by drawing them into all forms and types of civil conflict, encouraging women in the bourgeois countries to participate in the struggle against capitalist exploitation, in mass action against the high cost of living, against the housing shortage, unemployment and around other social problems, and women in the soviet republics to take part in the formation of the communist personality and the communist way of life;

4. To put on the party's agenda and to include in legislative proposals questions directly concerning the emancipation of women, confirming their liberation, defending their interests as child-bearers;

5. To conduct a well-planned struggle against the power of tradition, bourgeois customs and religious ideas, clearing the way for healthier and more harmonious relations between the sexes, guaranteeing the physical and moral vitality of working people.

The party committees directly lead and are responsible for all the work of the women's departments or commissions. The head of the department or commission must be a member of the party committee. Wherever possible, the members of the departments or commissions should be communists.

The commissions or departments of working women should not work independently. In the soviet countries they should work through the appropriate economic or political organs (soviet departments, commissions, trade unions); in capitalist countries they should have the support of the appropriate proletarian organisations: party, unions, soviets, etc.

Wherever communist parties exist illegally or semilegally, they must still create an apparatus for work among women. This apparatus must be subordinate to the general party apparatus and adapt to the situation of illegality. All local, regional and central illegal organisations should have, in the same way as legal organisations, one woman comrade responsible for organising propaganda among women. In the modern epoch the trade unions, production unions and cooperatives must serve as the basis for party

work among women both in countries where the struggle for the overthrow of capital is still in progress and in the soviet workers' republics.

Work amongst women must be informed by an understanding of the unity of the party movement and organisation, but at the same time show independent initiative and, proceeding independently from other party commissions or sections, work towards the rapid and full emancipation of women. The goal should be not to duplicate work but to enable working women to help the party and its activities.

### **Party work among women in the soviet countries**

In the Soviet workers' republic the role of the departments is to educate the women in communist ideas, to draw them into the communist party and develop their self-activity and independence, involving them in the construction of communism and educating them to be firm defenders of the Communist International.

The departments must help women take part in all branches of Soviet construction, in matters ranging from defence to the many and complex economic plans of the republic.

In the Soviet republic the departments must make sure that the resolutions of the 8th Congress of Soviets on drawing working and peasant women into the construction and organisation of the national economy and on their participation in all bodies which guide, administer, control and organise production are being carried out. Through their representatives and through party bodies, the departments must participate in drafting new laws and influence the redrafting of those which need altering in the interests of the liberation of women. The departments must show particular initiative in developing laws to protect the labour of women and young people,

The departments must draw the greatest possible number of working and peasant women into the soviet election campaign and see that working and peasant women are elected to the soviets and their executive committees.

The departments must work for the success of all political and economic campaigns conducted by the party.

The departments must promote the acquisition of skills by female workers, by improving the technical education of women and making sure that working and peasant women have access to the appropriate educational institutions.

It is the job of the departments to see that working women are included in the enterprise commissions on the protection of labour and that the commissions of aid for the protection of maternity and childhood are more active.

The departments must contribute to the development of the entire network of

social institutions: communal dining rooms, laundries, repair shops, institutions of social welfare, house-communes etc., which transform everyday life along new, communist lines and relieve women of the difficulties of the transitional period. Such social institutions which help emancipate women's everyday lives, turning the slave of the home and family into a free member of the working class — the class which is its own boss and the creator of new forms of living.

The departments must encourage the education of women trade union members in communist ideas, with the help of organisations for work among women set up by the communist fraction in the trade unions.

The departments must ensure that working women attend general factory and general factory delegate meetings.

The departments must systematically appoint delegate-practitioners<sup>51</sup> to soviet, economic and union work.

The women's departments of the party must above all work to develop firm links with working women and closer contact with housewives, office workers, and poor peasant women.

The departments should call and organise working women's delegate meetings in order to create firm ties between the party and the masses, extend the influence of the party to the nonparty masses and educate the mass of women in communist ideas through independent activity and participation in practical work.

The delegate meetings are the most effective means of educating working and peasant women; through the delegates the influence of the party can be extended to the nonparty masses and the backward masses of working and peasant women.

The delegate meetings are to be attended by representatives of the factories of the given region, town or rural area (where it is a question of electing rural delegates through meetings of peasant women) or of the neighbourhood, where it is a question of electing housewife delegates. In Soviet Russia the delegates are involved in every kind of political or economic campaign, sent to work on various enterprise commissions, drawn into control of soviet institutions and, finally, given work as practitioners for a period of two months in the departments of the soviets (law of 1921).

The delegates are to be elected at workshop meetings or at meetings of housewives or office workers according to the norm laid down by the party. The departments must conduct propaganda and agitational work among the delegates, for which purpose meetings are held not less than twice a month. The delegates must report on their activity to their shops or to their residential area meetings. The delegates are elected for a period of three months. Broadly-based nonparty conferences of working and peasant women are the second form of agitation among the female masses. The



representatives who attend these conferences are elected at the meetings of working women in the enterprises, and of peasant women in the villages.

The working women's departments take the lead in calling and organising these conferences.

The departments or commissions conduct consistent and extensive propaganda, both verbal and printed, in order to build on the experience the working women gain from their practical work in the party. The departments organise meetings and discussions; they organise working women in the factories and housewives in the neighbourhoods, lead delegates' meetings and conduct house-to-house agitation.

Sections for work among women must be established to train special cadres and to expand work in the soviet schools at the central and at the district level.

### **In bourgeois-capitalist countries**

The current tasks of the commissions for work among women are dictated by the objective situation. On the one hand, the collapse of the world economy, the horrific growth of unemployment which has the effect of reducing the demand for women workers and increasing prostitution, the high cost of living, the desperate housing shortage and the threats of new imperialist wars; and, on the other hand, the succession of economic strikes by workers everywhere and the repeated attempts to begin the civil war on a world scale — all this is the prologue to world social revolution.

The commissions of working women must concern themselves with the important tasks of the proletariat, fight for the party's slogans in their entirety, and involve women in the revolutionary action the party takes against the bourgeoisie and the social compromisers.

The commissions must make sure not only that women join the party, the trade unions and other class organisations and have equal rights and equal obligations (they must counter any attempts to isolate or separate off working women), but that women are brought into the leading bodies of the parties, unions and cooperatives on equal terms with men.

The commissions must encourage the broad layers of the female proletariat and the peasant women to use their electoral rights in the interests of the communist parties during elections to parliament and to all social institutions, explaining at the same time that these rights are limited and can do little to weaken capitalist exploitation or further the emancipation of women and that the soviet system is superior to the parliamentary one.

The commissions must also see that the working women, office workers and peasant women take an active part in the election of revolutionary economic and

political soviets of workers' deputies — they must bring housewives into political activity and explain the idea of soviets to the peasant women. The commissions must work in particular to realise the principle of equal pay for equal work. They must also draw working women and men into a campaign for free and universal vocational education which would help women workers increase their skills.

The commissions must see that communist women take part in the municipal and other legislative organs wherever suffrage laws give this opportunity, introducing them to the revolutionary tactics of their party. Participating in the legislative, municipal and other organs of the bourgeois states, communist women must defend the basic principles and tactics of their party; they must concentrate less on the practical realisation of reforms in the framework of the bourgeois system and more on using the questions and demands that arise out of the urgent needs and everyday experience of working women as revolutionary slogans to draw women into a fight to win these demands through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The commissions must be in close contact with the parliamentary and local government fractions and discuss with them any questions which relate to women.

The commissions must explain to women that the system of individual domestic economies is backward and uneconomical and that the bourgeois method of bringing up children is far from perfect. They must concentrate the attention of working women on the proposals for improving the everyday life of the working class being put forward or supported by the party.

The commissions must help draw women trade union members into the communist parties. Special organisers should be appointed to undertake this work under the leadership of the party or its local sections.

The women's agitational commissions must do propaganda work to persuade working women in the cooperatives to fight for communist ideas and assume a leading role in these organisations which will have a very important role to play during and after the revolution as centres of distribution.

The entire work of the commissions must be aimed at developing the revolutionary activity of the masses, and thus hastening the social revolution.

### **In the economically backward countries (the East)**

In countries where industry is underdeveloped the communist parties and the departments of working women must make sure that the party, the unions and the other organisations of the labouring class recognise that women have equal rights and equal responsibilities.

The departments or commissions and the party must fight all prejudices and all

religious and secular customs that oppress women; they must carry out this agitation among men as well.

The communist parties and their departments or commissions must take the principles of women's equality into the spheres of child education, family relations and public life.

The departments must seek support above all from the broad layer of women exploited by capital, i.e., who work in the cottage industries and on the rice and cotton plantations. In the soviet countries the departments must encourage the setting up of craft workshops. In countries where the bourgeois system still exists, work must be concentrated on organising women who work on the plantations and on drawing them into unions alongside the men.

In the soviet countries of the East the raising of the general cultural level of the population is the best method of overcoming backwardness and religious prejudices. The departments must encourage the development of schools for adults that are open to women. In the bourgeois countries the commissions must wage a direct struggle against the bourgeois influence in the schools.

Wherever possible, the departments or commissions must do house-to-house agitation. The departments must organise clubs for working women and encourage the most backward of them to join. The clubs must be cultural centres and experimental model institutions that show how women can work towards their emancipation through self-activity (the organisation of creches, nurseries, literacy schools attached to clubs etc.).

Mobile clubs should be organised to work among nomadic peoples.

In soviet countries the departments must help the appropriate soviet organs to make the transition from precapitalist forms of economy to social forms of production, convincing working women by practical example that the domestic economy and the previous family form block their emancipation, while social labour liberates them.

In Soviet Russia the departments must see that the legislation which recognises the equal rights of women with men and defends the interests of women is observed among the Eastern peoples. The departments must encourage women to work as judges and juries in national courts of law.

The departments must also involve women in the soviet elections, checking the social composition of the working and peasant women in the soviets and executive committees. Work among the female proletariat of the East must be carried out on a class basis. The departments have to show that the feminists are incapable of finding a solution to the question of female emancipation. In the soviet countries of the East, women of the intelligentsia (teachers, for example) who sympathise with communism

should be drawn into educational campaigns. Avoiding tactless and crude attacks on religious beliefs or national traditions, the departments or commissions working among the women of the East must still struggle against nationalism and the power of religion over people's minds.

In the East, as in the West, the organisation of working women must be geared not to the defence of national interests but to the unity of the international proletariat of both sexes around the common goals of the class.<sup>a</sup>

### **Methods of agitation & propaganda**

The communist parties of the West and East must grasp the basic principle of work among women — “agitation and propaganda through action”. Then they will be capable of carrying out their most important task, which is the communist education of the women of the proletariat and the training of fighters for communism.

Agitation by action means above all encouraging working women to self-activity, dispelling the doubts they have about their own abilities and drawing them into practical work in the sphere of construction or struggle. It means teaching them through experience to know that every gain made by the communist party, every action directed against the exploitation of capital, is a step towards improving the position of women. Firstly, practice and action, that lead to an understanding of communist ideals and theoretical principles; and secondly, theory, that leads to practice and action — these are the methods of work the communist parties and their working women's departments must employ in approaching the mass of women.

The departments must be in close contact with the communist cells in the enterprises and workshops, making sure that each cell has an organiser to carry out work among women in the factory in question. In this way the departments will be centres of action and not of verbal propaganda alone.

The departments and the trade unions must keep in contact through their representatives or organisers, who are appointed by the trade union fractions but conduct their work under the leadership of the departments.

In the soviet countries the spreading of communist ideas through action means bringing working women, peasant women, housewives and women office workers into all branches of soviet construction, ranging from the army and the police through to those which directly emancipate women by their organisation of communal eating,

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<sup>a</sup> Because work among women of the East is so important and at the same time so new, special instructions are appended to the theses which explain how the basic methods of communist party work among women are to be applied in the specific conditions of everyday life in the East.

a network of institutions of social education, the protection of motherhood, etc. It is particularly important at the present moment to draw working women into work connected with the restoration of the national economy.

In the capitalist countries propaganda by deed means above all encouraging working women to participate in strikes, demonstrations and any type of struggle which strengthens and deepens their revolutionary will and consciousness. It also means drawing them into all types of party work, including illegal work (especially liaison work) and the organisation of party *subbotniks* or Sundays at which the wives of workers and women office workers who sympathise with communism work voluntarily for the party and organise sessions to sew and repair children's clothes, etc.

The principle of drawing women into all the parties' political, economic and educational campaigns is one aspect of propaganda by action.

In the capitalist countries the departments must extend their activity and their influence to the most backward and oppressed female proletariat. In the soviet countries they must conduct their work among the proletarian and semiproletarian female masses, enslaved by the conditions and prejudices of everyday life.

The commissions must carry out work among the working women, housewives and peasant women, and the women engaged in mental labour (the intelligentsia).

For the purposes of propaganda and agitation, the commissions must organise public meetings, meeting at individual enterprises and meetings of working women and women office-workers (either by trade or by district). They must also organise general women's meetings, meetings of housewives, etc.

In capitalist countries the commissions make sure that the fractions of the communist parties in the trade unions, cooperatives and factory councils appoint women's organisers; that, in other words, they have representatives in all organisations which help develop the revolutionary activity of the proletariat towards seizure of power. In soviet countries they encourage the appointment of working and peasant women to all soviet organisations which lead, administer and control social life and which serve to support the proletarian dictatorship and contribute to the realisation of communism.

