

WOMEN AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOCIALIST SOCIETIES, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE SOVIET UNION AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA



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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines and evaluates the effects of socialist transformation in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia on the position of women. The changes which had taken place are examined historically, i.e. from 1917 for the Soviet Union and from 1945 for Czechoslovakia, to the present time. The main explanatory variables are the spheres of economics (productivity and the need for women's labour); ideology (Marxist commitment to women's emancipation); politics (upbringing of children in line with the objectives of the Communist Party and the need for political support of women as a social group); socialist feminism (its auxiliary character within the over-all working class movement and the implication of this for the role of women and the Party strategy towards women) and demography (the need to enhance the population growth).

The ways in which these spheres mutually correspond to or conflict with each other, as well as a specific Party objective at a particular time, is seen as explaining much of the making of the socialist policy towards women and the family. This policy is then contrasted with the objective daily reality of Soviet and Czech women. The role of women is explained in terms of mutual reinforcement of the private sphere of the family and the reproduction of labour power; the social sphere of production, and the pre-industrial sexual division of labour. It is argued that these forces form the 'root' causes of persisting women's inequality within the family and in society at large.

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The chief objective of this thesis is to examine a specific aspect of the ideology of egalitarianism - sex equality. There has been a renewed interest in such an ideology among feminist scholars in the last few years, but much of the debates about the nature of and strategies for the social emancipation of women has been confined to Western capitalist societies (see Rossi, 1964 and 1969; Garskoff, 1971; Safilios-Rotschild, 1971; Dreitzer, 1972). State socialist societies in Eastern Europe have been largely ignored by feminist scholarship in the West, despite the fact that these societies themselves have an ideology of egalitarianism.

As the ideology of sex equality singularly suffers from an absence of specific definitions (its meaning tends to be connotative rather than denotative), we have to ask what this ideology looks like. It can take two forms: assimilation (women should become more like men) or enlarging the common ground on which men and women share their lives together.

The assimilation model of sex equality tends to take the present social structure and its values (favouring work, politics and aggression rather than the family, child care and tenderness) largely for granted. In other words, it is a rather one-sided plea for women to seek careers in the political and occupational world in sufficient numbers to eventually show a 50-50 distribution (Holter, 1971: pp.340-3 and Rossi, 1969: p.351).

There are, however, a number of practical difficulties involved in this. For instance, does equality suffer more when 75% of Soviet doctors are women or when 40% are engineers? Another, more important problem is that a predominantly masculinity-oriented equality may facilitate an increasing similarity between the sexes without a parallel change in and restructuring of social institutions,

thus leading to a double burden rather than to equality of women. The assimilation model also ignores the need for social compensation for the period when the female is pregnant as well as for the consequences of traditional sex-role socialization.

The hybrid model of equality rejects both traditional psychological assumptions and the institutional structure we have inherited. It anticipates equality on the basis of a radically restructured society (both in terms of institutions and values):

"The hybrid model is a radical goal which rejects the present structure of society and seeks instead a new breed of men and women and a new vision of the future ... With the hybrid model of equality one envisages a future in which family, community, and play are valued on a par with politics and work for both sexes, for all the races, and for all social classes and nations which comprise the human family" (Rossi, 1969: p.353).

However, as I am interested in the reality of contemporary life rather than in an imaginative conception of what a future good society should be, I am going to adopt a modified version of the 'assimilation' model of equality. The ideology of sex equality examined in this thesis is defined in terms of roles. It refers to a

"Socially androgynous conception of roles of men and women, in which they are equal and similar in such spheres as intellectual, artistic, occupational, domestic and child care interests and participation; and complementary only in those spheres dictated by physiological differences between the sexes" (Rossi, 1964: p.308).

What does this definition imply? Provided that present social institutions remain by and large intact (and this now includes widespread availability of housekeeping and child care facilities), it urges men and women to change the social definitions of approved characteristics and behaviour for both sexes. For instance, child care and house-keeping should be an equally shared parental as opposed to maternal responsibility.

The demand for equality in the labour force is more complex, because one has to take into account biological differences between the sexes. It is necessary to take into consideration woman's reproductive function and labour legislation must have special rules relating to child birth. This however, does not mean that women should avoid all physically strenuous or disagreeable occupations (if any are left after mechanization) as a matter of principle. Given that pleasant occupations are still relatively scarce in present day societies, sex equality implies that women must also share the less agreeable aspects of work.

We can now turn to the main theoretical themes of this thesis - the examination of what happens when a society tries to implement a specific ideological policy of equality. The questions to ask are (1) how successful the state socialist societies have been in implementing their ideology of equality; (2) what has hindered them; (3) what can we learn from this about 'optimal' conditions to achieve ideological goals; (4) what is the relevance of this for Western feminist ideology and (5) what is the relevance of this for our understanding of social processes.

I am therefore concerned with the social level, not the individual level of analysis.¹ As a sociologist, I am interested in the social processes involved in sex role differentiation, not in the

1. See Galtung's discussion of the 'fallacy of the wrong level' (Galtung, 1967: pp.37-48).

biological and psychological processes (if any).² Whether individual women want equality or not is bound up with their social position since it is a consequence of socialization. Naturally, sex role differentiation and socialization apply equally to men and women, and when equality is involved, one is always looking at the complementary role of men and women.

The processes involved in achieving sex equality (or any equality for that matter) are complex, because there is a continuum of increasing difficulty in effecting social and political change in this field. The easiest target in removing inequality involves legal statute change or juridicial interpretation of rights in the public sector, while the most difficult area involves changes in the covert attitudes and prejudices in family and social life of both sexes. Equality in one sphere might therefore co-exist with inequality in another.³

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2. The literature on the biological and psychological sex differences is so vast that one can cite only few examples. Briefly, the sexes differ in the way they think, perceive, aspire, experience anxiety, daydream and play competitive games (Hochschild, 1973). Some studies document these differences; others try to explain them as due to hormones, chromosomes, internal organs, instinct or 'innate' psychological traits on one hand, or upbringing on the other. The main debate is therefore between biological and sociocultural explanations. The former is summarized by Hutt (1972) and Bardwick (1971), while the latter is supported by evidence on cultural variation by Mead (1948, 1950) and Weisstein (1969). The most comprehensive treatment of the nature of sexual differentiation has been written by Money and Erhardt (1972). Their multidisciplinary approach (they utilize genetics, embryology, endocrinology, psychology and anthropology) focuses on the interaction of hereditary endowment and environmental influence rather than on the old, rather outdated dichotomy nature versus nurture. Their findings indicate that the difference between man and man, or woman and woman, can be as great as between man and woman.
 3. This is discussed in Holter (1971).

These issues are taken up in the historical examination of sex roles in two specific state socialist societies: the USSR and Czechoslovakia. The choice of either of these countries is not accidental. The Soviet Union plays such a dominant role within the East European block that it assumes a particular position of political influence and significance. As such, it cannot be disregarded in a comparative study of declared socialist societies. Moreover, the USSR is the first socialist country and as such has a much longer history. It is therefore reasonable to assume that we can learn a great deal more from its experience of deliberate commitment to the ending of traditional sex-inequality than from the other countries.

One of the main reasons for choosing Czechoslovakia was the lack of its sociological coverage in the past. Yet ironically, there is more information available within Czechoslovakia than there is within the USSR. Unfortunately, most of the data is in Czech or Slovak and therefore of little use to Western social scientists with a limited knowledge of these languages. What is theoretically significant is the fact that Czechoslovakia belongs to the economically more advanced countries within the East European block. Because of this, the analysis of the position of Czechoslovakian women, and its comparison with that of Soviet women, is of general relevance to Western advanced industrial societies.

We can now briefly outline the scope of the study. It is divided into six chapters and a Conclusion. The first chapter discusses the two major theoretical perspectives analysing the social relationship between males and females: structural-functionalist sociology and Marxist-feminism.

As I am primarily interested in the ideology of equality the next chapter is devoted to the examination and evaluation of the official Marxist doctrine of women's emancipation. The ways in which

Marxism has traditionally conceived of female inequality and emancipation, its strengths and weaknesses, form the main content of this particular chapter. It is important to realize that Marxist political ideology plays a rather special role in state socialist societies. Marxism is explicitly regarded as a guide to action, and as such, it provides the Communist Party, its legitimate interpreter, with certain goals and objectives, as well as with certain strategies necessary for the accomplishment of these goals. Thus the implications of the Marxist ideology of women's emancipation for the Party strategy towards women within its own organization as well as in society at large, is the dominant theme of the rest of the thesis.

The third chapter discusses the ways in which female equality was perceived and practised in the German Social Democratic Party and the Russian Bolshevik Party. This is contrasted with that of the 19th century specifically Russian narodnik movement, in order to better illustrate some of the socialist shortcomings. The assessment of the nature of the socialist feminist movement, namely its auxiliary character within the general working class movement, and its implication for the role of women and general Party strategy towards women, form the rest of the chapter.

In chapter four the effects of the socialist transformation in the Soviet Union on the role of women and the family, are discussed. The changes which had taken place are examined historically, from 1917 to the 1960s. The main explanatory variables are the spheres of economics, ideology, politics and demography. Their differential combination or interaction at specific periods of Soviet history is related to differential official priority assigned to the goals of emancipation of women, economic productivity, 'correct' upbringing of children and population growth at each particular time. This official

Party policy is contrasted with the objective daily reality of Soviet women. The mutual reinforcement of the spheres of social production and private reproduction of labour power⁴ within the individual family, as well as its consequences for the lack of female equality within the family and in society at large, are empirically documented.

Chapter five deals with the Czechoslovak feminist movement and proceeds on similar lines and dimensions of analysis as chapter three.

An analytical scheme similar to chapter four is applied to Czechoslovakia in chapter six. Recent 'family incentives' such as direct payment given to mothers looking after their small children in the home are analysed in great detail and emphasized as the possible future trend of development for the rest of the socialist block. The concluding chapter concentrates on the assessment of how each of the discussed dimensions contributes to the interlocking of the two spheres, work and family, production and reproduction. The emphasis is on the evaluation of the negative and positive influences on maintaining the present relationship between the sexes. An attempt is also made to predict the possibilities for change with regard to the above.

4. See chapter one for a definition of labour power.

Although the study of social stratification has been so prominent in theoretical and empirical research in sociology, the criterion of sex has played a relatively minor part in such studies.¹ Sociological analysis of social stratification has concentrated on differences between such social groupings as classes, races, castes, age-groups, elites and masses; sex role differentiation has been largely ignored or dismissed as irrelevant. As Parkin puts it:

"... if the wives and daughters of unskilled labourers have some things in common with the wives and daughters of wealthy landowners, there can be no doubt that the differences in their overall situation are far more striking and significant" (Parkin, 1971: p.15).

Since sex lines cut across class lines and since many sociologists regard the family, rather than the individual as the basic unit of the social system,² this has led to the conclusion that the nature and quality of sex role differentiation is not comparable to that of other social categories. Moreover, sociologists interested in differentiation of sex roles have tended to approach the subject only through the study of the family. As the sociology of the family has been heavily influenced by structural-functionalism the main theoretical argument about sex roles has been concentrated in this particular school of sociology.

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1. One has to make an important distinction between sociology and anthropology and the assertion certainly applies to sociology only. Social anthropology has extensively studied sex roles as sex is the principal source of the division of labour in primitive societies. The most famous, if controversial studies are by M.Mead (1948 and 1950). Among the less general studies, one of the most interesting seems to be Douglas' analysis of sex pollution and its relationship to wider social order, especially to male dominance. See M.Douglas (1966: pp.140-158).
 2. For a criticism of this approach, see Acker (1972) and Oakley (1974b: Chapter One, esp. pp.8-14). See also Rossi (1969) and Berreman (1972), who discuss the significance of the ways in which sex role differentiation differs from differentiation based on race, ethnicity or religion.

1. Functionalist Family Sociology

Empirical studies have focused their attention firstly on a description of the existing division of labour between the sexes; and secondly on the functions of this division for the maintenance of the family itself as well as for other systems such as the occupational system or the personality system (McIntyre, 1966). What has, however, been lacking is any linkage between this specific aspect of the division of labour and concepts of inequality or conflict. In other words, functionalist family sociology has tended to devalue the importance of stratified relationships within the family and, by extrapolation, between the sexes in general. While class inequality has been linked with subjective aspects of stratification and with such concepts as life chances, income differences, differences in status and honour, differences in power and authority, such themes have not been prominent in the traditional sociological study of sex role differentiation.

For instance, Parsons has not considered the possibility that male 'instrumental' role could mean more formal power, since the father is the head of the household. Yet sex inequality can be relatively easily conceptualized. As Rossi (1969: p.344) put it:

"A group may be said to suffer from inequality if its members are restricted in access to legitimate valued positions or rewards in a society for which their ascribed status is not a relevant criterion."

We can then differentiate between a particular form of inequality (e.g. codified law) and a particular type of inequality (e.g. civil and political rights of an individual). There are several other forms of inequality in addition to legal statute: corporate or organizational policies and regulations and covert social pressures which restrict the aspirations or depress the motivation of individuals on the ascribed grounds of their membership in certain categories. Thus a society or an educational system which uniformly applies pressure

on girls to avoid occupational choices in medicine, engineering, law, etc. are examples of covert pressures which bolster sexual inequality. Forms of inequality therefore range from explicit legal statute to corporate discriminatory regulations to informal social pressures.

Type of inequality adds a second dimension: the area of life in which the inequality is evidenced. One can find sex inequalities in the public sector (e.g. in education, employment, income distribution, political participation) and in the private sector (especially the family). It is far easier to change laws which presently penalize women as workers, students, or citizens than it will be to effect social changes in family life (Rossi, 1969).

Yet possible inequality is nowhere mentioned in the structural-functionalist analysis of the division of labour between the sexes. All existing sex-role differentiation is seen as 'functional' to society, to the family itself and to the personality structure.³ The family is seen as a functioning unit, adequately providing basis for child care, sexual security and emotional protection. The loss of previous functions (e.g. economic, educational) is 'made up' by better service in the remaining areas, i.e. emotionality and primary socialization.

The Parsonian version of this approach regards also the typical contemporary urban middle class family with conventional differentiation by sex and age as functional both for society and for the individuals concerned. The emphasis is on instrumental-expressive differentiation. The female position within the family and in society at large is seen in terms of maintaining group solidarity by virtue of preserving emotional, expressive, ascriptive and particularistic values.

3. See, for instance, the structure of Bell's and Vogel's influential reader entitled: A Modern Introduction to the Family (1960). The possibility of 'strain' or conflict arising out of the existing sex role differentiation is nowhere suggested.

It is claimed that her position of wife and mother institutionally segregates this latter set of values, 'reserved' for the family, from universalistic and achievement values, 'reserved' for the economic sphere and the occupational role of the father. It is also claimed that this conventional mutually exclusive, sex-role differentiation is the major factor in stabilizing adult personalities. This particular social arrangement is then justified on biological grounds, by the fact that:

"the bearing and early nursing of children establishes a strong presumptive primacy of the relation of mother to the small child and this in turn establishes a presumption that the man, who is exempted from these biological functions, should specialize in the alternative instrumental direction" (Parsons and Bales, 1955: pp.22-23).

I shall examine first the empirical validity of these statements. It is open to debate whether the existing sex-role differentiation is as 'functional' and 'integrative' for the individual's emotional stability as the authors have suggested. For Parsons (1955) is so concerned with the adaptive nature of social processes that he tends to ignore the ways in which changes can set up tensions and strains. It is quite plausible to argue that rather than satisfying each other's emotional needs, this structural setting on instrumental-expressive lines in many instances creates frustration and alienating experience for both spouses, but especially for the wife. Many authors have suggested that because of the roles they typically occupy, women are more likely than men to have emotional problems (Komarovsky, 1950; Mead, 1950; Moore, 1958; McKee and Sterniffs, 1959; Friedan, 1963; Gavron, 1966; Rossi, 1964; Oakley, 1974b). Moreover, disproportionately more women than men are found to be mentally ill.⁴ What is especially significant is the fact that the major difference in rates of mental illness is

4. For empirical evidence, consult Chesler (1971) and Gove and Tudor (1973).

found among married men and women. The results are quite different for unmarried persons. For example, single white women in the general U.S. population report less psychological distress than married or separated white women (Chesler, 1971: p.748). Some studies investigating the relationship between marital status and mental disorder even found that it was quite common among unmarried persons for men to have the higher rates of mental illness (Gove, 1972).

Certain forms of emotional disturbance can also be found in the present-day mother-child relationship. A number of studies have pointed out that many housebound mothers experience sense of deprivation (Friedan, 1963; Gavron, 1966; Oakley, 1974a and 1974b). Let us briefly look at Gavron's 'pioneering' study. Her sample was made up of white working class and middle class mothers, all young married women living in London with their husbands, with at least one child. Almost all of the mothers in the sample experienced feelings of isolation and felt burdened with responsibility. They all felt that their children in some way restricted their freedom, although the middle class mothers felt a more psychological restriction while the working class mothers expressed it more in terms of physical restrictions. Both groups found it difficult to articulate their uneasiness with their status. Neither Gavron nor the mothers questioned the inevitability of the conflict between the motherhood role and women's desires and ambitions outside the family.

The connection which Gavron and Parsons make between the biological function of the woman (her bearing and nursing of the children) and her 'specialization' in child-rearing and the emotional sphere cannot be taken for granted. Parsons explicitly states that maternity, with the associated emotional qualities, is the female social 'destiny'. This assumption has led Parsons to regard other possible social roles of

the woman (e.g. those in the labour force) to be in conflict with the basic biological 'root' function of reproduction. Moreover, his argument goes so far that it accounts for the difference between the roles performed by men and women in the occupational sphere on the same basis. Parsons claims that the

"distribution of women in the labour force clearly confirms this general view of the balance of the sex roles. Thus, on higher levels typical feminine occupations are those of teacher, social worker, nurse, private secretary and entertainer. Such roles tend to have a prominent expressive component, and often to be 'supportive' to masculine roles. Within the occupational organization, they are analogous to the wife-mother role in the family" (Parsons, 1955: pp.22-23).

While this is a correct empirical observation, it is not a satisfactory explanation, as the Bankses pointed out. They argue that it is the whole trend of industrialization rather than innate sex-role differences which account for the feminization of certain sectors of the economy and for the lack of marked occupational achievement on the part of women. Women worked as assistants to their husbands and fathers before the Industrial Revolution, and their subsidiary role was perpetuated and reinforced afterwards in factories and offices and by protective legislation. In fact, the whole trend of industrialization has been in the direction of the increasingly hierarchical organization of roles within the economy, some of which were allocated to men and women alike. For instance, bureaucratization has created a large number of subsidiary positions within the occupational hierarchy, which have always been filled to a large extent by men. Moreover, even some managerial roles, with a strong 'expressive' element, e.g. personnel work, are largely male dominated (J.A. and O.Banks, 1964).

The Parsonian account of the occupational structure is therefore questionable and the deduction made from the biological function of the woman overstated. Yet the implication of reproductive determinism

goes further than this, because it has been largely responsible for the relegation of the study of women to the 'sociology of the family'.

As Oakley puts it:

"If women have no place of their own in much sociology, they are firmly in possession of one haven: the family. In the family, women 'come into their own'; they are the family. By far the largest segment of sociological literature concerning women is focused on their roles as wives, mothers and housewives ... Possibly the family and marriage areas in which sociological visibility exceeds social presence; certainly the presence of males as fathers is not matched by an equal visibility in the discipline" (Oakley, 1974b:pp.16-17,18).

This does not of course imply that marriage and family life are not important to women today. Indeed the evidence suggests that these areas of experience are still crucial. But do we know how crucial? What has been lacking is a sociological account of the relative importance these areas play in the totality of women's experience. For other aspects of women's lives have been either neglected or totally ignored. This 'invisibility of women in sociology' has extended from "the classification of subject-areas and the definition of concepts through the topics and methods of empirical research to the construction of models and theory generally" (Oakley, 1974b: p.3). For instance, the relations between work and family life and its impact on the role of women, have been seldom studied in structural-functional sociology. Those few studies which have dealt with the subject have failed to relate the 'dual' role of the working mother in a systematic fashion (Klein and Myrdal, 1956; J.M. and R.E.Pahl, 1971; R. and R.N.Rappoport, 1971). The conflict between these two roles has been taken for granted and the need for an analysis of the nature of housework in modern industrial societies left unacknowledged.

The traditional academic sociology of women is in many aspects unsatisfactory, but this specific criticism must be linked with a more

general complaint about the whole of the structural-functionalist theory. For the unsatisfactory treatment of women in sociology has been at least partly related to the underlying premise of functionalist sociology as such, namely its emphasis on the status quo, on persistence, integration and pattern maintenance.⁵ It is these general shortcomings of functionalism which have been largely responsible for the failure of the sociological argument about sex roles to go much beyond the level of description of what exists, or appears to exist, in certain sectors of Western industrial societies.

In fact, some authors went as far as suggesting that an identification of sex role differentiation within the household and in society at large is not a theory at all, but an ideology (J.A. and O.Banks, 1964; Ehrlich, 1971; Laws, 1971; Middleton, 1974; Oakley, 1974a: pp.156-185). As Middleton is very precise on this point, I shall quote him at some length:

"In the present century, changing assumptions about human behaviour and its relationship to the social world (as embodied in the expanding disciplines of the social sciences) made a reformulation of sexist ideology imperative. The new improved version (Freud, Bowlby, Parsons, and Spock are key figures in this respect) has stressed the socio-psychological importance of the woman's traditional wife-mother role for other members of the family; and as I shall show it is in this variant that sexist ideology has had such a pervasive and subtle influence even on those who would discredit it ...

The functionalist theory of structural differentiation may be the sociological heir to the nineteenth-century conservative philosophy of organic harmony, but that philosophy had perceived woman as an inferior and subordinate being, whereas modern functionalism manages to combine the theory of organic harmony with an ideology of familial democracy. In other words, functionalism discounts the existence of actually prevailing inequalities between the sexes which conservative philosophy had at least acknowledged - even if it had done so with approval" (Middleton, 1974: pp.182, 183).

5. For a criticism of functionalism as a weak explanatory theory, see Hempel (1959) and Isajin (1968).

One should, however, place this specific criticism into a wider context of the 'crisis' of current academic sociology. For not only the Parsonian theory of women and the family, but the whole structural-functionalist approach has come under attack. As Giddens puts it:

"Now sociologists are chronically subject to self-doubt and we might ask whether there is indeed anything unusual about the present situation of controversy on sociological accidie. The answer is that there is. The 'crisis' - a trite and unsatisfactory term in itself - in contemporary sociology is symptomatic of the fact that we stand at an important phase of transition in social theory. In broad outline, the origins of the current situation are not at all difficult to discern. Two connected sets of factors are involved. One is to be found in the events which, in the past few years, have disrupted the pattern of 'consensus politics' in the capitalist societies: the increase in strike levels in certain countries, the struggles in France in 1968, and the eruption of student protest movements. To these may be added the conflicts which have arisen within the socialist world, culminating in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The second factor is the manifest poverty of the dominant forms of theory in sociology in accounting for these events. In academic sociology, structural-functionalism, and its main interpretative support, theories of 'the end of ideology' appear blank and barren in the face of a new upsurge of social and political conflict in the West. But Marxism, especially as transmuted into the official ideology of state socialism, seems equally inept when confronted with the events of the recent past" (Giddens, 1973; p.13).

Giddens raises a number of points that are highly relevant to the present discussion. Firstly, one could legitimately argue that his list of "events which in the past few years have disrupted the pattern of 'consensus politics' in the Western societies" should have also included the emergence of Black Power Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, etc. Secondly, structural-functionalist theory of women appears "blank and barren" not only in the face of a new upsurge of feminism, but also in the face of such a 'non-militant' phenomenon as the growing entry of women into paid employment. If women are seen primarily as wives and mothers, and if this 'root' function is considered as conflicting with their gainful employment,

how do we account for the growing numbers of women entering paid employment - a trend characteristic for all industrial societies? Furthermore, if women are supposed to specialize in the 'expressive' direction, both within the family and in the occupational structure, how do we explain the large numbers of Soviet women scientists and engineers within the Parsonian framework? Surely, they cannot all be 'deviant'.

What strategy should one adopt, on the level of sociological⁶ theory, in such circumstances? Structural-functionalism is unsatisfactory and so is the traditional Marxist⁷ theory of women and there are no adequate alternatives within existing sociology. After all, one can hardly consider Soviet women as a 'minority group' if they are actually a numerical majority in the population. Perhaps one should look for a better theory outside the boundaries of academic sociology. Such a strategy was recently suggested by Colin Bell in his review of a functionalist account of the family:⁸

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6. As Giddens made clear, "We stand at an important phase of transition in social theory" (my italics).
 7. This theme is explored in the next chapter. See also Middleton (1974: pp.185-191). He makes a good case for arguing that apart from the terminology it employs and the moral evaluation it passes, there is very little that differentiates classical Marxist theory of the family from the Parsonian functionalist account.
 8. The book in question is by Robert O. Blood, entitled The Family, and published in 1972. Bell's view has been shared by a number of other sociologists. See, for instance, Dreitzer 1972, Garskoff 1971, Safilios-Rotschild 1972.

"So here is a monument to a dying culture, produced in its later moments for a still existing mass educational system ... Its theoretical framework is unquestioningly and unquestionably functionalist as we all know and love it. There is no room or doubt. Reading this text has almost convinced me that the case made in Friedrichs' A Sociology of Sociology for the 'paradigmatic' status of functionalism (just like in the natural sciences) is correct. The theory does not have to be specified as we all understand what it is - only if you are too close you may never see ...

Indeed the revitalization of the sociology of the family and of sex roles that is coming from the Women's Movement need not have happened as far as this book is concerned ..." (Bell, 1973: pp.673-4).

The adoption of a feminist perspective for a sociological theory raises, however, a number of theoretical and practical problems. Firstly, one needs to emphasize that feminism is primarily a political movement, produced by the contradiction between men and women. In this respect, feminism shares with Marxism the epistemological difficulties in seeking to sustain the claim to be both an empirically verified body of theory, and a moral guide to political action. On the other hand, we have to realize that this 'fallacy' is not unique to theories that are explicitly attached to organized political movements. As we have observed, structural-functionalism is also a form of ideology, although its impact has been much more subtle and implicit than that of Marxism or feminism.⁹ Oakley summarized the apparent difficulties involved in adopting feminism as a theoretical viewpoint rather well:

"... a feminist perspective appears to be polemical because it runs counter to the accepted male-oriented viewpoint - a viewpoint which is rarely explicitly articulated. The word 'feminist', like the words 'sexist', 'male-biased', or 'male chauvinist' carries heavy polemical implications. Although these are highly political words, we use them because they are the only available ones: conceptually the area of gender-differentiation is very poorly developed" (Oakley, 1974b:p.2).

The second problem concerns the feminist belief that all women,^{ir} /respective of their social class or their politics, constitute a homogeneous group defined by their common subjugation. Such an assumption is certainly open to criticism. For to attain an accurate sociological theory of sex-based stratification, we have to consider women not as some idealized category, but as they really are, differentiated by their objective class affiliations and experiences.

9. On this point, see Mills' Sociological Imagination (1959). See also Mannheim's pioneering work in the sociology of knowledge, especially his argument about ideological 'relativism' (Mannheim 1936).

There is, however, one perspective that seems to have overcome this problem to some extent - the Marxist theory of domestic labour, which has now become the focal concern for Marxists in or associated with the Women's Liberation Movement. As Middleton put it, Marxist feminism

"... has produced a theory that meets the demand for an analysis of the material basis of those oppressions that are specific to women; that escapes from the hegemony of sexist ideology by recognizing women as historical subjects, as well as passive objects of the historical process, that structurally integrates the relationship between the sexes and that prevailing between proletarian and capitalist classes; and finally that need not commit the fallacy of assuming that all women share essentially identical conditions of material and social existence" (Middleton, 1974: p.201).

In this sense, the Marxist feminist account of sex role differentiation is put forward as a possible alternative perspective, which is perhaps more useful and relevant to the main theme of this thesis, than that discussed above. In other words, the Marxist feminist framework of analysis seems particularly useful in a study of the position of women in state socialist societies. For these societies have adopted Marxism and its tenet of sexual egalitarianism as an official ideology.

2. The Marxist-Feminist Theory

The clearest and most concise expression of this viewpoint can be found in a paper by Coulson (1973) which outlines the following perspective:

"A historical analysis of the oppression of women would have to start from an examination of the ways in which the mode of production, and the social arrangement of reproduction and human sexuality are interrelated in any epoch, and of the ways in which social organization and ideology support and sustain the relationship between the two. This involves recognising the significance of human sex differences, the process of human reproduction, and the helplessness of human infants; and the extent to which these acquire social meaning within the context of and in relation to a particular social formation. This methodological approach enables us to see that there are not two separate systems - that of reproduction and that of production - but two interrelated and interdependent systems. The unit of social organization within which these interrelationships have generally been structured is the family. The family is never simply a biological unit; it is the creature of the social system and it reflects its culture" (Coulson, 1973).

Coulson then strengthens her theory by constructing ideal types of agrarian and industrial societies. This contrast is a useful device because it highlights particularly well the extent of the changes in the position of women and the family since industrialization got under way. It should be emphasized, however, that a brief account of the interrelationship between production and reproduction in an agrarian society is by its very nature descriptive rather than theoretical. In fact, it is on a par with Marx's account of 'primitive communism', but it is better 'grounded' because of the much advanced state of anthropology today.

In pre-industrial societies, work and family were co-terminous for the mass of the population, so that domestic labour was embedded within and inseparable from the labour of general production. The old, the children above certain age, the husband and the wife, other kin and grooms of both sexes, all played some part in the production around the house - in agriculture, cottage industry or some combination of both. The collective household therefore formed by itself a self-sustaining unit of both production and reproduction. This particular interrelationship between production, reproduction and

human sexuality, that is to say their co-extensiveness or lack of separation, formed the structural basis of ideological and emotional cohesion of these families.

The structural changes accompanying industrialisation fundamentally altered all this. The main changes developed out of the separation of labour and capital. As Marx observed, this separation is necessary for the accumulation of capital, for the increase in the degree of mechanization and automatization, and for the intensification of work productivity. Moreover, in order to achieve this, this separation is reproduced on a continually extended scale. It must involve the institutional separation of the home from the place of work and the separation of domestic labour from commodity production. Thus, the development of capitalism fundamentally altered the position of domestic labour and reproduction within general production. This had important implications for the respective natures of the modes of production and reproduction, because they became vastly different. Moreover, the interrelationship between the two systems also underwent fundamental change, because it was now mediated through the commodity market, interposed between them.

Commodity production no longer took place within the family. It had moved outside the home, to factories and offices. This change of location then opened the way for a greater concentration of labour and accumulation of capital. This in turn has led to an increasing technological complexity and corresponding advance in the division of labour. The overall organization of production thus became much more efficient and advanced.

The labour of reproduction, on the other hand, has remained within the home and the individual family. Because of this, family-based reproduction underwent changes similar to those characteristic for the family itself. Its previously social nature was transformed

into a private one. Although this transformation is significant in itself, what is even more important is the fact that the two spheres - social production and private reproduction - have by no means been harmoniously related. In fact, one can extend the argument a little further and claim that this specific contradiction¹⁰ constitutes one of the two major factors that impart a specific dynamic to present-day women's situation, that forms the basis of their social inequality. The other factor is the prevalence of the traditional sexual division of labour. The full implication of the latter can be fully evaluated, however, only if it is placed within the material context of private domestic labour.

(i) Private Reproduction of Labour Power

In Marxist analysis, labour power is defined as the capacity to work, as the quality of a living labourer, which is sold on the labour market and exchanged for a living wage. The concept is particularly applicable to the proletarian class which, being excluded from ownership of the means of production, is forced to sell its only commodity: labour-power.¹¹ Its reproduction consists of two distinguishable processes: the daily maintenance of the labour-power of those members of the family who work in the market economy (they are fed, clothed, rested, able to resume work the following day) and the reproduction of a new generation of labourers (this refers both to the quantitative biological reproduction and to the qualitative socialization of a labour force of a certain kind.) Let us first consider the day-to-day domestic labour.

10. It is specific to the particular system of interrelationship between production and reproduction that has developed historically under capitalism and which so far has not been changed under the specific formation of state socialism.

11. For a more detailed discussion, see Middleton, 1974: pp.197-9.

As it is unpaid and only for the immediate benefit of family members, its quality seems to be something quite apart from the whole world of work and wage labour. To many people, it might not even appear as work at all; they may consider it as a 'labour of love'.¹² This outward appearance of housework is, however, misleading and it is to the credit of Marxists associated with the Women's Liberation Movement¹³ that its nature is now better understood.

Activities associated with domestic labour, e.g. shopping, preparation of food, house cleaning and keeping, laundry, care of children, etc. are all good examples of 'hidden', unpaid, socially necessary and useful labour of both production and reproduction. In this sense, household activities link and mediate between the two spheres of production and reproduction. The domestic labourer, normally the housewife, purchases on the commodity market the means necessary for the family subsistence/consumption, and by her household activities reproduces labour power which is then sold back at the labour market. It is in this sense that the social sphere of production and the private sphere of reproduction are structurally interlocked, although each sphere is quite different in character.

Productive labour in the sphere of work creates an exchange-value, that is to say, it could be sold on the market, and as such is a source of surplus-value. However, as Marx made clear, this type of commodity production does not exhaust all the forms of socially necessary and useful labour. Self-employed people such as peasants, who produce for their own consumption and not for the market, create only use-values, which are not 'productive' from the capitalist point of view,

12. Sociologists have been no exception in this case. See Oakley, 1974a and 1974b.

13. See Benston 1919; Morton 1970; Edwards 1971; Dalla Costa 1972; Secombe 1973; Gardiner 1975. One also ought to include Middleton 1974.

because they cannot be turned into an exchangeable commodity. Marx did not apply this type of analysis to individual housework, but the Marxist feminists have shown that its nature is not very different from the labour of the individual peasant who produces only for his immediate consumption.

Commodities, which the housewife buys on the market are not, in themselves, in a finally consumable form. Food must be unpacked, cooked and served, clothes must be washed and mended, etc. Housework therefore transfers and creates use-values, but as it does not have an exchange-value, it in itself cannot produce a surplus. Only when domestic services are transferred to the social sphere of production outside the home, or are performed within it by a paid servant or a housekeeper instead of an unpaid wife, domestic labour has and creates exchange-value. In other words, only housework which is turned into an exchangeable commodity which is sold on the market, can be considered as economically productive. For instance, cooks in restaurants outside the home or housekeepers inside the household are paid in the same way as labourers in any other form of social production.

Despite all that, unpaid domestic labour of the housewife within the family is inextricably linked with the social sphere of production - the use-values created by the private, unpaid domestic labour contribute to the capital accumulation of property owners. However, appropriation of the use-values of housework by the capitalists is done indirectly, through the husband and through the family as a whole. The wage earner is paid not only for his industrial power, but for the labour that reproduces the labour power of the entire family. As the housewife is excluded from the wage transaction, the man appears as an independent agent. The reproductive labour of his wife, which is necessary for his productive labour in the factory or in the office, is thus obscured and hidden. Domestic labour is therefore necessary to

the production of surplus value in the factories, but as it does not have an exchange-value, it in itself cannot produce a surplus.

The industrial worker in the factory and the wife in the family are in fundamentally different situations. While workers directly create capital for their employers, women's work in the individual homes does not lead to any capital accumulation on the part of their husbands. Another difference between the factory and the family is the respective character of economic relation and exchange. While in the factory wages are subject to a legal contract and collective bargaining, the redistribution of income within the family is conducted in private, arbitrarily between the marital partners, without any specific rules. The economic relation between the marital partners could therefore be looked upon as pre-capitalist. A non-monetary type of transaction, that is to say, exchange of domestic and economic services for economic upkeep rather than commodity money exchange, takes place.

The Industrial Revolution further reinforced (materially as well as ideologically) this specific situation of the woman within the family. The protective legislation covering women and children had obvious beneficial effects for women, but it at the same time re-asserted the role of the man as breadwinner and asserted that domestic labour was woman's responsibility. Women then became defined as a specific social group which sells its capacity for reproduction of labour power to individual men in return for their keep, rather than selling their labour directly on the market. The implications of this definition for the sexual division of labour are obvious, but in order to evaluate them properly, they have to be placed within the material context of private domestic labour.

Compared with the great technological and organizational advance in the social sphere of production, the labour process in the home has remained extremely primitive and inefficient. While it is true that updating of modern household technology has increased the productivity of domestic labour, its organization has remained completely static. For modern household technology has entered the home only on the level of commodity consumption. As Coulson put it:

"... each home requires - ideally - cooker, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, iron, etc. so that each domestic labourer may utilise these machines in the most inefficient way, in the isolated conditions in which she works, for the benefit of two or three other people, while millions of other domestic labourers with a similar range of machines go through almost identical routines for the sake of their two or three other people. The immediate gain from this duplication being the maximum sale of household commodities" (Coulson, 1973).

Reproduction of labour power is therefore wastefully and inefficiently repeated within each family and as such is unnecessarily time - and labour consuming. Because housework is unpaid, and because production of surplus value is not directly involved, there has been no strong interest in reorganizing the domestic process so as to increase efficiency.

The third factor is much more complex. As it is also relevant to the state socialist societies, I shall return to it later on to avoid repetition. What is sufficient at this point is this: whatever the reasons are, child care¹⁴ and housework in modern industrial societies have continued to be the responsibility of women, and organized to a large extent on a private family basis. This daily situation

14. The literature on child socialization is so vast that its evaluation would be too selective. In Michel's 'social learning' view, children early learn to discriminate between 'boy things' and 'girl things' and later generalize to new situations. (Maccoby 1966). We also know that girls as they grow up learn to value boys more and girls less. (McKee and Sheriffs 1956). Other aspects of differential socialization (e.g. emotionality, intellectual capacity etc.) are discussed in Dahlstrom and Liljestrom (1967) and Joffe (1971). Possibilities of plural forms of socialization, neither necessarily tied to the nuclear family, nor to the biological mother, are discussed in Mitchell (1971: pp.115-120, 145-147), at the end of this chapter and in the Conclusion of this thesis.

of the housewife has then weakened her capacity to sell her labour power when she goes out to work. In fact, it has been historically the case that housewives, as a reserve pool of labour, have sold their labour—power cheaper than their male counterparts. A number of reasons account for this.

First, women themselves have been inclined to accept lower wages or part-time employment. After all, given the pervasive and subtle influence of the sexual division of labour, the idea of women's primary responsibility and fulfilment in the family, rather than at work outside the home, is easily accepted and taken for granted. Secondly, women's work productivity has indeed, on the whole, been lower than that of men. For given the degree of physical and mental exhaustion produced by two jobs, one in the home and one at work, female productivity is unlikely to be as high as that of men.

In this sense, the central feature of present-day women's position is not their role simply as domestic workers, but rather the fact that they are both domestic and wage labourers. It is this dual and contradictory role, actualized or only latent, that generates their specific social situation, that forms the basis of their inequality vis-a-vis men.

However, this hypothesis implies more than this, for a theory about the nature of social inequality between the sexes also implies a theory about the nature of social equality between the sexes. In our case, Marxist feminism suggests that full sexual equality will be brought about by the unification of the process of reproduction of labour power with the process of commodity production, and by the abolition of the sexual division of labour. As such, this hypothesis is highly appropriate for the study of the position of women in state socialist societies. For these societies have been explicitly committed to full

sexual egalitarianism. Their experience could therefore be used as one kind of evidence confirming or refuting the validity of the thesis.

This is not to imply, however, that advanced capitalism has produced no significant changes in the nature of domestic labour. Semi-processed foods, expanded and rationalized shopping facilities, dry-cleaning and laundering services, nurseries, cheap cafes and restaurants, factory and school-canteens, youth clubs, hospitals, old people's homes, all these institutions complement and to some extent replace the labour of the housewife. The extent to which private domestic labour is socialized or retained, depends on three major factors: (1) class affiliation, (2) intrinsic psychological aspects of housework and child care and (3) wider economic and political pressures.

The first factor should be self-evident. There will undoubtedly be more pressure on the working class than on the middle class housewife to substitute her own 'free' labour for expensive 'substitute' domestic commodities in order to stretch the wage further. Lack of money also makes shopping more harassing because the woman has to shop around to get the best possible 'value for money'. Furthermore, the shopping needs to be undertaken more frequently, because the working class housewife cannot usually afford the necessary initial outlay to buy in bulk. She also tends to spend more time on cooking, because good time-saving meals are always more expensive. 'Take away' meals or eating out in restaurants are, on the whole, rare treats among low-income families. More time is also spent on doing washing by hand, because launderettes and dry-cleaning may be difficult to afford.

The second factor is more speculative. For it could be argued that the retaining of 'inefficient', isolated housework has something to do with its very nature. An important aspect of domestic labour is the creation of a direct emotional relationship within the

family, and there are so far very few ways in which individual emotional needs can be satisfied outside the family. Families with sufficient means to purchase housework's commodity substitutes (such as tinned food or nannies) might feel immeasurably worse off and indeed highly discontented if they were forced to take full advantage of them. For domestic labour, especially such activities as cooking, sewing, home decorating, bringing up a child, can be intrinsically quite satisfying. Yet an important distinction needs to be made between cooking and child-rearing as a fulfilling and creative leisure pursuit, and cooking and child care as an objective day-to-day necessity. So far, the option to partake housework as a 'hobby' is open only to affluent families. Working class women have no such option. They have to cook and look after their children every day regardless, whether they like it or not, while affluent women, if they wish, can hire a servant, eat out in a restaurant, or leave the child with a nanny. One ought however, to emphasize that in this thesis I am primarily interested in social processes and in the social provisions which maximize individual choices, not in individual women as such. In other words, the possible psychological refusal of individual women to have reproduction of labour centralized is not my concern at all.

(ii) Self-Declared Socialist Societies

Before dealing with the validity of this implicit socialist feminist hypothesis in any detail, it is of some interest to point out its similarity with what Lenin said explicitly in July 1919:

"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 economy begins" (Lenin, 1965: p.64. Emphasis is Lenin's own).

Lenin is also quite explicit on why a socialist, rather than a capitalist, economy is required for the transformation of private reproduction of labour power into a large-scale economy:

"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 pre-requisites 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" (Lenin 1965: p.64. Emphasis is Lenin's own).

Lenin makes one very significant point, because he suggests that the socialization of domestic activity can be met, under certain circumstances, within capitalist society itself. Socialists should not find this so very surprising since it does not conflict with

"Marx's own analysis suggesting that the socialization of production (and to this we now have to add the socialization of domestic production and reproduction) was the historic task of capitalism - not of socialism. Indeed, it is this process that creates the contradictions in a society characterized by private appropriation" (Middleton 1974: p.199).

This, of course, does not preclude the possibility that a socialization of domestic labour could be also implemented, perhaps even more effectively, in a socialist planned economy. For socialist societies lack private property¹⁵ - their resource-ownership is centrally controlled. Because of this, the substantial cost involved in unifying the process of reproduction of labour power with commodity production, can be spread throughout the whole society.

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15. One has to make a distinction between personal and private property. The former refers to individual items of consumption (dwelling, clothing, durables etc.), while the latter refers to individual ownership of the means of production, either directly, through a family firm, or indirectly through shares.

This is still in accordance with Lenin, but one has to point out that the 'wholesale transformation of petty housekeeping into a large-scale socialist economy' is much more problematic and difficult, and by no means as automatic, as Lenin assumes. For the socialization of the family or the 'socialist' transformation of reproduction of labour power are rather abstract, propagandistic slogans. When it comes to practical implementation, a much more precise delineation of what is actually involved in the process, is needed.

This involves discussion of such issues, as the distinction between 'productive' and 'unproductive' labour under socialism, its implication for the reproduction of labour power, availability of investment resources, criteria adopted in allocation of investment priorities, problems of economic planning, difficulties in implementing specific policies, etc. None of these problems have so far been analysed by socialist feminists in any detail,¹⁶ although some of these issues have been touched upon by economic theory as it exists in the declared socialist countries.

The problem of 'productive' and 'non-productive' labour has been a particularly prominent theme in early Soviet economic theory. S.G.Strumilin was the leading proponent of the view that the only relevant criterion which determines the productive character of labour in a socialist society is its social nature. He argued that in a socialist society, all socially necessary labour, regardless of whether it is material production, administration or public reproduction of labour power or other forms of public services, is to be regarded as 'productive'. The only type of 'unproductive' labour in a socialist economy is to be such work the only purpose of which is private satisfaction and enrichment.

16. Gardiner's article (1975) is of some relevance but its chief concern is advanced capitalist societies, not state socialist societies.

Thus, according to Strumilin, all social forms of labour which objectively lead to the overall increase in the standard of productive forces, and which lead to the advancement of the welfare of the whole society, are to be regarded as 'productive'. Profitability, productivity, even efficiency of such labour are to be irrelevant criteria under socialism. In fact, Strumilin went so far as to include individual housework in the category of 'productive' labour. He argued that due to the temporary inability of the Soviet economy to devote sufficient resources to the 'socialist' transformation of the reproduction of labour power (to use modern terminology), Soviet housewives were performing socially necessary, and thus 'productive' labour (Strumilin, 1926).

However, the theory which gained prominence in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s was not that of Strumilin. Soviet statistics of that period, and ever since for that matter, have distinguished between such social activities which directly create national income, i.e. such labour which is eventually embodied in a material product, from those, which only share in its utilization. Moreover, the embodiment of labour in a material product was adopted as the chief, in fact the only, criterion which determined the 'productive' character of labour in a socialist economy. Labour involved in administration and public services (the latter being the institutionalized form of social reproduction of labour power) was regarded as socially necessary, but 'unproductive'.

The validity of this particular distinction is not as important for the present discussion as is its political implications. For the Soviet Union had only limited resources at its disposal, and these were primarily allocated to such spheres of the economy which were defined as 'productive'. This pattern was, however, also reinforced

by a methodological weakness in the use of the economic theory itself.

Although Soviet and later also Czech economists argued that the respective structures of 'productive' and 'unproductive' labour are vastly different, they failed to use different models for their respective analyses. The theory applicable to the sphere of material production was abstracted from this particular context and applied in more or less unchanged form to the analysis of the non-material, servicing sphere. Not surprisingly, this has led to official 'disenchantment' with the 'inefficient' and 'unproductive' character of this sphere (Kerner, 1973).

The authorities also magnified the nature of the problems involved in the practical implementation of the policy advocating the socializing of the reproduction of labour power. This is not to say that problems of economic planning are not involved. Indeed, there are several issues involved: determination of necessary levels and priorities of required investment; ensuring the technological development of public services; changing the overall structure of employment and the corresponding distribution of the labour force; the possibility of a prolonged lack of effective demand for public household services and its insufficient elasticity. However, none of these obstacles are so serious as to be insoluble, either on the level of theory or of practice.

Yet, so far, socialist economic theory, as it exists in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, has brought very few new insights into our understanding of the essence of the public reproduction of labour power under socialism. In fact, most of the issues involved have not been discussed in the Czech economic literature till quite recently (Kerner, 1973). And this is more than twenty-five years after Czechoslovakia first embarked on her 'socialist transformation'.

In this sense, the envisaged 'socialist' unification of production and reproduction has proved to be a difficult task even on the level of socialist theory. One can expect to find even more discrepancies on the level of socialist practice. For, as Lenin and present-day socialist feminists imply, socialization of the means of production by the proletariat is only the first step, although a crucial one. Public ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange, provide an important mechanism through which the unification of the processes of reproduction of labour power and commodity production can potentially be achieved. Whether or not this actually occurs depends on a large number of specific historical and political circumstances affecting each particular society.

One of the most important specific circumstances, common to all declared socialist countries, with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia and East Germany, is initial economic backwardness. The level of productive forces was, and in many cases continues to be, so low, that the resources needed for the socialization of the reproduction of labour power were simply not available.

The important point here is that in terms of the overall level of investment required, there are pressures working against the socialization of housework and childcare. This appears to conflict with the argument that, if housework were socialized, the resulting savings in labour time should substantially cheapen the process, but this impression is mistaken. For savings in labour time are only one aspect of socialization. The other is that, when previously-unpaid reproduction of labour power becomes wage work, it commands payment in accordance with what is generally expected in the labour market, thus becoming more expensive. Because of this, very great

savings in labour time are necessary for the socialization of domestic labour to become a viable economic proposition.

For instance, adequate socialized pre-school child care requires a minimum of one adult to five children, without taking account of administrative and ancillary staff. If one compares this with the average family with 2-3 children to one woman, one gets a rough estimate of no more than a halving of necessary labour (Gardiner, 1975). However, there are a number of other factors besides these strictly economic ones, pushing in the opposite direction. For example, educational and political pressures to influence the quality of the labour force in the next generation may outweigh the importance attached to the cost involved. Similarly, one can argue that it is impossible to recruit an efficient female labour force without taking responsibility for performing at least some of the tasks previously carried out by women in their families.

Thus what actually happens depends on a number of historically specific factors. These include the available economic resources, specific investment priorities, the composition and quality of the available labour force, an adequately developed theory of what public reproduction of labour power actually involves, the fear of possible future labour shortage, the existence of a political movement or at least of pressure groups capable of influencing the decision-making of which policy is finally adopted. In fact, the empirical examination of the interaction of these and other conflicting forces throughout Soviet and Czechoslovak 'socialist' history is the chief concern of this thesis.

What is needed now is the consideration of a number of points overlooked by Marxist feminism in its analysis of modern capitalism. Although the Marxist feminist perspective has discussed

the implication of the nature of biological reproduction for the position of women (see Wandor, 1973), it has not given sufficient attention to the problematic mutual relationship between biological reproduction and the wider social formation. For instance, the historical content of the family has been taken largely as given - any changes were explained mainly in terms of the productive process of capitalism itself. The emergence of childhood, as a new social category which precipitated the nucleation of the bourgeois family around the children and thus the transformation of the family's historical content, has been also given insufficient attention in Marxist feminism, although this problem has played a major part in the radical feminist analysis.

As Firestone puts it (and her analysis in this respect is based almost entirely on Phillipe Aries' now widely acclaimed book Centuries of Childhood)

"the development of the modern family meant the breakdown of a large, integrated society into small, self-centred units. The child within these conjugal units now became important, for he was the product of that unit, the reason for its maintenance" (Firestone, 1973: p.85. The emphasis is mine).

To put it differently, in modern industrial societies, characterized by an extensive division of labour and its resultant individuation of the population that decomposes society into individual families, the parents seek to reproduce not their society or their lineage or household, but themselves through their children (Harris, 1975).

Hence the modern child-centred nuclear family is not merely an agent of consumption, and of the reproduction of labour power, but also a means of private reproduction of children, a means of the reproduction of individuals into which society decomposes (Harris, 1975).

Thus the emotional and ideological content of the present day family is qualitatively different from its pre-industrial predecessor.

Needless to say that this historical transformation has led to some new contradictions for the individual parents, children, as well as society as a whole.

In the first place, there is a contradiction between the private and communal nature of children as products, by virtue of which other than their immediate producers have an interest in them. Hence the emergence of the family as a closed household centered around child-rearing has been accompanied by attempts by the state to interfere in the private production of children (Harris, 1975). It could be now argued that this interference is much greater in the declared socialist societies than in the capitalist ones, and that this is largely due to the fact that the gap between demographic objectives of the society as a whole and individual's reproductive behaviour has more serious implications for the former than for the latter.

A rapid decline in fertility has serious economic consequences for socialist economies, especially for their labour supply. The latter is measurable both in terms of quality and quantity, i.e. productivity as well as sheer number of available workers. As most socialist economies have been characterized by low labour efficiency, the quantitative rather than qualitative expansion of the labour force has been pursued. This means that in the absence of external migration (the employment of immigrant labour from capitalist or Third World countries would be politically unacceptable) and lack of availability of other forms of labour reserves (the drawing of labour from the private sphere of peasant and domestic production has been now almost exhausted), fertility is the only dynamic variable. In other words, given that the low labour efficiency continues, the increase of the size of the labour force through natural replacement

seems to be the only alternative and solution.

Thus policy-makers in these societies are faced with the task of finding material, psychological and emotional incentives effective enough to persuade individual families to produce more children. Although external support to larger families and the protection of female employment rights while on maternity leave have been in existence since the early days of 'socialist transformation', motivations for a large family have been obviously weak and insufficient. The private production of children within the specific emotional content of child-centered families implies that parents are primarily producing children for themselves and not for society as a whole. If the production of additional children is seen as causing material and emotional discomfort in terms of housing and financial hardship, or if maternity is considered to compete with female economic roles, individual families are likely to decide to limit their families, regardless of the economic needs of the society as a whole. An individual decision to have an additional child must be therefore the result of strong pressures, both in terms of economic and psychological motivation. Hence the current emergence of extensive pro-natalist population policies and incentives in the socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe.

A number of fiscal 'family incentive' measures were adopted to reduce this contradiction between the private and communal nature of children as economic products. This has been combined with an important pro-natalist innovation - the so-called maternity contribution. It was introduced for the first time in Hungary in 1967. It provides for a salary which is paid by the state to previously employed mothers who stay at home to look after their infant child or children. In this sense, this measure represents

an attempt to transform maternity into a paid, professional social labour. In other words, it transforms the private, but unpaid, production of children for use-value into a still private, but paid production of children for exchange-value.

This transformation then has important implication for the social meaning and significance of maternity. Because of their merit in upholding the level of reproduction of children - the future labour force - mothers become much more useful for society than was traditionally believed in socialist theory and practice. On the other hand, by acquiring this new social recognition and prestige, the maternity also reinforces the narrow confines of female biological situation and the traditional sexual division of labour.

Thus the production of children in present-day socialist countries has a paradoxical effect on the position of women in these societies. However, this paradox, the chief cause of which is the contradiction between the private nature and collective consequences of reproduction of children, has also important implications for the socialist feminist theory. For the position of women has to be also understood in terms of the historically-specific nuclear-family form centered around the private production of children. Harris has argued that it is this aspect of the family which requires its isolation and the immurement of the housewife in it. He has also claimed that the 'collectivization' of household tasks is in contradiction to the nature of the family as the means of private, i.e. individual reproduction (Harris, 1975).

While it is difficult to see any contradiction between, say, public household services and individual biological reproduction as they have happily co-existed side by side for some time, Harris nevertheless makes an important point. For the very nature of the

reproduction of children, i.e. its individual character, is an important factor which partly accounts for the current attempt of the socialist regimes to strengthen rather than fundamentally alter women's position within the family and in society at large. Whether intended or not, this emphasis on individual biological reproduction, this priority assigned to the increase of the labour force through natural replacement, also has important consequences for the other aspects of the reproduction of labour power, since the production of children and domestic labour are institutionally associated through the family. Although there is no technical barrier to the collectivization of housework, socialist countries have found it more expedient not to fully socialize the private character of domestic labour. Thus as in capitalism, housework has remained unpaid and its use-value has not been taken into account in the determination of the wage or salary of either spouse. Moreover, as in capitalism, the productivity of domestic labour has remained low largely because the cost of inefficiency has fallen on the individual domestic labourer and not on the state.

Yet, unlike in capitalism, the private production of children is now being paid for, but the sum involved is very small. Although a collective production of children is more difficult to imagine than collective domestic labour, it is by no means impossible.

In fact, all societies do this up to a point. For instance, many primitive societies have adopted social procedures for female or twins' infanticide (e.g. ancient Sparta; pre-revolutionary China; parts of Africa). Small-scale societies such as the early kibbutsim used to decide about the production of children collectively at general meetings according to the economic needs and resources of the whole group. Chinese communes are also attempting to decide collectively about the

number of children produced in any particular year. The parents are urged to adopt social rather than individual criteria, i.e. the needs of China as a whole rather than individual parental wishes for a male offspring.

In a market economy the social procedures of controlling the production of children will normally take the form of financial incentives or disincentives although ideological, nationalistic or eugenic factors might also have some importance. For the process of producing children is too important for societies to leave uncontrolled, although control does not always work. For instance, once knowledge of effective contraceptive techniques is widespread, withholding them would be politically very difficult, even making the most authoritarian assumptions about political institutions.¹⁷ Nonetheless, it is likely that biological reproduction of future generations will remain private and rooted within the individual child-centered nuclear family for some time to come.

17. The ways in which the social control of the production of children has, or has not worked in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 6.

SUMMARY

Two theoretical perspectives analysing the social relationship between males and females have been discussed: structural-functional sociology and Marxist feminism. A number of weaknesses were found in the former, which have limited its usefulness for this thesis. These included the tendency to deny that women do in fact constitute a subordinate group at all, the rather invalid assumption of reproductive determinism, the relegation of the study of sex differentiation to the study of the family, consequent lack of emphasis on the mutual relationship between the spheres of work and the family, and the neglect of women's role in the labour force.

The structural-functionalist account of sex role differentiation has viewed women primarily as wives and mothers. Moreover, this 'root' function is considered as conflicting with gainful employment outside the home. Yet how do we then account for the growing numbers of women entering paid employment - a trend characteristic of all industrial societies, but especially the state socialist ones? The USSR, Czechoslovakia and the GDR have now reached almost universal female employment. Furthermore, according to Parsons, women are supposed to specialize in the 'expressive' direction, both within the family and in the occupational structure. Yet 40% of all Soviet 'non-expressive' engineers are women. How do we account for this? The proportion is large enough to exclude the possibility of individual 'deviance'.

The present thesis therefore proposes to examine the usefulness of an alternative perspective: that of Marxist feminism. The Marxist feminist approach treats males and females as being neither antagonistic nor complementary, but in different social locations. While

men are seen as being only wage labourers, women are considered to be both domestic and wage labourers. It is further hypothesized that these two aspects of their existence, actualized or only latent, are not harmoniously related. This duality and contradiction is seen as constituting the basis of sex-role differentiation specific to females. This difference might, however, be outweighed by class differences.

In this sense, Marxist feminism provides us with a better and more useful framework of analysis for this thesis than structural-functionalism. For the former views the social processes of production and reproduction, as well as women's role within them, as a totality, thus being particularly useful in accounting for the specific nature of women's employment. Moreover, even though this approach is basically Marxist, it is very relevant to the analysis of state socialist societies, which have adopted ^{a variant of} Marxism as their official ideology. As women's emancipation has historically been its tenet, the next chapter examines and evaluates its specific content.

Chapter Two:

Engels' Theory of Women and the Family

Social science has always been vexed by the political implications of one theory or another, particularly in such potentially 'explosive' fields as racial or sexual stratification. The controversies centered around Eysenck's and Jensen's theories are the best known and the most widely publicised examples, but the same is increasingly applicable to sociological theories dealing with family relations (see the previous chapter). In liberal capitalist countries the influence of academic theory on social reality is rather limited and often unintentional, because the link between theory and practice is only limited. However, in state socialist societies, Marxist theory is explicitly treated as a political ideology, and as a guide to action for socialist revolution, socialist reconstruction and the transition to communism. Within this context, the Marxist theory of women's oppression and emancipation becomes a significant factor in our understanding of the position of women in state socialist societies.

Marxists have been aware of the subordination of women largely in terms of its moral problematics for socialists, and all Marxist political movements have been explicitly committed to women's emancipation. However, such a commitment was not, on the whole, considered a political priority (as we shall see in the next chapter); moreover; the level of theoretical discussion on the issue never matched the degree of sophistication attained

by Marxist analysis of class antagonisms. When one considers the volume of writing by various Marxists, the amount of space devoted to the 'woman question' is indeed negligible. As a result, the one classical text that does deal with sexual inequality and female emancipation has assumed particular significance in defining the Marxist position on the question - Frederick Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, first published in 1884. This book laid the foundations for both a socialist theory of women's oppression and a strategy for women's emancipation. An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of Engels' analysis is therefore important in giving us one set of criteria for assessing the performance of Marxist parties and states in promoting and achieving sex equality.

Engels' analysis can be considered in three parts: (1) the reconstruction of the past; (2) the oppression of women under capitalism and (3) women's emancipation under socialism. While a discussion of the position of women in primitive societies might seem less central to this study than an examination of the role of women in capitalist and socialist societies, the former cannot be disregarded. Not only does the analysis of women in antiquity constitute an integral component of Engels' theory, but also, more importantly, it raises the question of whether one can hope to end the subjection of women without understanding the original causes of that subjection.

1. Engels on the Role of Women in Antiquity

Engels' account of the role of women in antiquity is mainly based on the work of Lewis H. Morgan, an American social anthropologist of the last century. When critically assessing this part of Engels' theory, two factors have to be taken into consideration. Firstly, he was writing at a time when most of the material now available on social organization of primitive and early urban society was lacking. Secondly, he wrote in the intellectual context of evolutionism (a prominent school of thought of that period [1880s]), an important point to bear in mind because he could not possibly have escaped the numerous methodological and theoretical weaknesses of this approach.

One of these weaknesses was the assumption that Victorian, bourgeois, industrial society was the culmination of a unilinear developmental process, which was believed to be the same for the whole of humanity. Social research was accordingly directed towards the explanation of the origins and stages of societal development and of corresponding social institutions, including the family. Morgan and Engels shared the assumption of their contemporaries about the three main stages of the developmental process - savagery, barbarism and civilization.

As far as economic development is concerned, this scheme, although not identical with that used by modern social science, is still generally accepted: savagery corresponds to the hunting and gathering cultures; barbarism to the agricultural cultures with domestic

animals; and civilization to urban, literate cultures. However, when we come to the evaluation of the corresponding social development of sexual relations and marriage, the ideas put forward seem too speculative, at times even bizarre. Engels hypothesizes a developmental process which begins with a state of complete promiscuity, then leads through group marriage into pairing marriage, and finally into monogamy. Even Engels himself freely admits that there is no evidence for the first stage of unrestricted sexual freedom:

"The primitive social state of promiscuity, if it ever existed, belongs to such a remote epoch that we can hardly expect to prove its existence directly by discovering its social fossils among backward savages." (Engels 1972: 97).

Group marriage, in which "whole groups of men and whole groups of women mutually possess one another, and which leaves little room for jealousy" (Engels 1972: 100), is seen as the oldest, most primitive form of the family, corresponding to savagery. It includes three subtypes: mass marriage found among the Australian aboriginals; the consanguine family, which has a mating taboo between the generations, i.e. parents and children are excluded from mutual sexual relations; and the punaluan family, where the incest taboo is extended to brother and sister and to first, second and third cousins. The latter two types of the family were apparently found in Hawaii.

However, by citing these examples as evidence for the theory of the origin of the family, Engels is confusing two issues - the way society thinks about marriage and kinship and the way its members actually behave. When

Australian aboriginies say that women from the Fish clan become the wives of the Wallaby clan, they do not mean that all men in the Wallaby clan can have equal access to them, as Engels understood it. They rather mean that each woman is monogamously married to one man within the Wallabies, so that a social link is created through which the woman becomes a Wallaby clan wife. A useful analogy can be drawn with the phrase 'marrying into a family', commonly used in contemporary society. This phrase also describes a way of thinking about kinship rather than actual social behaviour.¹

The next stage, a transitional form between group marriage and monogamy, is the pairing family.

"A certain amount of pairing, for a longer or shorter period, already occurred in a group marriage or even earlier; the man had a chief wife among his many wives (one can hardly yet speak of a favourite wife), and for her he was the most important among her husbands ... Thus the history of the family in primitive times consists in the progressive narrowing of the circle, originally embracing the whole tribe, within which the two sexes have a common conjugal relation ... Finally, there remains only the single, still loosely linked pair, the molecule with whose dissolution marriage itself ceases... The pairing family is the form characteristic of barbarism, as group marriage is characteristic of savagery and monogamy of civilization." (Engels, 1972: 110, 111-112, 117).

The pairing family involves the formation of short-term liaisons within the marriage group, thus replacing the promiscuous relations in side the group as a whole. Its

¹ Discussion in this paragraph is based on Delamont (1972). Gough (1975: 66) makes a similar point by arguing that Morgan and Engels "drew their conclusions not from evidence of actual group marriage among primitive peoples but from the kinship terms found today in certain tribal and chiefly societies ... Modern evidence does not bear out these conclusions. All known hunters and gatherers live in families, not in communal sexual arrangements."

appearance is explained by changes in sexual morality which are assumed to have originated with the women. Engels argues, not very persuasively, that women began to experience as oppressive the diversity of sexual relationships that they had within group marriage.

He suggests further that this feeling among women provided the necessary mechanism for the transition from group marriage to pairing marriage, for the gradual extension of the incest taboo and for consequent evolution of monogamous sexual relations. However, we are not offered any hypothesis about the origin of this change of feeling among women. In fact, the whole argument is based on some rather moralistic Victorian assumptions about the nature of female sexuality.

"The more the traditional sexual relations lost the naive, primitive character of forest life ... the more oppressive and humiliating must the women have felt them to be, and the greater their longing for the right to chastity, of a temporary or permanent marriage with ~~one~~ man only, as a way of release." (Engels, 1972: 117).

This 'explanation' of the emergence of monogamous sexual morality would be doubted today by most psychologists and sexologists.

Engels also claims that the pairing family

"in no wise destroys the communistic household inherited from earlier times. Communistic housekeeping, however, means the supremacy of women in the household; just as the exclusive recognition of the female parent, owing to the impossibility of recognizing the male parent with certainty, means that the women - the mothers - are held in high respect. One of the most absurd notions taken over from 18th century enlightenment is that in the beginning of society woman was the slave of man." (Engels, 1972: 112-113).

Engels' proposition that the relationships between the

sexes in primitive societies of the distant past was egalitarian is controversial because ethnohistorical data sufficient for definite proof are lacking. Archaeological evidence on the social position of the sexes is slim and ambiguous. For instance, the small effigies of female personages found in various parts of the world are in themselves sufficient evidence for neither matriarchy (vaguely defined as mother-dominated or women-dominated societies) nor for sex equality. These objects of art are generally interpreted as being symptomatic of fertility rituals based on the generative powers of women. More positive, if still ambiguous evidence as to the status of the sexes is afforded by burials, especially in cases of a simultaneous double burial of a female and a male. These are generally interpreted as sati, whereby the wife (or concubine or slave) is compelled to follow her master to the future life. This kind of evidence does not indicate a high status for women, who would seem to have been treated as part of the personal property of the dead man (Childe, 1963: 67-68).

Male dominance is recorded everywhere in anthropological records, although some women anthropologists have recently argued that these reports are distorted. The disputants claim that data concerning the relative power of men and women have been collected by male fieldworkers who have had little access to information on women and female activities, and so have been led to underplay the role and importance of women (Webster and Newton, 1972). Others have argued that even women anthropologists, as

much as men who have been socialized in Western culture, expect and assume male dominance, so that data and interpretations are likely to be further biased (Ardener, 1972). But, no matter what we think about existing anthropological evidence concerning male dominance, we still have the problem of how to apply data gathered in modern times to primitive societies of the remote past. The debate about sex equality in primitive societies therefore remains unresolved.

Contemporary Marxist writers do not postulate an early matriarchy² (with the exception of Reed, 1974), but maintain that preclass societies had relatively egalitarian relationships between the sexes, and that wherever male dominance now exists in societies of this type, it is a consequence of colonial conquest (Leacock, 1972). In accordance with Engels, the contemporary Marxist analysis of women's oppression claims that it is an outcome of power relationships engendered in all class societies, an outcome resulting particularly from the development of private property, commodity production and the economic isolation of the nuclear family and women's work within it. With the development of new technology and sources of foodstuffs came a more specialized division of labour and commodity production, which enabled a few individuals to acquire wealth in

2 For a review of the literature on matriarchy, see Webster and Newton (1972) and Webster (1975). In their view, matriarchy should be defined as the mirror opposite to patriarchy: a society in which women as a group had power and authority over men as a group.

the form of slaves and herds. At the same time, the position of women relative to men deteriorated: pastoral men now owned the instruments of labour, women having been largely displaced in the fields, and male power increased.

In the lower stages of barbarism, Engels argues, "human labour-power still does not produce any considerable surplus over and above its maintenance costs. That was no longer the case after the introduction of cattle breeding, metal-working, weaving and, lastly, agriculture. Just as the wives whom it had formerly been so easy to obtain had now acquired an exchange value and were bought, so also with labour-power, particularly since the herds had definitely become family possession." (Engels, 1972: 118).

Engels also argues that this economic transition led to a change in the kinship system.

"... As wealth increased, it made the man's position in the family more important than the woman's, and ... created to exploit this strengthened position in order to overthrow, in favour of his children, the traditional order of inheritance. This, however, was impossible so long as descent was reckoned according to mother-right. Mother-right, therefore, had to be overthrown, and overthrown it was... The overthrow of mother-right was the world historical defeat of the female sex." (Engels, 1972: 119, 120).

Judging from modern evidence, the importance of transition from matriarchal to patriarchal organization is overestimated and we are not even certain whether it actually took place. We now know that even in societies with matrilineal descent-reckoning (that is, in those in which eligibility for marriage, the holding of property, inheritance, and succession to office all depend on a person's kin relationship through females), it is the men who hold the most prized offices and exercise basic control over resources (Friedl, 1975: 4). In

most matrilineal societies, it is the maternal uncle rather than the mother who exercises the prerogatives of the father in respect of children and family property (Childe, 1963: 66 and Delamont, 1972). However, this situation could have been different in primitive societies of the remote past; we simply do not know.

Despite this uncertainty, Engels' explanation for the consolidation of monogamy and the formation of the upper class family as an instrument for the concentration of individual wealth, does seem quite plausible.

"It was the first form of the family that was based not on natural but on economic conditions - on the victory of private property over primitive natural communal property. The Greeks themselves put the matter quite frankly: the sole exclusive aims of monogamous marriage were to make the man supreme in the family and to propagate, as future heirs to his wealth, children undisputably his own." (Engels, 1972: 128).

Class and sex oppression therefore came together.

"...monogamous marriage comes on the scene as the subjugation of the one sex by the other; it announces a struggle between the sexes unknown throughout the whole previous prehistoric period... The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male." (Engels, 1972: 128, 129).

As Leacock (1972: 42) pointed out, far more evidence than Engels offers is needed to clarify the process of women's subjugation, both in relation to the initial rise of class societies in the Old and New Worlds, and to the secondary diffusion of commodity production and class divisions. Essentially, Engels offers a paradigm, posing a sharp contrast between women's status in primitive communal society and in classical Greece and Rome.

He then touches on Medieval Europe and jumps to industrialization, leaving uncovered many changes within a great span of history and unanalysed considerable variations in women's position in different classes: slave, free worker, peasant, serf, burgher, aristocrat.

2. Engels on Women's Oppression under Capitalism

While there are clearly problems in accepting Engels' contention that class oppression predated sex oppression, this does not invalidate the argument that sexual liberation is impeded by the structures of class society. Engels correctly understood that women's transition from a public role in the primitive economy into a private one within the isolated nuclear family effectively subjugated them and made them dependent on their husbands.

"In the old communistic household, which comprised many couples and their children, the task entrusted to the women of managing the household was as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the procuring of food by the men. With the patriarchal family and still more with the single monogamous family, a change came. Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production ... The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed slavery of the wife, and modern society is a mass composed of these individual families as its molecules. In the great majority cases today, at least in the possessing classes, the husband is obliged to earn a living and support his family, and that in itself gives him a position of supremacy without any need for special legal titles and privileges. Within the family, he is the bourgeois, and the wife represents the proletariat." (Engels, 1972: 137).

Sacks (1975: 216-7), in reviewing Engels, argues that

"with time, production by men specifically for exchange purposes developed, expanded, and came to overshadow the household's production for use ... As production for exchange eclipsed production for use, it changed the nature of the household, the significance of women's work within it, and consequently women's position in society. Women worked for their husbands and families instead of for society as a whole. Private property made its owner the ruler of the household ... Women became wards, wives and daughters instead of adult members of the society ... Women's reproductive labour, like their productive work, also underwent a transformation from social to private. That is, women bore men's heirs - to both property and social position - whereas before they had borne new members of a social group that included men and women."