The commissions must assign proletarian women communists to work in factories or offices where there are a large number of women; they must send communist working women into large proletarian neighbourhoods and industrial centres, as has been tried with success in Soviet Russia

Commissions for work amongst women must make use of the highly successful experience of the women's department of the RCP in order to organise delegates' meetings and nonparty conferences of working and peasant women. Meetings of

working women and women office-workers from various sectors, and of peasant women and housewives, must be organised, at which concrete demands and needs are discussed and commissions elected. These commissions must keep in close touch with those who elect them and with the commissions for work among women. The commissions must send their agitators to take part in debates at the meetings of parties hostile to communism. Propaganda and agitation through meetings and debates must be complemented by well-organised house-to-house agitation. The communist women doing this work must each be responsible for no more than ten households; they must make visits at least once a week to do agitation among housewives, and call more frequently when the communist party is conducting a campaign or is preparing any kind of action.

The commissions are instructed to use the written word in the course of their agitational, organisational and educational work:

1. To help publish a central paper on work among women in every country;
2. To guarantee the publication of “working women’s pages” or special supplements in the party press, and also the inclusion of articles on questions of work amongst women in the general party and trade union press; the commissions are responsible for the appointment of editors to the above-mentioned publications and training working women, both party members and nonparty members, to work for the press.

The commissions must see to the issuing of popular agitational and educational literature in the forms of leaflets and pamphlets and they must help in their distribution.

The commissions must enable communist women to make the most effective use of all political and educational institutions of the party.

The commissions must work to strengthen the class consciousness and militancy of the young communist women, involving them in general party courses and discussion evenings. Special evenings of reading and discussion or a series of talks especially for working women should be organised only where they are really necessary and expedient.

In order to strengthen comradeship between working women and working men, it is desirable not to organise special courses and schools for communist women, but all general party schools must without fail include a course on the methods of work among women. The departments must have the right to delegate a certain number of their representatives to the general party courses.

## **The structure of the departments**

Departments and commissions of work among women are attached to every party committee, at local and regional party level and at CC level. The size is determined by

the party and depends on the needs of the particular country. The number of paid workers on these commissions is also determined by the party in accordance with its financial resources.

The director of the women's agitational department or the person chairing the commission should be a member of the local party committee. Where this is not the case the director of the department should be present at all the sessions of the committee with full voting rights on all questions concerning the women's department and a consultative vote on all other questions.

As well as the above-mentioned general work, the district or county department or commission has the following additional functions: encouraging contact between the departments of the given district and the central department; collecting information about the activity of the departments or commissions of the district/region in question; ensuring that the local departments have the opportunity to exchange material; supplying the district/county with literature; sending agitators to the districts; mobilising party members for work amongst women; calling district/county conferences not less than twice a year, at which each department is represented by one or two communist women; and holding nonparty conferences of working and peasant women and housewives of the given district/county.

The members of the collegium are nominated by the head of the department or commission and approved by the county or district committee. The director is elected in the same way as other members of the district and county committees — at the district or county party conference.

The members of the district/county and local departments or commissions are elected at town, district or county conferences or are appointed by the appropriate departments in contact with the party committees.

If the director of the women's department is not a member of the district party committee/county party committee, she has the right to be present at all the sessions of the party committee with full voting rights on questions concerning the departments and a consultative vote on all other questions.

The central party department, in addition to the functions listed for the district/county departments, also instructs the women's agitational department over questions of party work, supervises the work of the departments, directs, in contact with the appropriate party bodies, the allocation of personnel engaged in work amongst women, checks the conditions and progress of female labour, bearing in mind the changes in the legal and economic situation of women, participates through its representatives or authorised persons in special commissions working on the question of improving or changing the everyday life of the working class, the protection of labour and childhood,

etc., publishes a 'central women's page', edits a regular journal for working women, calls a meeting, not less than once a year, for the representatives of all the district/county departments, organises national speaking tours for instructors on work among women, ensures that working women and all departments take part in all the party's political and economic campaigns and actions, delegates a representative to the International Secretariat of Communist Women and organises an annual International Working Women's Day.

If the director of the women's department is not a member of the CC, she has the right to be present at all sessions of the CC with full voting rights on questions concerning the departments, and with a consultative vote on all other questions. The director of the women's department or the chairperson of the commission is appointed by the CC of the party or is elected at an all-party congress. Decisions and resolutions passed by all departments or commissions have to be finally approved by the appropriate party committee. The size of the central department and the number of members to have full voting rights are decided by the CC of the party.

### **On international work**

The International Women's Secretariat of the Communist International leads the women's work of the communist parties at the international level, unites working women to struggle for the goals put forward by the Communist International, and draws women of all countries and all peoples into the revolutionary struggle for the power of the soviets and the dictatorship of the working class. ■



## Appendix 5

# From the Old Family to the New<sup>52</sup>

*By Leon Trotsky*

The inner relations and happenings within the family are, by their very nature, the most difficult to investigate, the least subject to statistics. It is not easy, therefore, to say how far family ties are more easily and frequently broken nowadays (in actual life, not merely on paper) than formerly. To a great extent we must be content to judge by eye. The difference, moreover, between prerevolutionary times and the present day is that formerly all the troubles and dramatic conflicts in working class families used to pass unnoticed by the workers themselves; whereas now a large upper part of the workers occupy responsible posts, their life is much more in the limelight, and every domestic tragedy in their life becomes a subject of much comment and sometimes of idle gossip.

Subject to this serious reservation, there is no denying, however, that family relations, those of the proletarian class included, are shattered. This was stated as a firmly established fact at the conference of Moscow party propagandists, and no one contested it. They were only differently impressed by it — all in their own way. Some viewed it with great misgivings, others with reserve, and still others seemed perplexed. It was, anyhow, clear to all that some great process was going on, very chaotically assuming alternatively morbid or revolting, ridiculous or tragic forms, and which had not yet had time to disclose its hidden possibilities of inaugurating a new and higher order of family life.

Some information about the disintegration of the family has crept into the press, but just occasionally, and in very vague, general terms. In an article on the subject, I had read that the disintegration of the family in the working class was represented as a case of “bourgeois influence on the proletariat”.

It is not so simple as this. The root of the question lies deeper and is more complicated. The influence of the bourgeois past and the bourgeois present is there, but the main

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process consists in a painful evolution of the proletarian family itself, an evolution leading up to a crisis, and we are witnessing now the first chaotic stages of the process.

The deeply destructive influence of the war on the family is well known. To begin with, war dissolves the family automatically, separating people for a long time or bringing people together by chance. This influence of the war was continued and strengthened by the revolution. The years of the war shattered all that had stood only by the inertia of historic tradition. They shattered the power of tsardom, class privileges, the old traditional family. The revolution began by building up the new state and has achieved thereby its simplest and most urgent aim.

The economic part of its problem proved much more complicated. The war shook the old economic order; the revolution overthrew it. Now we are constructing a new economic state — doing it as yet mostly from the old elements, reorganising them in new ways. In the domain of economics we have but recently emerged from the destructive period and begun to ascend. Our progress is still very slow, and the achievement of new socialistic forms of economic life are still very distant. But we are definitely out of the period of destruction and ruin. The lowest point was reached in the years 1920-21.

The first destructive period is still far from being over in the life of the family. The disintegrating process is still in full swing. We must bear that in mind. Family and domestic life are still passing, so to speak, their 1920-21 period and have not reached the 1923 standard. Domestic life is more conservative than economic, and one of the reasons is that it is still less conscious than the latter.

In politics and economics the working class acts as a whole and pushes on to the front rank its vanguard, the Communist Party, accomplishing through its medium the historic aims of the proletariat. In domestic life the working class is split into cells constituted by families. The change of political regime, the change even of the economic order of the state — the passing of the factories and mills into the hands of the workers — all this has certainly had some influence on family conditions, but only indirectly and externally, and without touching on the forms of domestic traditions inherited from the past.

A radical reform of the family and, more generally, of the whole order of domestic life requires a great conscious effort on the part of the whole mass of the working class, and presumes the existence in the class itself of a powerful molecular force of inner desire for culture and progress. A deep-going plough is needed to turn up heavy clods of soil. To institute the political equality of men and women in the Soviet state was one problem and the simplest. A much more difficult one was the next — that of instituting the industrial equality of men and women workers in the factories, the mills, and the

trade unions, and of doing it in such a way that the men should not put the women to disadvantage. But to achieve the actual equality of man and woman within the family is an infinitely more arduous problem. All our domestic habits must be revolutionised before that can happen. And yet it is quite obvious that unless there is actual equality of husband and wife in the family, in a normal sense as well as in the conditions of life, we cannot speak seriously of their equality in social work or even in politics. As long as woman is chained to her housework, the care of the family, the cooking and sewing, all her chances of participation in social and political life are cut down in the extreme.

The easiest problem was that of assuming power. Yet just that problem alone absorbed all our forces in the early period of the revolution. It demanded endless sacrifices. The civil war necessitated measures of the utmost severity. Philistine vulgarians cried out about the barbarisation of morality, about the proletariat becoming bloody and depraved, and so on. What was actually happening was that the proletariat, using the means of revolutionary violence forced into its hands, started to fight for a new culture, for genuine human values.

In the first four or five years we have passed economically through a period of terrific breakdown. The productivity of labour collapsed, and the products were of an appallingly low quality. Enemies saw, or chose to see, in such a situation a sign of the rottenness of the Soviet regime. In reality, however, it was but the inevitable stage of the destruction of the old economic forms and of the first unaided attempts at the creation of new ones.

In regard to family relations and forms of individual life in general, there must also be an inevitable period of disintegration of things as they were, of the traditions, inherited from the past, which had not passed under the control of thought. But in this domain of domestic life the period of criticism and destruction begins later, lasts very long, and assumes morbid and painful forms, which, however, are complex and not always perceptible to superficial observation. These progressive landmarks of critical change in state conditions, in economics and life in general, ought to be very clearly defined to prevent our getting alarmed by the phenomena we observed. We must learn to judge them in their right light, to understand their proper place in the development of the working class, and consciously to direct the new conditions towards socialist forms of life.

The warning is a necessary one, as we already hear voices expressing alarm. At the conference of the Moscow party propagandists some comrades spoke with great and natural anxiety of the ease with which old family ties are broken for the sake of new ones as fleeting as the old. The victims in all cases are the mother and children. On the other hand, who in our midst has not heard in private conversations complaints, not

to say lamentations, about the “collapse” of morality among Soviet youth, in particular among Young Communists? Not everything in these complaints is exaggeration — there is also truth in them. We certainly must and will fight the dark sides of this truth — this being a fight for higher culture and the ascent of human personality. But in order to begin our work, to tackle the ABC of the problem without reactionary moralising or sentimental downheartedness, we must first make sure of the facts and begin to see clearly what is actually happening.

Gigantic events, as we said above, have descended on the family in its old shape, the war and the revolution. And following them came creeping slowly the underground mole — critical thought, the conscious study and evaluation of family relations and the forms of life. It was the mechanical force of great events combined with the critical force of the awakened mind that generated the destructive period in family relations that we are witnessing now. The Russian worker must now, after the conquest of power, make his first conscious steps towards culture in many departments of his life. Under the impulse of great collisions, his personality shakes off for the first time all traditional forms of life, all domestic habits, church practices, and relationships.

No wonder that, in the beginning, the protest of the individual, his revolt against the traditional past, is assuming anarchic, or to put it more crudely, dissolute forms. We have witnessed it in politics, in military affairs, in economics; here anarchic individualism took on every form of extremism, partisanship, public-meeting rhetoric. And no wonder also that this process reacts in the most intimate and hence most painful way on family relationships. There the awakened personality, wanting to reorganise in a new way, removed from the old beaten tracks, resorts to “dissipation”, “wickedness”, and all the sins denounced in the Moscow conference.

The husband, torn away from his usual surroundings by mobilisation, changed into a revolutionary citizen at the civic front. A momentous change. His outlook is wider, his spiritual aspirations higher and of a more complicated order. He is a different man. And then he returns to find everything there practically unchanged. The old harmony and understanding with the people at home in family relationship is gone. No new understanding arises. The mutual wondering changes into mutual discontent, then into ill will. The family is broken up.

The husband is a communist. He lives an active life, is engaged in social work, his mind grows, his personal life is absorbed by his work. But his wife is also a communist. She wants to join in social work, attend public meetings, work in the soviet or the union. Home life becomes practically nonexistent before they are aware of it, or the missing of home atmosphere results in continual collisions. Husband and wife disagree. The family is broken up.

The husband is a communist, the wife is nonparty. The husband is absorbed by his work; the wife, as before, only looks after her home. Relations are “peaceful”, based, in fact, on customary estrangement. But the husband’s committee — the communist “cell” — decrees that he should take away the icons hanging in his house. He is quite willing to obey, finding it but natural. For his wife it is a catastrophe. Just such a small occurrence exposes the abyss that separates the minds of husband and wife. Relations are spoiled. The family is broken up.

An old family. Ten to 15 years of common life. The husband is a good worker, devoted to his family; the wife lives also for her home, giving it all her energy. But just by chance she comes in touch with a communist women’s organisation. A new world opens before her eyes. Her energy finds a new and wider object. The family is neglected. The husband is irritated. The wife is hurt in her newly awakened civic consciousness. The family is broken up.

Examples of such domestic tragedies, all leading to one end — the breaking up of the family — could be multiplied endlessly. We have indicated the most typical cases. In all our examples the tragedy is due to a collision between communist and nonparty elements. But the breaking up of the family, that is to say, of the old-type family, is not confined to just the top of the class as the one most exposed to the influence of new conditions. The disintegrating movement in family relationships penetrates deeper. The communist vanguard merely passes sooner and more violently through what is inevitable for the class as a whole. The censorious attitude towards old conditions, the new claims upon the family, extend far beyond the border line between the communist and the working class as a whole.

The institution of civil marriage was already a heavy blow to the traditional consecrated family which lived a great deal for appearances. The less personal attachment there was in the old marriage ties, the greater was the binding power of the external forces, social traditions, and more particularly religious rites. The blow to the power of the church was also a blow to the family. Rites, deprived of binding significance and of state recognition, still remain in use through inertia, serving as one of the props to the tottering family. But when there is no inner bond within the family, when nothing but inertia keeps the family itself from complete collapse, then every push from outside is likely to shatter it to pieces, while, at the same time, it is a blow at the adherence to church rites. And pushes from the outside are infinitely more likely to come now than ever before. That is the reason why the family totters and fails to recover and then tumbles again. Life sits in judgment on its conditions and does it by the cruel and painful condemnation of the family. History fells the old wood — and the chips fly in the wind.

But is life evolving any elements of a new type of family? Undoubtedly. We must only conceive clearly the nature of these elements and the process of their formation. As in other cases, we must separate the physical conditions from the psychological, the general from the individual. Psychologically the evolution of the new family, of new human relationships in general, for us means the advancement in culture of the working class, the development of the individual, a raising of the standard of his requirements and inner discipline. From this aspect, the revolution in itself has meant, of course, a big step forward, and the worst phenomena of the disintegrating family signify merely an expression, painful in form, of the awakening of the class and of the individual within the class. All our work relating to culture, the work we are doing and the work we ought to be doing, becomes, from this viewpoint, a preparation for new relationships and a new family. Without a raising of the standard of the culture of the individual working man and woman, there cannot be a new, higher type of family, for in this domain we can only, of course, speak of inner discipline and not of external compulsion. The force then of the inner discipline of the individual in the family is conditioned by the tenor of the inner life, the scope and value of the ties that unite husband and wife.

The physical preparations for the conditions of the new life and the new family, again, cannot fundamentally be separated from the general work of socialist construction. The workers' state must become wealthier in order that it may be possible seriously to tackle the public education of children and the releasing of the family from the burden of the kitchen and the laundry. Socialisation of family housekeeping and public education of children are unthinkable without a marked improvement in our economics as a whole. We need more socialist economic forms. Only under such conditions can we free the family from the functions and cares that now oppress and disintegrate it. Washing must be done by a public laundry, catering by a public restaurant, sewing by a public workshop. Children must be educated by good public teachers who have a real vocation for the work. Then the bond between husband and wife would be freed from everything external and accidental, and the one would cease to absorb the life of the other. Genuine equality would at last be established. The bond will depend on mutual attachment. And on that account particularly, it will acquire inner stability, not the same, of course, for everyone, but compulsory for no one.

Thus, the way to the new family is twofold: (a) the raising of the standard of culture and education of the working class and the individuals composing the class; (b) an improvement in the material conditions of the class organised by the state. The two processes are intimately connected with one another.

The above statements do not, of course, imply that at a given moment in material betterment the family of the future will instantly step into its rights. No. A certain

advance towards the new family is possible even now. It is true that the state cannot as yet undertake either the education of children or the establishment of public kitchens that would be an improvement on the family kitchen, or the establishment of public laundries where the clothes would not be torn or stolen. But this does not mean that the most enterprising and progressive families cannot group themselves even now into collective housekeeping units. Experiments of this kind must, of course, be made carefully; the technical equipment of the collective unit must answer to the interests and requirements of the group itself, and should give manifest advantages to every one of its members, even though they be modest at first.

This task [Comrade Semashko recently wrote of the necessity of reconstructing our family life] is best performed practically; decrees and moralising alone will have little effect. But an example, an illustration of a new form, will do more than a thousand excellent pamphlets. This practical propaganda is best conducted by the method surgeons in their practice call transplantation. When a big surface is bare of skin either as the result of wound or burn, and there is no hope that the skin will grow sufficiently to cover it, pieces of skin are cut off from healthy places of the body and attached in islets on the bare surface; these islets adhere and grow until the whole surface is covered with skin.

The same thing happens in practical propaganda. When one factory or works adopts communist forms, other factories will follow. (N. Semashko, "The Dead Holds on to the Living", *Izvestia*, No. 81, April 14, 1923)

The experience of such collective family housekeeping units representing the first, still very incomplete approximations to a communist way of life, should be carefully studied and given attentive thought. The combination of private initiative with support by the state power — above all, by the local soviets and economic bodies — should have priority. The building of new houses — and, after all, we are going to build houses! — must be regulated by the requirements of the family group communities. The first apparent and indisputable success in this direction, however slight and limited in extent, will inevitably arouse a desire in more widespread groups to organise their life on similar lines. For a thought-out scheme, initiated from above, the time is not yet ripe, either from the point of view of the material resources of the state or from that of the preparation of the proletariat itself. We can escape the deadlock at present only by the creation of model communities. The ground beneath our feet must be strengthened step by step; there must be no rushing too far ahead or lapsing into bureaucratic fanciful experiments. At a given moment, the state will be able, with the help of local soviets, cooperative units, and so on, to socialise the work done, to widen and deepen it. In this way the human family, in the words of Engels, will "jump from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom". ■

## Appendix 6

# The Protection of Motherhood & the Struggle for Culture<sup>53</sup>

*By Leon Trotsky*

Comrades, your conference on the protection of mothers and children is valuable because the content of its activities shows that we are working from various directions to establish the new socialist culture, working simultaneously and in a parallel fashion.

Only yesterday I had the opportunity — though without the time required for this, and consequently, without the necessary thoroughness — to acquaint myself with the theses that have been presented to your conference in the form of a pamphlet. What is particularly striking in these theses, above all for someone standing more or less on the sidelines (though in essence, no-one has the right to stand aside from your work), is the fact that your work has taken on an exceedingly concrete and profound character. From those ill-defined tasks which we posed in 1918 and 1919 in all fields of our culture and daily life, we have now passed over to a very concrete study and analysis of these tasks on the basis of our collective experience, without limiting our essential perspectives, and without falling into hairsplitting. This is our colossal achievement in all the fields of our work, and it is reflected to the fullest degree in the theses on the protection of mothers and children.

Comrades, what has attracted most attention (at any rate, of my attention, and I think this will apply to any reader of these theses) has been the table, included in the theses of Comrade Lebedeva, on infant mortality. I was very struck by these figures. No doubt you have already discussed this matter in more detail, but at the risk of repeating what has already been said, I feel I must dwell on this. Here we have a table comparing the mortality of children under the age of 12 months for the years 1913 and

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A speech to the Third All-Union Conference on the Protection of Mothers and Children on December 7, 1925.



1923. Is this table correct? This is the first question that I ask myself and others. Is it correct? In any case, it is subject to verification by society. I think it has to be excerpted from these theses, which are accessible only to you as specialists working in this field, and made a weapon in the arsenal of our press in general, both Soviet and party. It has to be subjected to statistical clarification and cross-checking, and if it is true, it should be recorded as a very valuable conquest in our socialist cultural inventory.

From this table it emerges that in 1913, when Russia was significantly richer than we are today — yes, Russia as a state, as a nation, or as an aggregate of nations, was far richer than we are now (we are now approaching the level of *production* of 1913, but not the level of *accumulation*, and even if you make a full comparison with the level of industrial and agricultural production in 1913, it will still be a long time before we reach the level of accumulated social wealth that we had in 1913) — despite this, it turns out that the death rate for children younger than one year in the Vladimir gubernia in 1913 was 29%, while it is now 17½%. In the Moscow gubernia it was almost 28%, while now it is about 14%.

Is this correct or incorrect? [*Voices: "Correct!"*] I do not presume to dispute this; I am simply saying that you know this, and the whole country ought to learn of it. The contrast between these figures must be carefully checked before everyone. It is striking — such a fall in mortality, when the level of production and accumulation in the country is lower. If this is a fact, then it is already the most indisputable achievement of our new culture of everyday life, and above all of your efforts and organisation. If this is a fact, then it should be publicised not only within the Soviet Union, but on the world scene. If checking puts this fact beyond dispute, for all of public opinion, then you should solemnly declare that from now on we shall cease altogether to make a comparison with the prewar level.

The table shows that in the Moscow gubernia children under one year are dying at half the prewar rate. But our prewar conditions of everyday culture were, after all, those of haughtiness and boorishness, that is, the most contemptible, appalling conditions. Our success in relation to these conditions is very gratifying, but these prewar conditions cannot remain our longer-term criterion. We need to seek another standard, and this other standard, comrades, must be sought in the civilised *capitalist* world. What percentage of infants die in capitalist Germany, France, Britain and America?

Here again I find a complete methodological parallelism, a uniform approach to the question, in your work and that of all others. If you study the work of our industry and agriculture, you will observe the same process there: until yesterday, until today, we have worked and are still working with an eye on the prewar levels. We say: our

industry in the past year reached 75% of the prewar level; this year, starting from October 1, it will reach, say, 95%, and if things turn out well, perhaps even a full 100%. By virtue of this, however, we are ceasing to compare our successes with the prewar level. We are not obliged to compete with the prewar level, which is becoming part of the history of our barbarism, but with the pressure — economic, military and cultural — that we are experiencing from outside our borders. Our capitalist foes are more cultured and more powerful than we are, their industry is superior to ours, and it is possible that despite the fact that the capitalist system holds sway there, infant mortality is still lower in their countries than it is here. In the event, it seems to me that this table has to become a landmark, marking a turning-point in your work. By putting this table to the test, by fixing it in social consciousness, we are saying: from now on we shall make comparisons not with prewar levels, but with the most cultured capitalist states.

If we speak in schematic terms, that is, of the most basic features, the fate of mothers and children depends in the first place on the development of the productive forces of a particular society, on its degree of wealth, and secondly, on the distribution of this wealth among the members of this society, that is, on the social system. The state may be capitalist, that is, on a lower social level than a socialist state, but may nonetheless be richer. History now presents us with just such a situation: the advanced capitalist countries are incomparably richer than we are, but there the system according to which these riches are used, along with their distribution, belongs to an earlier period of history, that is, to capitalism. Our social system, in line with the possibilities contained in it, must seek for itself criteria, models, goals and tasks incomparably superior to those which capitalism can provide. But since capitalism is still incomparably richer than us in terms of its productive forces, we have to pose as our *immediate* task catching up with capitalism, in order later on to overtake it. This means that after we have cleared one hurdle, the prewar level, we have to set ourselves a second task — to match, as soon as possible, the best achievements of the most advanced countries, where the bourgeoisie assigns the question of working-class mothers and children the degree of attention that is dictated by its own class interests.

It could be said that if the position of mothers and children depends firstly on the development of the productive forces, on the general level of the economy in a particular country, and secondly on the social system, on the mode of utilisation and distribution of the country's wealth, then what significance does the work of your special organisation have? I pose this as a historical question. Every social system, including socialism, risks encountering a situation in which the material possibilities for a particular change and improvement of daily life are already evident, but rigidity, mental laziness, servile traditions and conservative stupidity are met with under socialism as well, as links to

the past and as a lack of the initiative and boldness needed to destroy the old forms of life. The task of our party and of the series of social organisations led by it, such as your own, consists of urging forward psychology, customs and the pattern of life, so that the conditions of life do not lag behind the socio-economic possibilities.

Where technology is concerned, the whip is a big one: the pressure coming from the West. We have entered the European market, buying and selling. Like merchants, we, that is, the state, have an interest in buying cheap and selling dear. To buy and sell advantageously, you need to produce cheaply, and to produce cheaply you need good technology and to have your production highly organised. It follows from this that in entering the world market, we have placed ourselves beneath the lash of European and American technology. Whether we like it or not, we have to go forward. All the problems of our social system, and this means of mothers and children as well, depend on how successful we are in standing up to this new world competition. There are figures to show irrefutably that we have coped with the bourgeoisie in our country; that on the basis of NEP, our state industry is prospering and developing; that there is no danger of the private industrialist defeating state industry on the basis of the market — this is now clear to everyone. But now that we have entered the international market, the competitor has become larger, more powerful, more educated. Here we have a new standard in the economic field — catching up with European and American technology, in order later on to surpass it.

Yesterday we opened an electrical generating station 130 kilometres from Moscow, the Shatura station. This is a huge technical achievement. The Shatura station was built to run on peat, from a bog. We have a good many bogs, and if we learn how to turn the latent energy of our bogs into the motive force of electricity, this will be a boon to both mothers and children. [*Applause*] The celebration in honour of the builders of this station provided us at the same time with a clear picture of our entire culture, with all its contradictions. We set off from Moscow. What is Moscow? Provincial delegates who come to Moscow for the first time see that it is the centre of our Soviet Union, a world ideological centre for the leading of the workers' movement. Shatura, a little over 100 versts from Moscow, is a huge technical achievement in its size and construction; it is the only *peat-fired* power station in the world.

Between Shatura and Moscow we looked out of the carriage windows on impenetrable, slumbering forest, exactly as it was in the 16th century — and on villages, scattered here and there, that are almost the same as they were in the 17th century. The revolution has, of course, raised the level of culture in these villages, especially around Moscow, but how many more features there are in these places of the middle ages, of appalling backwardness, above all where women and children are concerned.

Yes, you have recorded the first major advances in the countryside, and every conscious citizen of our Union can congratulate you on this. However, your theses do not in any way conceal how much slumbering darkness there still is in every village, including along the way from Moscow to the Shatura power station. We have to urge on the countryside to catch up with Moscow, to catch up with Shatura, since the Shatura power station represents advanced technology, built on the basis of electrification. Here we can again recall the words of V.I. Lenin when he said that socialism is Soviet power plus electrification.

To speed up everyday life, so that it does not lag behind technological advances — that is your most important task, since customs and traditions are appallingly conservative, incomparably more conservative than technology. Before the peasants and workers, male and female, there are no first-hand models of the new, models that would force people to try to emulate them, and nor is there any pressing necessity to do this. When it comes to technology, America is saying to us: “Build Shatura, otherwise we’ll swallow you, all your socialism, bones and all, and there’ll be nothing left.” Meanwhile, it’s as though everyday life has been preserved inside a husk; it does not feel these blows directly, and as a result, bold collective work is particularly essential here.