Sacks claims that in fact it is the restriction of women from the growing public sphere of political and economic activities as much as the restriction of women to domestic setting which is the critical factor in the infantilization of women which culminates in Western society in the dependent housewife, and in non-Western societies, in the veiled and secluded women we associate with the 'purdah'.

The monogamous family, according to Engels, gave rise to a series of new legal relations which safeguarded undisputed paternity, life-long monogamy for the woman and the right to sexual freedom for the man. The latter was sanctioned by the existing sexual norms. Prostitution, as a form of male sexual freedom, marks male domination through social ostracism of the prostitute rather than the client. Furthermore, under capitalism, the prostitute becomes analogous to the wage slave, and, in this sense, class and sex exploitation are again joined. However, monogamy also produced a new form of institutional heterosexual relationship - marriage based on love, a unifying

development capable of reconciling the sexes.

"Before the Middle Ages, we cannot speak of individual sex love ... What little love there was between husband and wife in antiquity is not so much subjective inclination as objective duty, not the cause of marriage but its corollary. Love relationships in the modern sense only occur in antiquity outside official society ... Our sex love differs essentially from the simple sexual desire, the Eros, of the ancients. In the first place, it assumes that the person loved returns the love; to this extent, the woman is on an equal footing with the man, whereas in the Eros of antiquity she was often not even asked. Secondly, our sex love has a degree of intensity and duration which makes both lovers feel that non-possession and separation are a great, if not the greatest, calamity; to possess one another, they risk high stakes, even life itself. In the ancient world this happened only, if at all, in adultery. And finally, there arises a new moral standard in the judgement of a sexual relationship. We do not only ask, was it within or outside marriage, but also, did it spring from love and reciprocated love or not?" (Engels, 1972: 139, 140).

Individual sex love and marriage based on love are thus viewed by Engels as specific institutionalized forms of the relationship between the sexes. Intense emotional love is therefore not seen as an irreducible, 'natural' value, but as form of individual relationships which had spontaneously (and thus partly autonomously) arisen within a wider, specific and determinate system of social relations - i.e., capitalism. Engels' discussion of the historical emergence of romantic love under capitalism thus correctly brings out the fact that personal relationships are influenced socially. Romantic love as basis for marriage initially emerged among the new Protestant bourgeoisie, though Engels sees 'individual sex love' primarily as a working class phenomenon.

However, his analysis of the nature and implications of romantic love does not go far enough. Firstly, he

accepts too readily and uncritically bourgeois notions idealizing romantic love. In this sense, he did not escape the influence of bourgeois morality and ideology. Romantic love is an ideal norm, an ideal myth, which might bear very little relation to daily conjugal life. Engels' presentation of romantic love as a reality, rather than as an ideal norm, therefore obscures and mystifies the actual nature of the relations between men and women.

Further, Engels does not recognize that differential structural location of the sexes might lead to differential implications of the romantic love mythology for men and women. Men usually construct their own social status, prestige and identity outside the love relationship - namely at work - and their female partners only confirm or reaffirm this outwardly constructed recognition. For women, on the other hand, for as long as they are confined to the private sphere of reproduction and the family, identity is indirect, dependent on and achieved through the male partner within the monogamous relationship.

In this sense, romantic love has greater social as well as personal significance for the woman than for the man, in so far as it forms the main, and usually the only, basis for her social identity. For the asymmetrical basis of the love relationship might lead to new forms of woman's dependence on the male in the 'invisible' sexual, psychological and emotional spheres. These

'invisible' components of female inequality, such as the possibility of female psychological dependence on the man, created through and within the love relationship, are ignored by Engels. As we have seen, his discussion of women's social inequality is based entirely on 'visible' institutional inequality. It seems likely that the framework of his book directed his attention elsewhere, to the state, property, the family rather than to women's psychological experience.

On a political level, it is obvious that individual emotional and psychological experience cannot be simply altered by a societal revolution or by specific legislation. Individual emotions and attitudes tend to remain unchanged long after the material foundation which had originally given rise to them has fundamentally altered. Moreover, they are quite resistant even to a rational argument about the necessity of changing them, particularly in the case of romantic love. For these reasons, they pose serious problems for all revolutionaries aiming at fundamental change in all social relations, including those between men and women.

3. Engels and Kollontai on Women's Emancipation under Socialism

Engels' ideas about women's emancipation logically follow from his argument about women's oppression. He wants to remove and reverse those conditions which originally caused female subjugation: private property,

women's private service within the family, the inability to work outside the home and the consequent material dependence on the man; and he wants to establish a new communal society of a higher type. This could be achieved only through a socialist revolution.

The abolition of private property and its replacement by social ownership and control of the means of production are therefore seen as the most fundamental preconditions for the emancipation of women. The actual emancipation would then be brought about by two simultaneous social measures: the re-introduction of women into social production and the socialization of private domestic work and the care of children.

"... the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and ... this in turn demands that the characteristic of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society be abolished." (Engels, 1972: 137-8).

"With the transfer of the means of production into common ownership, the single family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are legitimate or not." (Engels, 1972: 139).

Engels is thus quite clear and unambiguous on what needs to be done to create 'real' social equality between the sexes, but, as we shall see in greater detail later, some of the things he said have been subsequently ignored or distorted in the East European practice.

It is a well known fact that all state-socialist countries acted upon the first recommendation and ra-

pidly drew women into social production. However, it cannot be said that more than minimal restructuring of working and living arrangements have been made to facilitate the substantial growth in the participation of women in paid labour outside the home. The second fundamental condition of women's emancipation - socialization of traditional family responsibilities - has been largely ignored by the state-socialist societies. Because of this, women's participation in the economy turned out to be something quite different from what Engels intended - gainful employment outside the home has been added to the required work in the home. As long as female domestic and maternal responsibilities within the individual family remain as strong as ever, women will not be able to enter social production on an equal footing with men. However, we cannot blame Engels for this 'masculine' sex equality, but rather East European practice, which has ignored one of the most vital conditions of women's emancipation.

Having briefly discussed Engels' expectation of sex equality under socialism at the institutional level of analysis, we can now turn to the personal level. Engels is less helpful here, because his discussion of the ordering of sexual relations under socialism is speculative and expresses only his personal opinion.

"Having arisen from economic causes, will monogamy then disappear when these causes disappear? One might answer, not without reason: far from disappearing, it will on the contrary begin to be realized completely ... Prostitution disappears; monogamy, instead of collapsing, at last becomes a reality also for men." (Engels, 1972: 139).

"And as sexual love is by its very nature exclusive - although at present this exclusiveness is fully realized only in the woman - the marriage based on sexual love is by its nature individual marriage ... If now the economic considerations also disappear which made women put up with the habitual infidelity of their husbands - concern for their own means of existence and still more for their children's future - then, according to all previous evidence, the equality of women thereby achieved will tend infinitely more to make men really monogamous than to make women polyandrous." (Engels, 1972: 144-5).

Engels' failure to take into account some of the oppressive aspects of monogamous sexuality and romantic love under capitalism renders naive some of his arguments about the nature of sexuality and romantic love under socialism. He simply takes love as a 'given' phenomenon, not requiring further analysis. He also assumes that love relationships are symmetrical and that any possible sexual inequality is caused only by the economic factor of material dependence of the woman on the man. As this will disappear under socialism, it is predicted that romantic love will be entirely free, voluntary and equal. However, as he considers love and sexuality under socialism as a private matter for every individual, he seems to have abandoned his own methodological and theoretical approach. In his analysis of the historical emergence of the romantic love mythology under capitalism, Engels is aware of the division between public and pri-

vate life imposed by capitalist society and bourgeois ideology, but in his analysis of socialism, he fails to realize that, even under socialism, feelings are generated and relationships established within a wider context or system of social relationships. In other words, under socialism as well as under capitalism - or any other system for that matter - intimate feelings, perceptions, ways of acting and interpersonal relationships are not private and individual, but social and political. As long as men and women are confined to different social locations in the productive and reproductive spheres (as is the case in all past and present industrial societies but not necessarily Engels' expectation of the socialist future), their emotional experiences of the 'universal' romantic love mythology are likely to differ. Moreover, this difference in social identity and emotional experience is likely to form the basis for informal, psychological sexual inequality.

However, and this is important, Engels is not dogmatic about the form sexual relations will take in the future. He admits that the future generation might think differently from him.

"What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up ... When these people are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion about the practice of each individual ..." (Engels, 1972: 145).

Thus, although Engels takes love as 'given' for himself,

he is reluctant to engage in utopian speculation and he leaves the future open to the historical forces that will shape it.

Alexandra Kollontai (a prominent Russian Bolshevik and feminist) was the only Russian social theorist of any prominence who expanded on Engels' ideas about personal relationships. Furthermore, she was also the only Bolshevik thinker who gave much importance to the personal liberation and self-transformation of both men and women. She argued in her pamphlets and novels that, under socialism, relationships between the sexes would be based on complete freedom, equality, genuine friendship and free love. She opposed the old hypocritical philistine morality, characterized by the advocacy of monogamy on the one hand and the patronage of prostitution on the other (this contradiction had already been brought out by Engels). Moreover, she also criticized the oppressive nature of individual sex love, where each partner possesses the other and both are jealous of one another.

Kollontai called for greater fluidity and experimentation in sexual relationships, and this is where she not only radically diverged from Engels, but also met with disapproval from the Bolshevik leaders. The Bolsheviks had some justification for their criticism: her pamphlet Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle was a development and expansion of Engels' theory, but, as a foundation for social policy for the Soviet Union of the 1920s, her ideas were unrealistic. Free love came to be used as a justification of social and moral disintegration under NEP, charact-

erized, among other things, by widespread sexual exploitation of women rather than by personal freedom and social care. The unavailability of contraception only added to the difficulties experienced by the majority of women in their lives during that period. Sexual freedom therefore meant sexual freedom for men only. Rather than liberating women, it burdened them with unwanted pregnancies, children and abortions.⁴

In terms of how people of peasant origin would respond to her analysis at a personal level, Kollontai was thus out of touch with social reality. Given the existing cultural level, it was inevitable that Soviet women and men would misunderstand and distort such radical ideas as separation of sexuality from love or sexual experimentation generally.⁵ However, to do Kollontai sufficient justice, we need to stress that the essay Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle was written about 1913 and was not therefore addressed specifically to the sexual problems of the Russian revolution. Kollontai's championing of abortion, her stand on the question of prostitution, her work for the economic emancipation of women and her novels show, I think, that she was aware of the complexities of achieving sexual freedom and of the possibility of changing Soviet economic priorities.

Lenin was the primary mover behind the notion that the revolution demanded more discipline and less

4 Documentation follows in Chapters Three and Four.

5 This also applies to Western men and women and to much of Western feminist thought of that period. For the evaluation of the very strong puritan element in Western feminism, see J.A. and O. Banks, (1964: 107-113).

personal freedom. He argued that the nature of sexual morality was not a private and personal affair (as Engels had argued it would be under full communism), but a social matter - a duty towards the community. Although he did not advocate sexual abstinence, he did not formulate a positive concept of sexual life for youth either, thus playing down the role of sexuality in both private and social life.⁶

Lenin's successors moved much further in the direction of repressing freedom (including sexual freedom) in personal and social life. Wilhem Reich saw the new repressive measures of the 1930s (e.g. reintroduced ^{anti-}homosexual legislation, emphasis on discipline and authority) as symbolizing the 'betrayal' of the revolution. In the 1930s, Kollontai was no longer published and her public opponent, Professor Zaldkin, became the semi-official Soviet spokesman on sexuality. An inverse relationship was postulated between sexuality and the class struggle, between the heroic 'building of socialism' and the 'unhealthy' preoccupation with the realm of private pleasure. In other words, Soviet people were urged not to 'waste' time on socially

6 Since these views were expressed in a private conversation with Clara Zetkin (they were not intended for publication), one cannot be dogmatic about what Lenin would have said in public, had he decided to speak. Zetkin cannot be considered a reliable source; she was elderly and, when she wrote her reminiscences, faction lines were already being drawn. Moreover, Lenin's downgrading of the importance of sexuality was time-specific: it referred to the revolutionary period in Russia and to that of the expected revolution in Germany. One could be reasonably confident that he would evaluate sexuality differently today. Both Lenin and Engels were open as regards the future.

'unproductive' sexuality, but to rather engage in fulfilling the Five-Year Plans (Geiger, 1968: 84-88).

In the late 1930s, all references to sex were practically eliminated from fiction, cinema, theatre and education. Until the early 1960s, there was hardly any public discussion of matters relating to sex. This has now changed: sex is now publicly discussed in the mass media, but the discussion usually takes the form of attacking young people for deviating from the official sexual morality. Girls are taught to be inhibited, modest and passive in their sexual encounters. For example, Lidia Bogdanovich, doctor of medicine, from the Laboratory for the Problems of Sex Education of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences' Research Institute for General Problems of Education, argues that

"girls should learn self-respect, then there won't be any need to pass a law prohibiting hugging and kissing on the street. Woman's modesty increases man's sexual energy but lack of it repels men and brings about total fiasco in their intimate relations."
(Ogonyok, No.26, June 1972. Translated in CDSP Vol. XXIV, No.45).

The official way of thinking about sex under socialism has therefore remained virtually unchanged since the 1930s. Monogamy for both sexes, heterosexuality and no sex outside marriage have remained the official doctrine. No social theorist of any importance has emerged in the Soviet Union to develop a critique of these views or to construct a new theory of the significance of sex under socialism.⁷ Reich's claim that

7 The other East European countries, especially Hungary, differ in this respect. See, for instance, the works of Hegedus and Heller, which are now available in English.

the theory of the sexual revolution was always lacking in general socialist theory and that there was no attempt made to change the "antisexual, moralistic, inhibited, lascivious, jealous, possessive, generally neurotic psychic structure of men and women" still holds today. Moreover, the already existing contributions of Reich and Kollontai have been completely ignored, played down or even suppressed.⁸

There is, however, a great deal of evidence that many individuals are less puritanical than the tone of many official discussions would suggest. For example, S.I. Golod has studied attitudes towards premarital sex among students and professional people and found that the majority of his respondents approved of such relations (Hollander, 1973: 209-210). Taubman (1967: 216), in his report on MGU students, recalls instances when "students lived together for weeks and months without being disturbed. Some ended up getting married, and others drifted apart."

Why then have sexual relations and freedom been surrounded with so much silence or hostility in the communist countries? Hobsbawm has argued that, while there is no intrinsic connection between the degree of sexual permissiveness and the type of system of political rule (a statement which is certainly open to a debate), there is a definite affinity between revolution and puritanism. Although most revolutionary movements have been characterized by

⁸ For instance, all modern official Soviet biographies or references to Kollontai emphasize her diplomatic career rather than her involvement in the women's movement. Her ideas on sexuality are hardly ever mentioned.

a strong element of personal libertarianism, puritanism has always prevailed (Hobsbawm, 1969). This pattern certainly applies to the course of Soviet history, but we are not offered any hypothesis why this had to happen.⁹

Maybe the fact that all existing communist-ruled countries are today authoritarian rather than revolutionary accounts for some of the obstruction of sexual revolution there. It can be argued that sexual freedom is incompatible with a strict authoritarian rule and child-socialization within the authoritarian family. While sexual freedom and permissiveness do not necessarily politicize people and make them revolt (permissive sexuality might even act as a 'retreat sphere' thus actively hindering radicalization), they do represent independent thinking and deviation from accepted norms. People who experiment with their personal lives might not pose any real political threat, but they do not submit easily to rigid authority. Thus it could be argued that the anti-homosexual legislation in authoritarian Russia responded to the potential political implications of homosexuality rather than simply to homosexuality as such. Stalin needed more soldiers and a higher birth rate, and homosexuals did not fit the existing role stereotypes of masculine warriors versus feminine mothers.

⁹ Marcuse's concept of 'repressive desublimation' might be applicable in this instance.

Summary

Far more evidence than Engels offers is needed to clarify the status of women in primitive societies and the process of women's subjugation in relation to the rise of private property, class distinctions, commodity production and patrilineal kinship. The existing archaeological and anthropological data are too slim and ambiguous to prove Engels right or wrong on the subject. There is a crying need for further analysis of existing materials and for the collection of new data to resolve the question of whether sex oppression predates class oppression, whether class oppression caused sex oppression or whether they both arouse at the same time and are coterminous.

Engels' major contribution to our understanding of the social relations between the sexes lies in his analysis of the economic basis of sexual inequality under capitalism. Engels correctly understood that female inequality in capitalist societies is due to the institution of private property, women's private service within the family, their inability to work outside the home and their material dependence on men. The social equality between the sexes is to be achieved once these specific conditions are removed.

As private property could be abolished only by a socialist revolution, the struggle for women's emancipation is seen as coterminous with the struggle of the proletariat. Once the proletarian revolution is victorious and the social ownership and control of

the means of production are firmly established, the actual equality between the sexes is thought to be brought about by two specific structural changes. Engels advocates the drawing of "the whole female sex back into public industry", thus ending women's economic dependence on the man, and the socialization of private domestic work and care of children, thus ending female private service within the family.

The East European societies which have socialized the means of production have largely ignored the second condition of women's emancipation, thus achieving sex equality of a dubious value. Women were fully drawn into social production, thus becoming more confident and achieving financial independence, but the reproduction of labour power has remained private and largely their responsibility. Unlike working fathers, the majority of working mothers have to undertake two jobs - one in the family and one outside the home.

Engels is less illuminating on sex equality on the subjective level, but perhaps he saw psychological and emotional forms of sex inequality as epiphenomenal and the economic realities underlying them as 'real'. His speculation on the monogamous form of sexual relations under socialism was his personal expectation, and he expressed agnosticism on the future forms of the family.

The concluding points are not that Engels was wrong that the family as an economic unit will disappear under socialism, or in saying that heterosexuality and monogamy are 'natural', but that, on the one hand, the transition to socialism has not so far taken place under the

circumstances that Engels envisaged and that, on the other, he did not give a sufficiently detailed analysis of the family under capitalism for socialists to do more than build upon during the period of transition. Finally, we must recognize that, inadequate as those who have tried to apply it have found it to be, Engel's approach remains the only one on which it has yet been possible' for modern feminists to develop their theory and practice.

The best way to analyse the Russian feminist movement is to divide it into three main parts, according to the three main chronological patterns of Russian radicalism. Firstly, I shall discuss the origin and nature of the narodnik movement, especially its attitude and relationship to the 'woman question' and feminism. As this problem received different attention and took different form among the narodniks and the Bolsheviks, this discussion is directly relevant and analytically significant to the second section, where I shall discuss the feminist activities of the pre- 1917 Bolshevik Party.

I shall contrast them with those of their narodnik predecessors, but I shall also compare them with those of the German Social Democratic Party. There were many similarities between the German and the Russian socialist women's movement (to the extent that the former served as an organizational model for the latter), but there were also important differences, so that comparison between the two movements is particularly useful from the analytical viewpoint. It will hopefully illuminate the overall Bolshevik approach towards feminism and women in general. In the third section I shall discuss the nature and aims of the feminist movement after the October Revolution, when the Party addressed itself to all women rather than to women workers only.

I. Narodnik Movement

The populist narodnik movement was a specific Russian variant of the general European phenomenon of moralistic, utopian socialism. It was a response to the predicament of the intelligentsia, the marginal social group of alienated intellectuals which stood between the government and the masses. Russia's developing role as a European power in the early nineteenth century brought them in contact

with advanced European ideas and values, which sharply alienated them from their backward society. Before they could hope to function coherently as moral beings, and to assume a useful role in their society, they had to interpret the gap between their intellectual development and their country's backwardness, by answering such fundamental metaphysical questions as the significance and destiny of Russia in the scheme of human progress. This feeling accounts for that overwhelming attachment to ideas as means of salvation, which is so characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia in the nineteenth century. An 'integral world view' - an all-embracing system reconciling fact and value - was the essential precondition of an 'integral personality', to which all the generations of the intelligentsia aspired. It was a personality in which intellect, moral conviction and act were harmonized (Kelly, 1975: p.21).

Those most frustrated by the oppression of the Tzarist autocracy seized on Western utopian socialist doctrines as the path to this ideal. In accordance with the English and French utopian socialists half a century earlier, Russian narodniki believed in 'subjective' socialism, to be brought about by moral ideas and purposeful action of individuals, rather than in objective socialism created by economic forces irrespective of human wishes. The Russian intelligentsia found that their alienation gave them an advantage over their Western predecessors, because even the most radical of these remained too attached to past traditions to carry the liberating implications of socialism to their logical extreme. The Russian whose past was unrelieved barbarism and slavery was in this sense freer than the Western man.

Hence the emergence of Russian nihilism - a ruthless negation of traditionally sacred values and institutions, impelled by a moral need for a faith more total and liberating than any offered by the West.

Nihilism negated, in the name of individual liberty and personality, all the obligations imposed upon the individual by society, by family life, by religion, etc. It advocated emancipation of the intellect from every kind of dependence, it reacted against everything that was not based upon pure and positive reason. It accepted as true only what could be scientifically demonstrated.¹

In the wholesale negation of oppressive institutions, traditional religions, political and moral values, whereby the intelligentsia sought to prepare the ground for the ideal of 'integral personality', the social and political subjugation of women was a central target. There was no entrenched tradition of male political hegemony in the way, the mass of educated men being as deprived of civil and political rights as women. Political discussion took place predominantly in the home and women became accustomed to participate in it. The legal and moral subordination of the woman in the family was hotly criticized and women's emancipation seen as an integral part of that all-round fulfilment of the personality to which the intelligentsia aspired (Kelly 1975, p.21).

However, these and similar discussions in the 1830s and 1840s did not go beyond the moral condemnation of the existing order, neither did they call for an active political protest.² N. Dobrolyubov, one of the intellectual leaders of the period, in a famous article of 1860, "When Will the Real Day Come?" attacks the generation of the 'fathers' for being content to remain divided Hamlets, whose moral idealism was never translated into action. For the new generation the moral wholeness demanded by the socialist ideal must not be a thing of the future

1. For a more detailed account of nihilism, see Stepniak, 1883: pp.2-13.

2. The ways in which the 'woman question' was introduced to Russian intellectual life in the years following the Crimean War, are discussed in Stites (1969). However, the problem of women's emancipation was not the burning question of Russian public life of that period. It was seen as only a portion of the total human question and the immediate concern was the imminent emancipation of the serfs.

but must be epitomized in the personality of the propagandist himself. As a first step he must free himself much more consistently than before from the moral values and ideas of the 'Bad old world' (Kelly, 1975: p.22). The revolts of the students in the 1860s,³ which first gave the term 'nihilism' currency and notoriety, epitomized the more rigorously consistent application of their predecessors' conception of negation as the path to a socialist liberation of the personality.

The concern of the nihilists of the 1860s to integrate beliefs with action is particularly striking in their attitude to women's emancipation, which they moved from the intellectual to the practical plane. Chernyshevsky's political novel and revolutionary appeal What Is To Be Done, first published in 1863, was crucial in this respect.⁴ Many pages of the novel deal with the means of achieving economic and intellectual independence of women, a process which concerns both men and women.

Acting upon Chernyshevsky's moralistic advice, 'hundreds of young men started to live honourable, lofty, philosophical lives in the fashion of the types represented by Lophukov and Kirsanov'.⁵ Sex and the erotic instinct were looked upon as out of date romantic ideal; as an unworthy frittering away of time in a world where there was a great deal to do, which was politically more important. The object was not simply puritanism,⁶ but also an absolute respect of the individuality of each comrade. The double standard of sexual morality was overthrown and the conventional 'puritan' conception of female sexuality was also demanded of the men.

3. See Meijer (1955: pp.12-20) for a discussion of the Russian student movement of that particular period.

5. Preface to the first English edition of the book, published in New York in 1866. See Chernyshevsky, 1866: p.6.

4. As political and social ideologies were banned from direct expression in Russia, they became commonly expressed in literary criticism and in novels. The influence of Belinsky, the leading literary critic who established political and social criteria as the main principles for evaluating artistic works (rather than aesthetic criteria) was crucial in this respect. What was demanded of Russian radical literature in Tzarist Russia was political utility and a clear and simple social message.

6. For a discussion of the Western puritan feminist thought, see J.A. & O. Banks (1964:pp.107-113).

In this sense, chaste cohabitation and fictitious marriages were the main contributions individual men could make towards the liberation of women. In Tzarist Russia, women could not obtain the internal passport essential to legal residence anywhere unless they had the approval of the father or the husband. As fathers were generally very unsympathetic, fictitious marriages were arranged to enable women to live in communes in the larger cities or to go and study abroad at Zurich, the first European university to admit women for degrees. It was an absolute rule that such 'husbands' would not approach the women sexually, and all memoirs agree that this was lived up to. One memoir describes such a marriage in the following way:

"One day when we were living in the commune, Charushin came and told us that he had received a letter from an acquaintance in Vyatka who was a class teacher in the Diocesan school there and had taught some of the older people about the service to the people. In his letter, he said, she told him that several pupils who were ready to model their lives on these ideas when they left school were meeting with bitter opposition from their families. One of her best pupils, the daughter of the village priest was so crushed beneath paternal despotism that she had determined upon flight, but was discovered and subjected once more to her father's authority. All correspondence and even books, were strictly forbidden to her and her family were making every endeavour to force her into marriage ... Since there was no escape except through a fictitious marriage, so the letter ran, the recipient was asked to find a suitable husband. Without hesitation, I offered my services ..."

The young student started on a long journey provided by his comrades with better clothing and borrowed presents for the 'solemn occasion' to secure the freedom for a totally unknown girl. The priest, satisfied that the young man was of noble birth and the son of a rich landowner, joyfully gave his consent to the union. After the wedding, the young couple set out straight away for St. Petersburg without the parents having the slightest suspicion. The 'wife' was able to find shelter in one of the many communes and devoted herself to study and at the same time to socialist propaganda. The young man, who meanwhile had fallen in love with the girl, as a revolutionary could not even con-

fess his love under the nihilist circumstances - his intercourse with her was simply that of a good comrade. Only later this particular fictitious marriage was turned into a real one,⁷ (Halle, 1932: pp.44-45).

The communes were, particularly for women, places of refuge for runaways from the patriarchalism of smaller towns and family estates. The members shared money, food, possessions (Halle, 1932: p.42). The women expressed their contempt for the existing society by educating themselves and by violating the social rules of dress. They wore their hair straight, their clothing severe and comfortable (wearing of trousers was as yet unthinkable), glasses whenever they needed them and particularly violated convention by smoking. They tried to abandon everything that made for femininity. Men and women had separate rooms in the communes and the cohabitation was strictly chaste.

Following Chernyshevsky's literary model of Vera Pavlovna, the wife of the revolutionary Rakmetov, who escaped from her family life and attained economic independence and scope for her social activities by the establishment of a dressmaking co-operative, a number of young women and men accepted and imitated this model in the form of co-operatives of shoemakers, bookbinders, etc. (Halle, 1932: p.42).

Because of present dissatisfaction with existing sex norms in the West, there is a tendency to give these communes, co-operatives and fictitious marriages much more attention than their place among Russian revolutionaries warrants. Most of the women got legally married (only church weddings were legal). More than half of the women who were prominent in the Russian populism married other revolutionaries. The vast majority of marriages occurred after the women became revolution-

7. In fact, a number of fictitious marriages later turned into real ones. They were also used for other purposes. For example, narodnik Frolenko entered a fictitious marriage not to liberate his 'wife', but to maintain a conspiratorial cover for the assassination of Alexander II (McNeal, 1971-1972).

aries (McNeal, 1971-72). In this sense, the conception of negation as the path to a socialist liberation of the personality was not applied to all aspects of life - the monogamous marriage remained the prevalent cultural standard.

The concern of the nihilists with women's emancipation developed into a powerful movement, encouraged by all the intellectual leaders of nihilism, demanding the economic emancipation of women, largely through their admission to higher education and the professions. The government rejected their demands, but professors sympathetic to their cause taught at evening courses for women and at the end of the decade, many women went abroad to study at Zurich. In the period 1870-73, more than a hundred Russian women were studying in Zurich, together with about 150 Russian men. The total Russian colony, including non-students, numbered over 300 persons, (Meijer, 1955: p.1).

The political importance of this Russian colony lies in the fact that out of a total of over 150 women and men who were studying at the University of Zurich at that time, more than half later participated in the narodnik movement. How did this political radicalization come about? Meijer argues that the young women, the majority of whom arrived in Zurich in 1872, decided to do so individually, not as a result of an organized action. Their motives for the decision to go and study in Zurich varied; they were both personal⁸ and social. The desire to serve the people⁹ was usually stronger, but it was by no means

8. For instance, a number of students came from provincial communities which lacked educational facilities.

9. Women's attempts to educate themselves brought them into contact with radical literature and they came to see their emancipation in terms of a fight for the right to be as useful to the people as men; to this end most studied medicine or midwifery.

of an explicit political nature. The majority of women students were distinguished by such ascetism of habits and dedication to study that initially little time was left to political activities outside the scope of their vocational studies. A Swiss woman student describes an encounter in the Russian eating-room with Olga Lyubatovich, then a seventeen-year-old student at Zurich in these terms:

"Behind the table was sitting an enigmatic being, whose biological character was at first all but clear to me: a roundish, boyish face, short-cut hair, parted askew, enormous blue glasses, ... a coarse jacket, a burning cigarette in its mouth - everything about it was boylike, and yet there was something which belied this desired impression. I looked stealthily under the table - and discovered a bright-coloured, somewhat faded cotton skirt. The being took no notice at all of my presence and had remained absorbed in a large book, every now and then rolling a cigarette which was finished in a few draughts" (Meijer, 1955: p.59).

The political transition in Zurich occurred in the environment of freedom of discussion and opportunity for organization. In 1872, various self-educational and discussion groups were established. The Women's Club for Logical Speech was organized by Rozaliya Idel'son, who had herself contracted a fictitious marriage. She proposed the formation of a club to which only women could be admitted so that in the absence of men, they could learn how to speak and use their knowledge and how to express themselves more freely. However, older women who were more concerned with their vocational study than with politics, opposed the exclusion of men. Their objections were at first not accepted, but when they decided to leave the Club after six weeks, the Club formally ceased to exist (Meijer, 1955: pp.69-70).

It is, however, important to realize that the founders of the Club were aware of the drawbacks of formal equality between men and women. If the latter are unable to take full opportunity of these rights, if they are too inhibited to speak at public meetings and put

forward their specific demands, their equality remains somewhat shallow. The Bolsheviks also realized this problem, but they devoted far less attention to it than the earlier radical movement.

Another, more important group, which made a significant political impact, was the so-called Fritschi group. Called after their landlady, it was a close-knit group, crystallized around the strong personality of Sofia Bardina. Although it started as a circle for self-education and discussion of their vocational subjects, it soon became the centre for discussions on socialist literature. The group originally numbered eight, later twelve members. Vera Figner became a member some time after its foundation, (Meijer, 1955: pp.70-72).

After the decree of May 1873, which forbade women to study in Zurich and declared all degrees obtained after January 1874 to be invalid in Russia, thus causing a virtual end to the colony, the Fritschi group dispersed to Bern, Geneva and Paris. However, before their various departures, they decided to formulate a programme which up to that time had been lacking. Emphasis on self-education and knowledge, thereby on personal emancipation, was still eminent, but the call to action was becoming stronger, (Meijer, 1955: p.164). In 1874 they formed a new group by amalgamating with a circle of male narodniks from Georgia, with the explicit aim of returning at once to Russia. There they were to do political work among the people. When back in Moscow in February 1875, they drew up a programme in which emancipation of women was of secondary importance to the general aim of achieving a better society for all, (Meijer, 1955: p.167).¹⁰

This development of the Fritschi group is parallel in most of its aspects to the development of the Chaikovsky group inside Russia

10. For a detailed discussion of the Fritschi group and the subsequently formed Pan-Russian Social-Revolutionary Society (also called the Moscow Organization), see Knight (1975).

itself. Initially, it was also a circle of women who came together through their common pursuit of study: most of them attended the first women's courses to be found in Russia, the so-called Alarchin courses, which were opened in St.Petersbourg in 1868 by professors sympathetic to women's emancipation. At the end of the first year, a few students were invited to private courses held by some of their teachers. Sofya Perovskaya, A.Kornilova and other women then decided to form a circle for self-education. Although social interest predominated (for example, the group discussed literature, the works of Chernyshevsky and Lassalle), the motive of personal emancipation was not entirely absent. When Perovskaya and one of the Kornilova sisters became members of another circle, consisting of men (the Vullf commune), other women strongly protested. Nonetheless, through Kornilova and Perovskaya, the two circles made contact and in 1871, they merged into one, the Chaikovsky group.

Its members saw themselves as future revolutionaries, as knights dedicated to the moral preparation of the intelligentsia for its work among the people, believing that a revolutionary party must be a model of the principles of truth and justice which will characterize the new society. The integral world view to which study was the means was centered on the ideal of rational society based on the commune,¹¹ and the urge to harmonize beliefs with action culminated in the movement of 'going to the people' of 1873-1874. Thousands of young intellectuals went to the villages to teach and preach socialism, with all the fervour of a religious crusade motivated, as participants themselves confessed, by a desire for moral purification as much as by practical aims, / (Kelly, 1975:p.21

11. Russian populists believed that Russia possessed in the peasant commune a relic of a primitive state of harmony existing before man enslaved himself to such abstract products of his alienated reason as the state, and which, if developed into conscious socialism, would inaugurate a new age in which men would fulfil themselves as integral beings.

As indicated by the police statistics of that period and by the subsequent mass trials, women participated in the movement 'going to the people' in great numbers. Police statistics of 1872-82 show 1,611 supposed revolutionary propagandists, of whom 15% were women, (McNeal, 1971-72: p.144). Out of 22 centres of propaganda, five were under the leadership of women, (Elnett, 1921: pp.88-89). In fact, Count Pahlen, Alexander II's Minister of Jurisprudence, in his report to the Tzar in 1874, ascribed the chief success of the revolutionary propaganda to the presence of women.

When the government's harsh repression of this non-violent populist movement prevented further work among the people, the populists were forced to consider a political battle, a tactic they had always rejected on the grounds that the political liberties so gained would benefit only the exploiting classes and perpetuate the people's economic misery. The decision was agonizing for most. Vera Figner describes her own and Sofya Perovskaya's reluctance to leave their work of school-teaching and medical help in the villages; reason called them to terrorism, but feeling, 'the striving for a pure life', urged them to remain with the peasants. A crucial event in the turn to terrorism was Vera Zasulich's attack on Trepov. At her trial she described how when Trepov's savage flogging of a prisoner for the crime of failing to remove his cap in his presence had aroused no protest in the press:

"then, seeing no other means to that end, I decided, even at the cost of my own life, to prove that one cannot be sure of going unpunished in thus violating human personality", (Kelly, 1975: p.22).

In her unhesitating consistency, Vera Zasulich epitomizes the contribution of women to the Russian populist revolutionary movement. The dramatic initiative of her act symbolized the complex process of effect and cause whereby women, drawn into the movement by the specific character of Russian nihilism, intensified its moral impetus. The

comparatively greater effort required from women than from men to break free of parental and family ties (many of the revolutionary women were married and had children) gave their participation a distinctive character of self-mortifying moralism in the unity of conviction an act which was characteristic of Russian nihilism as a whole.

Zasulich's sacrifice illustrated convincingly to many that for those who were dedicated to the emancipation of the personality there was no other way than terrorist action to win the minimal liberties necessary for propagating their ideas. In the People's Will, the terrorist organization subsequently formed, ten out of the twenty-eight members of the Executive Committee were women who like Vera Zasulich had been formed by the nihilism of the 1860s and were characterized by the same unrelenting consistency. Thus Vera Figner asserted at her trial that having decided that terrorism was necessary, she took this road to the end:

"I have always demanded of a person consistency and harmony of word and deed, and it seemed to me that if I had theoretically recognized that something could be done only by force, I was obliged to take direct part in any violent activities undertaken by the party to which I belong", (Kelly, 1975: p.22).