I have mentioned already that from the theses, I have learned what a great start you have made to the work of penetrating the countryside. In the theses of E.A. Feder there is an indication not just of the colossal need for child-care centres in the countryside, but also of a huge *pressure* coming from the peasants, that is, a conscious desire to have these centres in the villages. Not so long ago, in 1918-19, there was a tremendous distrust of these institutions in the towns. It is unquestionably a huge advance if new social attitudes have now reached the peasant family from this direction, because the peasant family will also gradually be reconstructed. I am inclined to dwell on this at particular length, since even in our press the opinion is voiced that in questions of the family we should mimic the worst peasant prejudices, and that this follows from the alliance between workers and peasants. In fact, our task, proceeding from the reality in the countryside — and this includes backwardness, prejudices and ignorance, which cannot be wiped out with a stroke of a pen — is to find a link, a vital hook to which we can attach ourselves, so as to skilfully draw the peasant family forward along the road that leads to the initial stages of socialism. In no circumstances should we passively imitate the existing concepts and traditions, which are based on slavery.

What did our old culture in the field of the family and everyday life amount to? On the top was the gentry, which on the basis of ignorance and a lack of culture, placed the stamp of boorishness on all of social life. In the field of the class struggle and

revolutionary politics our proletariat, which emerged from the peasantry, caught up with the proletariat of Europe in a single bound over some 30 to 50 years, and then overtook it, but in the area of the family and everyday life, in the area of personal morality, our proletariat still has about it more than a little of the old, foul odour of serfdom. In the families of the intelligentsia and the petty bourgeoisie, you can also find a good deal of real, authentic serfdom. There is no need to set yourself the utopian task of overturning the old family through some kind of one-off juridical leap — you'd fall flat on your face and discredit yourself before the peasantry — but in line with the material possibilities, with the conditions of social development that have already been secured, you need to be active in the legal field as well, pointing the family in the direction of the future.

I do not intend to speak now about the proposed new marriage law, which is under discussion and about which I reserve the right to put my views. I expect that in the struggle for a correct law on marriage, your organisation will also take the appropriate position. I only want to dwell on one particular argument that I have been struck by. This argument runs more or less as follows: how can we give the single mother, that is, the mother whose relationship is not registered, the same legal right as a married mother to receive help from the father, thus encouraging women to enter relationships they would not enter if the legislation refused them this right!

Comrades, this is so monstrous that you ask yourself: are we really in a society reconstructing itself along socialist lines, that is, in Moscow or Shatura, and not somewhere in between Moscow and Shatura, in a primeval forest? Not only is the attitude to women here uncommunist, it is an example of reactionary philistinism in the worst sense of this word. Is it possible to imagine that the rights of women, who have to bear the consequences of all marital unions, even short-lived ones, are guarded *too* zealously in our country? I don't think there is any need to show how monstrous this way of posing the question is. But this is symptomatic, and testifies to the fact that in our traditional views, ideas and habits, there is a good deal that is truly primeval, and that needs to be smashed through with a battering ram.

Defending mothers and children in our present conditions means waging a particular fight against alcoholism. Unfortunately, I have not noticed here any theses about alcoholism. [*Voices: "There aren't any."*] Forgive me for arriving too late to suggest that this point be inserted into the agenda, but I will make a plea for this matter to be included in the agenda of your next conference, and above all, in your current work. It is impossible to fight for improvements in the position of mothers and children without waging a struggle against alcoholism along a broad front.

The theses state, and rightly, that irregular sexual relationships should not be

struck arbitrarily from the record, and that public opinion should take a strong stand against frequent divorces and so on. This is quite correct. But, comrades, when we characterise sexual relationships as being frivolous, in many cases it has to be said: there is no greater threat than those sexual relationships that are entered into under the influence of alcohol, in a drunken state, and which make up a very high percentage in a milieu with a low cultural level. It seems to me that your organisation has to take the initiative in the struggle against alcoholism.

If we split the question of mothers and children into a series of issues, addressing in particular the question of the struggle against alcoholism, then we shall all see clearly that the main form which the struggle for more stable and civilised family relationships takes will be a struggle to raise the level of the human personality. Abstract propaganda or preaching will not help here. Legislative frameworks, in the sense of protecting mothers during the most difficult periods of their lives, and providing guarantees for children, are absolutely essential. If we allow any bias in the legislation, then it will not of course be in favour of the fathers, but of the mothers and infants, since however the rights of mothers might be protected juridically, because of morals and customs the role of mothers will not in fact be sufficiently protected until we reach developed socialism, and still more, communism. Juridically, therefore, it is necessary to provide a maximum bias in favour of mothers and children. The struggle has to be directed along various tracks, including against alcoholism. This will not be the least important branch of our work in the near future.

I repeat, however, that the main thrust will consist of raising the level of development of the human personality. The higher people stand mentally, in terms of the nature of their interests and of their level, the more they demand of the people close to them. The greater these mutual demands, the stronger the bond, and the harder it is to break. The main task in all the fields of our collective work is being solved through developing industry, agriculture, welfare, culture and education. This will not lead to chaotic relations, but on the contrary, to more stable ones, which ultimately will not need any juridical registration.

Once again on work in the countryside; I don't think there is any mention here of our agricultural communes. [*Voices: "There is!"*] Excuse me, that was my omission. Not long ago I visited two large agricultural communes, one of them in the Zaporozhye region of the Ukraine, and the other in the Terek region in the North Caucasus. Of course, this is not yet the "Shatura" of our daily life, that is, it cannot be said that this signals a new mode of family life in the same way that Shatura signifies a new technology, but there are early signs here, especially if we compare these communes with the countryside round about them. The communes have child-care centres, permanent

establishments that are based on the entire labour collective, and act as a component part of the big family. There is a room for female adolescents, and another for male adolescents. In Zaporozhye, where an artist was a member of the commune, the walls of the children's rooms are well decorated with paintings. There is a communal kitchen, a communal dining-room, and a combined club and library. This is really a little children's kingdom, housed in a specially assigned wing of the common building. This is a huge step forward compared to the peasant family. In the commune, women feel themselves to be human beings.

Of course, comrades, I am fully aware that firstly, this is a small oasis, and secondly, it still has not been shown that this oasis is itself capable of ensuring that it spreads, since the productivity of labour in these communes is still far from assured. But in general, any social form, any cell, will be viable if the productivity of labour within it increases, rather than remaining static or falling. Socialism can only be built, and the fate of mothers and children assured, on the basis of economic growth. If there is decline and destitution, all that will be possible is a return to medieval barbarism. Nevertheless, the beginnings of new possibilities have undoubtedly been demonstrated in the agricultural communes, which are especially valuable now that the development of commodity production in the countryside, as it proceeds on the extreme wings represented by well-off kulaks and poor peasants, is recreating to one degree or another the forms of capitalist stratification. This means that any forms of cooperation in the countryside, any forms of collective fulfilment of economic, cultural and family tasks, of the tasks of daily life, are especially dear to us. The fact that, as the theses state, the countryside is exerting pressure to set up child-care centres, a pressure that has not existed until now, and that as explained here, this pressure originated with poor peasants and has been transmitted to families with an average level of wellbeing — this fact has colossal significance, if along with it we are going to have little productive and family-domestic rural “Shaturas”, that is, agricultural communes. It seems to me that you need to take these communes under your special care where their family and domestic aspects, and the position in them of mothers and children, are concerned.

I was very interested by the attitude of the peasants to the commune Communist Beacon. The word “beacon” is full of significance. A beacon shows the way from afar, lighting the path for everyone. In 1918 we bestowed any number of such names, but how many of these “beacons” turned out to be fortuitous, ill-founded, sometimes light-minded, and how many of them went out! It was therefore very important to check the degree to which this name was justified. It needs to be said that although this “beacon” is shining in a province inhabited mainly by Cossacks and partly by members of Baptist sects and so on — both these elements are rather conservative — the

hostility of the old, of the past, to the communes did not persist. That is, it still undoubtedly exists among kulak elements, but since this commune operates in a more or less neighbourly fashion, since it has three tractors which also serve the surrounding district under appropriate conditions, it accustoms the nearby Cossacks to the new forms of family and domestic life, and as I have said, the earlier hostility no longer exists. This is an important plus.

Several comrades have told me that in certain Soviet circles the attitude has arisen that agricultural communes are not suited to the times, that they amount to anticipating the future. This is wrong. The communes are among the *embryos* of the future. Of course, the main work of preparing for the future is being conducted along more basic lines — the development of industry, which will provide the countryside with the technological basis for industrialised agriculture. This is the cooperative form of distribution of economic benefits without which it will be impossible to bring the middle peasant to socialism. But alongside this, having such living examples of new economic forms and of new family and domestic relationships in the countryside, having such family and domestic Shaturas, means also preparing for the future from below, helping to work out new attitudes to women and children.

We Marxists say that the value of a social system is determined by the development of the forces of production. This is indisputable. But the question can also be approached from the opposite direction. We do not need the development of the forces of production in and of itself. Ultimately, we need the development of the forces of production because this lays the basis for the new human individual, a conscious individual, not subject to any earthly master, and who does not fear any imaginary, heavenly masters, born out of fear; a human individual who absorbs all of the best that was brought into being by the thought and creativity of previous centuries, and who, in solidarity with all others, goes forward, creates new cultural values, establishes new personal and family relationships, higher and more noble than those which sprang from the soil of class slavery. What is dear to us is the development of the forces of production as the material preconditions for a higher human personality, one that is not closeted in itself, but which is cooperative, part of a community of labour.

From this point of view it may be said that for many decades it will probably still be possible to evaluate human society on the basis of its attitude to mothers and children — and not only society, but also individual people. The human psyche does not develop all its elements simultaneously. We are living in a political century, when working men and women develop through struggle, when they are educated above all in revolutionary political fashion. The cells of consciousness that are filled by family views and traditions, by the attitude of one human being to another, by attitudes to women, children and so



forth — these cells in many cases still retain their old form. The revolution has not yet done its work on them. Those brain cells in which social and political views are located are now worked on much more quickly and dramatically, thanks to society's whole structure and to the epoch in which we are living. (Of course, this is only speaking figuratively — the process in the brain takes place differently.) As a result, we shall go on observing for a long time that on the one hand we are building new industry, a new society, while in the field of personal relationships a great deal still remains from the middle ages. Therefore, one of the criteria for evaluating our culture, and a standard for individual workers, proletarians and advanced peasants is the attitude shown to women and children.

Vladimir Ilyich taught us to assess workers' parties in particular on the basis of the attitude they took to oppressed nationalities and to colonies. Why? For the reason that if we take, let us say, British workers, it is far easier to nourish in them a feeling of solidarity with all their class — they will take part in strikes, and even go as far as revolution — than to force them to show solidarity with yellow-skinned Chinese coolies, to relate to them as brothers in exploitation. This is far more difficult because in such a case, you have to break through a shell of national arrogance that has been formed over centuries. In just the same way, comrades, the shell of family prejudices in the attitudes of the head of the family to women and children — and women are the coolies of the family — this shell has been formed over thousands of years, not just centuries. Because you are acting, and must act, as the moral battering ram that will smash through this shell of conservatism, which is rooted in our old Asiatic existence, in slavery, in serfdom, in bourgeois prejudices and in the prejudices of the workers themselves, prejudices derived from the worst aspects of peasant traditions — because you are going to smash this shell, acting as a battering ram in the hands of the socialist society as it constructs itself — every conscious revolutionary, every communist, every advanced worker and peasant must support you with all their strength.

I wish you every success, comrades, and above all, I hope our public opinion pays you greater attention. Your work, which has a truly cleansing effect, which brings a genuine salvation, must be placed in the centre of attention of our press, so that it is supported on the shoulders of all the country's vanguard elements, so that you are helped to achieve successes in reconstructing our culture and our way of life. [*Loud applause*]■

## Appendix 7

# *From The Revolution Betrayed*<sup>54</sup>

*By Leon Trotsky*

### **Thermidor in the family**

The October Revolution honourably fulfilled its obligations toward women. The new government not only gave women full political and legal rights, equal to those of men, but still more important, did everything in its power — and in any case, incomparably more than any other government — to provide women with genuine access to all types of practical and cultural work. Nevertheless, even the most daring revolution, like the “all-powerful” British parliament, cannot turn women into men, or more precisely, cannot divide equally between men and women the burdens of pregnancy and childbirth, and of the feeding and upbringing of children. The revolution made heroic efforts to put an end to the so-called “domestic hearth”, that is, the archaic, rigid, stifling setting in which working-class women perform heavy forced labour from childhood until death. It was planned to replace the family, as a closed-off petty enterprise, with a developed system of social services: maternity homes, creches, child-care centres, schools, public cafeterias and laundries, health clinics and hospitals, sanatoriums, sporting organisations, cinemas, theatres, and so on. A thorough assuming of the economic functions of the family by the institutions of socialist society, linking all generations through solidarity and mutual concern, would have brought women, and as a result, the loving couples, real liberation from age-old fetters. Until this task of tasks is achieved, the great majority of 40 million Soviet families will remain nests of medievalism, of women’s bondage and psychological misery, of the daily humiliation of children, and of the subjection of women and children to superstition. No illusions can be entertained here. Precisely because of all this, the successive changes to the way the question of the family has been posed in the USSR provide an excellent characterisation of the real nature of Soviet society and of the evolution of its ruling

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Written in Norway in 1936.

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Taking the old family by storm proved impossible. This was not for lack of determination, or because the family was so close to people's hearts. On the contrary, after a brief period of mistrust of the state, and of its creches, child-care centres and similar institutions, women workers, and after them forward-looking peasant women as well, realised the immeasurable advantages of socialised child-care, and of the socialisation of the whole family economy. Unfortunately, Soviet society proved too poor, and its cultural level too low, for this goal to be reached. The actual resources of the state did not match the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. The family could not be "abolished"; it had to be replaced. The real liberation of women was unattainable on the basis of "collectivised scarcity". Experience quickly revealed this stern truth, which Marx had formulated 80 years earlier.

During the years of hunger workers, and to some degree their families as well, ate whenever they could in plant cafeterias or other public dining-halls, and this was officially claimed to represent the transition to the socialist mode of living. There is no need to dwell further on the peculiarities of the various periods, including the years of war communism, the New Economic Policy, and the first five-year plan. The fact is that from the time the rationing system was abolished in 1935, the better-provided workers all began returning to their home tables. It would be wrong to view this retreat as a judgment on the socialist system, which was by no means being put to the test. Nevertheless, workers and their wives made a damning assessment of the "public nutrition" organised by the bureaucracy. The same conclusion has to be drawn with regard to the public laundries, where it is more usual for linen to be stolen or damaged than washed. Back to the domestic hearth! But the domestic table and home laundering, which orators and journalists are now promoting in semishamefaced fashion, mean a return by workers' wives to the cooking-pots and wash-troughs, that is, to the old servitude. The Comintern resolution on the "total and irreversible victory of socialism in the USSR" can hardly sound very convincing to the women of the workers' districts!

The rural family, tied not only to the domestic economy but also to the agricultural one, is incomparably more rigid and conservative than the family of the cities. Only the few, and for the most part, impoverished agricultural collectives introduced communal dining and creches during the initial period. Collectivisation, as was at first proclaimed, was also supposed to bring about a decisive transformation in the sphere of family life; it was no accident that the expropriations extended not just to the peasants' cows, but also to their chickens. At any rate, there was no shortage of reports of a triumphant advance of collective dining in the countryside. When the retreat began, however, reality emerged immediately from beneath the froth of boastfulness. As a rule, all that

the peasants receive from the collectives is grain for themselves and feed for their stock. Meat, milk products and vegetables are obtained almost entirely from the peasants' personal plots. Since the most important foodstuffs are obtained from the isolated efforts of the families, one cannot even speak of communal dining. The dwarf farms, by creating a new basis for the "domestic hearth", act as a dual burden upon women.

The number of permanent places in child-care centres in 1932 came to just 600,000; the number of seasonal places, available only during the months of work in the fields, was around four million. In 1935 there were about 5.6 million places, but as before, full-time places made up only an insignificant portion of the overall total. Moreover, the existing child-care centres, even in Moscow, Leningrad and other centres, generally failed to satisfy even the most elementary demands. "A child-care centre in which a child feels worse than at home is not a child-care centre, but a low-grade orphanage," a leading Soviet newspaper laments. It is no wonder that the better-off worker families shun these places. Meanwhile, the number even of these "low-grade orphanages" is far too small in relation to the mass of workers. In the most recent period the Central Executive Committee has resolved that abandoned and orphaned children should be handed over to be raised by private individuals; the highest organ of the bureaucratic state has thus recognised its helplessness with regard to a very important socialist function. Between 1930 and 1935 the number of children attending kindergartens increased from 370,000 to 1,181,000. The striking thing here is how insignificant the figure was in 1930! The 1935 figure, however, is also a mere drop in the ocean of Soviet families. Further research would show beyond doubt that the greater part, and in any case, the best of these child-care centres catered for the families of managers, technical personnel, Stakhanovite workers, and so on.

The same Central Executive Committee was recently forced to admit openly that "the decision to do away with child homelessness and neglect is being implemented poorly". What lies concealed behind this impassive admission? Only by chance do we learn from newspaper comments in small print that in Moscow more than 1000 children are living in "extremely severe family and domestic circumstances"; that in the so-called "children's homes" of the capital there are around 1500 adolescents who have no prospect of housing and are destined for the streets; that in Moscow and Leningrad during two months in the autumn of 1935 some 7500 parents were "charged with having neglected their children". What good did these court prosecutions do? How many thousands of parents avoided this fate? How many children in "extremely severe circumstances" went uncounted? How do extremely severe circumstances differ from merely severe ones? These questions remain unanswered. The immense scope of

child homelessness, not only obvious and open, but also concealed, is the direct result of a great social crisis, in the course of which the old family has continued to disintegrate far more quickly than the new institutions have been able to replace it.

From the same newspaper comments, and from reports of criminal activity, the reader can learn of the existence in the USSR of prostitution, that is, the supreme degradation of women in the interests of men who are able to pay for it. During the autumn of last year, for example, *Izvestia* unexpectedly reported the arrest in Moscow of “as many as a thousand women, secretly selling themselves on the streets of the proletarian capital.” Those arrested included 177 workers, 92 office employees, five students, and so on. What drove them onto the streets? Inadequate earnings, poverty, the need to “earn a little on the side for a dress, for some shoes.” It would be futile for us to try to discover even the approximate scale of this social evil. The chaste bureaucracy orders the statisticians to keep silent. This enforced silence, however, bears unerring witness to the large numbers of women in the “class” of Soviet prostitutes. Of its very nature, this cannot be a case of “holdovers from the past”; the prostitutes are recruited from the younger generation. Of course, it would not occur to any reasonable person to assign the blame for this ulcer, which is as old as civilisation, to the Soviet regime in particular. Nevertheless, it is unforgivable to speak of the triumph of socialism while prostitution exists. True, the newspapers maintain — to the extent that they are allowed to refer at all to this ticklish topic — that “prostitution is diminishing”, and it may be that this really is so, compared to the years of hunger and collapse from 1931 to 1933. However, the restoration of money relations that has taken place since then, and that has ended all direct rationing of food, will inevitably lead to a new growth of prostitution, as well as to homelessness among children. Where there are privileged people, there are also pariahs!

The existence of large numbers of homeless children is without doubt the most unmistakable and tragic sign of the grievous position of mothers. Here, even the optimistic *Pravda* is forced at times to make bitter confessions. “For many women, the birth of a child is a serious threat to their position ...” Precisely because of this, the revolutionary authorities gave women the right to abortion. In a context of poverty and family oppression this is one of a woman’s most important civil, political and cultural rights, whatever might be said by eunuchs and old maids of both sexes. Under conditions of effective social inequality, however, even this right of women, joyless in itself, is transformed into a privilege. Isolated reports on the practice of abortion that have made it into print are of a truly horrifying nature. Hence, in 1935, “195 women mutilated by unqualified abortionists”, including 33 workers, 28 office workers, 65 collective farmers, 58 housewives, and so on, passed through a single rural health clinic

in one of the regions of the Urals. This region differs from most others solely in that information about it happened to be published. How many women are mutilated each year throughout the whole breadth of the Soviet Union?

Finding itself unable to provide necessary medical help and hygienic surroundings to women who are forced to do away with their issue, the state abruptly changes course, and sets out on the road of prohibition. As in other cases, the bureaucracy transforms necessity into virtue. One of the members of the Soviet supreme court, Soltz, a specialist on marital questions, justifies the impending ban on abortions on the grounds that in socialist society, where there is no unemployment, and so on and so forth, women do not have the right to refuse the “joys of motherhood”. The philosophy of a priest, who has the powers of a policeman into the bargain! We have just heard from the central press organ of the ruling party that for many women, or it would be more truthful to say, for the overwhelming majority, the birth of a child is “a threat to their position”. From the highest institution of Soviet power we have just heard that the decision to do away with homelessness and neglect is “being implemented poorly”, which no doubt signifies a new rise in homelessness. Yet here we have a high-ranking Soviet judge proclaiming to us that in a country where “life is joyful”, abortion needs to be punished by a prison sentence, just as in capitalist countries where life is miserable. It is already clear that in the USSR as in the West, the women who fall into the hands of the jailers will mostly be workers, domestic servants and peasants, who find it hard to conceal their actions. Meanwhile “our women”, the ones who generate the demand for quality perfumes and other fine things, will as before do what they find necessary, under the very nose of an indulgent justice system. “We need people”, Soltz goes on to say, while closing his eyes to the homeless. “In that case, be so good as to bear them yourself”, millions of working women might answer the learned judge, if the bureaucracy had not sealed their lips for them. These gentlemen, it seems, have forgotten once and for all that socialism has to banish the causes that impel women to have abortions, and not force them into the “joys of motherhood” with the help of vile police interference in the area that for every woman is the most intimate.

The draft law on forbidding abortions was submitted for so-called general popular discussion. More than a few bitter complaints and stifled protests managed to penetrate even through the fine sieve of the Soviet press. The discussion was cut off just as suddenly as it was announced. On June 27 the Central Executive Committee turned the shameful draft into an even more shameful law. Even some of the bureaucracy’s inveterate apologists were embarrassed. Louis Fischer declared the legislative act to be something like a regrettable misunderstanding. In fact, this new law against women, with exceptions for ladies, represents the natural fruit of Thermidorean reaction.

The solemn rehabilitation of the family, occurring simultaneously with the rehabilitation of the ruble (what a providential coincidence!), arose from the material and cultural bankruptcy of the state. Instead of saying, "We have turned out still to be too poor and ignorant to create socialist relations between people; this task will be carried out by our children and grandchildren", the leaders are forcing people not just to glue the fragments of the shattered family together again, but also, on pain of dire penalties, to regard the family as the sacred nucleus of victorious socialism. It is hard to comprehend the scope of this retreat!

Everyone and everything is drawn into the new course: the lawmaker and the literary figure, the court and the police, the newspaper and the school. When a naive and honest member of the Young Communist League dares to write in the league's newspaper, "You would be better off working to solve the problem of how women can escape the oppressions of the family", he receives in reply a couple of sharp slaps and — falls silent. The ABC of communism is declared an "ultraleft deviation". The stale, dull-witted prejudices of semicultured philistines are reborn under the name of new morality. Meanwhile, what is happening in everyday life, in all the nooks and crannies of an immense country? The press reveals the depth of thermidorean reaction in the area of the family only to an insignificant degree.

Since the noble passion for sermonising increases together with the growth of sin, the seventh commandment is acquiring great popularity in the ruling stratum. Soviet moralists need only modify the phraseology a little. A campaign has been mounted against too frequent and easy divorces. The creative mind of the lawmaker has now come up with such a "socialist" measure as the levying of a money fee for the registration of a divorce, with this fee to be raised for subsequent divorces. As was noted earlier, the rebirth of the family goes hand in hand with the growing educative role of the ruble. The fee will undoubtedly make registration more difficult for those who find it hard to pay. For people higher up, one hopes, this payment will not pose an obstacle. In any case, people who have good apartments, cars and other blessings arrange their personal affairs without undue publicity, and consequently without registration either. It is only in the lower depths of society that prostitution has a painful and humiliating character. At the top levels of Soviet society, where power is combined with comfort, prostitution takes on the elegant forms of small mutual services, and even the guise of the "socialist family". We have already heard from Sosnovsky about the importance of the "automobile-harem factor" in the degeneration of the ruling stratum.

Poetic, academic and other "friends of the Soviet Union" have eyes but see nothing. Meanwhile, the marriage and family legislation of the October Revolution, once an object of its legitimate pride, is being refashioned and mutilated through extensive

borrowings from the legislative treasure-chest of the bourgeois countries. As if using mockery to set the seal on treason, the same arguments that were earlier invoked to support unconditional freedom of divorce and abortion — the “liberation of women”, “defence of the rights of the individual”, “protection of motherhood” — are now repeated in support of restricting these gains or annulling them entirely.

The retreat is not only taking on the form of repellent hypocrisy, but in essence is also going immeasurably further than is dictated by the iron necessity of the economy. The objective causes that are prompting a return to such bourgeois norms as the payment of alimony are being augmented by the social interest the ruling layer has in deepening the hold of bourgeois law. The most compelling reason behind the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relationships, and for disciplining young people through 40 million points of support for authority and power.

When the hope was still alive that the nurturing of new generations could be concentrated in the hands of the state, the authorities were not only unconcerned with supporting the authority of “elders”, particularly fathers and mothers, but on the contrary, did their utmost to separate children from the family, so as in this way to protect them from the traditions of a stagnant way of life. Even quite recently, during the period of the first five-year plan, the schools and the Communist Youth League made wide use of children to expose, shame, and in general “re-educate” drunken fathers or religious mothers. How successful this was is another question, but in any case, the method served to shake parental authority at its very foundations. In this area, which is of no small importance, an abrupt turn has now also been made. Along with the seventh commandment, the fifth has fully regained its place in the laws. So far, it is true, there are no references to God, but French schools also make do without the deity, and this does not stop them from successfully instilling conservatism and routine.

Concern for the authority of elders has now also brought a change of policy with regard to religion. The denial of God, his assistants and his miracles was the sharpest of all the wedges that the revolutionary regime drove between children and their parents. Under the leadership of people such as Yaroslavsky, the struggle against the church outstripped the growth of culture, of serious propaganda and of scientific education, often degenerating into window-dressing and childish mischief. Now the storming of the heavens, like the storming of the family, has come to a halt. Concerned for its reputation for solidness, the bureaucracy has ordered the young atheists to surrender their martial armour and sit down to their books. Where religion is concerned, a regime of ironic neutrality is gradually being installed. This, however, is only the first stage. It would not be hard to predict the second and third stages, if the



course of events depended only on the present authorities.