It is perhaps indicative of their more exclusive dedication to the moral aspects of populism that women left little contribution to its theory, although they left many memoirs of immense value for an understanding of the motivations of the movement. The sincerity, intelligence, extraordinary courage and total dedication of these women of nobility was something entirely new not only for Russia, but for the whole world. This high rate of female participation both in numerical strength and in leadership capacity in the Russian populist movement in the nineteenth century is quite unique and unparalleled in any other revolutionary movement. In this sense, their role deserves to be seen as more than an episode in the historical struggle for women's liberation.

However, these women joined the populist movement as individuals, not as a social group. The specific character of Russian nihilism freed women from their personal paternal subjugation and made it possible for them to establish equal personal relationships both within the movement and within their marriages. As the problem of women's emancipation was thus solved (within personal relationships), as men and women saw themselves as equal comrades, there was no perceived need for a separate feminist consciousness and movement. Thus nihilism, especially its concern to integrate belief with action and its emphasis on comradeship, paradoxically accounts both for the absence of a strong feminist movement in Russia and for the high rate of women's participation in the populist movement.

The specific Russian milieu also explains why, while educated radical women in England, and elsewhere in Western Europe, devoted greater energy to feminism than to socialist revolution, their counterparts in Russia tended to be passionately committed to the second at the expense of the first. Because of this, Russian radical women who fought Tzarism side by side with men from populist convictions ignored their specific oppression as women and contributed nothing to the theory and practice of revolutionary feminism. They did not even react against a form of female discrimination in their own movement. Male terrorists were quite willing to admit women on equal terms to the conspiratorial groups, because in the acts of terrorism women had an equal if not greater chance of success (the authorities were less suspicious of them¹²), but women were not accepted on the editorial boards, which defined the ideological field of action, (McNeal, 1971-72). As a result, (in addition^{to} women's more exclusive dedication to the moral aspects of populism) no female theoreticians emerged.

12. A useful parallel can be drawn with the initial stages of the Algerian nationalist movement against French colonialism: women, traditionally oppressed by the Moslem religion, were accepted as equal and successfully used by the Algerian male terrorists. See Pontecorvo's film Battle of Algiers.

II. Pre-1917 Bolshevik Party and its Attitude Towards Women's Emancipation

The neo-narodniks' zeal for personal emancipation, and the resulting sexual democracy and high female participation within the revolutionary movement, is much less noticeable in the Marxist social democratic movement. Although both movements operated in the same cultural environment and there was a significant degree of personal contact and crossover between the parties,¹³ the Social Democratic Party (including both the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks) was more emigré-based and more influenced by the international social-democratic movement. This was reflected both in the personal attitudes of its members and in its overall organizational policy towards women.

The Social Democratic Party also differed from the narodniks in the quality of its membership and in laying greater stress on the importance of theory and political analysis. Most of the active narodniks came from a noble origin, from the intelligentsia, while a large proportion of the Bolshevik members (the leaders also came from the intelligentsia) were of a humble class origin. Men and women of lower class origin accepted the more traditional ideas about the inequality between the sexes more readily than the intelligentsia, whose members actively attempted to change them (as we have seen in the discussion above).

Another difference between the narodniks and the social democrats was in the field of theory. As noted above, neither the first generation of narodnik radicals nor any subsequent generation of their

13. I am referring to the Marxist Social Democratic Party and the neo-narodnik Socialist Revolutionary Party. The former was founded in 1898, but as most of its few participants were soon arrested, the Party became a reality only at its second convention, which was held in Brussels and London in 1903. The Socialist Revolutionaries formed their party in 1901. They resumed the terrorist tactics of their narodnik predecessors, namely the 'Will of the People'. Their own 'Battle Organization' assassinated a number of important government officials. However, the Socialist Revolutionaries were also influenced by Marxism. Their most noted leader, Chernov, was engaged in many debates with the Marxist social democrats about the nature and future of Russian society

followers produced any female theoreticians. As the recruitment to the leadership of the Russian Social Democratic Party was based largely on the achievements in the field of theory, there was little room for female equality at the top of the Party hierarchy. Angelica Balabanoff recalls the importance of theory for all the factions of the Social Democratic Party in her description of the Fifth Congress of the Party in 1907:

"The speeches of the leaders lasted for hours (the Congress itself was to last for six weeks), and when they were dealing with theoretical issues and historical analogies, one forgot that this was a political convention. It might have been a gathering of academicians, or a prolonged scientific debate", (Balabanoff, 1938: p.88).

Thus no woman sat on the Central Committee of the Russian Democratic Party before the October Revolution.¹⁴ Women, even those who worked closely with the male leadership, accepted subordinate, largely secretarial roles. All major decisions were always referred to the Party male leadership, especially to Lenin. And even if leading Bolshevik women were allowed to work in a semi-autonomous way, the male leadership could always count on their submitting to decisions made by Party committees.¹⁵

On the whole, the highly disciplined Bolshevik Party, governed by the principle of democratic centralism, was unwilling to encourage the development of women's ability to think and behave independently from men. Indeed, the very concept of a Leninist party precludes women's autonomy within the party (I shall return to this point later on); yet this was necessary if women were to overcome and reverse their socialization.

14. Incidentally, this situation did not change after the October Revolution and it remains the same even today. At the 24th Party Congress in April 1971, out of 467 members elected to the CPSU Central Committee, only 18 were women. Needless to say, ~~with one exception~~ no woman has ~~ever~~ sat on the CPSU Politburo, the main decision-making body.

15. For a more detailed account of the relationship between male leadership and women within the pre-1917 Bolshevik Party, see Bobroff, A: 1974.

On the other hand, we have to realize that the practice of individual sexual inequality within the socialist party is politically and analytically less significant than the overall socialist policy towards men. The specific neo-narodnik tradition of personal, existential liberation withered in the environment of Marxism. An individualistic, personal, solution to women's oppression was unacceptable to a Marxist revolutionary party. Marxism and social democracy regarded the enslavement of women as an integral part of capitalism, to be finally solved by a general socialist revolution, and not by a personal act of will.

Thus the Social Democratic Party was committed to the emancipation of female masses almost by definition. However, as the Marxist programme primarily emphasized the general economic oppression of the working class, individual, psychological forms of female inequality were ignored, as the previous chapter argued. This had immediate personal implications. Male socialists did not seem to have applied their general socialist ideas of equality to their personal, individual relationships with women either within the Party or in their own families. Women continued to play a subordinate role in both institutions.

On the other hand, the Party's membership may not be representative of the population as a whole. As the Party was committed to the emancipation and equality of all previously oppressed groups, i.e., workers, national and ethnic minorities, women, poor peasants, etc., this revolutionary commitment to the equality of women as a whole, must be separated from, and considered as more significant than, the unequal relationships between the sexes within the Party. Yet it is important to emphasize that the socialist parties' organizational policy towards women workers did not come from Marxism itself. It emerged only

gradually, as a tactical response to two basic sets of factors: increasing number of women entering the labour force throughout Europe at the end of the last century, which had various implications, and the activities of the bourgeois feminists.

In Marxism and socialism, gender differentiation has been traditionally perceived by men and women alike as of secondary importance to the division between social classes as defined by their relationship to the means of production. Marxism and the socialist parties considered the class struggle as of primary importance; the industrial proletariat was regarded as the main force which was to bring about the socialist revolution. This meant that women were not organized as a group on the basis of their gender by the socialist parties, but rather were called upon to give their active support to the struggle as workers. For this reason, the activities and influence of bourgeois feminists among working women were seen as a threat to the influence of the socialist parties, because they seemed to challenge the class allegiance of women. The women's sections within the socialist parties were set up as tactical response to this threat as well as under pressure from women within the parties. This pressure grew in credibility with the highly visible, successful, large-scale strike activity of working women.

Thus the main task was to resolve the question of the relationship between an independent women's organization and a single revolutionary party of the working class. This was achieved by the attempt to build a working class women's movement subordinate to the revolutionary party. It was essentially an auxiliary, secondary wing of the main party, without a militant feminist tone - the class struggle was considered more important and relevant, because it was assumed that women could be fully emancipated only in a socialist society.

This argument can be best documented by the historical evidence of the socialist women's movement in Germany, the Second International and Russia.

It is obvious why the German movement must be discussed first. To begin with, Germany at the turn of the century had the most organized and politically influential working class movement. As such, it had influenced other European labour movements, including that existing in Russia. Secondly, problems in relation to the 'woman question' had to be faced and be solved by all socialist movements, therefore a useful analogy, which might highlight some of the analytical points which I mentioned above, could be drawn.

An analysis of the international socialist women's movement can serve as a bridge between the two national movements. Clara Zetkin, the leader of the German social democratic women's movement, also played a leading role in the international women's movement in a way similar to that which the German SPD as a whole played within the Second International. The socialist women's movement within the Second International directly influenced the pre-1917 Russian women's movement in terms of focusing its activities on specific occasions, e.g. celebration of the International Women's Day. The character of the activities of the socialist women's movement in Germany, within the Second International and in Russia, will show its polemical nature in relation to bourgeois feminism. Hence we see the political significance of the latter, even if otherwise there was complete disagreement on aims and tactics.

Clara Zetkin herself became involved in the struggle for female emancipation under the influence of bourgeois feminism. In 1874, she was accepted into a teacher's training college in Leipzig, which was headed by Augusta Schmidt, a prominent activist in the

bourgeois feminist movement. Students and teachers at this college were frequently discussing questions of female emancipation, (Stasova, 1958: p.52), and Zetkin's life-long preoccupation with the problem of women's oppression and the women's movement could well have originated at this 'bourgeois' college.¹⁶

1. Germany

a) Female Employment

The whole of 19th century Europe was characterized by rapid expansion of the industrial work force which naturally included women, but Germany experienced particularly rapid growth, mainly in the last three decades of the century. Between 1849 and 1861, the rate of female employment among day labourers and manual workers in Prussia rose from 12.7 percent to 16.7 percent, (Thonnessen, 1973: p.13), but at that stage, in the 1860s and 1870s, the level of German industrialization was still very low. The working class movement was then very anti-feminist, being totally biased towards the bourgeois family ideal. For example, the Lassaleans did not oppose female labour merely on the grounds of the harsh factory conditions which existed at that time under capitalism, but they were against it on principle. Like the bourgeoisie, they saw women's place only in the home. The discussions about female labour at the conferences of the First International were also characterized by similar hostile attitudes toward women workers.

Male manual workers thus instinctively recognized women appearing on the labour market as their rivals and competitors, much sought after by the employers, because they could pay them lower wages. It is therefore not surprising, that initially, male workers attempted to solve this problem of female competition simply by prohibiting women

16. For a more detailed discussion of bourgeois feminism in Russia before 1917, see Stites (1973).

from working. However, industrial workers could do nothing to stop the 'logic' of capitalism. While in 1875, the number of female workers in Germany amounted to 1,116,695, by 1882, i.e. only seven years later, this figure had increased almost by 400 percent to 5,541,517. By 1895, 6,578,350 women^{had} entered the labour force and by 1907, this figure increased by almost 50 percent, to 9,492,881, (Thonnessen, 1971: p.57).

The German male working class movement was thereby objectively forced to come to terms with women workers, their potential competitors on the labour market. Thus rather than eliminating female competition by prohibiting women from working, which proved to be an impossible task anyway, the male labour movement was forced to try to reduce this competition by organizing women into trade associations. Female trade union membership rose from 4,355 in 1891 to 22,844 in 1900. The first decade of this century was characterized by an even greater rate of increase in female trade union membership which reached 189,442 in 1910, (Thonnessen, 1971, p.57).

b) Socialist Theory of Women's Emancipation.

The birth of the socialist theory of women's emancipation must be understood within the context of these economic and political factors as well as the influence of bourgeois feminism. Bebel's Woman in the Past, Present and Future, later renamed Woman and Socialism, was first published in Leipzig in 1878. As it came out only a few months after the anti-socialist Law had been passed, the original politically misleading title, was deliberately chosen. Bebel's book went into 58 editions in the German language, of which fifty alone appeared between 1879 and 1908. It was also translated into many foreign languages, (Thonnessen, 1971: p.36).

It has been generally acknowledged that Bebel's book served as the most important educational work during the Party's persecution period, when women were hit even harder than men. Until 1908, it was illegal for women in most parts of Germany to join a political group of any kind. Bebel thus prepared the ground for the numerical and political strength of the German socialist women's movement in the realms of education, agitation and organization, which could take a concrete form when the circumstances became more favourable.

Engels' Origins, published six years later, in 1884, has had much less significance for the German socialist movement than for the Russian one and I will therefore discuss it no further. There are many similarities between the two works anyway, particularly in the analysis of the relationship between the emancipation of women and the emancipation of workers. This was politically significant, because it implied that women's liberation was impossible in isolation. This point could be used in theoretical discussion against bourgeois feminists. At the same time, the socialist women's movement could also be subordinated to the more important, working class movement.

Clara Zetkin's pamphlet entitled The Question of Women Workers at the Present Time was published in 1899, i.e., five years after she entered the teacher training college with feminist influences. Following Bebel and Engels, Zetkin also argued that full emancipation of women could only come with labour's complete victory over capital. She described female labour as a precondition for the emancipation of women and emphasized the need to organize the industrial woman worker, to educate her politically and economically and bring her into solidarity with the men of her social class. An implicit distinction was drawn between bourgeois feminism (a few privileged women struggling against the men of their bourgeois class) and socialist feminism (women

struggling together with men of the working class against the capitalist class as a whole).

c) Political Organization

This line of argument was made explicit at the 1896 Gotha Party Conference, where Zetkin presented a report on the 'woman question' and laid an organisational foundation for the women's movement. Zetkin explicitly stressed the incompatibility between bourgeois feminism and the proletarian women's movement. In her speech, she advocated special organizations to foster more political activity among women. She also specified the tasks of these separate women's associations. In addition to working for the general aims of the Party, they were to concentrate on a whole range of issues of special concern to women workers: political equality, insurance at childbirth, protective legislation, education and security of children, political education of women workers etc.

The SPD's women's paper, entitled Gleichkeit (Equality) played a particularly important educational and organizational role. It was published once a fortnight during the period 1891-1923. Clara Zetkin was its editor throughout most of its existence, namely in the period 1892-1917. She resisted all the attempts of the reforming wing of the Party to de-politicize the journal and concentrate on mass entertainment of women workers. She was finally forced to resign her editorship in 1917, when she refused to abandon her class position to the prevailing reformist trend in the German SPD.

Reformist German Social Democrats, like Lilly Brown, advocated some co-operation with the bourgeois feminists, but this has always been rejected by the revolutionary socialist movement. The first Women's Conference of the SPD took place in 1900 and discussion centred

precisely around this problem, the attitude to be taken by proletarian women to their bourgeois counterparts and general agitation among women workers. The issue was becoming more urgent because of the political threat of the bourgeois feminist movement. Similar and additional themes, e.g. protection for women workers, protection for children, women's suffrage etc. constantly recurred at subsequent women's conferences in Munich in 1902, in Mannheim in 1904 and even at the first International Socialist Women's Conference in Stuttgart in 1907.

Initially, German socialist women were separately organized. This was partly due to legal requirements, but Zetkin's views on this subject also counted a great deal. She argued for separate working women's associations on the basis of the special needs of women, their isolation within the family, their fear of speaking with men around, and the need to develop the leadership capacities of women. Kollontai put forward similar arguments when she was advocating separate women's organization within the Menshevik or Bolshevik Party. These ideas have re-emerged quite recently within the Women's Liberation Movement.

After the expiry of the old Anti-Socialist Law, women were legally able to join the SPD directly and those in the special SPD women's organizations did so. They received proportional representation on all standing committees of the party, and the women members of the committees were elected at meetings of the women themselves. This particular organizational model, was, however, adopted neither by the Second International, nor by the Russian Social Democrats.

However, this does not mean that women did not experience discrimination within the German Party. This discrimination coincided with the divergence between the radical theory of women's emancipation and the actual practice of the Party. Malicious witticism and sexist joking by

the male leaders were used as effective means of countering women's demands as well as against women leaders, thus blunting women's criticism of the Party's reformist practice. The war policy then brought them into open conflict with the majority of the Party.

Male socialists were thus carrying into the working class movement the same antagonism that capital had aroused between male and female labour. The woman movement was considered as secondary by male socialists, the day-to-day implementation of party policy with regard to the female labour force was left entirely to the women of the Party. As Clara Zetkin concentrated most of her activities in this secondary auxiliary movement, she tended to be automatically excluded from the main political and decision-making role in the socialist movement as a whole. Alexandra Kollontai experienced a similar fate in the Russian movement. Only Rosa Luxemburg avoided this pitfall, and this was because she did not actively work in the women's movement, although she supported it, but concentrated on theory. Leadership roles in the socialist movement had always been taken by those who contributed to theory.

2. The International Socialist Women's Movement

The foundations of the international socialist women's movement were laid at the same time as those in Germany. At the occasion of the International Socialist Congress in London in 1896, i.e. in the same year as the Congress at Gotha, the first private meeting of thirty socialist women delegates took place. Discussion centred around the distinction between bourgeois feminism and the socialist women's movement, which again proves the political significance of bourgeois feminism for the development of the socialist women's movement as a tactical response.

The First International Women's Conference took place in Stuttgart in 1907, in connection with the general International Socialist Congress. Alexandra Kollontai participated as a Russian delegate. A separate International Women's Bureau was set up, and Zetkin became its secretary. Die Gleichkeit, under her editorship, became also an international socialist women's organ, besides its function for the German socialist women's movement.

At the request of Zetkin and others, the general Congress debated the question of the struggle for suffrage conducted by the Austrian Social Democrats. The Austrian tactics of sacrificing the principle of equal rights for women and men to what the Austrians considered a more expedient tactic, the winning of universal male enfranchisement, was condemned. The general Congress then passed a resolution advocating women's suffrage. This resolution said, among other things, that women workers should campaign for their franchise in conjunction with the working class parties and by not co-operating with the bourgeois supporters of women's equal rights. The period 1908-1910 was then characterized by an extensive participation by women workers in the election campaigns of their respective parties in Prussia, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, England, Austria, United States and elsewhere. The socialist women's movement was beginning to take roots in most European countries.

The Second International Women's Socialist Conference took place in Copenhagen in 1910. A. Kollontai again participated, as a delegate appointed by the Textile Workers Union. On the suggestion of Zetkin, this conference called for an international day of action demanding a universal female suffrage, later to be called the International Women's Day, on 8th March 1910 (25 February in the old Russian calendar). Zetkin chose this particular day to express solidarity with the current strike of New York garment workers.

York seamstresses. By choosing the beginning of the strike for the International Women's Day, the Conference supported their struggle for higher wages and better working conditions and emphasized the relationship of the struggle for female suffrage to wider social struggles of the working class against capitalism. The response to the suggestion of an International Women's Day was overwhelming. It was celebrated by 1911 in Germany, Austria (including Bohemia), Denmark, Switzerland, and the United States. Other countries followed later on; e.g., it was celebrated in Russia in 1913.

The third International Socialist Women's Conference was scheduled for August 1914 in Vienna, but it did not take place because of the outbreak of the First World War. Another conference was organized in Bern in 1915, upon the initiative of Zetkin. However, Zetkin took the initiative upon herself, and the conference did not have the approval of the German SPD as such. The resolutions of the conference expressed the dedication to peace and socialism of working class women, despite their governments' and social democratic leaders' support for the war. The causes and consequences of wars were explained as well as the ways in which they could be abolished.

Bolshevik women played a prominent part in this conference. Working under Lenin's direction, they introduced a resolution calling for a formation of a new Socialist International. It was opposed by most participants, but the Bolshevik delegates refused to alter their position, thus threatening to break up the desired unified stand. Only when Zetkin negotiated separately with Lenin and he agreed to compromise, the Bolshevik women withdrew the resolution.¹⁷ This is a good example of Lenin's control of the women's movement within the Bolshevik Party. The policy of Russian Social Democrats towards women workers developed, therefore, under the influence of, and in conjunction with, the Second Inter-

17. For a more detailed description of this incident, see Balabanoff, 1938: pp.151-2.

national, but specific Russian conditions were of much greater importance.

3. Russia

Firstly, Russia started industrializing much later than Germany, i.e. only towards the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, industrialization once started, occurred at a very rapid pace. The annual industrial growth in the 1890s was 8%, which slowed down at the turn of the century during a depression, but it picked up again at 6 percent after 1905. The working class grew in size accordingly. It numbered two million in 1900 and 3 million in 1914, out of a population of about 170 million, (Riasanovsky, 1963: p.475). However, although the working class was insignificant in quantity in proportion to the total population, its political significance exceeded its numerical strength because of its dense concentration. Late industrialization also meant modern technology and continued emphasis on heavy industry and large plants. Half of all the industrial enterprises employed more than 500 workers each, and many employed more than a thousand each, (Riasanovsky, 1963: p.475). In addition, all of Russian industry was concentrated in a mere eight basic industrial regions, St.Petersburg and Moscow being the most important ones. This made political agitation a lot easier.

Thus the Russian working class and the Bolshevik Party were in a different situation from their German predecessors at the same stage of industrial development. By the time Russian women started entering the labour market in great numbers, the solution of the problem of female competition by prohibiting women from working altogether was politically out of the question. Existing socialist theory and decades of struggle by the German socialist women's organization made it clear to

the Bolsheviks that female participation in social production is a necessary pre-condition for female emancipation. However, the second alternative, the means of dealing with the threat of economic and political competition from women, posed a problem to be faced by the German Democrats and the Russian Bolsheviks alike.

a) Female Employment and Bolshevik Response

According to Kingsbury and Fairchild, during the period 1901-1911, the employment of women in the country as a whole rose from 26 per-cent of the total number of industrial workers (an increase of 5%), while Bobroff claims that, in the period 1901-1910, the number of women in the labour force increased by 18%), (Bobroff, 1974: p.550 and Kingsbury and Fairchild, 1935: p.6). This is quite a big difference, but in both cases, it is still a substantial increase.¹⁸

Similar discrepancies exist in the accounts of Bolshevik response to this potential army of economic rivals or political supporters. While Bobroff claims that, prior to 1913, the Bolsheviks did not even print literature dealing specifically with women, (Bobroff, 1973, p.543), this is disputed by official Soviet sources. In 1901, Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, under the pseudonym Sablina, legally published a pamphlet entitled Rabotnica (The Woman Worker).

18. According to Kingsbury and Fairchild, there were 606,000 women workers in 1911. Nearly 434,000 were in the textile industry. All of the other 172,000 were in the clothing trades, the food industry, certain chemical trades and the manufacture of shoes.

"Drawing upon her experiences among the workers as well as upon Marxist theory, Krupskaya produced a simple and affecting picture of women's life in factory and field dwelling heavily on the sorry lot of the working mother -- perpetually pregnant and without maternity benefits -- whose children either died or were nursed by strangers and raised on the streets. As a contrast, she evoked the image of a bright future under socialism where factories, where society would care for the old, the sick and the weak, so that no one would be forced to eat off charity, and where society would see to the care and education of all children" (Stites, 1973: p.466).

Her line of argument closely followed Zetkin's ideas. The 'woman question' is conceived as a part of the general proletarian struggle and as such it could be solved only by a socialist revolution. Krupskaya also acknowledged the existing male prejudice and criticised those workers who advocated that politics should remain a 'male affair', (Liubimova, 1964).

According to the official Russian sources, the first women's circles of propagandists were established in Petrograd, Ivanovo-Voznesensk^a, Kostrom, Moscow and other cities in the early 1900s, (Liubimova, 1964). In the winter of 1907-8, three hundred women agitators, charged with the task of winning the proletarian women to the revolutionary class struggle, began agitating among textile workers, where most working women were concentrated, (Halle, 1938, p.89). On the other hand, Bobroff argues that the first decade of this century was not a period in which great attention was paid to women by the Bolsheviks. She states a plausible argument that a rapid increase in the female labour force was not in itself sufficient to focus Bolshevik attention on women workers.

What was needed in addition was a highly visible, successful, large-scale activity by working women themselves, which would compel the Bolsheviks to change their policy towards women. This was absent before 1910 - activity by working women was relatively small and the few strikes which did take place ended mostly in defeat. However, the subsequent

decade saw a substantial growth in general strike activity, (Bobroff, 1974: pp.551-4), as well as a growth of consciousness among working women of their own needs as women. They were no longer prepared to accept rudeness and sexual exploitation by foreman and employers. For example, women workers in ^{the} Griso factory in Moscow went on strike in 1913 on this issue (Bobroff, 1974: p.554). Women workers were now setting forth strike demands relating to their particular needs, i.e., to their problems as pregnant women and mothers and the already mentioned sexual abuse. These demands were not apparently extended to equal pay - women workers pressed for an undifferentiated overall pay increase, thus retaining discriminatory clauses.

A rapid increase in these strikes forced the Bolsheviks to reassess their earlier policy of total opposition to any form of separate organization of women. Women were now seen as an active, potentially revolutionary force, and the Party was compelled to find effective ways of relating to them. As in other socialist parties, a women's newspaper and, later on, a compromise form of women's organization, were adopted as a means of attempting to win the political support of militant women workers. On the other hand, the Russian Social Democrats (both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks) were also responding to the political threat of the Russian feminist movement. This was even explicitly acknowledged.

For example, Nina Popova, in her book entitled Women in the Land of Socialism, which was published in English, that is, for foreign readership and for propaganda purposes, states openly:

"The Bolshevik Party's struggle against bourgeois feminism was a struggle to free women from the influence of the bourgeoisie, to reveal the harmfulness of bourgeois feminist ideas and illusions, to expose the efforts of the bourgeois feminist organizations to keep the working women out of the class war waged by the proletariat", (Popova, 1949: p.30).

b) Bourgeois Feminism

In Russia, a separate, bourgeois feminist movement developed relatively late for the reasons which I have outlined in my discussion of the narodnik movement. A charitable society 'Cheap Lodging', set up in St.Petersburg in 1861 and run mostly by women in the tradition of communes, had been in due course transformed into a 'Russian Women's Mutual Charity Society', known as the 'Women's Society'. Its president, Anna N.Shabanova, a prominent children's physician, helped the Society to organize a library and a reading room. In 1898, living quarters were opened, but due to the Tzarist restrictions, the 'Women's Society' could neither be a women's club nor a women's union, (Selivanova, 1923: p.194). Only in 1902, when Shabanova obtained permission to call a woman's congress,¹⁹ two women's organizations could be established.

At that time, the liberal Union of Equal Rights for Women (Soyuz rovnopravnosti zhenshchin) was formed. It was, according to Kollontai, "The first women's organization in Russia which adopted a definite political platform". By the spring of 1906, it claimed 8,000 members, (Bobroff, 1974, p.543). The Women's Progressive Party emerged from the Union roughly at the same time. Both of these women's groups were feminist - they called for the unification of women of all classes. They tried to attract working women, in particular domestic servants, their own maids and cooks, and organized them into unions. They also established a number of clubs for working women, which were, however, soon closed down by the Tzarist government. The Bolsheviks supported some of these working women's clubs, namely the Society for the Self-Education of Women Workers (Obschestvo vzaipomoshchi rabotnic), which was

19. The preparations for this conference were, however, interrupted by the 1905 Revolution and the congress did not open until December 1908.

initiated in the autumn of 1907 in Petrograd and the Third Women's Club (Tretii zhenskii klub), which opened at the same time in Moscow, (Liubimova, 1964).

The two feminist groups also formed the 'All-Russian Union for Woman Suffrage'. They collected signatures and two separate petitions were presented to the session of the First Duma, one with 5,000 and another with 4,000 signatures. The Second Duma was presented with a petition with 20,000 signatures, (Selivanova, 1923: p.195). Many of the signatures came from working women, (Bobroff, 1974: p.543). The First All-Russian Women's Congress finally met in Piter, in November 1908. It lasted for seven days and it was also attended by socialist women.

c) Political Activities of Bolshevik Women

This conference is also reported with some discrepancy. Official Soviet sources claim wholehearted Bolshevik support, but this is disputed by Kollontai in her biography and by Bobroff. One official source claims that with regard to this conference, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party adopted Lenin's view of the political tactical need to use both legal and illegal possibilities for the propaganda of Bolshevik ideas, and charged P.F.Kudelliova with the task of organizing a group of women workers to attend this Congress. Fifty delegates, of whom four were to give speeches, were elected at a previous meeting, (Stasova, 1958: pp.195,219-220).

Kollontai and Bobroff claim that the Petrograd Committee of the Party, above all Vera Slutskaya, opposed the Congress, both on grounds of separatism and of collaborating with a bourgeois group. However, Kollontai went ahead with preparations for the conference, despite the opposition. She worked among textile, cardboard, rubber, tobacco,

footwear and domestic workers. She also obtained the support of the Union of Textile Workers and later the Central Bureau of Trade Unions in Petrograd. Only then, the Petrograd Committee suddenly decided, shortly before the conference took place, to attend it after all, and they delegated Slutskaya as their representative,²⁰ (Bobroff, 1974: p.544). In the end, 45 socialist women, 30 of whom were factory workers, attended this Congress, which totalled 700 women. Kollontai gave the main speech for the working-class delegation. She raised the questions of high infant mortality, protection of work done by women, protective legislation and insurance for women workers, etc. These issues were not on the original agenda, because the feminists ignored class divisions among women.

The International Women's Day was held by the Social Democratic Party in 1913 and 1914. Kollontai describes how they organized an illegal morning teach-in on the 'woman question' in Petrograd in 1913, at the end of which almost all the Party speakers were arrested, (Kollontai, 1920). A woman's page started appearing in Pravda in 1913, and a separate women's publication, Rabotnica (Woman Worker), was launched in the winter of 1914. It was published abroad, as was most of the Bolshevik literature, and edited by Krupskaya, Stal and Armand, but it also had Russian editors, namely Elizarova, Samoileva and Roztepovich, (Blonina, 1920). Despite the practical difficulties this division caused, the first issue appeared in time, on International Women's Day. A primary function of the journal was to continue the attack on bourgeois feminism and the call for socialism - hand in hand with men. Its message was to join the mixed Bolshevik organization. The war put an end

20. Kollontai was still a Menshevik at that time.

to the paper as well as to the celebration of the International Women's Day. The latter was again celebrated in 1917 and a massive women's demonstration on that day, 25 February, sparked off the February Revolution.

This incident, as well as the renewed activity by bourgeois feminists and the Mensheviks (and the fact that they both achieved initial success in attracting large numbers of women), decisively influenced and changed the previously negative attitude towards a separate female organization. As the Bolsheviks were rivals for the support of this important sector of the proletariat, they could not afford to ignore the special concern with women's issues, which were clearly effective in appealing to them. By March 1917, from all over the country came reports of women being elected to various representative bodies. Soldiers' wives organized a highly disciplined demonstration to back their six carefully worked-out demands. It was joined by 100,000 people, which is certainly a large group of potential political supporters, (Bobroff, 1974: pp.559-560). The liberal feminist League for Equal Rights for Women drew 35,000 women from all spheres of life to demand women's suffrage and full participation in the Constituent Assembly. On 8 March, a suffrage demonstration occurred which consisted solely of working women.

Two days later, on 10 March (and sixteen days after the February Revolution), the Petrograd Committee charged Slutskaya with the drawing up of plans for agitational work among women. Within three days, on 13 March, she recommended the formation of a Women's Bureau as part of the Petrograd Committee and the revival of Rabotnica, (Bobroff, 1974: pp.543, 560). Bobroff also claims that Slutskaya became the head of the women's bureau, but this is not confirmed by official Soviet sources. The

women's section of the Petrograd Party Committee was apparently headed by K.N.Samoileva, although the overall participation of Slutskaya in the Petrograd Party Committee is not denied, (Tarasova, 1959 and Stasova, 1958: pp.251-269). At the end of April, Nikolaeva, Samoileva, Aprelikova, Solin and others met Lenin and discussed with him political work among women. Lenin's advice to call a conference of women workers was taken up and, shortly before the October Revolution, 500 delegates, representatives of 80,000 women workers, met in Petrograd.

This conference was tactically crucial for the Bolsheviks, because it was also attended by the Mensheviks, by Essers and by bourgeois feminists who were all competing for political support. Bourgeois feminists argued for a geographical basis of female organization which was taken by the Bolsheviks as an attempt to break up working collectives, and to loosen the ties of women workers to their other factory organizations. As such, this proposal was inevitably rejected. The Bolsheviks were most concerned with their own political influence among women workers. Samoileva advocated that all work among women in factories should be conducted under the leadership of the Bolshevik organization. This was rejected by women Mensheviks who argued that the women's movement must be independent and must not be subjected to Party influence, (Tarasova, 1959: p.129). The October Revolution ended this speculation about the form and character of the women's movement and the Bolsheviks' view prevailed.

However, when compared with the German women's movement, the Russian one was much weaker. Although the Bolsheviks compromised with their original position on the 'woman question' as time went on, and some of their activities among women workers were similar to those of their German predecessors, a specific women's section within the Bolshevik Party was not established until the eve of the October Revolution, and

"The Position of the Bund in the Party", published in Iskra on October 22, 1903, he applied this eventual renunciation of the special demands of the Jews to the right of their separate group existence, i.e. to the Bund itself, (Mishkinsky, 1971: p.292).

Lenin was never so explicit on a separate feminist section within the Party, but it could be assumed that the argument would be similar. Female oppression will cease under socialism and women should therefore join the Party which is aiming at the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. The Bolshevik Party, as a small vanguard of the proletariat, operating under difficult political conditions, needed the unanimous support of workers; whether they were Jews or women was of secondary importance. However, this type of approach ignored the existing contradictions and antagonisms among various sections of the working class. The future proved that they could not be solved by simply avoiding them.

III. Women's Movement in Soviet Russia

The Party's policy towards women changed after the October Revolution, when the Party had to adapt itself to its new position in society. It was no longer the tool of the working class for the accomplishment of the socialist revolution, but had become a state administrative institution, which had to deal with all sections of the population. As the Revolution occurred in an economically backward country, where the industrial proletariat was in a minority, the Bolsheviks needed the active support of other social groups, such as peasants, national minorities and women.

In traditional Marxism, workers and peasants can unite only to carry out bourgeois democratic revolution, but not the proletarian, socialist revolution. However, the speed of the Russian revolution after

then only in Petrograd. This was largely due to the Leninist conception of the Party, which differed radically from the European, broad-based, Social Democratic Parties. In Germany, the women's movement or even the Party itself, could not cling to mere negation of existing social conditions. It had to go beyond mere assertion that women's emancipation was impossible under capitalism. As parliamentary reformism gained the ground, electoral assistance to the Party became the most important political task of the women's movement - hence again its auxiliary and secondary status.

This, however, was not possible in Russia. Because of the existing oppressive conditions, the Bolshevik Party could not be organized on 'broad democracy', but had to be governed by the principle of democratic centralism. Discussion and publicity were impossible, because secrecy above all was necessary. The need for secrecy also meant that the numbers had to be small. Thus there was no room for a separate women's organization in this conception of the Party. Lenin primarily viewed the Party as an organizational form which could accomplish the long-term revolutionary goal, the overthrow of the existing social system, (Lenin, 1905). He felt that directing particular attention to one segment of the working class would create unnecessary division within it.

A useful analogy could be drawn between Lenin's attitude towards separate women's organization and separate national minority organization, i.e. the Bund. The Jewish labour movement, represented by the Bund, played a cardinal role in the foundation of Russian social democracy, and constituted the strongest organized force within it. Lenin admitted specific oppression of the Jews under the Tzarist regime and supported their specific demands. However, he argued that under socialism, such a situation will not arise, for all forms of radical and national oppression would cease to exist. In an article entitled

the 'bourgeois' revolution in February 1917, led Lenin to revise his views on the role of peasants in the socialist revolution. In his 'April thesis', he argued that peasants could be effectively led by the proletariat. The proletariat meant, in practice, its vanguard, the Bolshevik Party.