The hypocrisy of prevailing attitudes always and everywhere develops as the square or the cube of social contradictions — this, more or less, is the historical law of ideologies, translated into the language of mathematics. Socialism, if it deserves this name, means human relations without considerations of profit, friendship without envy or intrigue, love without sordid calculation. The more insistently the official doctrine proclaims that these ideal norms have now been attained, the more loudly reality protests against such assertions. An example is provided by the new program, adopted in April 1936, of the Communist Youth League. “On the basis of the genuine equality of men and women”, the program maintains, “a new family is being established, with the Soviet state ensuring that it flourishes.” The official commentary expands on the program as follows: “In choosing a life partner, a wife or husband, our young people know only one motive and one inducement, that of love. The bourgeois marriage of convenience, contrived for money, does not exist for our rising generation.” (*Pravda*, April 4, 1936) Where ordinary workers are concerned, this is more or less correct, but “marriages of convenience” are not commonplace among workers in capitalist countries either. The situation is quite different in the middle layers, and among the elite. New social groupings automatically make their mark in the field of personal relationships. The vices which power and money foster in the area of sexual relations flourish so luxuriantly in the ranks of the Soviet bureaucracy, that one might think the bureaucracy had set out to overtake the Western bourgeoisies in this area as well.

In complete contradiction to the just-cited assertion by *Pravda*, the “marriage of convenience” has now been fully resurrected, as the Soviet press itself admits in times of accidental or enforced candour. Qualifications, salaries, positions and the insignia of rank on a military uniform are taking on ever greater significance, since connected with this are the questions of shoes, fur coats, apartments, bathrooms and — the ultimate dream — automobiles. Each year, the struggle for a room in Moscow is enough to bring together and divorce no small number of couples. The question of relatives has taken on exceptional significance; as one’s father-in-law, it is advantageous to have a military commander or an influential communist, and as one’s mother-in-law, the sister of a high-placed official. Should anyone be surprised at this? Could it possibly be otherwise?

One of the especially dramatic chapters in the great book of Soviet life is the tale of discord and break-up in those Soviet families where the husband, as a party member, member of the professions, administrator or military commander has grown, developed himself, and acquired new tastes, while his wife, weighed down by the family, has stayed on the old level. The path of two generations of the Soviet bureaucracy is sown with the

tragedies of wives who have fallen behind and been cast off! The same thing can now be seen in the new generation. The greatest incidence of coarseness and cruelty is encountered, if you please, in the bureaucratic elite, where a very high proportion consists of ill-cultured upstarts who think everything is permitted them. Archives and memoirs at times reveal outright crimes against wives and women in general committed by the preachers of family morality and of the enforced “joys of motherhood”. Meanwhile, the people responsible are beyond the reach of the judicial authorities.

No, Soviet women are not yet free. So far, full equality of rights has provided incomparably greater benefits to women of the upper strata, to female representatives of bureaucratic, technical, pedagogic, and in general, mental labour, than to women workers and especially, peasants. So long as society is unable to take on itself the material cares of the family, a mother can fulfil a public role successfully only if she has at her disposal a white slave — a nanny, a housemaid, a cook, and so on. Of the 40 million households that make up the Soviet population, 5%, and perhaps even 10%, build their “hearth” directly or indirectly on the labour of domestic slaves. A precise figure for Soviet servants would be no less meaningful for a socialist assessment of the position of women in the USSR than all the Soviet legislation, however progressive. Precisely for this reason, the statistics hide servants beneath the heading of women workers or “others”!

The position of the mother of a family, a well-regarded communist, who has a cook, a telephone with which to place orders with the shops, a car in which to make trips, and so forth, has little in common with the position of a woman worker who is forced to run from one counter to the next, to cook dinner herself, and to fetch her children on foot from the kindergarten, if it even exists. No socialist labels can hide this social contrast, which is no less than the contrast between a bourgeois lady and a woman proletarian in any country of the West.

The genuinely socialist family, from which society will lift the burden of intolerable and humiliating cares, will not need any regulating, and the very idea of legislation on abortion or divorce will sound little better than recollections of brothels and human sacrifices. The legislation of October took a bold step in the direction of such a family. Economic and cultural backwardness then led to a cruel reaction. The thermidorean legislation retreats to bourgeois models, hiding this retreat behind false speeches about the sanctity of the “new” family. On this question as well, socialist bankruptcy is concealed by hypocritical respectability ...

There are honest observers who, especially in matters where children are concerned, are shocked by the contradiction between exalted principles and a miserable reality. A single fact such as the harsh criminal punishments meted out to homeless

children is capable of convincing such people that the socialist legislation defending women and children is mere window-dressing. There are also observers of an opposite type, people won over by the breadth and magnanimity of the plan that is dressed in the form of the laws and administrative organs. When confronted with the homeless, the prostitutes and the mothers battling with poverty, these optimists tell themselves that the further growth of material wealth will gradually lend flesh and blood to the socialist laws. It is hard to decide which of these two approaches is more mistaken and harmful. Only people smitten with historical blindness could fail to see the breadth and boldness of the social plan, the significance of the first stages of its fulfilment, and the enormous possibilities that were opened up. On the other hand, it is impossible not to be indignant at the passive, essentially indifferent optimism of the people who close their eyes to the growth of social contradictions, and console themselves by looking into the future, the key to which they deferentially offer to leave in the hands of the bureaucracy. As if the equality of rights of men and women had not already been turned into equality of their lack of rights before the bureaucracy! And as though in some book of prophecies a firm promise had been given that the Soviet bureaucracy could not introduce a new oppression in place of liberation.

History has a great deal to tell us about how men enslaved women, how exploiters placed both in subjection, and how workers at the cost of their blood tried to free themselves from slavery, but merely exchanged one set of chains for another. In essence, history does not tell us anything different from this. So far, however, there are no positive, ready examples of how to really free children, women, or human beings in general. All previous historical experience is negative through and through, and demands of working people above all an irreconcilable mistrust of privileged and uncontrolled guardians! ■

# Notes

## Introduction

- 1 Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1970), pp. 191-316.
- 2 Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge University Press: 1993).

## The Development of Capitalism in Russia

- 3 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1960), pp. 443-444, 546-547.

## The Draft Program of the RSDLP

- 4 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1961), pp. 28-30.

The party program adopted at the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903 was worked out by the editors of the Leninist *Iskra* between 1901 and 1902. The original drafts of the program had been made by Plekhanov. Realising that Plekhanov’s drafts were not acceptable, Lenin worked out a draft of his own in January-February 1902. The *Iskra* editorial board appointed a commission to draw up a single draft program based on the drafts made by Lenin and Plekhanov. Lenin insisted on inserting in the final draft the extremely important clause on the dictatorship of the proletariat, a clear-cut definition of the proletariat’s leading role in the revolution, and on laying a special emphasis on the proletarian character of the party. Lenin also drew up the agrarian part of the program.

- 5 *Factory Courts* were supposed to deal with conflicts between workers and employers concerning wages, labour protection, etc., and pass decisions on them. Agricultural courts were to be vested with the right to lower very high rents, invalidate shackling contracts, etc.

## The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart

- 6 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1962), pp. 89-91.

The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart (the Seventh Congress of the Second

International) was held on August 18-24, 1907. The RSDLP sent 37 delegates. The Bolsheviks were represented by Lenin, Litvinov, Lunacharsky and others. The congress discussed the following questions: (1) militarism and international conflicts; (2) relations between political parties and trade unions; (3) the colonial question; (4) immigration and emigration of workers and (5) women's franchise. The congress was the scene of a clash between the revolutionary wing of the international socialist movement, represented by the Russian Bolsheviks led by Lenin and the German left social-democrats (Rosa Luxemburg and others), and the opportunist wing (Vollmar, Bernstein and others). The opportunists suffered a defeat and the congress adopted resolutions which supplied a revolutionary Marxist formulation of the main tasks of the socialist parties.

### **Civilised Europeans and Savage Asians**

7 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1963).

### **A Great Technical Achievement**

8 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19.

### **Capitalism and Female Labour**

9 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1966).

### **The Working Class and Neo-Malthusianism**

10 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19.

11 *Pirogov Congresses* — congresses of Russian doctors convened by the Russian Doctors' Society in memory of the great Russian surgeon and anatomist N.I. Pirogov. Here the reference is to the 12th Pirogov Congress held in St. Petersburg on May 29-June 5, 1913.

12 *Russkoye Slovo* (Russian Word) — a liberal-bourgeois newspaper which appeared in Moscow from 1885 to 1917.

### **Fifth International Congress Against Prostitution**

13 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19.

14 *Leipziger Volkszeitung* — German social-democratic daily newspaper published from 1894 to 1933.

### **Petty Production in Agriculture**

15 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19.

**To Inessa Armand (1)**

16 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1966).

17 This refers to a pamphlet which Inessa Armand intended to write for working women, but never did.

**To Inessa Armand (2)**

18 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35.

**A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism**

19 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964), pp. 71-74.

20 *Organising Committee* (OC) — the leading centre of the Mensheviks, formed in 1912.

21 *Golos* (Voice) — later *Nashe Slovo* (Our Word); daily newspaper published in Paris from September 1914 to January 1915; Trotsky and Martov were the leading figures on the editorial board.

**Tasks of the Left Zimmerwaldists ...**

22 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 142.

These theses were written in Russian and German, translated into French by Inessa Armand and distributed among Swiss left-wing social-democrats for discussion.

The Zimmerwald Left group was formed by Lenin at the First Socialist Conference of the Internationalists, held at the beginning of September 1915 in Zimmerwald (Switzerland). Lenin described the conference as “a first step” in the development of the international antiwar movement. In the Zimmerwald left group only the Bolsheviks led by Lenin occupied a completely consistent position on the war and the tasks facing the socialist movement.

**The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution**

23 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964), p. 70.

**Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Program**

24 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 471-476.

**Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?**

25 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1966), pp.111-115 & 126-127.

**Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women**

26 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).

The First All-Russia Congress of Working Women was convened by the Central Committee of the RCP(B) in Moscow. November 16-21, 1918. It was attended by 1147 women delegates from factories and the rural poor. The congress approved the foreign policies of the Soviet government and called upon women workers and peasants to support and champion it. The congress approved the establishment of delegates' conferences as a new organisational form of drawing nonparty working women into socialist construction. The congress marked the beginning of extensive party work among women workers and peasants.

- 27 *Poor Peasant Committees* were set up by decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on June 11, 1918. The following questions fell within the competence of the committees: distribution of grain, necessities of life and implements, assistance to local food organs in requisitioning grain surpluses held by kulaks and rich peasants. The decree granted privileges to the poor peasants with regard to the distribution of grain and agricultural implements.

The Poor Peasant Committees were the strongholds of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the countryside. They played an important part in the struggle against the kulaks, in redistributing confiscated lands and supplying food for the industrial centres and the Red Army. The setting up of these committees was a further step in the development of socialist revolution in the countryside, where they contributed to the consolidation of Soviet power and were of tremendous importance in winning the middle peasants over to the side of Soviet power.

By decision of the Extraordinary Sixth Congress of Soviets (November 1918) the Poor Peasant Committees, which had by that time fulfilled their tasks were merged with the village soviets.

## Draft Program of the RCP(B)

- 28 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965), p. 131.

Materials and documents written by Lenin for a draft program of the RCP(B) formed the basis of the work of the commission which drafted the program which was adopted at the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) in March 1919.

## A Great Beginning

- 29 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 428-431.

- 30 *Communist subbotniks* — voluntary unpaid labour by Soviet workers to help restore the country's economy.

The first subbotniks were organised during the Civil War, when the economy was ruined and there was a shortage of labour. In response to the letter of the RCP Central

Committee calling upon them to work in a revolutionary way, the workers of the Moscow-Kazan railway line turned out for the first communist subbotnik on Saturday, May 10, 1919. After knocking-off time they put in an extra six hours work repairing railway carriages and locomotives, loading materials and performing other jobs without payment. Their initiative evoked a response and subbotniks became a widespread phenomenon.

On May 1, 1920, an all-Russia subbotnik was organised.

Communist subbotniks played an important part in the period of the economic rehabilitation and development after the Civil War and foreign military intervention. Lenin attached great importance to the subbotnik movement, calling them a “great beginning” in “the development of labour productivity, in the establishment of a new labour discipline and the creation of the socialist conditions of economy and life”.

### **The Tasks of the Working Women’s Movement ...**

31 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).

### **Soviet Power and the Status of Women**

32 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30.

### **To the Bureau of the Women’s Congress in Petrograd Gubernia**

33 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30.

### **To the Working Women**

34 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30.

### **On International Working Women’s Day**

35 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30.

International Working Women’s Day or International Women’s Day, March 8, was begun as a day of international unity of working women all over the world in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

March 8 was instituted as International Women’s Day on the proposal of Clara Zetkin at the Second International Conference of Women Socialists, held at Copenhagen in 1910, with the aim of mobilising broad sections of women for the struggle against bourgeois domination. International Women’s Day was first observed in 1911 in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Switzerland. It was first observed in Russia in 1913.

### **Greetings to the All-Russia Conference ...**

36 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1966).



## International Working Women's Day

37 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).

## Message of Greetings to the Conference ...

38 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32.

The First Conference of Representatives of Women's Departments of the Peoples of Soviet Regions and Republics in the East was held in Moscow on April 5-7, 1921. It was attended by 45 women communist delegates from Turkestan, Azerbaijan, Bashkiria, the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Tatar Republic, Siberia and a number of gubernias with Turkic and mountain populations. The conference delegates addressed a letter to Lenin inviting him to attend the conference. The telephone message published here was Lenin's reply to the invitation.

## The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution

39 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965), pp. 52-54.

## On the Significance of Militant Materialism

40 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 234-236.

41 *Pod Znamenem Marxizma* (Under the Banner of Marxism) — a monthly philosophical, social and economic magazine, which first appeared in Moscow from January 1922.

42 *Ekonomist* — a journal published by the Industrial-Economic Department of the Russian Technical Society in Petrograd, 1921-22.

## To the Nonparty Conference of Factory and Peasant Women ...

43 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33.

The Nonparty Conference of Factory and Peasant Women of Moscow City and Moscow Gubernia met on November 6, 1922. There were more than 2000 delegates. Lenin's message of greetings was given to the delegates who went to invite him to speak at the conference.

## The Program of the Communist Party of Russia

44 Included as an appendix to *The ABC of Communism*, originally published in England in 1922 in a translation from the Russian by Eden and Cedar Paul. For the full text see Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1966).

### My Recollections of Lenin

- 45 The text is taken from the appendix to V.I. Lenin, *On the Emancipation of Women* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).
- 46 The Second Congress of the Communist International met between July 19 and August 7, 1920.
- 47 *Military Cadets* — in tsarist Russia those attending officer schools. During the October Revolution and in the period that immediately followed they offered armed resistance to the insurgent people and Soviet power in Petrograd, Moscow and some other towns but were everywhere defeated.
- 48 The reference is to the war launched by the bourgeois-landowning Poland against the Soviet Republic in April 1920.
- 49 The Third Congress of the Comintern held on June 22-July 12, 1921, heard a report by Clara Zetkin on the revolutionary women's movement and adopted the following resolutions: (1) On strengthening international ties of women communists and the tasks of the International Secretariat of the Comintern with regard to work among women and (2) On the forms and methods of communist work among women.

### Methods and Forms of Work Among Communist Party Women

- 50 Adler ed., *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International* (Ink Links: London, 1980).
- 51 When delegates were freed from factory work for their term, while retaining a wage, they were called "practitioners". The idea was for them to work in various Soviet institutions and thus gain experience of governing.

### From the Old Family to the New

- 52 This article first appeared in English in a translation by Z. Vengerova in 1924 in the collection *Problems of Life*.

### The Protection of Motherhood and the Struggle for Culture

- 53 Trotsky's speech was published in both *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on December 17, 1925; it was translated from *Pravda* for this volume by Renfrey Clarke.

### The Revolution Betrayed

- 54 Translated from the Russian for this volume by Renfrey Clarke. ■

# Glossary

- Adler, Victor** (1852-1918) — A founder of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party; afterwards a reformist leader of the Second International.
- Armand, Inessa** (1875-1920) — Bolshevik from 1904; collaborated with Lenin in exile before World War I; active in party work directed at women; from May 1919 head of the Zhenotdel, the Communist Party's department for work among women, until her death from cholera in August 1920.
- Astrakhan, I. D.** (1862-1918)— Doctor, author of a number of works on social insurance, prevention of accidents, etc.
- Augean stables** — In Greek mythology, the stables of Augeas, king of Elis, in which he kept an enormous herd of cattle, and which had not been cleaned for 30 years; Hercules cleaned them in a single day by diverting two rivers through them.
- Bebel, August** (1840-1913) — With Wilhelm Liebknecht, a founder in 1869 of the German Social-Democratic Workers Party (Eisenachers); later the leading figure in the German Social-Democratic Party and a leader of the Second International. Author of *Woman and Socialism* (1883). At the turn of the century waged a struggle against reformism and revisionism but towards the end of his life he began drifting to the right, aiming his attacks not against the revisionists but against the revolutionary left (Luxemburg, Liebknecht, etc.).
- Bernstein, Eduard** (1850-1932) — A leader of the extreme opportunist wing of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and the Second International; after Engels' death in 1895 came forward as chief advocate of revising Marxism to accommodate the liberal bourgeois social-reformist practice of the right-wing of the SPD.
- Bolsheviks** — Majority faction of Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party formed at 1903 Second Congress; led by Lenin; became separate party in 1912; led the 1917 October Revolution that established first workers' state; later changed name to Communist Party.
- Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Yekaterina Konstantinovno** (1844-1934) — A leader of the right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; after the 1917 October Revolution

she came out against the Soviet government.

**Bukharin, Nikolai** (1888-1938) — Bolshevik publicist and economist, member of the RSDLP from 1906 onwards. In 1918 when the Brest-Litovsk peace was discussed he headed the group of “Left Communists”; editor of Russian Communist Party central organ *Pravda* 1919-29; succeeded Zinoviev as president of the Comintern 1926-29; after 1923 became the major spokesperson for right-wing pro-kulak policies; formed Right Opposition 1928; expelled from party 1929; executed after March 1938 frame-up trial (“trial of the 21”).

**Cadets** — The popular name for the liberal-bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party formed in Russia in 1905.

**Chernov, Viktor Mikhailovich** (1876-1952) — Founder and most prominent leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. In May-August 1917, was agriculture minister in the bourgeois Provisional Government, pursued a policy of brutal repressions against the peasants who were seizing the landed estates. After the 1917 October Revolution, he was one of the organisers of anti-Soviet revolts; emigrated from Russia in 1920.

**Communist International** — Third International or Comintern; founded in 1919 as the revolutionary alternative to the class-collaborationist Second International. Guided by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in its early years, it later became bureaucratized under Stalin. Following the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany without any serious opposition from the Communist Party, and the Comintern’s endorsement of the ruinous policy of the German CP, Trotsky concluded that the Comintern was bankrupt as a revolutionary organisation. In 1935 the Comintern adopted the class-collaborationist Popular Front policy, supporting bourgeois coalition governments in Spain and France and the Roosevelt administration in the US. The Comintern was dissolved by Stalin in 1943 as a sign to his wartime imperialist allies of his non-revolutionary intentions.

**Communist Workers’ Party of Germany** (KAPD) — Formed in 1919 by ultraleft split from the Communist Party of Germany; opposed to participation in parliamentary elections, advocated leaving mass trade unions and forming revolutionary unions; for a while was a sympathising organisation of the Communist International but was condemned as adventurist.

**Constituent Assembly** — An assembly elected by direct and universal suffrage which, it was promised by the unelected Provisional Government, would determine the permanent constitution of the Russian state. On June 14 (27), 1917, the government decided to hold elections to the Constituent Assembly on September 17 (30), 1917. In August it postponed the elections until November 12 (25).

The elections took place on the appointed date, after the October Revolution. Deputies were elected according to the lists that had been drawn up before the revolution and in keeping with the regulations set down by the Provisional Government. The elections took place at a time when the mass of the people had not yet appreciated the import of the October Revolution. This put the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries at an advantage and as a result they secured a majority of votes in areas outside the capital and industrial centres.

The convocation of the Constituent Assembly became a focus for all those opposed to the October Revolution and Soviet power. It met in Petrograd on January 5 (18), 1918. By decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 6 (19), 1918, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved because, through the reactionary majority, it had rejected the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People submitted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and had refused to approve the decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets on peace, land and the transfer of power to the soviets. Its dissolution had no impact within Russia but provoked a furious storm abroad among enemies of the revolution.

**Cossacks** — Originally free warrior-peasants from the steppelands of south Russia and the Ukraine; in 18th and 19th centuries Cossacks served as cavalry for the tsarist regime.

**d'Annunzio, Gabriele** (1863-1938) — Italian writer and bourgeois politician; chauvinist during the World War I.

**Denikin, Anton Ivanovich** (1872-1947) — Tsarist general; during the Russian Civil War (1918-20) commander-in-chief of the anti-Soviet armed forces in the south of Russia; defeated by the Reds at Orel in 1919; went into exile in 1920, living in France and the USA and writing books on his military experiences.

**Dittmann, Wilhelm** (1874-1954) — A leader of German social-democrats; centrist.

**Engels, Frederick** (1820-95) — Co-founder with Karl Marx of the modern socialist workers' movement; co-author of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), a leader of the revolutionary-democratic movement in Germany in 1848-49, outstanding theorist and populariser of scientific socialism.

**Fabian Society** — Reformist organisation founded in 1884 by a group of bourgeois intellectuals in Britain. It was called after the Roman general Fabius Cunctator (the "delayer") known for his cautious tactics and avoidance of decisive battles. The Fabians renounced the class struggle and set themselves the task of "permeating" the bourgeoisie with "socialist" ideas. They maintained that it was possible to effect transition to socialism by means of petty reforms. In 1900 the Fabian Society joined the Labour Party.

- Fischer, Louis** (1896-1970) — *Nation* correspondent in Europe, mainly in Soviet Union; Trotsky regarded him as an apologist for the Moscow trials.
- Freud, Sigmund** (1856-1939) — Austrian neuropathologist and psychologist; he regarded human behaviour as being based on the sex instinct.
- Gärtner** — Official of the Austrian Ministry of Railways, member of the International Society for Combating Prostitution.
- Gorbunova (Kablukova), M. K.** (1840-1931) — Economist and statistician, writer of Narodnik trend.
- Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD)** — Formed in April 1917 as a pacifist breakaway from the pro-war SPD. Among its leaders were Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky. At its founding it had 120,000 members. It participated in the bourgeois-republican provisional government headed by SPD leader Friedrich Ebert in November-December 1918. It attained a maximum membership of 750,000 by November 1919. In December 1920, following the party's Halle Congress in October, the USPD majority fused with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), while the minority retained the party name until rejoining the SPD in 1922.
- Jogiches, Leon (Tyszka)** (1867-1919) — A leading figure in the Polish and German working-class movements and close collaborator of Rosa Luxemburg; fought in the left wing of German Social-Democratic Party; a founder of the *Internationale* group, the Spartacist League and the Communist Party; arrested and murdered in 1919, a month after similar killings of Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.
- Key, Ellen** (1849-1926) — Swedish bourgeois writer; author of works on women's movement and education of children.
- Kharizomenov, S. A.** (1854-1917) — Russian Zemstvo statistician and economist.
- Kievsky, P.** — See *Pyatakov, Yuri*.
- Kolchak, Aleksandr Vasilyevich** (1873-1920) — Tsarist admiral, monarchist, head of the White armies in Siberia and "supreme ruler" of the White forces in 1918-19; tried and executed after his forces were defeated by the Red Army.
- Lebedeva, Vera** — Bolshevik; doctor with interest in pediatrics; head of the Department for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy (OMM).
- Legien, Karl** (1861-1920) — Leading member of the right wing of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and outspoken apologist for German imperialism during World War I; head of the SPD-aligned trade union movement.
- Lenin, V.I.** (1870-1924) — Founder and leader of the Bolshevik Party; principal leader of the October 1917 Russian revolution; founder of the Communist International; outstanding Marxist theorist of 20th century.
- Lichkus, L.G.** (1858-1926) — Doctor; director of the Mariinsky Maternity Home in St.

Petersburg.

- Lilina, Zlata I.** (1881-1929) — Old Bolshevik; active in international socialist women's movement and party work directed at women; after 1917 held various posts in Soviet government.
- Litvinov, Maxim Maximovich** (1876-1951) — Old Bolshevik; member of united RSDLP delegation to 1907 Stuttgart Conference of Second International; member of International Socialist Bureau after 1912; Commissar of Foreign Affairs in 1930-39, replaced by Molotov on eve of 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact.
- Lunacharsky, Anatole V.** (1875-1933) — Old Bolshevik; member in 1917 of Trotsky's Mezhrayontzi (Interdistrict) Group in 1917 and with them joined Bolsheviks in July; People's Commissar of Education 1917-29; played key role in reconciling the academic intelligentsia to the Soviet regime; wrote *Revolutionary Silhouettes* (1923), a collection of portraits of the Bolshevik leaders. For memorial article see Trotsky, "Anatole Vasilievich Lunacharsky", *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1933-34) (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1972).
- Luther, Martin** (1483-1546) — A leader of the German Reformation; founder of Protestantism (Lutheranism) in Germany; ideologist of the German burghers; in 1525 Peasant War sided with princes against insurgent peasants and urban poor.
- Luxemburg, Rosa** (1871-1919) — Outstanding figure in the international working-class movement; author of a number of important works on economic theory, politics and culture; helped initiate Polish social-democratic movement; from 1897 actively participated in the German social-democratic movement and played a leading role in the struggle against Bernstein and the revisionists; from 1910 led the revolutionary opposition within German Social-Democratic Party; jailed February 1915 but played key role in formation of the Spartacus League; from prison authored the famous antiwar "Junius" pamphlet; freed by the 1918 revolution, she was a founder of the Communist Party of Germany and the editor of its paper, *Die Rote Fahne*; in January 1919 was arrested and murdered by counter-revolutionary troops of the right-wing social-democratic government.
- Malthusianism** — Reactionary doctrine propounded by the English economist Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), who sought to prove that the population was growing faster than the means of subsistence and that the misery and poverty of the working class under capitalism were due to the rapid growth of the population, and not to the capitalist exploitation of the workers.

Malthusianism was an attempt to exonerate capitalism and to prove the inevitability of privation and misery for the working class under any social system. It was an attempt to conceal from the masses the real causes of their misery and to

divert them from the struggle against the capitalist system.

Marx scathingly criticised the theory of Malthus and proved that the poverty of the masses was the product of capitalism and that it was caused by the appropriation of the workers' unpaid labour by the capitalists. He showed that the destruction of capitalism and transition to socialism would put an end to the misery and privations of the working class.

Marx showed that no overall law of the growth of population actually existed and that every socioeconomic formation had its own law of population growth.

In the 1870s Malthusianism reappeared in the shape of *neomalthusianism* which tried to justify the growing impoverishment of the working people by pseudo-scientific theories of "absolute overpopulation", diminishing returns of the soil, etc. Neomalthusianism regards birth control, wars and epidemics as means of bolstering up capitalism and alleviating the misery of the masses. Many of its exponents advocate race discrimination

**Marx, Karl** (1818-83) — Co-founder with Frederick Engels of scientific socialism; leader of the Communist League 1847-52; co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*; central leader of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) 1864-76; author of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.