This need for active support of a large social group such as peasants as well as the general voluntaristic conception of the Party which agitates and brings consciousness to the proletariat, can be extended to other social groups, such as women or the national minorities. Lenin never supported a separate organization for women or the national minorities, e.g. the Jews, outside or within the Party before the Revolution, as stated above, but after the Revolution, he was in favour of special organs of the Party for work among specific social groups, i.e., women, peasants, national minorities. The women's section of the Party, Zhenotdel, was set up roughly at the same time as the peasant's section and the national minorities' section, in 1919. All sections had a similar task; to win the particular social group's support for the revolution, expressed by the Bolshevik Party.

Thus the Bolsheviks followed the practice of social democracy of organizing women into a specific women's organization only after the socialist revolution. As in Germany, the Russian working-class movement needed to win the active support of women. A Socialist women's organization was therefore also a tactical response. However, as the Bolsheviks needed to win political rather than strictly economic support, and because of the specific conditions of the Russian revolution (i.e., economic backwardness, the Civil War and foreign intervention, a few feminists in the Bolshevik Party, etc.), the need for active support was extended from working-class women to women as a whole, i.e., to all women

as a separate social group.

On the other hand, this extension was only gradual. The Bolsheviks first concentrated on women workers and only after their initial mobilization did they turn their attention to peasant women. Bukharin's pamphlet appealing to working-class women to support the new Soviet government was published early in 1919, while a similar pamphlet, addressed to peasant women, the majority of whom were illiterate anyway, was written by Samoiloova in 1921.

In his pamphlet, Bukharin explains the existing difficult conditions, e.g., famine and the Civil War, and blames ^{them} on the enemies of the working class. He then lists a number of improvements in the women's position under the Soviet government, e.g., equal rights with men, protective labour code, protection of motherhood, child-care facilities, and contrasts this with the previous situation under the Tzar, which the Whites wanted to restore. Bukharin then urges women workers, as an integral part of the working class, to support 'their government', particularly the Red Army, (Bukharin, 1919).

Many women workers responded to this and similar appeals. For example, in Samara, women workers gave up their only free day, Sunday, and organized a 'Work-in', where they sewed, unpaid, underwear and warm clothing for the Red Army soldiers. Women workers also took an active part in the military defence of Leningrad, Lugansk, Tula and other places. In Tula, women workers even passed a resolution and slogan that the Whites would get through to Moscow only over their bodies, (Samoiloova, 1920).

Samoiloova's pamphlet is written in a similar spirit. It starts off with the contrast of the slave-like conditions of peasant women under the Tzarist regime with the Soviet improvements: equal rights, representation in Soviets, free schools of literacy, free village clubs and reading rooms, and the protection of motherhood and youth.

As agricultural production declined drastically during the Civil war and many parts of Russia experienced famine, peasant women were urged to step up drastically agricultural output, to plan and work systematically and to struggle with the profiteering kulaks, (Samoilova, 1921).

It is thus clear that the new Soviet regime needed both political and economic (in terms of available labour force) support from women workers and peasants. The women's section was set up to fulfil this task. However, one of the differences between the women's section and the other Bolshevik sections was that the former was set up on the initiative of women workers and Bolshevik feminists themselves. A group of women in Petrograd had already called for a conference of women workers before the October revolution. Because of the October events, it was postponed until 6 November 1917. At the same time, in Moscow, a first committee for agitation and propaganda among women was set up.

On the initiative of Alexandra Kollontai, K.Samoilova and others, the First Congress of Peasant and Working Women took place as early as November 1918. 1147 delegates turned up, while only 300 were expected. The agenda of the Conference consisted of ^{eight} ~~seven~~ main questions: the question of women workers in Soviet Russia, family and the Communist government, the tasks of social security, international revolution and the woman worker, the organizational question, the struggle against prostitution in Soviet Russia, the struggle against child labour and the housing question, (Artiuchina, 1959: p.31). However, the chief tasks of the Congress were to awaken women, to tell them what the October Revolution meant to women workers and peasants and thus win their active support for the revolution, to teach them how to make use of the new laws which freed women from their traditional paternal subjugation.

For example, V.Lebedeva, a doctor and the director of the Moscow Institute for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, discussed

the positive and protective attitude of the Bolsheviks towards women as mothers. She argued that motherhood is a social service and duty performed by women to society as a whole, so that if the state needs children, then it must make provisions for them. Thus all new institutions, administered by the Department, such as mother and baby homes, maternity hospitals, health consultations, milk kitchens, creches, which were practically non-existent in Tzarist Russia, were women's by right and not by state charity, (Halle, 1938: p.149). Such an argument is likely to appeal to many women, even to those who had no previous political consciousness and involvement. Women in most societies would support such a regime which attempts to ease the responsible task of motherhood.

However, the Congress also aimed at mobilisation of women for the defence of the Soviet State and the restoration of the national economy. The latter was more important because as most men were fighting in the Civil War and against foreign intervention, it was crucial for women to continue production in the factories and villages. The Congress had to explain to women the questions and problems of economic construction, their duty to work. A distinction had to be made between 'socialist reconstruction' and 'bourgeois work', which certainly was not an easy task, because the daily conditions of Soviet Russia during the Civil War were probably even harder than those under the Tzarist regime. The Congress made two important recommendations, which were both accepted. In September 1919, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party set up the women's section Zhenotdel and Women's Delegates' Meetings or Conferences were adopted as the main form of the Party's work among women.

1. Zhenotdel - Its Principles

It is not surprising that the clearest and most coherent account of the role and tasks of Zhenotdel is to be found in the writings of its first leaders, namely I.Armand and K.Samoileva. In her report to the First International Conference of Women Communists, which took place in Moscow in July 1920, Inessa Armand listed 10 main principles for the Party's work among women:

(1) Zhenotdel should increasingly and urgently draw women workers and peasants into all Soviet institutions, i.e., executive committees of various kinds, Soviets or sections of Soviets, such as professionals' Soviets of the national economy; the Party; professional and technical schools, etc. Armand emphasized that women should be drawn into such Soviet work in order to liberate them from domestic and family servitude.

(2) Delegates from meetings of women workers and peasants should be elected for general meetings in factories and villages. Delegates' conferences should take place periodically and they should promote the Party's communist propaganda.

(3) Through the delegates' meetings, the Party exercises influence on the women masses. In villages, delegates' meetings should help to differentiate bourgeois elements from proletarian ones.

(4) Elected delegates should enlist the services of Soviet departments not only for the inspection and control of nurseries, orphanages, public dining-rooms, hospitals and other institutions, but also for the delegates' meetings themselves, thus learning Soviet construction.

(5) Zhenotdel nominates probationers, instructors and organizers to play an active part in various Soviet departments, and to guide the work of women delegates in the control and inspection of the institutions of that particular department.

(6) Women delegates account for the work to both the delegate meetings and to general meetings at their factories.

(7) The Communist Party should pay great attention to cultural educational work in order to increase the cultural standard of the women masses.

(8) The Communist Party should lead propaganda campaigns to enlighten the masses on questions of prejudice in attitudes towards women, towards her role in society, in the family, and on the significance of woman labour in social production.

(9) The Party should also give greater attention to the struggle with religious prejudices among women workers and women peasants.

(10) Special work is required with women of the East and Moslem areas, (Otchet o pervoi mezhdunarodnoi konferencii kommunistok, 1921: pp.92-94).

Samoileva's pamphlet, published at the same time, further specifies some of these principles. For example, Samoiloa argues that Zhenotdel ideally fulfils three main tasks of political work both among Party-women and non-Party women: agitation, organization and instruction, (Samoileva, 1920: p.11). Initially, when political work consists only of propaganda and agitation, women workers' sections should be used. However, when agitation and political education is extended to women peasants and supplemented into drawing women into the economy, these relatively isolated sections cannot fulfil this task and should be substituted by delegates' meetings, (Samoiloa, 1920: p.24).

It is thus clear that Zhenotdel and women delegates' meetings were seen as playing a double role, political and economic. Through Zhenotdel and delegates' meetings, the Party attempted to win the political support of all sections of the women masses, firstly of women workers and then of women peasants and Muslim women of the East. At

the same time, delegates' meetings performed a crucial economic role by drawing women - the reserve labour force - into the labour-hungry economy which had to do without so many men-soldiers. How were these principles applied in practice?

2. Zhenotdel - In Practice

As the central organ of the Party for the work among women, Zhenotdel directed the work of women delegates' meetings. It provided them with documents, bulletins and various women's journals for discussion. Kommunistka (The Woman Communist), the organ and mouthpiece of the central committee of the women's section, was concerned with the general tasks of agitation and propaganda and as such was designed for the Party Cadres, who were involved in the women's movement. Rabotnica, the original Bolshevik women's journal, appeared in January 1923, and was aimed at a specific female section, namely women workers, irrespective of their Party affiliation. Delegatka (The Woman Delegate), published in the period 1927-1931, was concerned with and reported various delegates' meetings in towns and villages. It thus served as a means of exchanging experiences for hitherto unorganized, non-Party women.

However, due to the difficult economic circumstances, the circulation of these journals was very limited. For example, in 1921, ten numbers of the monthly journal Kommunistka were published, each having an edition of 30,000, (Otchet otдела C.K.R.K.P. po rabota sredi zhenshchiny za god raboty, 1921), which certainly was not enough for the whole of Soviet Russia. The central women's section also organized various summer schools and other courses for women workers and peasants. Some women delegates were sent on political courses at the Academy of Social Education in Moscow or at Sverdlov University. Kollontai gave a course of 14 lectures at the latter on the role of women's work in the

development of the economy.²¹

3. Delegates Meetings

Women delegates' meetings or conferences were set up in factories, in villages and workers' settlements in towns, as Armand suggested in her second principle. Jessica Smith directly observed their initiation:

"One out of every ten workers and one out of every hundred housewives and peasants are each elected by as large a number of women as can be got to participate in the elections. The women thus elected meet twice a month under the leadership of a trained party worker and are given a political course" (Smith, 1928: p.48).

The trained party worker was presumably the chief agent and link in the Party's attempt to win female political support. However, before any form of political education among the peasant masses or the Muslim women in Central Asia could have begun, illiteracy had to be combated. In 1920, 67 per cent of the whole population was still illiterate, and 77.5 per cent of those were women, (Serebrennikov, 1937: p.192).

Thus Party cadres and delegate meetings first arranged classes and reading circles and then attempted to combine literate education with political agitation. These meetings and lectures tried to bring women out of their individual isolation within the family and teach them something about the life of others. Peasant women were encouraged to learn to speak at those meetings, to be able to take part in larger meetings with men without any inhibitions. This was a very difficult task, as we have already seen that even the narodnik women, who had the advantage of higher education, encountered the same problem, be it half a century earlier.²² Chulkova, a Party cadre who worked with women's delegates'

21. These were then published in a book form. See Kollontai, 1923.

22. See the discussion of the Women's Club for Logical Speech in the first section of this chapter.

meetings in Suchumi, near the border with Georgia, describes in her short biography, how difficult it was to overcome women's resistance to leave their homes and go and study, (Pylaeva, 1967).

Nevertheless, in three years of effort a solid base of organized women was created. Sixty thousand were elected 'delegates', assisted tremendously by a decree signed by Lenin authorizing that they be paid, albeit on the barest subsistence level. This enabled them to be full-time voices for and primary organizers of women. With each representing about thirty-five others, they had contact with perhaps two million women, about 2% of the female population, chiefly urban. The vast majority of urban women was, however, quite unsympathetic. Housewives with servants slammed their doors in the faces of Zhenotdel's workers and would not let them talk to the servants. As a result, delegate meetings with houseworkers could not be organized until long after groups had been established at factories and among housewives. The number of houseworker delegates was never large. The older women could neither understand nor accept any change from their traditional way of life. A delegate reminisces that housewives would respond:

"Why should I go to a delegates' meeting? I won't understand anything anyhow. I'm hardly literate, and it's too late to learn. My business as a woman is to make dinner, straighten the room, wash the dishes, sew, patch"
(Mabdel, 1975: p.66).

The vast majority of the peasant women had similar attitudes. Nonetheless, while in 1920 only 853 village non-Party delegates' meetings took place and out of 500 general meetings only 300 women delegates were chosen to work in district Soviets, (Samoilova, 1921: pp.11-12), in 1924 the number of women peasant delegates rose to 58,000 and this figure almost doubled within the following year. By 1925, it reached just over 100,000, (Zueva, 1925: p.61). Similar rapid growth occurred in the urban areas.

In Leningrad district, in 1927, 18,000 women delegates out of a total number of 24,000, were drawn into various organizations, (Belova, 1962: p.6).

The practical, economic work of women's delegate meetings was of even greater importance than their activities in the literacy programmes and political education. As Armand suggested in her fourth principle, women delegates' meetings were attached to various Soviets, co-operatives and trade union organizations for the purpose of organizing and supervising the work of educational and medical institutions, nurseries, canteens, children's playgrounds etc. Delegates' meetings trained women in public work and guided them when they first took up such employment.

However, by drawing women into state administration in these traditionally 'female' occupations, e.g., areas of education and food-preparation, traditional sexual division of labour and the social norms defining female role were not challenged, but further reinforced. The female private role within the family as a child-rearer, nurse and cook was simply and uncritically extended into a public one with the same content. Zhenotdel, a woman's organization, thus did not even attempt to combat one of the main sources of female oppression - the cultural fixing of the sexual division of labour.

This was largely due to the very basis of Zhenotdel's existence. As it was primarily conceived as a means of gaining the political support of women masses for the new regime, the Party had to approach women on their 'home' ground. It is by no means easy to break this vicious circle of gaining women's support on issues which appeal to them and then challenging the cultural and social definition of these issues as specifically 'female'. However, it is not impossible.

Yet the Party was unwilling to attempt even to challenge the existing social definition of what the female role ought to be. The Party saw Zhenotdel as self-liquidating in nature, as a device scheduled to gradually dissolve in the overall stream of Soviet work. Zhenotdel's membership was not meant to be permanent. Politically inexperienced women were supposed to be educated and trained, subsequently passing on to activity in mixed groups. In this sense, the first and foremost task of Zhenotdel was the conscription of a skilled, disciplined, female labour force for the economic reconstruction and the consolidation of political power. Zhenotdel thus served a very useful purpose from the Party's point of view, yet there was a lot of prejudice against it at all levels of the Party hierarchy, in the State administrative institutions and among the peasant masses generally.

4. Male Prejudice

a) Male Opposition to Zhenotdel Within the Bolshevik Party.

As Lenin said in his conversation with Clara Zetkin in the autumn of 1920, most men communists regarded agitation and propaganda work ^{among} women as of secondary importance, (Zetkin, 1965: p.110).

Samoilova identified two main 'camps' of male Party members who were unsympathetic towards a separate women's organization: those who considered specific women's sections unnecessary, because their work could be apparently divided among organizational-instructional and agitational sections of various Party committees, and those, who viewed Zhenotdel as a separate, independent organization, which was doing some special women's work which had nothing to do with general Party work, (Samoilova, 1920, p.3).

These attitudes stem from the fundamental Bolshevik distrust of all specialized mediating networks standing between the population and the Party-State, especially if those networks were not totally subject to central surveillance, manipulation and control. It was feared that feminist voluntary associations (such as women's clubs) would tend to approach and attract women as women, irrespective of their social background. This would lead to an organizational bias towards 'mass' rather than 'class', which would undermine the class struggle, waged by the Party. Many male Party members (and some female, too) therefore opposed women's clubs on the grounds of deviation towards feminism, (Report of Zhenotdel for the year 1920). It was also feared that specifically female problems, and feminism generally, would distort the overall Bolshevik thrust; that it would dilute women's revolutionary concern, and sidetrack them into narrow feminist pursuits.

In some parts of the country, Zhenotdel was actually abolished soon after it was set up and merged with the department of Agitprop, (Report of Zhenotdel for the year 1920). Cases like that of comrade Pamysov in Permskaya gubernia, who actually took all the documents of the women's section and burned them, (Samoilova, 1920, p.11), were not as uncommon and extreme as it might sound. Samoilova asserts that most of the local and district Party cadres openly expressed prejudiced, even scornful attitudes towards Zhenotdel, (Samoilova, 1920: p.11). As in the German SPD, sexist satire and ridicule were used as an effective means of silencing women and their just criticism. Zhenotdel and women's delegates meetings were maliciously called "centro-baba" and "babkomy" (old-hags committees). Sexist satire was used effectively against Kollontai even by Lenin, on the occasion of his criticising the left-wing opposition, of which Kollontai was a member, (Balabanoff, 1938: p.277).

Weak co-operation between the women's section and other Party committees and sections, as well as state institutions, was also due to male prejudices. The report of Zhenotdel on its work in 1920, which was submitted to the Politburo, complains about the unsympathetic, unhelpful and unco-operative attitude of most Soviet institutions, ranging from various Soviets to various ministries. In fact, the only satisfactory contact and co-operation that existed was with the 'female' Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood. The report specifically concludes:

"The success of the work of Zhenotdel depends on the positive attitude and co-operation of the Party and state organizations", (Report of Zhenotdel for the year 1920).

Samoilova also urges Zhenotdel and the Party to lead agitation and propaganda not only among women, but also among men, to combat their prejudice and teach them to appreciate the importance of women's participation in the building of a new socialist society, (Samoilova, 1920: p.29).

b) Moslem Areas in Central Asia

If so much male hostility towards Zhenotdel and women's delegate meetings existed within the Bolshevik Party and Soviet institutions themselves, one can easily imagine what the situation must have been like among the peasant population at large. Most peasants strongly opposed increased female participation in delegate meetings, Soviets, and other institutions. As this opposition took the most violent form in the Moslem areas of Soviet East, I shall concentrate my discussion on this particular area.

The choice of Central Asia is also important for other reasons. While in European Russia, female emancipation was a secondary issue, a by-product of broader revolutionary schemes, women's emancipation in Central

Asia was a primary issue par excellence, a lever for social destruction and reconstruction, an important catalyst for generating the revolutionary process itself. Central Asia was highly intact and integrated, i.e. lacking in large, significant and politically experienced groups that were both alienated and marginal. Even women, who, as a rule, were segregated, exploited, degraded, constrained, seen as 'the lowest of the low', were highly integrated in the traditional order.

Nevertheless, the revolutionary cadres, frustrated by the resistance and resilience of traditional society, singled out women's oppression as a structural weak-point in the traditional order, susceptible to militant revolutionary appeal. Although most Bolshevik organizers (especially female) were genuinely interested in changing the status of Moslem women in the course of overall cultural and social transformation, for some Bolsheviks (particularly men), the tasks of female emancipation were distinctly subordinate to the imperatives of power and control. On the other hand, in view of the recognition of the special political opportunities offered by the status of Moslem women, the scope and intensity of Zhenotdel's activities in Central Asia were much greater than in European Russia. Due to the specific Central Asian circumstances, Zhenotdel's action scheme was much more specialized than in Russia, far broader in scope, more self-conscious and autonomous.

Moslem women were traditionally under complete patriarchal control. The specific dimensions, conceived by the Bolsheviks as being most oppressive to women, were early marriages (between minors), child marriages (between a female child and an old man), kalym (purchase price paid for the bride) and veiling, which was both an instrument and a symbol

of women's subjection.²³ These issues were attacked through revolutionary legislation (and the emphasis soon shifted from overall legal emancipation to the specific issue of divorce), and later, through extra-legal assault (and the emphasis changed again, this time from seclusion as a whole to veiling).

Zhenotdel was the primary agency which implemented these Bolshevik schemes - it sponsored female - initiated divorces and general unveiling, promoted political recruitment as well as cultural reorientation and economic mobilisation among women. Zhenotdel did this in conjunction with several specialized voluntary associations - Delegates' Meetings, Za Novyi Byt (For a New Way of Life), intended to disseminate new values, skills and habits, and Doloi Kalym i Mnogozhenstvo (Down with Polygamy and the Bride Price), a militant association meant to mobilize grassroots opinion in the struggle with local custom, (Massell, 1974: p.357).

However, Zhenotdel's political work had to proceed with extreme caution. Special organizational models, adapted to local conditions, i.e. separate women's clubs, Red Corners, Red Boats, Red Yurtas, Women's Shops, Mountaineer Women's Huts (in the Caucasus), had to be adopted. Only by excluding men was it possible to satisfy the Moslem requirement that women had to be safe from the eyes of strange men, and only by excluding men was it possible to overcome the great female timidity in which they had been brought up for centuries.

The first workers in the Zhenotdel were outsiders, that is Party-trained European women. Most of them were Russian, Armenian or

23. For a detailed description of the ways in which the Bolshevik analysts perceived and attempted to change Moslem women's oppression, see Massell (1974: part two), Halle (1938: passim), and Smith (1928: pp.62-3).

To my knowledge Massell's book is the only scholarly study of this subject which is available in English - Halle and Smith are much more impressionistic and not so comprehensive.

Jewish, most joined the Party before or during the Russian revolution and civil war, and most were single and in their mid-twenties when commandeered to Central Asia, (Massell, 1974: p.134). Initially, in 1924-26, Moslem women did not respond as much as was expected. They did not unveil, they failed to vote or otherwise assert their newly proffered rights, they avoided contact with Soviet institutions, and failed to bring their grievances to Soviet courts. Even if they attended a Zhenotdel-sponsored club, a handicraft or consumer's co-operative, or a literacy circle in close proximity to their homes, they tended to retain their veils and to shun communication, commitments, and action that would in any way violate traditional taboos and provoke opprobrium from the community or kin-group, (Massell, 1974: pp.257, 260).

Thus early recruits by Zhenotdel consisted largely of maltreated wives, wives of polygamous men, recent child brides, orphans, widows and divorcees and menial employees in well-to-do households. Encouraged and trained in the relative isolation of the first women's clubs, some of these indigenous women were persuaded to take (unveiled) female roles in the theatre, give concerts and dance in public. Some volunteered to run on the Party's ticket and be elected to public posts in Soviets, judicial apparatus and in Women's Delegates Meetings. Some, albeit relatively few, joined the Party, (Massell, 1974: pp.257, 260).

Nevertheless, despite the initial setbacks and great male opposition, Zhenotdel's attempt to organize native women met with a huge success. While in 1924, there were only 5,000 native women organized in the work of the Women's Section, by 1925 this number jumped to 15,000, (Halle, 1938: p.174). And this was despite the difficulties of reaching the widely scattered, largely illiterate women, as well as great male hostility, both within the Party and among the male population at large.

Bogochova, head of Zhenotdel in Merv, describes her initial reception in the following terms:

"At first, neither men nor women could understand the aim of our labour, and they all met us with suspicion and set the dogs on us in the auls. As soon as we approached an aul, dozens of dogs leapt upon us from behind the kibitkas and flew at our horses", (Halle, 1938, p.155).

In 1921, Otmar-Shtein, a female political commissar of the Red Army on the Central Asian front, was dispatched by Frunze and Kuyibishev to organise Bukharan women. All possible obstacles were put in her way, she was even obliged to wear a veil, yet she was accused of violating local taboos, arrested and expelled on the orders of the Bukharan Communist Party, composed solely of men (who, after all, helped the Red Army to crush the Bukharan Emir's resistance). With her departure, the Women's Department she had freshly established in the local Central Committee was summarily liquidated.

In 1923, Liubimova, arriving from Moscow to re-establish the special unit, was unceremoniously ordered by the Bukhara's authorities to desist. The leadership of the Bukhara Central Committee refused even to introduce her to their wives. Several years later, a number of Central Asian communists were found to have acquired vicious dogs to guard female quarters in their homes, preventing all outsiders from visiting their wives or inviting them to public meetings, (Massell, 1974: p.295).

In 1926, when faced with the divorce wave in Central Asia, authorities in Turkmenistan and Kazakchstan demanded formally that the divorce wave be stopped forthwith as ill advised ("Every divorce, initiated by a woman - no matter what the reason - amounts to the moral murder of her husband" - ran the justifying argument) and that Zhenotdel activists stop agitating and inciting Moslem women, (Massell, 1974: p.295).

Thus in 1925-8, Zhenotdel's units in urban and rural locales were emerging as important centres airing female grievances. At an accelerating pace, girls and women were arriving in the offices of Zhenotdel to ask for advice and support on a vast number of issues. Many angry, frightened, starving young women, sometimes with infants on their hands, or older women, turned out by their polygamous husbands as no longer desirable, often bleeding from wounds, came to the offices to ask for help, bread, a roof over their head, some arrangement for the future, (Massell, 1974: p.264).

Yet these arrangements were not forthcoming - there was no significant build-up of supportive structures and arrangements commensurable with the volume and rate of unidimensional female emancipation. Mobilization of women had not been accompanied by absorption, organization, and genuine participation in a suitable institutional framework. This led to growing disillusionment and caution among women, due to the regime's inability to support and protect the very people it claimed to be liberating.

Local officials were either extremely uncooperative or they directly sabotaged the Soviet effort in emancipating Moslem women. They tended to withhold credit, seeds and agricultural implements from female-held households. The handful of women who, after years of pressure, were finally elected or appointed to seemingly responsible positions in the Party apparatus, in courts and in Soviets, led a formal, shadow political existence. They were not invited to, and frequently not even notified about official meetings. They were neither taught nor guided in their new roles - and were then accused by male officials of being incapable of discharging their duties. Instead of being assigned to responsible practical tasks, many were relegated to cleaning the premises and washing the floors. In some cases, they were simply shunted

into back rooms where no one could see them, while their male 'secretaries' not only conducted their business for them, but blocked their contact with the outside world, (Massell, 1974: pp.301-2).

Recruitment of women into industry was side-tracked wherever possible. If recruited, through forceful Party pressure, they were assigned to menial tasks, deprived of advanced training and cut off from supervisory positions. A number of women's clubs reported as established, turned out to exist only on paper. Most of those that did exist were found to be ghost-institutions, with no people in them. The network of special stores and 'red corners' was liquidated rather than expanded, and that by order of local authorities. The closure was justified because these shops were apparently expensive, unorthodox and unnecessary with mass unveiling, (Massell, 1974: p.300).

The militant campaign for unveiling started in 1927. The impetus for the assault came from the fear of possible takeover of revolutionary activity by a nationalist movement, which might prefer Turkish reformism to Soviet Russian leadership. In mid-1926, in the Old City of Tashkent, the association 'Young Forces', formed by native female teachers, had been discovered as potentially 'subversive'. They claimed to be interested in studying the works of the Turkish female writer, Kahlide-Khanum, but they were also interested in the Turkish feminist movement and liked Ataturk's reformist programme, even Afghan legislation abolishing polygamy and lowering the amount of kalym. Local Zhenotdel functionaries urgently demanded from Moscow detailed information on Turkish and Afghan reforms as well as a clear guideline for further action, (Massell, 1974: p.219).

Mass unveiling was adopted as the principal strategy. Its first phase, in the early 1920s, was limited to the relatively more secularized section of the population: urban communist officials. It

caused unease and resistance even in the highest places, (Massell, 1974: pp.233-9). The second phase, starting in early 1927, was deliberately selective in its emphasis and targets. For instance, in Bukhara, poor women organized themselves into flying columns and carried out paranja raids. They tore the veils from the heads of the rich in the open streets, forced their way into their houses during a wedding or any special activity. They collected the paranjas in heaps and either set fire to them in inner courtyards or altered them for clothing for the poor in sewing rooms specially established for the purpose, (Halle, 1938: p.174).

The great offensive reached its peak on International Woman's Day, 8 March 1928. 10,000 women burned their veils in Uzbek city squares. At the beginning of April, about 17,000 veils had been disposed of. By May, the figure reached 90,000 for Uzbekistan alone, (Massell, 1974: p.245). However, some of these figures were highly inflated, not corresponding to what actually took place. For instance, some native communist functionaries hired substitutes to be publicly unveiled, usually Tatar or Kirghiz women who were not habitually veiled. They dispatched these women from meeting to meeting to be 'officially unveiled' a number of times, thus increasing the figures for the record and documenting their organizational success, (Massell, 1974: p.286)

Nevertheless, the offensive campaign for public unveiling was on the whole a success. On the other hand, it had some unintended and disastrous consequences. First and foremost, it led to rape of unveiled women, both among the male population at large and among native male communists. In 1927-8, in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and other places, unveiled women were subjected to growing harassment and shaming in the streets. Crowds of men followed women around, jeering, laughing, spitting at them. In some cities, unveiled women were seized

in the streets and raped by bands of youths. Many were killed, not only by roving gangs, but by their own kinsmen at home, as traitors to tradition and as prostitutes, (Massell, 1974: p.281).

Communist officials also made advances to unveiled peasant women, and when rebuffed, either lured them into well-protected places (including local party headquarters) or simply ordered their arrest, after which the women were raped, sometimes by the entire party cell, headed by the ranking functionary. They tried to insure themselves against possible complication by forcing the violated woman to sign a statement that she had given herself voluntarily. Zhenotdel's activists had to sit up at nights in their tents with guns ready to ward off native Soviet functionaries bent upon rape, (Massell, 1974: p.303).

Native males now saw the Soviet regime solely in terms of 'a power that takes away women and divorces them from husbands', (Massell, 1974, p.276), and they were increasingly turning towards violence. In 1925-6, Turkmen villages were swept by bloody disturbances, i.e. by collective riots and individual cases of urder, mainly by husbands of wives sueing for divorce. By mid-1928, vilification, persecution and murder extended to all female activists, as well as to their families, including males. Between March 1927 and December 1928, 800 women reportedly perished, and not all cases were reported. Thus in 1927-8, thousands of men and women were killed or wounded in connection with the assault campaign for public unveiling. Violence continued at an even more feverish pace well into 1929 and even in the early 1930s. This wave of terror (often with extraordinary ferocity) meant the loss of the thin layer of trusted and experienced cadres, (Massell, 1974: p.282).

Thus the more massive and dramatic were female demonstrations, unveilings and veil-burnings in public, the more intense and generalized became male hostility, violence and terror against those women. The regime's capacity to provide protection for these women proved to be

utterly unequal to the need. In fact, the greater the need, the smaller was the capacity to meet it, and the more problematic the implications of meeting it. The massive mobilization of women inspired by the Bolsheviks was intended to break the traditional way of life and to sharpen the class struggle. Instead it led to intense and widespread alienation from the Soviet system. In other words, female mobilization was producing conflicts which were highly destructive from the Soviet point of view and which tended to negate some of the regime's other crucial commitments (such as the redistribution of land and property, sovietization and nativization of the administrative apparatus).

The mobilized women themselves, out of disillusionment, destitution, disorientation, loneliness or fear of shame, were either turning to prostitution in the cities or sliding back into the traditional fold or even turning to militant self-assertion against the regime itself. In the winter of 1928-9, the first large-scale hunger riots were reported in Central Asia. The participants were mainly destitute Moslem women, demanding bread and work, (Massell, 1974: p.328). In late 1928 and early 1929, a growing number of native female Party members quitted the Party. They refused to obey Party orders and turned down all political assignments. This included in some cases even high-ranking female communists, with a record of active service in revolutionary causes, (Massell, 1974: p.329). In the context of Delegate Meetings, an increasing number of women elected to what were declared authoritative posts perceived with growing bitterness the disparity between the ceremonial and substantive aspects of their political positions, and registered their disappointment, (Massell, 1974: p.328).

Vast numbers of women resumed the veil. For example, in Pskent, a large village only 50 miles from Tashkent, with a regular bus connection to that city and with an established Soviet club, Zhenotdel

and a Party district committee, one and a half thousand women unveiled in the spring, but all but 30 were found veiled again by mid-summer. In Margelan, a sizeable town and important trading centre of the Ferghana valley and cotton-belt, 3,000 women had reportedly unveiled themselves in the spring of 1927, but by mid-summer, only 400 women remained unveiled, (Massell, 1974: p.330). In Uzbekistan as a whole, 100 million unveiled in 1927, but two years later, there were only 5,000 of those who had not resumed the veil, (Halle, 1938: p.174).

As a result of this massive backlash, combined with the profound changes in the Soviet system as a whole, the 'storming' activities on behalf of female emancipation were brought to an abrupt halt. Polygamous marriages antedating the new legal code, were formally exempted from prosecution - the Soviet regime could not afford to keep the women who were destitute and old and thus less desirable from the male point of view. Official encouragement for female-initiated divorces was unequivocally withdrawn throughout Central Asia. Official encouragement of unveiling was also withdrawn, except in cases of high-echelon personnel. Administered massive unveiling in public was stopped altogether as an overtly crude and dangerous violation of local custom. Even women who wished to dispose of their veils were to be scrutinized in terms of the impact their act was likely to have on themselves and their environment, (e.g. possibilities of prostitution, male hostility), (Massell, 1974: pp.344-354).

This policy-shift put Zhenotdel, which had been assigned a crucial role in initiating and supervising all aspects of the campaign, into an anomalous situation. However, the delimitation and eventual dissolution of Central Asian Zhenotdel was also related to the overall Soviet changes, namely to the advent of Stalinism and the 'building of socialism in one country'.

5. End of Zhenotdel

In the middle of 1929, the Central Committee of the Party adopted a new policy regarding its tasks of work among women. As for the rest of Soviet society, rapid industrialization now became the chief social concern, and the Party accordingly appealed to women to show strength of will and proletarian heroism in the struggle to fulfil the five year plan, (Artiuchina, 1964: p.148). This resolution also changed the emphasis of the role of women delegates' meetings - productivity, the leading role of the Party and the doctrine of the increasing class struggle now became their main focus. These tendencies were clearly expressed by Artiuchina, who was then the head of Zhenotdel, in her speech given at the Delegates' Congress of Moscow District at the end of 1929.²⁴

The criterion of productivity was emphasized more than once in the course of her speech: "The main thing in the work of women delegates has to be the question of productivity", (Artiuchina, 1929: p.4), or, more poetically, but also more firmly: "The work of a delegate meeting will be satisfactory only if it succeeds in educating the woman delegate in such a way, that when she finishes her work, she says to herself: the interests of productivity are my own interests", (Artiuchina, 1974: p.3).

Another change in the policy, or rather in emphasis, as Zhenotdel always attempted to draw women into social production, was the closer link between the Party and the delegate meetings. Artiuchina said specifically:

"Each delegate meeting, working this year, must address itself seriously to the question of the preparation of women delegates for entry to the Party", (Artiuchina, 1929: p.4.)

The concluding slogan of this paragraph makes it clear that the Party as a whole rather than its women's section or women's emancipation in general

24. Her speech was published in Rabotnica, No.43, November 1929.

was now of over-reaching importance:

"Delegate meetings have to prepare strong, self-assertive women Party members, who steadily hold the general Party line", (Artiuchina, 1929: p.4.)

Thus Zhenotdel no longer attempted to win active support of women for the Party, but direct, unquestionable obedience was now demanded. As the new Five Year Plan created new and increased demand for female labour, Zhenotdel continued in its original task, but the one-sided emphasis on productivity made a slight change in its focus. The increased demand for a greater number of women as a reserve labour force, was also caused by the purges. Artiuchina said specifically:

"Chistka (a purge) of the Soviet apparatus opens wide possibilities of drawing new masses of working women into Soviet work", (Artiuchina, 1929, p.4).

It is thus clear that from the male leaders' point of view, Zhenotdel was gradually and increasingly becoming unnecessary. The Five-Year Plan, a massive project in sublimation, self-denial and sacrifice, discipline, etc. did not differentiate between men and women and from this point of view, a specific women's section of the Party was indeed unnecessary.

Moreover, the final dissolution of Zhenotdel is directly related to the political changes within the Party, namely to the victory of the Stalinist faction within the Party. The Stalinists were ruthlessly determined to suppress all spontaneous, potentially autonomous pluralistic social sources (including a separate feminist organization), as intrinsically intolerable in a tightly centralized, organizationally and culturally homogeneous, monolithic Party-State.

Sometime in the mid-1930s,²⁵ Zhenotdel was abolished as a dist-

25. The evidence for determining the exact date of the abolition of Zhenotdel is confusing and contradictory. Rowbotham (1972: chapter five) gives 1929 but this is at variance with the Russian source discussed above - Artiuchina gave her speech in November 1929. Even Massell does not give the exact day. Stites (1973: p.473) claims that Zhenotdel was abolished in 1930 as part of the reorganization of the Secretariat of the Central Committee.

inct component of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in conjunction with the reorganization of the Party's supreme executive organs at that time, (Massell, 1974: p.357). Work with women throughout the U.S.S.R. was designated as merely one of the many (and relatively minor) responsibilities of the Secretariat's newly constituted Department for Agitation and Mass Campaigns. The resolution of the Central Committee to set up women's sections of Soviets was passed on 10 July 1932, (Zagumennykh and Gajdukov, 1932).

This fairly abrupt designation of the Soviets rather than the Party units as the main organizers of female masses meant that many of the day-to-day concerns for women's welfare were relegated to what was politically a distinctly inferior domain. Given the Soviets' largely ceremonial functions and increasingly evident subordination to the party in all matters, female emancipation was being relegated to relatively low-key priorities and activities.

Central Asia was specifically, albeit quietly, exempted from the liquidation order of Zhenotdel. However, even the Central Asian Zhenotdel was renamed Zhensektor, which was clearly a demotion in the hierarchy of the Soviet apparatus. Zhenotdel's formerly active sponsorship of divorces and unveiling was, in effect, cut short and many of its other responsibilities were dispersed among various commissariats and other state agencies, such as those concerned with health, education, labour, justice, social security, and political enlightenment, (Massell, 1974: p.357).

6. Critique of Zhenotdel

I have argued all along that Zhenotdel, like other socialist women's organizations, had a secondary status, because it formed an auxiliary wing of the 'main' Party. This lack of autonomy was not much of an issue for as long as the interests of women's emancipation coincided with the overall Party objectives, but when these began to diverge, the subordinate status of women's organization became politically significant.

Zhenotdel's lack of feminist militancy and a strong autonomous base meant that women were unable to resist and prevent the abolition of their own organization. I have described the existing male prejudices within the Party in the 1920s, but these became even more widespread in the 1930's, when the new leadership, of peasant and working class origin, took over.

The original leadership of the Bolshevik Party was drawn from the intelligentsia, which had different attitudes towards women than their successors. The former experienced the specific cultural Russian climate which had so much influenced the narodniks, but they also came in contact with Western liberal ideas of women's equality, dramatically brought to the attention of the public by the activities of the suffragettes. Stalin and his colleagues, on the other hand, never lived in the West, and as they were younger, they also did not experience the narodnik tradition.

On the whole, Zhenotdel devoted very little attention to the area of personal relationships anyway. The need to combat existing male prejudice was mentioned on an ad hoc basis by the women leaders as well as by Lenin himself, but not much was done, and changed, in practice. These attitudes of sexual inequality in personal relationships, existing within the Party, were then carried over into other areas of social life,

particularly to the family (or vice versa). This was, as we have seen, a reversal of the earlier narodnik tradition of the Russian revolutionary movement.

I have outlined some of the reasons for this reversal at the beginning of the second section of this chapter, and I do not want to repeat them. There are, however, also other reasons, specific to the historical development of the Bolshevik Party and Soviet Russia. Among the women leaders who emphasized the need to change personal relationships between men and women, Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai, were quite prominent. Neither, however, led the women's movement for very long. Armand died in 1921 and Kollontai was never very popular among the Party male leadership. This has been explicitly documented by Balabanoff:

"During these first few years of the Revolution she (i.e. Kollontai) was a frequent source of both personal and political annoyance to the Party leaders. On more than one occasion the Central Committee had wanted me to substitute for her in the leadership of the women's movement, thus facilitating the campaign against her and isolating her from the women's masses", (Balabanoff, 1938: p.277).

In fact, Kollontai was finally isolated and removed from the women's movement after the defeat of the Left-Wing Opposition.

What was even more important was the changing nature of the socialist revolution and society. Already Lenin had emphasized that the Revolution demanded more discipline and less personal freedom and this attitude became even more prominent in the autocratically governed Stalinist Russia. There was no room for personal experimentation in one's life style in the Soviet Russia of the 1930's, which began to promote motherhood and hard work in the building of the Moscow Metro or the new towns in Siberia, rather than women's emancipation and equality as it was conceived in Marxism.

The reversal of the family policy in the 1930's (divorce and abortion legislation) was opposed by many women, but they could no longer use the medium of their organization to defend their interests and put forward new demands. From the women's point of view, a separate women's organization was essential, but from the point of view of male Stalinist leaders, it was no longer necessary.

By the early 1930's, Zhenotdel had largely achieved what it was initially set up for. It had won the political support of women as a social group and drawn them into production.

7. The Soviet Women's Committee

The women's liberation process did not, of course, end with the elimination of the Zhenotdel organization.²⁶ Its functions were merely dispersed. Party work among women has continued to the present day through special organizations, congresses and journals devoted to women's affairs, (Stites 1973: p.473). Moreover, a new women's organization, the anti-fascist Soviet Women's Committee, was formed on 7 September 1941. Its main objective was self-evident: women's struggle against fascism. After the war, this was extended into the struggle for the preservation of world peace. The International Democratic Federation of Women, founded upon the initiative of the Soviet Women's Committee in December 1945, had this notion in this constitution. Nor surprisingly, the Federation as well as the Soviet Women's Committee took an active part in the CNA movement, initiated by the Stockholm Peace Congress in 1950. The Soviet Women's Committee (the word anti-fascist was dropped in 1956) also took part in the World Congress for Peace in Moscow in 1962 and in Helsinki in 1965.

The S.W.C. also participates in the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. In 1956, the Committee organized an international U.N. seminar, the main theme of which was the 'Equality of Women in the U.S.S.R.' The 1970 U.N. seminar, entitled 'Participation of Women in the Economic Life of their Countries' also took place in Moscow and was organized by the Committee. The Committee gives grants to women students from Third World countries, predominantly from Africa. In 1963, the Committee organized a special international seminar on the problems of women's education in Africa. The following year, the S.W.C. played host to the World Congress of Women. The S.W.C. has contacts with women's organizations in 120 countries, including the International Women's League.

26. Major changes in the status of women were the result of larger policies of the regime, which are discussed in the next chapter.

To mark the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth, the CSW staged a symposium entitled 'V.I. Lenin on Women's Role in Society and the Solution of the Question of Women's Emancipation in Socialist Countries'. Forty-nine delegates reported on the present status of women in eight Communist-governed European countries, Cuba, North Vietnam, North Korea, Mongolia, the P.R.G. of South Vietnam, Guinea, India, the Arab countries and South Africa. In September 1971, the CSW organized a 'European' women's conference, which was attended by women politicians from Eastern Europe, leaders of national women's organizations and women M.P's from various countries of Western Europe. The conference unanimously approved the idea of a European conference.²⁷

All this, however, sounds rather official and bureaucratic. Moreover, the emphasis is on international rather than on home affairs. Although their publication claims that the S.W.C. closely co-operates with women's sections of local Soviets and of the trade unions, the extent of internal political activity and influence is not very clear. On the one hand, the Committee was able to convince the government to bar women from coal-mining in recent years, (Mandel 1975: p.205), on the other there has been some criticism of the Committee's lack of co-operation with local groups, (Yankova, 1970b). Yankova anticipates that this might improve in the future with the formation of local women's councils and clubs. While women's clubs would primarily serve as leisure centres, women's councils are assigned a more active political role in Yankova's scheme:

27. The information above is derived from a publication by the Soviet Women's Committee, entitled Zhenshchiny mira v bor'be za social'nyi progress, 1972.

"Under a skilful leadership of Party and Komsomol cadres, sociologists, doctors and educationalists, these councils could exert significant influence on the formation of women's communist way of life".

The very fact that this is an anticipation of the future suggests that at present the women's movement is not politically very active. It is of some significance that the mass circulation of women's magazines, Sovetskaya Zhenshchina and Rabotnica contain very little information about political events in general and a Soviet women's organization in particular. This is in contrast to the 1920's and early 1930's, when the women's press reflected an active women's movement (see Appendix for the illustration of the difference in direction in which the women's magazines have evolved since the early days of revolution). Soviet women tend to express their grievances through the trade unions or through the public opinion forming mass media rather than directly through^a/women's organization. There is, however, no reason, why this has to remain so in the future - Yankova's proposal is one example of the possibilities of new forms of women's movements in present day Soviet Union.

Summary

As relatively little is known about the socialist women's movement, I have described it in greater detail than would otherwise have been necessary. What conclusions can we now draw from this historical account of the narodnik movement, the women's section of the German S.P.D., the International Socialist Women's Movement and Zhenotdel, the women's section of the Bolshevik Party?

First of all, there are some significant similarities between them. Both the utopian 'subjective' socialists such as Belinsky, Herzen, Dobroljubov and Chernyshevsky as well as Marxist socialists such as Engels, Bebel, Zetkin, Lenin and Kollontai, argued that emancipation of women will not come by itself, but that women must themselves actively struggle for it. In the socialist view, woman's position in society is not determined by marriage, but by active social participation - female emancipation therefore starts in the economic sphere. However, here the similarities end, because utopian and Marxist socialists each diverged on the question of strategy and tactics of the attainment of women's emancipation.

Chernyshevsky, a utopian socialist, called for the establishment of productive co-operatives as the chief means of achieving women's equality. However, communal living and individual economic co-operation represents a tendency to create a new world by a personal act of will and as such remains on the existential level of personal liberation. It is an individual rather than a social solution, and as such it is unacceptable to a Marxist revolutionary party, be it the German S.P.D. or the Russian Bolshevik Party. The cultural and political myth of female liberation through comradeship might indeed contribute to the change of personal relationships between the sexes, but if it ignores the existing material circumstances and class divisions among women, it cannot become

a social solution. Russian radical narodnik women felt equal in their personal relationships to men, but contributed nothing to the theory and practice of women as a social group.

Male Marxists developed their political strategy towards women only gradually, as a result of the economic pressure created on the labour market by the growing number of women entering the work force and the political threat created by the activities of bourgeois feminists. In Marxist theory and practice, differences between the sexes have been traditionally perceived by men and women alike as less important than the specific relationships expressed by the social classes. As the rule of capital could be overthrown only by a socialist revolution, the class struggle and the industrial proletariat were the crucial forces and factors for consideration in the socialist parties. The most militant and active participants in the October Revolution were sailors, railway workers, steel workers - traditional male occupations. Within the context of this theory and practice, women as a social group are automatically excluded from the crucial political struggle and relegated to a secondary, even in politically necessary, place of active support only and that in the capacity of women workers rather than specifically as women.

The auxiliary nature of the working class women's movement has had serious political and personal consequences for the women concerned. Once the women's wing of the 'main' socialist party acts in a merely supportive capacity (be it electoral assistance for the German S.P.D. or political and economic support for the Bolshevik Party in the early years of its power), it can be easily manipulated for other political purposes which might go even against the individual or collective interests of women. Lenin used the International Socialist Women's Conference in Bern in 1915 for tactical purposes in promoting a new International rather than specific feminist issues. Similarly, Stalin used the delegates

meetings for greater economic productivity or even as a tool for Party purges.

I have argued that the German socialist women's movement as well as the Soviet one emerged as a tactical response to a particular set of social circumstances and I wish to add that this origin has also affected the development of socialist theory. As Zetkin or Krupskaya devoted so many of their writings to the polemic with the bourgeois feminists, they did not expand on the problematical and, in many instances, inadequate texts of Engels or Bebel. Similarly, Bolshevik women leaders, namely Armand and Samoilova, had to concentrate on strategy and the immediate practical organizational tasks of the women's movement, so they could scarcely have found the time to develop further the existing socialist theory of women's emancipation. And yet such a development was required and could have been undertaken at that time only in Soviet Russia. Engels, Bebel, Zetkin, etc. were still talking about a hypothetical socialism, and it was up to the Soviet feminists to put those ideas into practice, and from that experience, develop them further.

No such thing occurred. The difficult economic circumstances caused by the Civil War and the foreign intervention, the predominance of peasants with traditional patriarchal attitudes in the country, the advent of Stalinism and the abolition of Zhenotdel, were the factors which prevented further development of the theory and practice of socialist feminism.

Kollontai's theoretical writings and novels, which introduced new views on the subject, namely the need to change personal relationships between the sexes as well as the recognition of the oppressive nature of monogamy, etc., were developed mainly outside the Russia women's movement in her exile in the West. As I have argued in my second chapter, her theories were totally divorced from the existing Russian reality and were too advanced for the women masses of that particular period of history.

On the other hand, Kollontai's ideas were not printed and widely distributed in the Soviet Union either. The original socialist theory, which linked women's oppression to private property and capitalism only (it emphasized institutional, economic forms of oppression and ignored the individual, psychological and informal forms), is still prevalent in the Soviet Union. It is argued that as private property was abolished, the 'woman question' does not exist in the socialist countries - a feminist movement is therefore also considered unnecessary, hence the relative political insignificance of the current Soviet Women's Organization.

Appendix

Content Analysis of Soviet Women's Magazines

Unlike in the 1920's, the present-day Soviet women's magazines contain very little information about women's organizations. While Kommunistka and Rabotnica were full of information on Zhenotdel and the socialist women's movement abroad, the contemporary issues contain very little of such information, as the following comparison shows:

Kommunistka, December 1920, No.7.

Economic Revival: On the Forthcoming 8th Congress of Soviets. Results of the 3rd All-Russian Meeting of Heads of Women's Departments; Our Production Tasks (from Trotsky's speech); Vocational Training for Women. Problems of the Communist Women's Movement in Russia (Kollontai); The Way to Emancipate Women (Preobrazhensky); On Religious Belief (Stepanov); The Last Slaves (about a Congress of Women in the East, Kollontai).

International Women's Movement: German Communist Women (L.), About Soviet Russia (Zetkin); Women's Pages in the German left-wing press (Didrikil); Women's Conference in Germany (Didrikil). Questions of organisation: Work among Peasant Women (Samoilova); Questions of Agitation and Propaganda (Pitlovsky); Work of the CC of the Bolshevik Party among Women (A.I.), Suggestions on Organisational Questions (Eporov); Other work: Week of the Child, Red Army, Compulsory Military Training; Work among Housewives.

Rabotnica, 1924, No.6.

Five Years of the Communist International; On England (describing the ILP, the British Socialist Party and their work among women); Struggle against Unemployment in Russia, Memoirs of a maid who worked in Lenin's parents' home, story about a couple who moved in from the countryside to work in a factory: he hits her in front of working women, they get him

sacked until he apologises to his wife in front of all, on women who act as newspaper correspondents, description of how the newspaper is printed, women at work, pioneer exhibitions, communal eating, description of scientific experiments to transplant sex organs to bring back youth, illustrated description of the female sex organs, blouse pattern, poem about Ivan who was always worrying about the women, blouse pattern.

Rabotnica, January 1974.

Article on Lenin, Brezhnev in India, textile workers, a woman who fought in the Second World War, story about a man who rescues a drunkard from a pond - this episode gives him the strength to leave for the army, because he realizes that society will look after his wife, working conditions and control of - admitting little has been done, suggesting measures to be taken, careers for girls leaving school, dress and hat patterns, information about the comet, kidnapping - one of the horrors of capitalism, articles for children, the bread you eat, how to make tasty sandwiches, fashion.

Rabotnica, February 1974.

Article on the five-year plan, a sewing factory, 250 years of the Academy of Sciences, short story of how a girl spent her first day working in a canteen, girls who went to East Germany for two months, sewing pattern, Princess Dashkova - an educated lady of Catherine the Great's time, skin care, recipe for pancakes.

While it is difficult to give the flavour of the magazines through the headings alone, they are sufficiently clear. The 1920s issues are full of information about the theory and practice of the Soviet women's movement, the 1974 numbers contain no such information. They tend to contain mass entertainment issues: dress patterns, beauty advice, cooking receipes, a guide to children's reading, poetry, short stories, interviews with public figures, colour photographs, etc. but on the whole very little about politics.

CHAPTER 4:
WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION

Soviet policy towards women and the family has been modified and changed at different periods of Soviet history depending upon the priority assigned to the goals of the emancipation of women, economic growth, the upbringing of children and the population growth. Some of the policy changes also involve an attempt to eradicate unanticipated, deleterious effects of earlier policies. The altruistic goal of the equality of the sexes played a particularly prominent part in the early idealistic phase of the revolution and of the establishment of the Soviet system. For the rest of Soviet history, the emphasis has been on the combination of women's employment, stable-marriages, reproduction and child-rearing rather than on experimental forms of living. The Soviet leadership has been prepared to pursue the goal of equality only up to a point - to that extent which other goals of higher priority (e.g., rapid economic growth) did not have to be sacrificed in some significant or evident way.

The regime's determination to pursue and maintain a high rate of economic growth required more women to be drawn and retrained in the labour force. This determination also explains the regime's ambivalence towards the radical transformation of the family. If the Soviet leadership had been less preoccupied with economic growth and more with human welfare, especially in the 1930s, sufficient housing space, adequate child-care facilities, cafeterias and household durables would have been provided, even at the expense of investment in other commodities. The Soviet regime chose, however, to provide only the minimum necessary to keep a large proportion of women in the labour force. As a result, most Soviet women have won equality in the economic sphere, but this equality in the work place has actually led to inequality, since women must also bear the primary burden of family responsibilities.

The resulting conflict between family and work is found to have important consequences for the productivity, fertility and self-realization of women. This is particularly evident in the more demanding occupations with higher levels of responsibility. Women who are both domestic and wage labourers are unlikely to bear more than one or two children, given that the means of controlling births are available (and this has historically been the case). The decline in the birth rate has in turn important over-all economic consequences for the socialist societies with few other forms of labour reserves left. The pool of housewives and peasants has been practically exhausted, immigrant labour can be used only to a limited extent, so that the natural replacement of the population is the only alternative. Because of these conflicting pressures, the assignment of priorities to various goals has been determined by the interaction of ideological, economic, political and demographic factors at a specific time. The analysis of the role of women and the family is therefore divided into four areas where these conflicts are found to be located: the family, women's employment, child rearing and the population growth.

I. The Family

1. Initial Legal Changes

Revolutionary legislation directly affecting the status of women, the family and the church, was introduced soon after the revolution. The new government granted women suffrage, passed divorce and civil marriage laws which made marriage a voluntary alliance and which eliminated the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children, legislated employment rights equal to those of men, gave women equal pay for equal work and universal paid late-pregnancy and early-maternity leave, (Schlesinger, 1949: pp.30-43; Hazard, 1953: pp.247-250 and Dodge, 1960: pp.57-63).

The 1926 family code went even further than the earlier family laws of the Revolution, for it sanctioned both marriage and divorce without the necessity of registration at all. Divorce was still permitted at the request of one or both parties, without a need to give reasons for this action. Registered and non-registered, de facto marriages were made equal before the law. However, the latter was never introduced into the polygamous Mohammedan republics in Central Asia, where enforcement of marriage registration was an essential step in the attack on religious and tribal culture, (Schlesinger, 1949: p.18 and Massell, 1974: passim).

With respect to family law, this was the period of the 'post-card' divorce, when a dissatisfied spouse could simply inform the authorities that he or she wished to discontinue the marriage, and if the other party was not physically present, a postcard would inform the spouse that his or her marital status had changed. The major intent of the law was to free millions of women who had been married off against their will under traditional patriarchal procedures. However, these laws proved catastrophically counterproductive, because women lost the protection against abandonment with a child or children they previously had.

The principle of marriage as a free and dissoluble institution rather than a life-long union reflects the ambiguous Marxist theory of the 'withering away' of the family.¹ The influence of this thesis can also be traced in the writings of Alexandra Kollontai, the first Soviet commissar for social welfare. She prophesied the following:

1. The ambiguity and shortcomings of this hypothesis were discussed in Chapter Two.

"Family households will inevitably die a natural death with the growth in number of communal houses of different types to suit different tastes: and as the individual household which is enclosed within the limits of a separate flat dies out, the fundamental clamps of the contemporary bourgeois family will be wrenched looser. Once it has ceased to be a unit of consumption, the family will be unable to exist in its present form - it will fall assunder, be liquidated", (Schlesinger, 1949: p.51).

Among Soviet Architects, A.M.Sabsovich was the best known supporter of this 'left tendency' in social relations. He claimed that the provision of communal services and facilities of recreation and leisure-time pursuits,

"Will dispense with any need or reason for the separate life of separate families in isolated flats and little houses designed with an eye on the 'family hearth'," (Schlesinger, 1949: p.171).

While the Bolshevik Party Programme of 1919 advocated communes as supplementary institutions freeing women from the burden of the 'outmoded' household economy, Kollontai and Sabsovich went further and considered communes as alternatives to the family.

2. House-Communes

The idea of the commune as sharing production, consumption and recreation among the same group of people has been prominent in the theory and practice of early utopian socialists, e.g., R.Owen and Ch.Fourier. The Bolshevik Party, as an urban-oriented political movement, had no room for a romantic and idyllic appreciation of rural Russia and the communal living of the Russian mir. Their idea of a city commune was more limited. It referred to a communal residential and service arrangement, with no formal link to productive enterprises. The commune was viewed as a residential urban complex which provided the framework for co-operative social interaction and shared services. As the evid-

ence for spontaneous youth communes is rather flimsy,² and as I am especially interested in the official attitude towards women and the family, I am going to concentrate on the fortunes of the government-sponsored house-communes (dom-kommuna).

In the 1920s, a number of urban communes were organized in the large cities. At first, existing houses were converted into co-operative residential and service dwellings; the first architectural experiments in this direction were undertaken a decade later. The converted communes were usually managed by elected committees, which not only looked after housing needs, but in some cases also organized food-stores, bakeries, laundries and recreational facilities. Some of the communes were composed of students alone, who shared their slim resources in a manner familiar to poor students of other places and times, (Wesson, 1963: p.84).

One therefore needs to differentiate between ideological aspirations of war communism and the 'generalization of want', necessitated by the widespread scarcity and ruin of the Civil War. Another problem with the early experiments was that the Western educated intellectuals who led the Russian revolution had no notion how backward the life of the country's four-fifths-peasant majority really was. The tens of millions of peasants who moved to towns (and who are still doing so) carried their burden of traditional patriarchal psychology with them. Their attitudes changed sharply in towns, but not completely in any respect, for such changes take decades, some of them generations.

2. Reich, (1969: pp.212-234) describes youth communes in some detail, but his objectivity is rather doubtful. Wesson, (1963) is more detached and scholarly, but his discussion of the spontaneous youth communes is not his primary concern.

In fact, this urban-rural cultural mix has a great deal to do with the destinies of Soviet women, legislation with respect to them, enforcement of such laws, and the energy or lack of it with which the Communist party has pursued its policies in this regard. In their overwhelming majority, the masses were psychologically and politically insufficiently prepared for the new forms of communal living. The house-communes became small and overcrowded because of both the scarcity of housing and women's unwillingness to share their cooking with other families.³ The central kitchen was often used by each woman separately, to prepare her own meal for her own family, "The women jostling each other for places at the stove, the air thick with smoke and quarrelling", (Smith, 1928: p.149).

Trotsky argued that it was the task of the revolutionary party, the vanguard of the working class, to make workers aware of the contradictions in their home life. He urged the Communist Party to show and make it clear to the masses that housekeeping in common is more practical and beneficial than for each family separately, (Trotsky, 1924: p.149). To solve this political and cultural lag between the aspirations of the Party and the masses, he put forward a number of proposals. For instance, he urged the more progressive and enterprising families to group themselves into collective housekeeping units or family group communities and thus set an example of a model community.

He also advocated the formation of voluntary associations, as a link between the State and the initiative of the masses. Trotsky was convinced that the initiative for communes must come from the masses rather than simply from the State.

3. The idea of men doing the cooking was even more radical and as such unlikely to have even occurred to them.

"People cannot be made to move into new habits of life - they must grow into them gradually, as they had grown into their old ways of living. Or they must deliberately and consciously create a new life. It would be pointless for the Soviet government to create communes with all sorts of comforts and simply invite the proletariat to live in those places", (Trotsky, 1924: p.94).

Yet this is precisely what initially happened.

"Many houses which have been allotted to families living in communes got into filthy conditions and became uninhabitable. People looked upon their dwellings as upon barracks provided by the State", (Trotsky, 1924: p.90).

The initiative of the masses, i.e. voluntary associations, was therefore seen as essential if the idea of the city-commune was to gain popularity among the people. A decree of 19 August 1924, gave the population the right to organize voluntarily into Housing Co-operatives. Jessica Smith claims that by 1928, 15% of the urban population lived in housing rented by the Housing Co-operation, (Smith, 1928: pp.160-161).

These housing co-operatives also had a political character. Their cultural department was concerned with political work among women not reached through the factory or some other means. Ostrovskaya, the head of such a department in Moscow, also advocated communal houses, but was cautious about the likelihood of their success in the same way as Trotsky was. She was proposing houses with a minimum^{of}/household drudgery for women. As she did not consider the possibility that housework could be done by men, she followed the general party line not to face head on the ideas of men, but concentrated on those of women. Ostrovskaya preferred small houses for individual families with their own separate kitchens, which could possible be later transformed for some other use, when the communal dining-room was organized, (Smith, 1924: pp.160-161).

The newly constructed house-communes were similarly modest in their communal arrangement. Soviet architects organized a number of design competitions for the dom-communa, but only some ten commune-type houses were actually built during the period before World War II, mainly in Moscow and Leningrad. The first experimental building was opened in 1929. Only some of its residential units were kitchenless and served by a communal dining-room, but even this arrangement was abandoned only two years afterwards. The dining-room and other communal facilities were subdivided to make further flats for individual families. A dormitory for university students built at about the same time suffered a similar fate, (Osborn, 1970: p.235).

This is hardly surprising for this was a period of massive drift to towns for the first Five-Year Plan, with very little additional housing provided to meet this heavy demand for living space. Stalin's decision to build 'socialism in one country' at all ideological, economic and human costs, inevitably put housing down on the list of investment priorities. The limited resources which were available were poured mainly into heavy industry; very little was left for consumer industry, which included housing. In 1930-31, Stalin sharply attacked all those who were trying to build pieces of the communist future in the present, whether it be by levelling wages or by organizing urban communes, (Osborn, 1970: pp.235-236). The design and construction of commune-type dwellings were then quickly abandoned. This was in line with a series of other policies smashing the last vestiges of political autonomy and experimentation.

Workers were made subject to a labour draft; factories witnessed the re-introduction of piece work; women were deprived of their right to abortion; Zhenotdel was abolished; motherhood became glorified; divorce was made extremely difficult; the 'withering away' theory of social institutions such as the State and the family was finally

abandoned. The Soviet regime required social stability, personal submission to authority, and a higher birthrate, and this could be achieved only through the strengthening of the family. The socialist family, as a part of the socialist superstructure, began to be seen as the primary unit of society and as such was assigned an active and important role, especially with regard to child bearing and child rearing.⁴

This did not however, imply that the family ceased to be considered as being subordinate to the State. The latter was to provide active guidance and help, especially by means of public child care facilities. The idea of the commune as an alternative to the family was definitely abandoned (and we have to bear in mind that it never represented more than a minority trend of 'leftist deviation' anyway).

4. The revival of the family was also, and perhaps primarily, an attempt to solve the massive problems which have accumulated during and immediately after the Civil War - children's homelessness and juvenile delinquency. The magnitude of the problem and the ways of dealing with it (i.e., children's colonies) are discussed by Madison, (1968: pp.39-41), and Fitzpatrick, (1970: pp.229-230). Juvenile delinquency is also discussed in Hazard, (1953: pp.252-253). The whole complexity of that period and the reasons for changes in the family policy are summarized in Geiger, 1968: pp.43-106) and Bronfenbrenner (1968).

Rather than seeking a total institutional replacement of the family, the Soviet policy has consistently⁵ advocated its supplementation by public household services and child care facilities. This was argued for on the grounds of ideology, politics and economics. Lenin and Trotsky were quite clear why they disliked individual housework performed by women:

"... they remain in 'household bondage', they continue to be 'household slaves', for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid and backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the individual family household", (Lenin, 1965: pp.83-84).

"... as long as woman is chained to the housework, the care of the family, the cooking and sewing, all her chances of participation in social and political life are cut down by the extreme", (Trotsky, 1924: p.47).

The moralistic condemnation of the number of hours that women are forced to work in the home, and of the deleterious effects that housework's

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5. The revival of the idea of the house-commune in the period 1958-1961 is an exception. The public debates on the subject in the mass media and among the architects are discussed in Osborn (1970: pp.237-246, 249). Osborn also describes a communal housing complex which was actually built and opened in Moscow in 1969 - Dom novogo byta (The House of the New Way of Life). The House is a 2,200 person complex, consisting of two 16-storey residential towers, joined by a spacious two-storey complex for communal use. It has a central dining room with 250 places as well as a dining room on each floor with places for one third to one half of the floor's residents; accordion-type folding partitions within each flat, including cupboard facilities, a do-it-yourself kitchen on each floor, lavish provision of recreational, social and hobby-room facilities. The House employs full-time staff of 115 to run the dining facilities and other services. It also organizes volunteer services of residents - over 100 full-time volunteers are needed for the smooth functioning of the House. Are these drawn predominantly from full-time housewives? Osborn does not deal with the problem of equal sharing of the required communal work between male and female residents. The architects who designed the House also do not seem to have considered this issue as important. What is perhaps even more significant at this stage is the fact that neither Osborn nor the architects think it likely that the house-commune will become a permanent feature of Soviet architecture in the very near future.

routine, monotonous, and soul-destroying character are bound to have on the mind and body of the housewife, is self-evident in the quotations above. This, of course, leads straight back to the central argument of classical Marxism: that it is necessary for women to enter fully into social production both as a means of escaping household drudgery and as a precondition of their emancipation in the wider context. 'Socialization' of housework, which would free women for work in economic production, was seen as a necessary component in the development of new 'socialist' female psychology and political consciousness. It was assumed that the latter is more likely to develop in the environment of the work collective than in the environment of the residential commune divorced from production - Marxism has traditionally paid more attention to the place of one's work than to the place of one's residence (which partly explains why the idea of the residential commune has been received without much enthusiasm in the official Soviet thought).

Yet the time taken up by private housework in the USSR has remained high. Soviet sociologists have calculated that housework takes up to 100 billion hours every year; its abolition would be equivalent to the freeing of another 45-50 million persons for production (Zanin, 1970: p.158; Yankova, 1970b: p.77).

The amount of domestic labour required to be done in the individual Soviet family is so high because (a) shopping takes a long time, (b) convenience foods are in their infancy, (c) amenity services are still very underdeveloped, (d) housing is cramped and facilities such as kitchens, lavatories and bathrooms often have to be shared, and (e) modern household technology has only recently become fairly common. Until very recently socialization of housework has remained more of a slogan than an actual policy.

3. Socialization of Domestic Labour

a) Shopping

Shopping tends to take a long time in the Soviet Union partly because of the old-fashioned trading methods, and partly because of the inadequate number of retail outlets, both of which lead to queueing. Most shops use a system whereby the customer first has to identify and order the goods required, then must go to pay elsewhere, and finally return with a receipt to claim the goods. It has been calculated that 20% of time could be saved if the desired products did not have to be weighed, and 17% could be saved if they were pre-wrapped, (Yankova, 1970b: p.85). Supermarkets, which have been introduced only recently, have been calculated to save a family as much as ten hours' shopping time a week. Home deliveries or shopping by order are not common. There were 381 persons to be served by one shop or stall in the USSR in 1960, as compared with 89 in the U.K. in 1961. The number of Soviet outlets has since risen (from 567 thousand in 1960 to 682 in 1970), but the stores are still too small and too crowded, with queues stretching out into the streets.

TABLE I: Retail Trade Outlets, 1928-1970

Indicator	1928	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970
Retail trade outlets ('000)	155.2	407.2	245.1	415.8	487.5	567.3	643.3	682.0
Population per outlet	.....	485	.....	437	406	381	361.	358

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1970, p.603.

b) Getting Meals

Food has to be bought frequently, since few families have refrigerators and fewer still deep freezers. The preparation of meals tends to take a long time, although tinned and bottled products and some of the newer types of convenience food are now available. However, these products are more expensive and do not always suit the popular taste, which favours traditional dishes, which often involve lengthy preparation. The preparation of meals is further aggravated by the crowded housing conditions and consequent need to share cookers and sinks (given that each family cooks for itself). Mixers, liquidisers and so on are uncommon.

Public catering plays relatively little role in easing the burden. In 1960, there were 1469 people for every establishment, compared with 411 people in Britain. In 1962, about 4% of meals appear to have been eaten out; Kurganov, (1967: p.221) has calculated that in 1962 an average Soviet citizen ate in a public catering establishment only on 11-12 occasions.⁶ The figure now is certainly higher - about 16% of retail trade turnover is through the public catering system. This represents a significant increase (the number of public catering establishments increased by 90,000 in the last decade), but it still does not solve the problem of food preparation.

6. Kurganov has also argued that this figure is even an overestimate. It includes dinners prepared in all public institutions, i.e. also those whose primary aim is not public catering (hospitals, internats, prisons). As they are put together with restaurants and holiday resorts, they distort the final figures.

TABLE II: Public Catering Establishments, 1928-1970

Indicator	1928	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970
Public catering establishments ('000)	14.6	87.6	73.4	95.4	118.1	147.2	192.7	237.3
Popn. per establishment	...	2256	...	1904	1676	1469	1205	1208

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1970: p.603.

In one Vilnius survey, only 6% of families ate out at mid-day, but 16% of families had some members who had lunch out, (Andryushkyavichene, 1970: p.81). The quality of public food is often no more satisfactory than its quantity, (Kurganov, 1967: p.222). In the Leningrad survey done by Kharchev and Golod, 256 of the 1230 women questioned considered the expense of canteen food the main drawback, while 211 complained that meals were poorly cooked. Only six answered that they liked cooking and only 12 thought that communal cooking was unnecessary, (Kharchev and Golod, 1971).

c) Amenity Services

Such services are still very underdeveloped in the USSR and there are many complaints about the quality and timeliness of the work they do. In Leningrad as many as 29% of working women use dry-cleaning facilities. However, only 10% use laundries and many complain about the poor quality of the service and of the long wait (10-12 days), (Kharchev and Golod, 1971). Again, it is quantity as well as quality that needs improving. The queues particularly in laundrettes suggest that demand is high but that the services available at the moment could not cope with more than 2% of the required washing. In all, household services cover only 5% of the demanded domestic labour, (Yankova, 1970a: p.45). With a population of 244 million, there were in 1970 only 42,300 hairdressers and barbers, 40,100 dressmakers, 33,500 shoe-repair shops, 3,600 laundries and 1,100 dry-cleaners. The U.K. had in 1968, 8,769 boot and shoe repairers, 1,205 laundries, 2554 laundrettes and 1,834 dry cleaners, (Board of Trade Report on the Census of Distribution and Other Services for 1966: pp.125, 129).

TABLE III: Commercial Service Establishments, 1960-1973 ('000)

Type of establishment	1960	1965	1970	1971	1973
Hairdressers and barbers	28.8	35.3	42.3	43.3	45.2
Dressmakers and menders	27.6	33.1	40.1	41.5	....
Shoemakers and repairers	30.0	30.4	33.5	33.5	....
Laundries	0.9	2.2	3.6	3.9	4.4
Dry-cleaners and dyers	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.6
Repair shops (including garages)	15.8	20.9	27.0	28.8	....

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1970, p.621; Vestnik Statistiki, 1972/5, pp.85-
Vestnik Statistiki, 1974/7: p.81.

d) Household Technology

Modern domestic gadgets helping in the process of food preparation, cleaning and so on, have only in recent years become more commonly available. Ownership by the public of some household items were as follows (per thousand in population).