**Mensheviks** — Literally "of the minority"; originated in split at 1903 2nd congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in opposition to the Bolsheviks (literally, "of the majority") led by Lenin. Afterwards, it was used to designate the pseudo-Marxist petty-bourgeois reformist current within the Russian socialist movement. The Mensheviks claimed allegiance to Marxism, but believed that the working class should combine with the liberal bourgeoisie to overthrow tsarism and establish a bourgeois "democratic republic". In 1912 the Bolshevik faction led by Lenin expelled the Mensheviks from the RSDLP. They supported and participated in the bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917. During the civil war that followed the Bolshevik-led overthrow of the Provisional Government by the soviets (councils) of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies in November 1917, one wing of the Mensheviks supported the counter-revolutionary White armies.

**Morgan, John Pierpont** (1837-1913) — Leading pre-World War I US industrialist and financier; Morgan is one of a handful of financial groups which controls the US economy.

**Morley, John** (1838-1923) — English Liberal politician and writer; secretary of state for India from 1905 to 1910, suppressed the national liberation movement.

**Morozovs** — Big textile manufacturers in Russia.

**Narodniks** — Representatives of an ideological and political trend which arose in



Russia in the 1870s. The distinctive features of the Narodnik ideology were the denial of the leading role of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement and the erroneous belief that socialist revolution could be carried out by the small proprietors, the peasants. They regarded the village commune, which was actually a relic of feudalism and serfdom in the Russian countryside, as a nucleus of socialism, etc. Narodnik socialism was divorced from the actual development of society and was merely a phrase, a dream, a pious wish. In the 1880s and 1890s the Narodniks reconciled themselves to tsarism, began to champion the interests of the kulaks and fought furiously against Marxism.

**Neomalthusianism** — See *Malthusianism*.

**NEP** — Adopted by 10th congress of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1921, the New Economic Policy replaced the emergency system of war communism (1918-21); forced requisitioning of peasant grain surpluses gave way to a modest tax in kind, limited private trade and private enterprise in general was permitted, and the state looked for joint ventures with foreign capitalists; the policy was successful in restarting the economy after the devastating Civil War.

**Plehkanov, Georgi Valentinovich** (1856-1918) — Leader of the Russian and international working-class movement, first propagandist of Marxism in Russia; he formed the Emancipation of Labour group, the first Russian Marxist organisation, in Geneva in 1883. After the Second Congress of the RSDLP he adopted a conciliating stand towards opportunism, and later joined the Mensheviks; during the first Russian revolution he shared the Menshevik views on all the major questions; during World War I (1914-18) he was a social-chauvinist; he adopted a hostile attitude towards the Bolshevik-led October Revolution, but did not take part in the struggle against the Soviet government.

**Popp, Adelheid** (b. 1869) — Austrian social-democrat, publicist and writer; founder and leader of the social-democratic women's movement in Austria.

**Preobrazhensky, Evgeny A.** (1886-1937) — Old Bolshevik; Left Communist during Brest-Litovsk struggle; early supporter of Left Opposition; author of *From NEP to Socialism* and *The New Economics*; capitulated to Stalin 1929; named as a defendant in August 1936 show trial but did not appear; assumed executed 1937.

**Pyatakov, Yuri** (Georgi) Leonidovich (1890-1937) — Used pseudonym *P. Kievsky* in prewar writings; Old Bolshevik; mentioned in Lenin's testament as one of the "two ablest young men in the party"; member of Left Opposition 1923-28; expelled from Communist Party 1927 but quickly capitulated and was reinstated; defendant in Stalin's second Moscow show trial (January 1937), found guilty and executed.

**Ramsay, William** (1852-1916) — English chemist, known mainly for his works in the

field of physical chemistry.

**Rockefeller, House of** — Capitalist dynasty begun by John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937), founder of the Standard Oil trust; one of the handful of financial groups which control the US economy.

**Rothstein, F.A.** (1871-1953) — Russian social-democrat; compelled to emigrate from Russia in 1890, he became active in the British labour movement and was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain (1920). Author of a number of works on the history of imperialism.

**Ryabushinsky P.P.** — A big Russian capitalist and banker.

**Scheidemann, Philip** (1865-1939) — A leader of the right-wing of German social-democracy; rabid patriot during war; entered last government under monarchy to try and stabilise the situation; member of SPD-led provisional government 1918-19; one of the organisers of the brutal suppression of the German working-class movement in early 1919; chancellor 1919.

**Second International** — Established in 1889; united socialist parties in a number of countries. In the period before the World War I, a great organisational and educational work was accomplished under its banner, particularly by the German social-democracy, its largest and most influential section. However, it embraced both revolutionary and pro-capitalist elements and failed the decisive test of the war, with most party leaderships supporting their respective governments. After the war, inspired by the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary elements established the Communist International in 1919. The Second International was resurrected at a conference in Berne (Switzerland) in the same year; only the parties which represented the right, opportunist wing of the socialist movement joined it. Today it exists as the Socialist International.

**Semashko, N.A.** (1874-1949) — Old Bolshevik; People's Commissar for Health in 1923.

**Semkovsky, S.Y.** (1882-1937) — Leading Menshevik; one of the five members of the Menshevik Secretariat Abroad (among the other members were Pavel Axelrod and Yuri Martov) which operated from 1912 to 1917; broke with Mensheviks in 1920 and joined Russian Communist Party; executed in Stalin purges.

**Socialist-Revolutionary Party** — SRs or Social Revolutionaries; founded in 1900; emerged as the political expression of the earlier Narodnik (populist) currents. They advocated a revolution to overthrow Tsarism and achieve "socialism", by which they meant not the abolition of capitalist ownership of industry by the proletariat but the "socialisation" (egalitarian distribution) of land by the labouring classes in general (wage workers, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the peasantry).

The Bolsheviks described the SRs as petty-bourgeois democrats expressing the outlook and interests of the peasantry. The right wing of the SRs, which oriented toward an alliance with the liberal bourgeois Constitutional Democrats (Cadets), was led by Aleksandr Kerensky, who became head of the landlord-capitalist Provisional Government in 1917. Toward the end of 1917 the SR Party split into pro- and anti-Bolshevik wings. The Left SRs supported the October Revolution and participated in the Soviet government until July 1918 when they organised an attempted coup against the Bolsheviks. During the Russian Civil War both wings of the SRs aligned themselves with the monarchist-led White armies against the Soviet workers' and peasants' republic.

**Soltz, Aron** — Old Bolshevik; Stalinist; worked in judicial system; died during World War II years.

**Sorokin, Piritim A.** (1889-1968) — Socialist-Revolutionary; before 1917 an assistant-professor at St. Petersburg University; between 1919-1922 professor of sociology at the Higher School in Petrograd; expelled from Russia for counter-revolutionary activities; eventually became Professor of Sociology at Harvard University and published numerous academic works.

**Spartacists** — Originated as a revolutionary current in the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) during World War I, opposing the SPD leadership's pro-war position. Among its leaders were Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Leo Jogiches and Clara Zetkin.

In April 1915, Luxemburg and Mehring started publication of the magazine *Die Internationale*. In 1916 the *Internationale* group began to publish illegally and circulate "political letters" over the name Spartacus and assumed the name of the Spartacus group. On November 11, 1918 the group constituted itself as an independent organisation, the Spartacus League, operating as public faction within the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD). On January 1, 1919 the Berlin-based Spartacus League fused with other revolutionary groups in Germany to form the Communist Party (KPD). In January 1919 the best known leaders of the Spartacists, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, were arrested and murdered by troops of the SPD-led provisional government.

**Stakhanovism** — A special system of speed-up of production introduced in the Soviet Union in 1936, which led to wide wage disparities and fostered the creation of a layer of privileged workers (*Stakhanovists*) as a base of social support within the Soviet working class for the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

**Svidersky, A.I.** (1878-1933) — Old Bolshevik; after 1917 October Revolution, held a number of government posts including as a member of the board of the People's

Commissariat for Food.

**Thermidor** — The month in the new calendar proclaimed by the French bourgeois revolution in which the radical Jacobins led by Robespierre were overthrown by a reactionary wing within the republican camp, which while preserving bourgeois property relations established by the revolution reversed the democratic and egalitarian measures of the petty-bourgeois Jacobin regime. The event most closely identified with this change is the execution of Robespierre on July 27, 1794. Trotsky used the term as a historical analogy to designate the seizure of political power by the reactionary petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucracy within the framework of the socialist property forms created by the proletarian revolution.

**Trotsky, Leon** (1879-1940) — A leading member of the RSDLP. He aligned himself with the Mensheviks in 1903-04, after which he took an independent position within the party. In July 1917 he joined the Bolsheviks and became a central leader. Chief organiser of October insurrection; first commissar of foreign affairs after revolution; leader of Red Army (1918-25). After Lenin's death, led communist opposition to Stalinism; exiled in 1929; founded Fourth International in 1938; assassinated in Mexico by Stalinist agent August 21, 1940.

**Tsereteli, Irakly G.** (1882-1959) — A leader of the Mensheviks. In May 1917 he became minister of posts and telegraphs in the bourgeois Provisional Government; head of the counter-revolutionary Menshevik government in Georgia after the 1917 October Revolution; counter-revolutionary *émigré* after the triumph of Soviet power in Georgia in 1921.

**Two-and-Half International** — Derogatory name for International Association of Socialist Parties; formed in 1921 by centrist organisations that had left the Second International, which it rejoined in 1923.

**Versailles, Treaty of** — Concluded World War I (1914-18); signed on June 28, 1919 by representatives of the Allied Powers (Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the USA), on the one hand, and Germany, on the other. Forced on Germany by the allied powers, it assigned Germany and its allies responsibility for the war and imposed heavy reparations, occupation and demilitarisation of the Rhineland and limitation of German armed forces; German colonies were parcelled out among victors.

The whole burden imposed by the Treaty of Versailles was borne by the German people, who had to pay huge taxes and suffer the ordeal of chronic unemployment; the capitalist industrial magnates retained their dominant position in the country and continued to pocket huge profits.

**Vigdorchik, N. A.** (1874-1954) — Doctor; author of a number of works on social insurance and occupational diseases.

- Vollmar, Georg Heinrich von** (1850-1922) — A leader of the social-democratic movement in Bavaria; in 1891 he advanced reformist views, predating Bernstein as the pioneer of the revisionist trend.
- Wrangel, Pyotr N.** (1878-1928) — Tsarist general; White military leader in Ukraine and south Russia during civil war; fled abroad in November 1920 after final defeat of his forces by Red Army in Crimea.
- Yakovleva, Varvara N.** (1884-1938?) — Old Bolshevik; elected candidate member of Central Committee at Sixth Congress in July 1917; part of Left Communist opposition to Brest-Litovsk peace treaty; held number of responsible government posts; initially supporter of Left Opposition but became follower of Bukharin; arrested after 1936 first Moscow show trial; executed or died in camps.
- Yaroslavsky, Emelyan** (1878-1943) — Old Bolshevik; a leading Stalinist specialist in the campaign against Trotskyism in the 1920s.
- Zetkin, Clara** (1857-1933) — Prominent figure in the German and international working-class movement; collaborator of Rosa Luxemburg in German Social-Democratic Party; a founder of the Spartacist League and then the German Communist Party; a leading figure in the Communist Party and the Communist International.
- Zietz, Luise** (1865-1922) — A leader of the German Social-Democratic Party; teacher by profession; at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Second International supported the demand for women's suffrage.
- Zimmerwald Conference** — Called on the initiative of the Swiss and Italian socialist parties to bring together the antiwar elements of the European socialist movement, it was held in the Swiss mountain village of Zimmerwald on September 5-8, 1915. It was the first international gathering of socialists during the war.
- A struggle developed at the conference between the revolutionary internationalists headed by Lenin and the centrist, Kautskian majority. Lenin organised a "Zimmerwald left" group, but even in this only the Bolshevik Party held a consistent Marxist position.
- Overall, the conference decisions were vague and semipacifist in character. The conference adopted a manifesto, drafted by Trotsky, which recognised that the world war was an imperialist one; it condemned the "socialists" who had voted war credits and had taken part in bourgeois governments; it called on the European workers to launch a struggle against the war and for a peace without annexations or indemnities.
- For the significance of the Zimmerwald Conference see Lenin's articles "The First Step" and "Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference, September 5-8, 1915" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21). ■

The persistence of gender inequality in the most advanced capitalist societies gives the lie to the idea that women's liberation is possible within the framework of capitalism. Today, with the "gender gap" widening and women, especially in the Third World, bearing the brunt of the capitalist neoliberal offensive against the working class as a whole, the correctness of the Marxist analysis of women's oppression as a cornerstone of class society and its revolutionary approach to achieving women's liberation is clearer than ever before.

There are enormous lessons to be learnt about the path towards women's liberation from both the positive and negative experiences in Soviet history. The progress achieved by the Bolsheviks, as well as the defeats inflicted on women during the subsequent Stalinist counterrevolution, demonstrate the absolute correctness of the Marxist analysis that because women's oppression is rooted in the family as the basic unit of class society, the liberation of women will require not only their complete re-integration into social production, but also the socialisation of all of the functions of the family.

Having overthrown capitalist property relations, granted women full legal equality, begun the process of socialising domestic labour (albeit with major limitations), and consciously striven to eradicate the backward social attitudes and ideological justifications for women's second-class status, the Bolsheviks' program for women's liberation remains the most radical yet seen.

Centred on works and speeches by V.I. Lenin, this collection also contains numerous appendices presenting material by Leon Trotsky, from the Bolsheviks' program, Comintern documents, and so on. On the Emancipation of Women documents the main ideas, debates and experiences in the Bolsheviks' struggle for the emancipation of women, and is therefore essential reading for serious socialists and feminists.

*Resistance books*