TABLE IV: Holdings of Items of Domestic Equipment by the Public, 1960-1970 (per 1000 of population)

Item	1960	1965	1970
Sewing machines	107	144	161
Washing machines	13	59	139
Refrigerators	10	29	89
Vacuum cleaners	8	18	31
Television sets	22	68	143

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1970 g: p.562.

Refrigerators and washing machines are relatively expensive and as such frequently sacrificed at the expense of a more 'desirable' television set, which is in the same price range. In other words, there

appears to be a deliberate choice of home entertainment first, and easing the woman's physical lot second (Andryushchkyavichene, 1970, p.81; Mandel, 1975: 228).

Young and working class families are typically less likely to have washing machines than the average urban family. One survey indicates that in working class families, only 15% have washing machines, 37% have fridges and 20% own vacuum-cleaners, (Yankova, 1970a: p.45). Another survey reveals the discrepancy between the generations:

Holdings of Items of Domestic Equipment by Age (in%)⁷

	<u>Age Category</u>	
	<u>up to 30</u>	<u>31 - 40</u>
Sewing machines	18	38
Washing machines	31	62
Refrigerators	2	19

Source: Andryushchkyavichene, 1970: p.79.

A washing machine has been reckoned to save Soviet families 500 hours of work every year. It has been further calculated that 'full electrification' of the home could increase leisure by two hours a day and time spent on 'socially useful activity' by 40%, (Andryushchkyavichene, 1970, p.79).⁷

Thus the 'real goal' of the October Revolution of 'putting home on a social basis' still has far to go, though more rapid progress than seen for many years is now taking place. The table below shows what savings are envisaged for the future, both in terms of socializa-

7. Compare this with the U.K., where 67% of all households have a washing machine and 78% have a refrigerator, (Social Trends, No.5, 1974: p.131).

tion of housework and of up-dating modern household technology within the individual family.

Estimated Time Expenditure if Housework Socialized and Mechanized
(per week in hours)

<u>Time Expenditure</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>Outlook</u>	
		<u>If housework mechanized</u>	<u>If housework socialized</u>
Preparation of meals	12	6	0.5
Provisions-buying	5	2.5	0.6
Care of dresses, shoes, linen	5	3.5	2.4

Source: Artemov et al, 1967: p.169.

However, these estimates tend to rely too heavily on technological determinism. There seems to be an assumption that the anticipated technological improvements will solve all of the problems inherent in domestic labour. They completely ignore the element of coordination involved. Women learn, partly from their mothers and partly from practice, to do many things at once. Because of this unwritten, personal skill, women tend to be more 'efficient' than men when engaged in housework, being able to wash dishes while waiting for the kettle to boil, to feed a baby and write a shopping list with the other hand, to pick up dirty clothes on the way from one room to another etc.⁸ It is hard, if not impossible for a domestic labourer to delegate all the work either to other members of the family, or to public household services. Someone is required to do the overall planning.

8. It should be noted that the development of these domestic skills may make other skills harder to acquire. Having trained herself to be able to think of many things in short space of time, she might be unable to keep her mind on any one thing for very long. She is likely to be more considerate of other people because she does not get carried away by 'single mindedness' and forget to notice how people are reacting to a situation.

In the case of shopping, the domestic labourer must either write a list, since she alone knows all the extra things needed in the house, or she has to check what has been bought so that she can buy the extra herself. Long-term shopping for pickling, fruit preserving, jam making, dress making, all of which are very popular in the majority of only recently urbanized Soviet families, (Mandel, 1975: pp.72-73), also requires specialized organizational domestic skills. In this sense, improved shopping facilities and the help given by other members of the family relieves the domestic labourer only of some of the burden of family-based housework.

4. Sharing Housework Within the Family

Having looked at the amount of housework required to be done in Soviet conditions, we must see who does it. Soviet ideals of child-upbringing require that all children should participate in family chores, but this of course, only relates to the children. The fact which emerges from all sources is that it is invariably the woman who carries far the heaviest part of the load. This was remarked upon by Lenin as far back as 1920:

"Could there be any more palpable proof than the common sight of a man 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 heart beat growing faint, and her will growing slack", (Zetkin, 1965: p.114).

Yet the policy of re-allocating household duties among family members never formed an integral part of the traditional Marxist theory of women's emancipation. It came to prominence in the Soviet Union quite late, only when it became clear that the State was unable to take over family functions. By that time, Soviet men were little inclined to take over duties that other Bolshevik speeches described as trivial and properly social rather than familial functions, (Geiger, 1967, p.12).

The fact of men's unwillingness to undertake an equal share of housework emerges from all surveys and discussions in the mass media. The journal Krasnaya Zvezda published the following letter (of an anonymous woman) in its December 1966 issue:

"I come back from work. The house is cold, untidy, there is no water, there is nothing. I do not know where to start: to prepare food, to put the house in order, to light the stove. My husband is lying on a bedstead, on fur pillows, and is reading a newspaper. He is cross, does not talk. I ask him, what has happened? He answers - Why didn't you light the stove? I say: Why didn't you make the fire? Isn't it true that you came home from work earlier? - I did not get married in order to light the stove! ", (Kurganov, 1968: p.150).

Similar attitudes are revealed in a divorce case of a young couple on the grounds of 'incompatible characters'. The case was reported in Izvestiya on November 17, 1967:

"She is guilty! One day she sends me to the shops, the next to the market. I am a doctor, I could meet my patients anywhere - what would people think? A doctor - with potatoes, a doctor - doing the job of a housewife? And anyway it's not my place to think about bread, which she's forgotten to buy.... What am I, her servant?" (Kurganov, 1968: p.150).

Such views do not represent isolated or extreme cases of 'male chauvinism'. In 1967, Literaturnaya gazeta published a number of articles and readers' letters concerning appraisal of women's place in life, the family and social labour. A large number of male readers expressed views such as 'the way to a man's heart is through his stomach'; 'woman is supposed to adorn the family hearth just as flowers adorn the meadows'; '... why separate a woman from the kitchen? Why deprive her of additional opportunities to manifest love and consideration for her husband?' etc. One man complained quite bitterly that

"A woman earns almost as much as a man. She considers herself independent and equal. The man's prestige in the family has been thoroughly shaken and is determined only by his prestige on the job. The woman has already stopped thinking of how to surprise her husband with a tasty dinner, and more often she surprises him by cooking nothing at all".

A number of women writers criticized the axiomatic, unquestioned premise that everyday's concerns are the women's concerns and advocated the elimination of the tradition of the man's privileged status in everyday life, (Kuznetsova, 1967: p.12).

The findings of a sample survey of 160 Leningrad working families, taken in the early 1960s show that only in 48 families, i.e., less than a third of the sample, men help with housework. As the extent of help is not specified, this figure might well be an overestimate.

Help with Housework Among 160 Leningrad Working Families

Wife with no help	69 families
Wife with a helping husband	48 families
Wife with helping children	12 families
Wife with help of all the other members of the family	5 families
Mother of the wife or the husband	26 families

Source: Kharchev, 1964: p.259.

Another survey showed that women unaided did 61% of breakfast preparation, 64% of shopping, 67% of washing and ironing, 69% of dinner-preparation, 73% of helping children with homework, 75% of visiting children's school, 78% of taking children to and from nursery or kindergarten and 81% of washing, dressing and feeding children. Men's substantial contributions to domestic work were limited to minor repairs, bill-paying, and helping with washing-up and tidying, (Andryushchkyavichene, 197-, pp.82-84).

TABLE V: Carrying Out of Domestic Tasks by Performer (in %)

<u>Task</u>	<u>Performed by</u>			
	<u>Wife alone</u>	<u>Husband alone</u>	<u>Husband and wife together</u>	<u>Other members of family</u>
<u>Housework:</u>				
Food-buying	64.2	2.7	18.1	16.0
Making breakfast	61.0	9.8	20.0	10.1
Getting lunch	69.0	1.5	14.3	15.2
Clearing and dish-washing	19.3	12.2	32.4	36.1
General tidying	44.6	9.2	31.8	14.3
Small repairs	24.3	68.1	1.8	6.0
Paying bills	49.2	29.9	14.8	6.1
Washing and ironing	67.1	1.6	19.3	12.0
<u>Childcare:</u>				
Washing, dressing and feeding	81.2	1.2	12.1	5.5
Taking to nursery or kindergarten and bringing home	78.2	6.0	11.8	4.0
Visiting school	75.1	12.1	11.8	1.0
Help with homework	73.3	14.2	8.8	3.7

Source: Andryushchkyavichene, 1970: p.82.

Results of a survey of 280 women in two Vilnius plants.

An anonymous woman who wrote to the newspaper Sovetskaya Rossiya claimed that help with shopping usually means queueing at liquor stores, while buying meat, eggs, bread and milk remains a woman's task. Similar fate can meet modern household appliances. A woman from Siberia complained that modern facilities such as central heating and gas free the men (they no longer have to chop the wood for the fire), but it does not really solve the problem of women, (Yurchenko, 1972: p.3).

Surveys undertaken in other parts of the Soviet Union (Gorkovskaya, Rostovskaya, Sverdlovskaya and Ivanovskaya oblast) confirmed this pattern. Women did most of the housework either unaided by their husbands, or the

latter contributed only to small repairs, (Artemov et al, 1967: p.140).

The less well off a family is, the longer a wife is likely to have to spend on housework, because she is likely to have fewer gadgets to help her. Unskilled women spend $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours on housework a day, compared with specialists' $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, (Yankova, 1970a: p.44). Much greater discrepancies between poorer and richer women with regard to their time expenditure on washing clothes, cleaning and shopping, were revealed in a survey undertaken in certain Moscow factories in the early 1960s. The less well off women spent twice as much on household duties as the better off ones (see table).

Women's Use of Time by Income-group in One Working Day
(in hours and minutes)

<u>Family per capita income (roubles)</u>	<u>Cooking</u>	<u>Care of Children</u>	<u>Cleaning</u>	<u>Laundry</u>	<u>Shopping</u>	<u>Total</u>
Up to 30	1.50	0.35	0.35	0.40	1.20	5.0
31-50	1.25	0.25	0.25	0.35	0.55	3.45
51-75	1.20	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.30	2.40
76 and over	1.20	0.10	0.10	0.05	0.30	2.15

Source: Kryazhev 1966:p.109. Also quoted in Matthews 1972: p.104.

Women in families with per capita family income of 50 roubles or less, spend more than 32 hours per week on housework, those in the 51-75 rouble bracket spend more than 28 hours on housework and those in families whose per capita income exceeds 75 roubles, spend 22 hours. Men in the same category devote only 13, 12 and $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours to housework each week. Differences between the patterns of the sexes in this sphere thus override differences between income groups. In fact, in this heavy burden of housework and family responsibility and in men's unwillingness to undertake an equal share of it must lie a large part of the explanation of women's failure to achieve the equal status the leaders of the

revolution believed it would bring them. Most surveys on the patterns of leisure distribution come with the same findings - women's relative positions vis-a-vis men have hardly changed at all and in some instances have even worsened.

Time Expenditure on Housework in Krasnoiarsk in 1922 and 1963 (Hours per week)

Kind of Activity	Men			Women		
	1922	1963	Dynamics	1922	1963	Dynamics
Food-buying and prep.	6.6	4.7	- 1.9	18.0	15.9	- 2.1
Care of dwelling	2.5	1.7	- 0.8	4.6	3.9	- 0.7
Care of dresses, shoes and linen	0.5	0.5	0	7.6	4.8	2.8
Child-care	0.7	0.9	+ 0.2	4.5	3.3	- 1.2
Other activities and personal hygiene	4.6	7.1	+ 2.5	4.0	5.6	+ 1.6
Total	14.9	14.9	0	38.9	33.5	- 5.2

Source: Baikova, Duchal and Zemcov, 1965: p.61.

Thus in absolute terms, women's position with regard to the time expenditure on housework has improved, but in relative terms, there has been hardly any change at all. The findings of other surveys reveal similar, if not greater discrepancies. Women spend 4-6 hours on domestic labour now, compared with 4 hours in 1924. Most of the extra is due to more intensive child care, (Yankova, 1970a: p.43).⁹ As

9. It seems that Yankova's figure for the year 1924 is applicable only to women currently employed. For instance, a sample survey of 12 time-budgets of unemployed workers in Leningrad and Vozesensk in 1924 and 1925 showed that housewives who were previously employed devoted 5.20 hours to housework daily (3.5 hours on a rest day), compared with 1.20 hours spent on domestic labour by unemployed men (0.86 hours on a rest day). Men's contribution to housework was limited to the chopping of wood and the carrying of water. All the remaining tasks, including the care of children, were performed largely by women, (Byt, vremya, demografiya, 1968:pp.34, 35). The findings of a more representative sample of 117 Moscow working class families in 1930 show that gainfully employed women workers spent 4.09 hours on housework daily (2.13 hours on a rest day), while full time housewives in working class families devoted as much as 10.24 hours to housework daily (6.37 on a rest day), (Byt, vremya, demografiya, 1968: p.52).

Yankova noted, women did not substantially benefit from the working days being shorter, because they simply spent longer with their children. A survey undertaken in Kostrom in 1960 showed that one hour reduction in working time produced only half an hour of free time - the other half being spent on housework, child care and sleep, (Pimenova, 1971: p.131). In an empirical study of the first effects on everyday life of the five-day week, and the extent of its social effectiveness, undertaken in a 'typical' industrial centre of Taganrog in 1967-1971, only 40% of the female respondents regarded the five day week as better for doing their housework (Gordon and Rimashevskaya, 1971: p.33). In fact, the process of rearing children has become increasingly complex and the new parental duties have been simply added to the existing household ones.

In 1924, women spent 1 hour a week on education and men 1 hour 50 minutes. In 1961, women had increased this 1.73 times (to 2 hours 13 minutes), but men had increased this 3.6 times (to 6 hours 36 minutes), (Yankova, 1970a: p.43). Their relative positions have therefore even worsened. Another survey revealed that men had 1.9 times as much leisure as women, did 1.2 times the voluntary work, self-education and touring, 1.7 times the study, 2.2 times the sport and 4 times the hobby-pursuit than women did (Andryushchkyavichene, 1970: p.84). On average, men tend to have twice as much leisure as women - about 5 hours per day. 15.7% of women have no leisure at all, the rest have about 2.8 hours a day, (Velichkene, 1970: p.97). Women's leisure and sleep tends to decrease with marriage and the number of children in the family. Unmarried women in the sample had 3.7 hours of leisure a day, while married women had 2.4 hours, (Velichkene, 1970: p. 97).

The disproportionate enjoyment of leisure between men and women was also marked throughout the time-budget study covering a weekend and one working day in the lives of manual workers in the large European

industrial centres of Dnepropetrovsk, Kostroma, Odessa, Zaporozh (with some additional material from Tagarong) and the small town of Pavlovsk Posad in the Moscow region. The survey directly involved one in every ten workers at 7 factories in the four main cities between 1965 and 1968, and 500 men and women in Pavlovsk Posad. Women spent almost half of their non-working, sleeping and eating time on housework and childcare (18 hours on average every week), compared with the quarter time spent by men (5-6 hours). This discrepancy was reflected, among other things, in the enjoyment of television. While men watched it on average 8-9 hours a week, women averaged only 3-4 hours, (Gordon and Klopov, 1972).

The inverse correlation between the number of children in the family and women's leisure and hours of sleep is shown in detail below.

TABLE VI: Use of Working Women's^{*} Week, by Number of Children

Time Use	Women with:					
	No Chil- dren	One Child	Two Chil- dren	Three Chil- dren	Four Chil- dren	Five & More Children
Total time (hours	168.0	168.0	168.0	168.0	168.0	168.0
<u>of which:</u>						
work and work-related	49.1	49.0	48.9	49.5	50.2	47.5
physiological needs	62.8	60.2	59.1	58.1	58.0	59.1
<u>including:</u>						
sleeping	50.0	47.0	45.0	44.3	44.5	45.4
eating, etc.	12.8	13.2	14.1	13.8	13.5	13.7
housework and						
personal care	28.1	43.8	46.7	48.5	51.9	52.0
relaxation	11.4	5.6	5.0	3.9	3.5	4.3
study and cultural						
pursuits	16.6	9.4	8.4	8.0	4.6	4.7

Source: Slesarev, 1965: p.159.

^{*}Survey of 8,468 women in a large enterprise in the city of Gorky.

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Source: Slesarev, 1965: p.159.

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The disruption caused by the arrival of the first child is self-evident. The working mother's sleep drops by three hours, her relaxation, study and cultural pursuits are practically halved, her housework substantially increased. This gets worse as more children arrive. Not surprisingly, many employed mothers postpone their second child, often indefinitely, and almost never have a third, (more on this in the fourth section of this and the sixth chapter).

We therefore find that Soviet working women spend substantially more time on housework, sleep fewer hours and have less time for study and cultural pursuits than their husbands. We also find that this situation has remained more or less unchanged throughout the course of Soviet history.¹⁰ Although the liberation of women from housework was demanded by Engels, Lenin and others as the first condition of women's emancipation, women still have a long way to go before the goal is attained. The failure to develop the use of sophisticated domestic equipment and support services on a scale wide enough to free women to pursue their self-development rather than just to join the labour force is largely explicable by the poverty of the USSR and the over-riding priorities of industrialization. At the present time, with society's greater affluence, these aids are developing faster than ever before and plans envisage their further extension. For instance, the 1964 Party Programme called not only for an expansion of the network of communal dining rooms in factories, offices, and houses, but it even envisaged a free communal dining room service within the next 10-15 years

10. The literature on this topic is fairly substantial and as the findings are consistent, I have quoted only the most recent ones. For more statistical data on the 1930s, refer to Kingsbury and Fairchild, (1938; p.249). Artemov et al, (1967); Petrosian, (1965) and Baikova, Duchal, Zemcov, (1965), are very detailed/recent time budget studies covering the following geographical areas: Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Gor'kovskaya, Rostovskaya, Sverdlovskaya and Ivanovskaya oblast'. The findings of a research conducted in Leningrad (revealing the same pattern of unequal leisure distribution) are cited in Kharchev, (1964) and Kharchev and Golod, (1971).

(Programma i ustav KPSS, 1964: pp.164-5). Although this is too optimistic, there is no doubt that the gap between the notion of socialized domestic labour and its practical implementation will get narrower.

It is less easy to ascribe the continuance of traditional sex roles to objective obstacles. Sex-role stereotyping is being eroded by spreading and deepening urbanization and education, but only partially and rather slowly. A significant proportion of Soviet men tends to hold traditional 'male chauvinist' views on sex-roles in marriage and consequently refuse to participate in the more arduous and unpleasant parts of running a home. Attitudes that woman's primary place is that of the keeper of the family hearth and that housework is beneath man's dignity are still fairly widespread, even among the educated and young.

Rural surveys conducted near Moscow in the years 1964-1967 revealed that 25% of those questioned, included the young and the intelligentsia, believed that it was 'permissible to punish one's wife'. 20-30% of those questioned held that if possible, it was 'better for women to concern themselves only with housework and child-rearing' (of the intelligentsia group, only 9% agreed with this), (Arutyunyan, 1968/69: pp.129-130). One cannot, however, only blame the men, for women are prepared to tolerate it. Despite the effects of almost universal public employment, women in their overwhelming majority do, in fact, accept a subordinate role within the family.

The sociological explanation for this is to be found in sex role socialization in preschool institutions. Mandel found that there is a remarkably close correlation between the percentage of children who were cared for in nursery and kindergartens and the percentage of fathers who co-operate very substantially, if not entirely equally, in the home. Soviet preschool institutions teach children self-help: serving their

meals, clearing the table, drying dishes, putting away toys, straightening their beds. There is absolutely no differentiation by sex in these duties. Yet today's fathers were themselves of nursery and kindergarten age when only about one fifth of the children could be accommodated. Today's surveys find 70% to 80% of preschool-age children of urban workers and white-collar people in child-care institutions. There is a reason to believe that taken together with all the other factors at work, this will be the percentage of fathers helping significantly in the home when the skills and roles^{to} which they are now being socialized as preschool children become part of their responsibilities as adults, (Mandel, 1975: pp.235-236).

However, the anticipated equally sharing family is likely to be in terms of time and not of specific duties because the future sex roles (nurturing versus home repairs) are instilled very early on. Boys and girls play with different toys after the age of three in kindergartens partly because of previous socialization at home, and partly because teachers are trained to instill responsibilities by future sex roles, (Mandel, 1975: p.236). As Weaver, observing children in Soviet kindergartens put it:

"The children imitate the work of the adults they know. The girls wash their doll's clothes and clean their toys, while the boys repair toy trucks and feed plastic animals", (Weaver, 1971: p.116).

As the sexual division of labour is likely to be maintained, the mother would continue to be in a disadvantageous position, even if less than today. She would still be losing time from work when someone has to stay at home to care for a sick child and she would still be forced to devote more time to housework, because of her overall responsibility. The observation below is likely to be applicable for some time to come:

"I have some friends who are both doctors of science, both professors. Both head large works, their salaries are identical. But in addition, the wife must think of their daughter's upbringing, and see that there are always starched shirts in the dresser for her husband and that the table is set when the guests arrive. So who is the head of the family?" (Libedinskaya, 1967: p.12).

II. Women's Employment

The persistence in the official priority assigned to women's employment has been caused by a combination of (1) ideological factors of Marxist theory of women's emancipation: (2) economic factors of industrialization (demand for female labour) and (3) specific demographic circumstances of a significant excess of females in the population - a consequence of wars and civil troubles. Engels' advocacy for 'the re-introduction of the entire female sex into public industry' has been put into practice almost completely. There is now nearly universal employment of women in the USSR.

The Employment of Women in the Non-Collective Farm Sector

<u>Year</u>	<u>Numbers (in millions)</u>	<u>%</u>
1922	1,560,000	25
1928	2,795,000	24
1940	13,190,000	39
1945	15,920,000	56
1950	19,180,000	47
1955	23,040,000	46
1960	29,250,000	47
1965	37,680,000	49
1970	45,800,000	51
1971	47,313,000	51
1972	48,707,000	51
1973	49,969,000	51
1974 (estimate)	51,200,000	51

Source: Vestnik statistiki 1975, No.1: p.86.

In 1959, when women constituted 55% of the population, they already amounted to 47% of state employed labour force and to 54% of the whole civilian labour force (all sectors). Since then, the number of women employed in the state sector had risen 1.7 times the 1959 level. Women now constitute 51% of the state-employed labour force and 52% of the collective farm labour force, (Vestnik statistiki, 1975/1: pp.82 and 88). They also do most of the work performed on the farm household private plots, (Matthews, 1972: pp.175-176).

However, the real situation of women's employment is grasped only if we look at the pattern of its distribution.

The Employment of Women in the Non-Collective Farm Sector by Branch (in %)

<u>Branch</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u> (estimated)
The whole economy	24	39	47	47	51	51
Industry	26	38	46	45	48	49
Agriculture	24	30	42	41	44	44
Forestry	12	32	32	21	22	21
Transport	7	21	28	24	24	24
Building	6	24	32	30	29	29
Trade & Public catering	19	44	57	66	75	76
Housing & municipal amenities	22	43	54	53	51	53
Health & social security	63	76	84	85	85	85
Education & culture	55	59	69	70	72	73
Art	30	39	37	36	44	45
Science	40	42	43	42	47	49
Credit & insurance	38	41	58	68	78	81
Administration	19	34	43	51	61	63

Source: Vestnik statistiki, 1975, No.1: p.86.

Despite the substantial increase in the role of women in industry, agriculture still remains the major sector of the economy in which women are employed. Indeed women still perform much of the 'physical' agricultural work. A comparison of the proportion of men and women among those engaged in primarily 'physical' agricultural occupations (excluding those in the private subsidiary economy) for the years 1926, 1939, 1959 and 1970 reveals little or no improvement in the position of women in this respect. The proportion in 1926 was 50% and in both 1939 and 1959 it stood at 58%. By 1970 it had declined only to 56%. 98% of milkmaids, 74% of workers in livestock feeding and 72% of orchard, vineyard, vegetable and melon workers in 1970 were women, (Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naeselenia 1970 goda. Tom VI, 1973: pp.165-169).

However, the absolute number of women has declined to approximately 35% of the 1926 level, corresponding, of course, to the over-all decline in the number of persons employed in agriculture. While older unskilled women are estimated to do most of the work at private plots, many young women in rural areas enter industry, construction, trade and the professions. The wide range of women's employment is an indication of its economic importance. Indeed, without the drawing into the economy of large numbers of women, the staffing of low-priority sectors, such as services, would have been virtually impossible. 91% of trade and public catering workers, i.e. sales assistants, managers of sales stands and buffets and cooks, are women; 84% of postal workers are women, (Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naeselenia 1970 goda. Tom VI, 1973).

But women are also employed extensively as manual workers in productive industry - they make up nearly half of the manual industrial labour force. They constitute an absolute majority in such branches as textiles, garments, fur, leather, footwear and food industries. A significant proportion of women is employed in industries producing

materials not traditionally handled by women. For example, more than 40% of those engaged in engineering and metal working are women.

TABLE VII: Women in the Total Number of Manual Workers by Branches of Industry (in %)

<u>Branches of Economy</u>	<u>1932</u> <u>(1st</u> <u>July)</u>	<u>1940</u> <u>(1st</u> <u>Nov)</u>	<u>1950</u> <u>(5th</u> <u>May)</u>	<u>1960</u> <u>(1st</u> <u>Jan)</u>	<u>1967</u> <u>(1st</u> <u>Jan)</u>	<u>1969</u> <u>(1st</u> <u>Jan)</u>
Engineering and metal-working	21	32	40	39	40	41
Cellulose and paper	29	49	50	43	47	49
Cement	22	29	37	36	36	36
Textiles	68	69	73	72	73	72
Garments	80	83	86	85	84	84
Leather and fur	41	61	62	64	64	68
Footwear	51	56	63	66	67	
Food						
<u>of which:</u>						
baking	28	58	61	69	70	74
confectionery	54	67	67	70	72	74
Total	35	43	46	44	46	48

Source: Trud v SSSR, 1968: p.120.
Vestnik statistiki, 1969/1: p.87; 1970/1: p.90; 1971/1: p.86.

Large numbers of women are also to be found in other occupations previously reserved for men.

TABLE VIII: 'Masculine' Occupations with High Numbers of Women in 1970

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Number of Women</u>	<u>Percentage of Women</u>
Chemical workers	392,000	68
Machine building: other machine tool operators	342,000	39
Workers in construction materials, glass and chinaware	312,000	56
Printing workers	149,000	72
Woodworking: planers, lathe and other machine tool operators	133,000	53
Machine building: forge and press operators	120,000	66
Leather workers	80,000	68
Paper and boxboard workers	57,000	65
Tram, trollybus and bus drivers	38,000	54

Source: Itogy vsesoiuznoi perepisi naselenia 1970 goda, Tom VI,
1973: pp.165-169.

As far as the more qualified work is concerned, here too women have achieved much. Indeed, they make up 59% of all employed specialists, though women only constitute 55% of the population aged 25-29 years. In 1973, there were 14 times as many women specialists employed in the economy as in 1940 and 79 times as many as in 1928. $7\frac{1}{2}$ million of them had specialized secondary education and nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ million had a higher education.

TABLE A: Women Specialists Employed in the Economy, 1928-1970

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>1928</u>	(1st Jan) <u>1940</u>	(1st July) <u>1955</u>	(1st Dec) <u>1960</u>	(15th Nov) <u>1965</u>	(16th Nov) <u>1970</u>	(15th Nov) <u>1973</u>
Women specialists (mln)	0.151	0.864	3.115	5.189	6.941	9.900	11.998
(% of all special- ists)	29	36	61	59	58	59	59
<u>of whom:</u>							
with secondary special education (mln)	0.086	0.552	1.960	3.324	4.423	6.382	7.601
(% of all such specialists)	30	37	66	63	62	63	63
<u>incl:</u>							
medical workers (mln)	.....	.....	0.818	1.088	1.336	.....	.....
technicians (mln)	.....	.....	0.414	0.706	1.056	.....	.....
teachers and cultur- al workers (mln)	.....	.....	0.738	0.861	1.058	.....	.....
<u>with higher education</u>							
(mln)	0.065	0.312	1.155	1.865	2.518	3.568	.....
(% of all such specialists)	28	34	61	53	51	52	.....
<u>incl:</u>							
doctors (mln)	0.028	0.085	0.247	0.302	0.366	.....	.....
engineers (mln)	.....	0.044	0.205	0.324	0.487	.....	.....
teachers and cult- ural workers (mln)	.....	0.145	0.737	0.901	1.242	.....	.....

Source: Trud v SSSR (1968: p.294).
Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1973: p.591.
Vestnik statistiki, 1975/1: p.88.

The most noteworthy feature is the high percentage of women engineers (40%), designers and draughtsmen (57%), scientific research personnel (40%) and teachers in higher education (43%), because such occupations have much smaller female proportions both in Western and Eastern Europe and North America. The proportions of women among librarians (95%), nurses (99%), kindergarten heads and teachers, and teachers in boarding schools (98%), doctors and dentists (77%) and medical administrators (53%) is also impressive, but these occupations

would be considered women's occupations also elsewhere (even if the proportion of women might not be quite so high, especially among doctors and heads of libraries).

What is also important is the fact that the proportion of women did not decrease in any significant way between 1959 and 1970 in any major 'mental' occupation, with the possible exception of doctors where deliberate efforts are being made to increase the proportion of men. In fact, in spite of the gradual normalization of the demographic composition of Soviet society, the proportion of women has increased in many of the more attractive, often previously masculine occupations. Between 1959 and 1970, the proportion of Soviet women engineers increased from 32% to 40%, of technicians from 45% to 59%, of technical workers in railway transport from 23% to 36% and of writers, journalists and editors from 35% to 45%, (Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naeselenia 1970 goda, Tom VI, 1973). Unfortunately, up-to-date information about the proportion of women working in the various specialized fields of the arts and sciences or of engineering and technology are not available.

Some insight may be provided by educational statistics, however, because changes in the proportion of women enrolled in each field is a good indicator of changes in the proportion of women employed in an occupation. With the exception of medical students, where there has been a slight decline in women's enrolment (although women still constitute an absolute majority), the educational statistics show remarkable consistency of subject-orientation by sex during the last two decades (Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1973: p.723). The wide range of women's professional employment in the Soviet economy is therefore unlikely to change in a significant way.

The elaboration of the 'horizontal' distribution of women among economic branches and occupations has revealed a great deal about the extent to which the sexual division of labour has been altered in the Soviet Union. Many occupations which are considered to be 'naturally' suitable to men in the West have been opened up to women. Their proportions in such occupations are so high (although they still fall short of complete equality) that one cannot talk of tokenism or the numerical preponderance of women in the population (which is now changing anyway). This, however, does not mean that the sexual division of jobs in low-grade sectors of the economy, which are characterized by lower wages than the over-all average.

1. Income Distribution

Data on earnings by sex are not published in official Soviet sources. One can reasonably assume that if there were no discrepancies, if male and female earnings were similar, the fact would be made public (although one perhaps should not make too much out of this, because the other socialist countries publish such data). An approach can be made to the problem, however, by comparing money-wage-levels in sectors of the economy and branches of industry known to have high percentages of women in the labour force with overall average earnings or with average earnings in sectors known to have large numerical preponderance of men.

TABLE IX: Sectors of the Economy and Branches of Industry, by Share of Labour-Force Female and Average Wage, 1950-1970.

<u>Sector/branch</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>
Whole economy				
% of women in labour force	47	47	51	51
average wage in roubles	64.20	80.60	122.00 ¹	134.9
<u>incl:</u>				
education and culture				
% of women in labour force	69	70	72	...
average wage in roubles	66.80	69.90	105.80	120.5
credit and insurance				
% of women in labour force	58	68	78	...
average wage in roubles	66.80	70.70	111.40	123.1
health and social security				
% of women in labour force	84	85	85	85
average wage in roubles	48.60	58.90	92.00	99
industry (manual workers)				
% of women in labour force	46	44	48	49
average wage in roubles	69	89.9	130.6	145.6
<u>incl:</u>				
textiles				
% of women in labour force	73	72	73	...
average wage in roubles	57.10	71.20	84.30	...
garments				
% of women in labour force	86	85	84	...
average wage in roubles	43.30	57.30	76.10	...

1. 1966: The figure for average wages in the whole economy comparable with the industry figures for 1966 was 99r. 20k.

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1970: pp.516, 519-520 and 1973: pp.583, 586-7.

The existence of an inverse relationship is self-evident; so is the noticeable rise in money wages in the last decade. For instance, wages of doctors and teachers at all levels were increased by 20% in the last few years (Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1973: p.587). Yet the gap between feminized professions and the national money-wage average is still noticeable. It is indisputable that 'feminisation' of a profession or branch in industry tends to hold down its status and rewards. This explains the effort to bring in more men. The enrolment figures for medical students do show a shift in favour of men, but this will take some time to make itself felt in the composition of the profession as a whole. Judging from the enrolment figures into teachers' training, the attempts to 'masculinize' teaching have not been entirely successful.

To gain further insight into the extent of the persistence of the sexual division of labour in the Soviet Union, we must examine more closely the vertical structure of occupations. For the proportion of women in higher-ranking jobs and political positions is significantly lower and declines sharply the nearer one gets to the top.

2. Positions of Authority

Women's achievements and participation at higher levels are significantly lower than men's both in employment and in political life. Although women make up one-half of the industrial labour force, they are employed as supervisors, shop chiefs, and in comparable leadership positions one-sixth to one-seventh as frequently as men, (Lennon, 1971: p.51).

TABLE X: Women Among Holders of Managerial Posts, 1957-1968/69 (%)

<u>Job</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1968/69</u>
<u>Industry</u>			
Foremen	21	20	...
Shop heads and deputy heads	14	12	...
Chief engineers	} 10	16	...
Directors		6	...
<u>Medicine</u>			
Doctors	82	...	...
Heads and deputy heads of medical institutions	57	...	...
Source: <u>Zhenshchiny i deti</u> , 1961: pp.143-144, 146 and 1963: pp.123-124.			

In 1969, men comprised only 15% of all medical personnel, but constituted 50% of all chief physicians and executives of medical institutions (Lennon, 1971: p.50). This is officially attributed not to prejudice on the part of the appointing authorities, but to the fact that women lose more time (through childbearing) at the beginning of their careers. Moreover, male doctors tend to have fewer domestic responsibilities than their female colleagues and can therefore take more advantage of further courses, consequently raising their qualifications and earning power.

A similar pattern can be observed in the teaching profession with perhaps more significant over-all consequences, because the school is the major socializing agency.

TABLE XI: Women Teachers in Day Schools

<u>All Women Teachers</u>	<u>In thous.</u>	<u>In %</u>
1950/51	999	70
1960/61	1312	70
1970/71	1669	71
1973/74	1712	71
<u>out of which in 1973/74:</u>		
directors of primary schools	4	80
directors of eight year schools	16	31
directors of ten year schools	13	27
deputy directors of eight year schools	21	61
deputy directors of ten year schools	69	64
Class teachers (excluding teachers - directors)	1490	80

Source: Vestnik statistiki, 1975/1: p.89.

Women make up 71% of the entire teaching force, with a big majority in every category of classroom teacher except one. 87% of primary school teachers and 75% of the subject teachers in secondary schools' classes are women. Only among teachers of aesthetic and technical subjects are they outnumbered by men, (Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1970: p.632). But when it comes to promotion to school headships, they do much less well than their numbers might lead one to expect. True, women make up a majority of primary school heads, but separate primary schools are very few in number. The normal organizational unit is the eight-year or ten-year school, which includes the primary department. In these schools, women have only about a one-in-four chance, on average, of becoming heads. Their proportion among deputy heads is much larger, but even that does not correspond to their numbers in the profession.

What this means is that most children grow up in a school where they are taught mainly by women under the direction of men. This may in turn reinforce traditional attitudes towards sex roles. It is not unreasonable to assume that being used to seeing a man in the dominant position, even in a largely feminized profession may shore up the idea (often current in the home as well) of the man as the final figure of authority. There is some evidence to suggest that this does happen, (Grant, 1972: p.7).

The proportionate representation of women in positions of authority exists neither in the 'feminized' professions nor in the economy as a whole. In addition, the over-all proportion of women tends to be lower than average in the highest-grade professions, though it is rising. Data on the position of women among scientific workers shows the same picture - a decreasing proportion of women as one progresses upward through the ranks or to higher academic degrees.

TABLE XII: Women Scientists, 1945-1970

Indicator	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1973
Women scientists ('000)	59.0	81.6	128.7	254.8	359.9	439.5
(% of all scientists)	36	36	36	38	39	40
<u>of total:</u>						
without higher degree ('000)	47.0	...	98.8	218.6	296.1	355.9
(% of all in category)	43.0	...	40	42	44	45
with higher degree ('000)	12.0	...	29.9	36.2	63.8	83.6
(% of all in category)	22	...	27	24	26	26
<u>of whom, with degree of:</u>						
Candidate ('000)	11.4	...	28.8	34.8	60.7	79.6
(% of all candidates)	25	...	29	26	27	28
Doctor ('000)	0.6	...	1.1	1.4	3.1	4.00
(% of all doctors)	7	...	10	9	13	13
<u>of total:</u>						
without academic status ('000)	42.4	62.9	102.4	210.9	309.6	384.7
(% of all in category)	42	41	39	40	41	42
with academic status ('000)	16.6	18.7	26.3	43.9	50.3	54.8
(% of all in category)	27	27	28	32	29	28
<u>of whom, with status of:</u>						
Junior Scientific Worker or Assistant ('000)	9.4	8.9	13.6	25.0	24.3	23.3
(% of all in category)	48	52	51	51	50	49
Senior Scientific Worker ('000)	3.5	4.4	5.8	8.3	9.8	11.5
(% of all in category)	31	30	29	29	26	24
Reader ¹ ('000)	3.2	4.8	6.2	9.5	14.4	17.8
(% of all in category)	15	17	17	20	21	22
Academician ² or Professor ('000)	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.1	1.8	2.2
(% of all in category)	6	7	7	9	10	10

1. Dotsent

2. Including Corresponding Members of the Academy of Sciences

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1970: p.657.Zhenshchiny i deti, 1969: p.107.Vestnik statistiki, 1975/1: p.91.

Although 40% of all scientists in 1973 were women (which is a much higher proportion than any other country can offer), they constituted only 13% of all doctors of science and 10% of all professors, academicians and corresponding members of the Academy of Science. It should be noted, however, that some improvement is evident in a number of ways. Between 1950 and 1973 the percentage of doctorates held by women increased from 7.2% to 13.2%. Similarly, the percentage of women among professors and members of the academies of science increased from 5.6% to 10.2%. At the dotsent level, the increase was from 14.7% to 22%.

Despite these improvements, males dominate the upper academic and research ranks of all the scientific fields just as they dominate the top leadership and administrative posts in other branches of the economy. No women are to be found in the upper reaches of the administration of the Academy of Science. There are very few women among the full and corresponding members of the all-union, republican, and specialized academies. Few women are employed in the top administrative positions of the many research institutes of the academies. Similarly, few women scientific workers have won prizes such as the Lenin prize.

It is instructive to look at the role played by women in the government and in the party. The data reveal relatively high proportion of women in the largely ceremonial soviets as well as the very small percentage of women in positions of real power in the republican governments. The role of women at the upper reaches of the all-union government is even more insignificant. Women now constitute 47% of deputies to local Soviets; 38% of deputies to Autonomous Republic Supreme Soviets; 31% of the USSR Supreme Soviet; 32.5% of people's judges and 49.6% of people's assessors, (Vestnik statistiky, 1975/1: pp.84-85), while the proportion of women in the Union Republics Councils of

Ministers is only 5% and in the USSR Council of Ministers 1%, (Women in the Soviet Union: Statistical Returns, 1970: p.16).

The picture is no different when one looks at the role of women in the Party, where women's share of membership is only just over a fifth.

TABLE XIII: Party Membership, by Sex, 1929-1970

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>1929</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1970</u>
All Party members (mln)	1.535	3.872	5.760	6.340	8.239	11.758	13.180	14.5 ¹
of whom: men (mln)	1.325	3.295	4.781	5.028	6.632	9.383	10.386	11.5 ¹
(% of total)	86.3	85.1	83.0	79.3	80.5	79.8	78.8	79 ¹
women (mln)	0.210	0.577	0.979	1.312	1.607	2.375	2.794	3.0 ¹
(% of total)	13.7	14.9	17.0	20.7	19.5	20.2	21.2	21 ¹

Source: Rigby, 1968: p.361, and
Kommunist, No.3, February 1972: p.35.

1. Approximately.

Even in the general membership the proportion of women is small, but at the level of real significance and power - the Central Committee - the role of women has been miniscule. The proportion of women in the Party Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission is only 4%, and in the Politburo 0%. The same applies to the Komsomol. The organization caters for 22 million youths, more than half of which are women. Yet in 1964, among first and second secretaries of district committees of Komsomol in the Russian federation, there were only 19 women, (Kurganov, 1968: p.32). One should, however, note a trend upwards. For the proportion of women among the heads of organizations of governmental administration, Party, Komsomol, trade union and other social organizations has increased from 26% in 1959 to 32% in 1970, (Itogy vsesoiuznoi

perepisi naselenia 1970 goda, Tom VI, 1973).

Nonetheless, we have a political situation where women have had very little to say directly about policies which have very intimately affected them and their role in Soviet society. The sociological explanation of this is to be found in women's dual and contradictory role as both domestic and wage labourers, but also in the effects of sex-role socialization. Young women in the Komsomols are not yet overburdened with domestic responsibilities in the same way as their married counterparts, yet they are virtually absent from Komsomol leadership. Let us therefore look at early socialization in greater detail.

III. Maternity and Child-care

Compared with the Western capitalist countries, the social provisions for maternity and child care are the key areas of comparative privilege of women in the socialist countries. Apart from some false starts (e.g. children's communes)¹¹ and unresolved debates (e.g. board-

11. Although children's colonies (former orphanages) and communes were seen by many Bolsheviks as potential alternatives to the school, having the advantage of separating children from the bourgeois influence of the family and developing the habits of communal life, this was a virtue made out of necessity. For these institutions catered primarily for homeless children and juvenile delinquents. Because of the magnitude of the problem (there were 7 million homeless children in the 1920s) these institutions were designed for a significant proportion of children, but they never became a general form of child upbringing.

ing schools),¹² there has been a straight line of improvement. In socialist theory and practice, maternity and child care have been considered as social rather than individual matters. As Kollontai and Krupskaya put it:

"The second demand is the acceptance in practice and not only in words that maternity is 'sacred'. Society must arrange all forms of 'aid-stations' for women, that will give them moral and material support during this very important period of their lives", (Kollontai, 1972a: p.25).

"How can one help the mother, suffering under the weight of child-birth, child-rearing and education? The answer is clear - the government needs to undertake not only to look after the woman during her pregnancy, during and after childbirth; but it must also establish tens of thousands of creches, kindergartens, children's colonies, children's communities, where children would receive care and food, where they would live, develop and learn under conditions ten times better than those which could be created by a caring mother singlehanded", (Krupskaya, 1938: pp.192-3).

This was also the policy of the Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, the founding of which Kollontai regarded as her most important accomplishment, (Kollontai, 1972b: pp.37-38). The Department was set up in 1918 and its guiding principles were as follows:

- 1) Childbearing is the social function of the woman and the duty of the government is to enable her to fulfil this function
- 2) It is the duty of the government to educate the mother-citizen
- 3) The child must be physically protected, breastfeeding is therefore recommended as a social duty of the woman
- 4) Upbringing of the child takes place in the atmosphere of a socialist family, (Lrbore-Ralsh, 1920).

12. The debate on boarding schools as institutions providing communal upbringing for all or most pupils was sparked off by Khrushchev's proposals for educational reforms at the XX. and XXI. Party Congresses, and by Strumilin's article entitled "Family and Community in the Society of the Future", published in Novyi Mir in 1960. The article provoked a strong response and opposition both from the general public and many psychologists and sociologists. In fact, the policy goal of providing 'universal' boarding schools was dropped only a few years after it was announced. For a summary of these debates and the discussion of the present day boarding schools, see Osborn, 1970: pp.64-67 and Matthews, 1972: pp.273-274. Dodge, 1966: pp.87-89.

On May 25, 1918, at a Congress of the Commissars of Social Welfare, a resolution was passed to set up sub-departments of protection of motherhood and childhood within each guberniya. By 1919, 28 districts had set up these sub-departments, although the actual number of institutions directly caring for young mothers and babies was negligible, (Vinokurov, 1919). By 1923, the number of sub-departments for the Protection of Motherhood and Infancy rose to 524, (Vinokurov, 1920). However, in 1923, the critical condition of the country necessitated a withdrawal of support by the central government for this work, and its transfer to local enterprises, factories, Consumer and Housing Co-operatives, Zhenotdel, village organizations and this naturally slowed down their expansion. In fact, the total number of these institutions reached the 1922 level again only in 1927, (Smith, 1928: p.175).

From 1927 onwards, these institutions again continued to expand. Kingsbury and Fairchild visited the Institute for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood in Moscow several times in the period 1927-1931 and reported about its organization. It had seven divisions: mother and child houses (former maternity homes), children's homes, houses for bezprizornye children, children's consulting rooms, women's consulting rooms, juridicial consultation and village consultation. Kingsbury and Fairchild claim that by 1934, the number of consultation homes reached 2,474 and the number of industrial health centres was 2,971, with over a million and a half workers employed in this particular sector, (Kingsbury and Fairchild, 1935: pp.152-4). These health consultations also served an educational purpose, i.e. mothers learned from lectures given by doctors about hygiene, abortion and contraception etc.

However, a real expansion of health facilities for women and babies took place only in the last three decades.

TABLE XIV: Women's Clinics, Children's Clinics and Health Centres (in thous).

Year:	1940	1950	1960	1965	1970	1973
Numbers:	8.603	11.3	16.4	19.333	20.955	21.758

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1973: p.760.

The length of paid and unpaid maternity leave and other maternity benefits (e.g. the security of her job and the seniority of her position) and the widespread provision of child care facilities are the most visible privileges women in the socialist countries enjoy over those in the capital ones. Every employed Soviet woman gets 112 days off at full pay (while in Britain she only gets ^{£7}/a week), half of it before the child is born. She may stay off her job the rest of the baby's first year (three years in Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia) without losing seniority or position. This is especially important for the length-of-service bonuses, pension qualifications, and the like. No capitalist firms provide similar guarantees and benefits. A new Soviet mother must also be given her regular annual paid vacation immediately after maternity leave if that is what she wants, regardless of normal vacation schedules, (Mandel, 1975: pp. 6, 114).

When we now look at the provisions made for children, the picture is equally impressive. In fact, some authors have suggested that children in the Soviet Union are rather privileged. It is a privilege not of material goods - although chances are they eat better and have better medical care than the rest of the population - but a privilege born of the care and concern of the adults in society, (Bronfenbrenner, 1970; Sidel, 1972). What we need to assess here is (1) the extent to which 'adults' refers only to women and (2) the extent to which child care is shared between individual families and public facilities, i.e.

the extent to which Makarenko guide lines were put into practice:

"It is particularly important that a boy's or girl's feeling of solidarity should not be based only on the narrow pattern of the family; it should extend beyond the boundaries of the family into the broad sphere of Soviet life and the life of mankind in general", (Makarenko, 1954).

In fact, looking after and bringing up children is a component of reproduction of labour power which has been growing as parents have become aware of the possibilities of helping their children and have become more conscious of social expectations and demands in respect of upbringing. But child care has remained women's responsibility - and children are looked after by their mothers /grandmothers as well as women teachers in nurseries and kindergartens. There seems to be no effort to recruit men into fields in which they would be dealing with small children.

As thousands of letters published in the mass media and many sociological studies point out, this is what the overwhelming majority of Soviet women want:

"The right to enter any profession, yes. The right to have the number of children you personally wish, yes. The right to make decisions jointly with your husband, or not to have a husband, or to get rid of him yes. Most divorces are now initiated by women in the USSR. But if you have a child, or more than one, rearing is yours, the woman's task. So the relationship is 'equal' in your eyes if the husband does everything but participate in child-rearing and say, major cooking", (Mandel, 1975: pp.227-228).

Surveys show that a majority of mothers would rather have their children cared for at home, if not by themselves then by a grandmother, a relative, a friend, even a paid child-minder, (Mandel, 1975: p.229). Many grandmothers are, however, thought to be rather backward in their knowledge of and attitudes to child-rearing. Although some cities (e.g. Minsk) have instituted child care classes for babushki, this has met with some resistance, and there is a general feeling that this is not a satisfactory solution, (Grant, 1972: p.7; Mandel, 1975: pp.222-223).

There are, however, some signs of increasing male interest in nurturing. Mandel photographed a young couple, where not only was the father pushing the pram, but it was he who would stop and bend over and tuck the cover in around the baby's chin or put the pacifier in its mouth. Mandel also came across two young men in their twenties, clearly working class, pushing baby carriages side by side. As they strolled along, they fussed over the babies exactly as mothers would. They quietened them, arranged their clothing, covers, and so forth, and exchanged advice with each other. When one cried a lot, the father picked her up and carried her in his arms, (Mandel, 1975: pp.236, 237).

Yet the main relief for mothers comes from public nurseries, kindergartens and schools. The network of these institutions is more developed than in Western countries and many visitors to the Soviet Union have been impressed with their extent and quality, (Osborn, 1970; Bronfenbrenner, 1970; Weaver, 1971; Sidel, 1972; Mandel, 1975).

TABLE XV: Pre-School Institutions, 1928-1973 (in thous.)

<u>Year:</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>
Total	4.3	46.0	48.4	45.2	54.2	70.6	91.9	102.7	110.1
<u>of which:</u> kindergartens and nursery schools	2.5	24.0	28.4	25.6	31.6	43.6	67.5	83.1	93.0
<u>of which:</u> urban areas	2.2	14.4	18.0	17.0	21.0	28.6	42.3	49.0	51.4
rural areas	0.3	9.6	10.5	8.6	10.6	15.0	25.2	34.1	41.6
Nurseries	1.8	22.0	20.0	19.6	22.6	27.0	24.3	19.6	....
<u>of which:</u> urban localities	1.5	9.2	8.2	9.3	11.2	14.7	14.5	12.5	....
rural areas	0.3	12.8	11.8	10.3	11.3	12.3	9.8	7.0	....

Sources: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1972: pp.634-635 and
1973: pp.708-709.
Zhenshchiny i deti, 1969: p.125.

There was a period of something like stagnation in the growth of pre-school institutions following the early years of industrialization and mass female introduction into the labour force, but the network is developing fast. It has more than doubled during the last decade. The proportion of enrolled children has greatly increased too.

TABLE XVI: Children in Permanent Pre-School Institutions (in thous.)

<u>Year:</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>
Total (thous,)	186	1953	2066	1788	2542	4428	7673	9281	10460
(% of eligible children)	...	....	....	....	....	129	232	318	359
<u>of total:</u>									
in urban localities	166	1422	1453	1380	2005	3565	6193	7380	8190
in rural localities	020	531	613	408	537	863	1480	1901	2270
<u>of total:</u>									
of nursery age	56	781	595	619	829	1455	2420	2580	2955
<u>incl:</u>									
in nurseries	56	781	595	619	811	313	1466	1182	1099
in nursery-schools *	-	-	-	-	18	142	954	1398	1856
of kindergarten age	130	1172	1471	1169	1713	2973	5254	6702	7505
<u>incl:</u>									
in nursery-schools *	-	-	-	-	....	....	....	....	....
in kindergartens	130	1172	1471	1169	....	....	....	....	....

* Institutions accepting children aged 0-7; the proportion of these is growing.

Source: National Khoziaistvo, 1972: pp.634-635 and 1973: pp.708-709.
Zhenshchiny i deti, 1969: pp.125-127;
Vestnik statistiki, 1971/9: p.90 and 1975/1: pp.93-94.

The Soviet Union now provides day or twenty-four-hour care for virtually every urban child whose parents desire it, and for every farm child during the planting and harvesting season. Fees are charged, but may cover only one tenth to two thirds of the total cost for the children, (Osborn, 1970: p.59). They are remittable in whole or part in the case of badly-off parents. Children are accepted from the age of three months, although relatively few mothers place them before one year.

The ratio between staff and children is quite good - urban nurseries average 108 children and 14 staff - 1 nurse to 7-8 children, (Osborn, 1970: p.58). A 20% pay rise to preschool teachers in 1972 was

designed to attract and keep better-trained personnel, with complete higher education in the field. The director of a creche must have higher school special education; kindergarten teachers must have either two or three year courses at a pedagogical college, (Weaver, 1971: pp.43-55).

During the first year of life in a Soviet nursery, a great deal of attention is paid to developing the children's sensory-motor function and their language ability. Through play, children are further stimulated to advance through each stage of development from crawling to standing to walking. They are methodically encouraged by warm, loving teachers who follow a plan laid out by the preschool institute. The teachers know at what age children should be able to roll a ball, climb, take short walks and play with special toys geared to aid their development (and re-inforce their sex-roles!).

The kindergarten and the nursery are thought of as collectives, and the children are taught to consider themselves as part of the collective. There is, nevertheless, a good deal of individual instruction in addition to group instruction. Much attention is paid to holding the child's interest, (Weaver, 1971: pp.65-111; Sidel, 1972: p.161). Following the guide line of Makarenko, the young child is taught a few basic rules of 'socialist morality' (politeness, unselfishness, tidyness, working for others and self-discipline), (Weaver, 1971: p.104).

The main problem seems to be the higher incidence of colds and children's diseases. It has been observed that the children of 'housewives' are less liable to fall ill than those of any other group, and that children brought up in institutions are ill much more often than those kept at home, in spite of the provision of medical inspection and care in the institutions, (Zdravookhranenie Rossiskoi Federatssii, No.11,

1970: pp.29-33). The evidence is not, however, entirely conclusive. A survey carried out in the city of Gor'ky showed that 27.5 children per 1000 in nurseries were suffering from rickets, but 38.9% of those not in nurseries had it (Slesarev, 1965: p.160).

Some of the older children are now looked after at school after normal hours till their parents can take them home. The 'extended day school' lengthens the school day to a total of 9-12 hours. It also provides all meals. It began as a volunteer parents' movement about a decade ago, when the built-in after-school child-supervisor, the living-in mother-in-law, widowed by World War II, ceased to be a universal phenomenon, (Mandel, 1975: pp.229-230). It had opened on an experimental basis in 1955, and was recommended for the entire Russian republic in the following academic year, but it was taken up in earnest only when the experiment with the boarding school began to falter, (Madison, 1968: p.75).

TABLE XVII: Extended-Day Schools and Groups, 1960-1970

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>
Extended-day schools ¹ (thous)	11.693	35.460	64.251
<u>of which:</u>			
urban	8.427	18.302	24.726
rural	3.266	17.158	39.525
Children in extended-day groups (mln)	0.611	2.445	5.188
<u>of whom:</u>			
in urban schools	0.458	1.484	2.668
in rural schools	0.153	0.961	2.520

1. Including schools with extended-day groups

Source: Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka i kultura v SSSR, 1971: p.92.

The 'extended day' schools and groups are not, however, without their faults. For instance, 13 years of experience with the extended day programme in Tula province shows decline rather than a way forward. Tula authorities initiated extended-day groups as well as entire schools in 1960

but thirteen years later, only extended groups were in operation, the experimental extended-day school being abolished after seven years. The main faults with the programme lie in the fact that children do most of their activities in one room - classes in the morning, homework and play in the afternoon, (Kozhevnikova, 1973). In Czechoslovakia, after-school centres are unpopular among the children for the same reason - they are too much like a school.

Children are also cared for during the summer holiday. Although many parents prefer to take their children with them on vacation or send them to the close farm relatives that nearly every family still has, 19 million children went on organized holidays in 1970 as compared with 5.8 million in 1950. The rapid growth in the provision of children's holiday camps during the last decade is shown in the table below - the numbers have more than doubled:

Pioneer Holiday Camps (in thous.)

Year:	1960	1965	1970	1972	1973
Number:	4464.1	6927.7	8805.6	9037.4	9325.3

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1972: p.636
and 1973: p.710.

Pre-school institutions, children's organized holidays and after-school-hours' guidance and supervision for school-aged children have therefore become permanent features of Soviet life. Initially, 'ultra-radicals' such as Kollontai and Lunacharski considered these institutions as alternatives to family upbringing, or at least as institutions which would be more important than child-rearing within the individual family. The dominant and consistent view has however been that these institutions supplement and

guide parental upbringing. The child progresses from a small group (the family) to a larger one (the nursery) to finally take its place in society. Young people in the contemporary Soviet Union have virtually no prejudice against kindergartens, and criticism against creches remains on the level of 'health protection' of infants. Demand exceeds supply, but the gap has been considerably narrowed. Yet in spite of all these provisions, most Soviet families have no more than two children - three is an exception and one is more frequent than two. What we therefore have to do now is to examine the impact which the combination of employment and motherhood has had on Soviet women's fertility. What we also have to consider is the nature of the conflicting interests of the state to drive for a population growth and individual women to exercise control over their bodies and fertility.

IV. Population Growth

Although emphasis on rapid population growth has played a prominent part in Soviet social policy, Marxism and Leninism have tackled the population problem in a very unsystematic and scattered way. Basic Marxist propositions relating to population and society can be found (1) in the critique of the Malthusian principle and of the 'universal law of population', (2) in the statement that each type of society has its own 'peculiar law of population', which is historically valid within its own limits, (3) in the theory of surplus value and relative surplus population, (4) in the dual role of man as consumer and producer and (5) in the appreciation of an 'abstract possibility' of over-population which might lead a Communist society to 'regulate the production of human beings', (Macura, 1974).

All these postulates are demographically relevant, but it is quite difficult to select those which could influence or have influenced population policy in the USSR. Fortunately, such a speculation does not seem

to be necessary because the 'historical validity of these postulates implies that policies are primarily affected by the demographic situation and its economic and social correlates in each country concerned. Because of this, we are no longer faced with the problem of discrepancy between theory and practice. A systematic classical socialist theory of population simply does not exist and the scattered individual postulates imply that the historical analysis of this phenomenon on an empirical level is sufficient. This section will therefore present some underlying demographic data and then evaluate legislation relating to abortion, contraception and various 'family incentives' measures.

1. The Demographic Background

Throughout the whole Soviet history until recently there has been a significant excess of females in the population of child-bearing years - a consequence of wars and civil troubles. Because of the mass slaughter of men during the second world war, 10% - 15% of women in fertile-age category could not be fitted into the framework of the monogamous pairing family after the war. The relatively undisturbed last quarter-century has produced a certain normalisation. Yet despite these facts and the high level of female employment, the Soviet birthrate remained high in international terms until 1960, after which it fell sharply.

TABLE XVIII: Crude Birthrate in the USSR

<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>
31.2	26.7	25.7	24.9	18.4	17.4	17.8	17.8	17.6

Source: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1973: p.43.

The small contingents of women born in the hard war-time and immediate post-war years were coming to child-bearing age, and women in the older age-groups - 25 and over, were restricting births more than formerly by abortion and contraception - mainly for reasons common in other industrial societies.¹³

It should be however pointed out that the USSR still has a higher birth rate than most industrial societies, especially the socialist countries in Eastern Europe. This can be largely accounted for by higher fertility among the less urbanized ethnic minorities and peasant women generally. Far and away the most important method of birth control is abortion rather than contraception.

2. Contraception

The official attitude towards contraception in the Soviet Union has been vague and ambiguous. The Communist Party took Lenin's argument against Malthusianism as its guiding principle and regarded birth control as a conscious limitation of the race, as a bourgeois solution for social ills and overpopulation. Woman's right to choose for herself, to have full control over her body has not much entered into the argument. Nevertheless, contraception was never officially suppressed in Soviet Russia, although little was done to publicize and encourage it, or to produce it.

The first attempt to deal with the problem of contraception occurred in early 1923. The Second Conference of the Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood did not endorse birth control as such, but it authorized the formation of a commission to investigate all known methods, work out new ones and make recommendations. In the autumn of 1923, Dr. Levy, member of the commission, issued a cautiously worded brochure which was implicitly against the use of birth control. In the summer of 1924, a Conference of the Department in Leningrad authorized certain methods and forms of contraception which could be used only with

¹³. For a more detailed account of the outstanding demographic features of Soviet society, see Dodge, 1966: pp.5-31; 251-258 and Matthews, 1972: pp.3-31.

doctors' recommendation. At the December 1925 Congress of the Department, Dr. Gans and Dr. Lebedeva, the Director of the Moscow Department, advocated the spreading of birth control as the only measure which could curb abortion. This Congress then resulted in an official endorsing of the dissemination of birth control method through consultations, as the best method of fighting abortion, (Smith, 1928: pp.185-7).

Thus we can see that from the beginning of Soviet history, there was no unanimous agreement as to whether to use contraception at all, and if so, in what form. Nevertheless, the positive attitude towards contraception seems to have prevailed in the official circles. Soon after the 1925 Congress, a small factory for manufacturing birth prevention was established in Moscow. The increased revenue from selling contraceptives from 250 rubles in 1927 to 17,000 rubles in 1928, 40,000 rubles in 1929 and 60,000 rubles in 1930, (Kingsbury and Fairchild, 1935: p.154), meant that contraceptives either became more costly or more popular. The latter seems more likely. Kingsbury and Fairchild reported from the Moscow Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood in the late 1920s that it had an educational programme on contraceptives, where both mechanical and chemical contraceptives were explained and provided and which was well attended.

However, this Institute reached a negligible proportion of Soviet women. The majority of the population lived in the rural areas and with hardly any rubber industry in the country in the day of the condom, contraception was nearly impossible. Moreover, the actual reliability of the condom which was produced before the war was very low. Small-scale tests in 1940 showed its effectiveness to be only 65-80%. This has improved - 1966 tests revealed 97% effectiveness, but its efficiency still stood at only 80%-82%. The cap, spermicide and the rhythm method showed 87% efficiency.

Chemical alternatives for the condom are even less reliable. One (pokoceptin) on test proved to have only 10%-14% efficiency and was later withdrawn. The contraceptive pill (with its efficiency rate of nearly 100%) is not yet generally available. As of 1973, the pill was only on the equivalent of the list the United States government calls 'New and Unofficial Drugs', although it is legal and sold by prescription. Of about a quarter-million women of childbearing age in a large Moscow district, only about three thousand were on the pill and five-thousand had had intra-uterine devices inserted. The reason there were more of the latter is that women were afraid of the effects of hormones on body chemistry and the doctors agreed, (Mandel, 1975: p.238).

This lack of use of the latest methods of preventing conception (and the situation in the countryside is undoubtedly worse) has led to excessive reliance on abortion. In other words, abortion is the major method of birth control in the Soviet Union rather than a safety net for the failure of contraception as it is in other countries. The Soviet Union has a long history of socially acceptable legal and illegal abortions and it is not considered unacceptable or 'sinful' to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

3. Abortion

The Soviet Union was the first European country which legalized abortion - it was legalized in 1920. However, further information is needed to be able to arrive at a correct conclusion about the significance of this legislation. First of all, it was enacted quite independently of the general matrimonial legislation. The actual decree was signed by the People's Commisar of Health and the People's Commissar of Justice.

Secondly, the decree made quite explicit the regime's disapproval of abortion, which it regarded as a serious evil to the community which must

be fought by propaganda. Legalized abortion was justified by the current difficult economic situation and by the regime's recognition of the futility of prohibiting it under the circumstances. The decree was designed to 'protect the health of women', to save them from the danger of illegal, back street abortions, (Schlesinger, 1949: p.44). The actual practice was not very different from this legal theory. According to Kingsbury and Fairchild, consultations on abortions were openly announced and freely held at the Moscow Institute for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, although the Institute also carried on propaganda to show the unhealthiness and danger of abortions.

Nevertheless, the legislation led to a significant increase in the abortion rate. Fanina Halle visited the abortion department of the Moscow Institute and claimed that the existing thirteen abortaria were not enough. In 1930, 175,000 abortions were performed in Moscow, 55,000 in one abortarium alone, (Halle, 1932: pp.140-142). In 1934, 73% of pregnancies in Moscow were terminated by abortion. The figures for Moscow, Leningrad, and other large cities were pronounced 'massive' and 'horrifying' by some of the more respected party members, (Geiger, 1968: p.73). In 1936, legalized abortion was abolished.¹⁴ It was justified on the same grounds on which it was legalized more than a decade ago, i.e. danger to health. The operation itself was now considered so dangerous that the state had to protect women from its possible consequences.¹⁵

In fact, this was not the reason for the enactment of the 1936 decree. We must view this particular decree within the context of the

14. The 1936 legislation banned first-pregnancy abortions, while all abortions were banned in 1944.

15. English translation of the decree appears in Serebrennikov, (1937: pp.261-277) and Schlesinger, (1949: pp.269-272).

family legislation of the 1930s and 1940s as a whole.¹⁶ The abolition of legalized abortion was a legal response to some specific social problems of that period, which I have mentioned above. The rise of Hitlerism was another problem and it seems quite feasible to argue that the prohibition of abortion was a response to Stalin's fear of the military and economic implications of the declining birth rate. On the other hand, as this began only five years after abortion was prohibited, the abolition of legalized abortion could not have achieved the desired effect on population growth in such a short time.

The 1936 law prohibiting abortion also reflects the totalitarian nature of the Soviet government, and the dictatorial nature of Stalin. The proposed legislation was publicly debated and opposed by many women,¹⁷ but Stalin used his law-making and executive power for the re-shaping of the law in disregard of the public opinion. (Incidentally, after this experience, Stalin never used the public opinion test again).

As it was, this legislation was a very unpopular measure, a fact, which was realized by the post-Stalin leadership, (Heer, 1968). Abortion was re-legalized in 1955 and the precise timing of this legislation was not accidental. It was shaped within the specific political situation rather than demographic, economic or ideological decision. It was a popular gesture of the new leadership to the population, living in crowded housing conditions, with no desire to have large families. This argument can be supported by the fact that other conditions remained virtually the same as they were in the 1930s. The birth rate was extremely low during and after the Second World War, (due to wartime

16. The English translation of the 1936 and the 1954 legislation appears in Schlesinger, (1946: pp.269-279; 367-390).

17. Some of the views expressed in this debate are published in Schlesinger, (1949: pp.251-269).

separations and the devastating conditions in the immediate post-war period), with the same implications as two decades earlier. As the international political climate of the 1950s, characterized by the cold war, was not potentially dissimilar from that associated with the rise of Hitlerism, there could not have been less need for population than there was in 1936.

The popularity of re-legalization of abortion was reflected in the rapid increase of the number of performed abortions.

TABLE XIX: Abortions in USSR, 1954-1966

	All abortions	Abortions out- side hospitals ¹	Abortions in- side hospitals
<u>Year</u>	<u>% of previous year</u>	<u>% of all abortions</u>	<u>% of all abortions</u>
1954	-	79.9	20.1
1955	130.9	76.9	23.1
1956	181.8	29.8	70.2
1960	110.0	19.8	80.2
1965	101.7	15.9	84.1
1966	97.5	15.8	84.2

1. i.e., basically illegal abortions.

Source: Ye.A.Sadvokasova, 1969: pp.117-118.

The average fertile woman has about five pregnancies, around two of which are terminated by abortion. 67% of women who, in the course of their whole fertile lives, had been pregnant had had abortions. Of these 49% had had three or more, 23% two and 29% one abortion, (Sadvokasova, 1969). Heer estimates 105.5 abortions per 1000 working women and 41.5 abortions for 1000 full-time housewives. The annual number of abortions exceeds that of live births and the abortion rate for employed women is 2.5 times higher than that of non-employed women, (Sadvokasova, 1963: pp.45-50).

Abortion is legal on demand up to and including the twelfth week of pregnancy; later only if medically indicated. For abortion by choice there is a fee of five rubles, about a day's average pay. Abortion is free if by medical indication at any stage of pregnancy. Soviet labour law specifies that a voluntary abortion qualifies a woman to take unpaid sick leave, thus protecting her against dismissal or disciplinary action for an authorized absence, (Mandel, 1975: p.116). The vacuum method is used, so that abortions are quite simple, with little subsequent pain. This is not to imply that the Soviet regime is entirely happy about the situation. A decrease in the number of performed abortions is its major aim, and it is hoped that this will be achieved by greater use and availability of modern forms of contraception. As Dr.Kazhanova, the head of a large Moscow clinic, told Mandel:

"... the ratio has gone down from three abortions per live birth 'previously, when we did not have contraceptives' (she meant pills and IUDs) to one-to-one at present", (Mandel, 1975: p.239).

But the eight thousand women equipped with modern preventive measures by her clinic are only 3% or 4% of those in the fertile ages in her area. Yet this is in Moscow - the proportion, low as it is, is undoubtedly much smaller in other parts of the USSR. An experiment of intensified contraceptive propaganda in seven towns succeeded in either cutting a rising abortion rate or reducing it. Contraceptive use stopped 30% - 35% of abortions which would otherwise have occurred, compared with 20% - 25% in the country at large. However, this level would be inadequate to bring about even an absolute reduction in the number of abortions, given a rising rate (abortions in 1966 were four times greater than in 1954, before re-legalization).

In other words, intensification of contraceptive propaganda and

use would be needed to stop 40% - 45% of abortions within one or two years.¹⁸ This could only be done by the use of better contraceptive techniques than presently in use. Given the unavailability of the pill, no radical improvement in significantly reducing the number of abortions can be obtained in the short run. An alternative policy to persuade women to actually bear more children does not hold much prospect for the future either.

4. Family Incentives

The Soviet concern about the declining birth rate can be best illustrated by the examination of the official introduction of measures which were intended to reverse this trend. These measures were first introduced in the 1936 legislation and were thus consistent with the aim to strengthen the nuclear family. At the same time as abortion was prohibited, the first Soviet family-allowance programme was introduced. Material aid given to women at child birth was increased and new aid to large families was introduced. However, payments began only with the seventh child and few families had more than three children, (Schlesinger, 1949: pp.272-273). For the majority of the population, this minimal programme of state aid to large families was not therefore much of a financial incentive.

Thus only the 1944 legislation, which went beyond the 1936 legislation in every aspect in its aim to strengthen the nuclear family, provided real incentives. Its many provisions included single grants, payable at birth for the third and fourth child, monthly stipends, payable after the first year, for four years, for the fourth and fifth child, monthly payments to unwed mothers etc. A tax on childless persons, enacted in 1941, was followed in 1944 by a tax on persons with

18. See Verbenko et al, (1968: p.39,) and Sadvokadsova, (1969: esp. pp.117-118 and 191.)

no more than two children. Motherhood medals of various degrees and classes were awarded to women who gave birth and brought up more than 5 children, (Schlesinger, 1949: pp.367-373). The total payments of these family allowances were often substantially more than the average annual wage and thus provided 'real' family incentive.

The 1947 legislation, which cut all the benefits of family allowance in half, greatly reduced the value and incentive of family allowance. Its real value was further reduced by the increase in the average annual earnings. While in 1944, family allowance amounted to 51% of the average annual wage, in 1948, it amounted to only 19%. In 1964, this proportion dropped to a mere 12%, (Heer and Bryden, 1967: p.156). The overall positive effect on fertility of this population policy could not therefore have been very great in such a short space of time. Its effect was, in fact, short lived, and the birth rate started to decline.¹⁹ The existing number of births owes very little to family 'incentive' measures, anyway.

In 1960, 65% of all births were first - or second - order births and brought in no family allowance money at all (unless the children were illegitimate). Third-order births constituted 14.4% of all births and brought in the lump sum payment of 20 rubles, which was only 1.8% of a skilled worker's average annual wage. Fourth-order births comprised 8.3% of all births and brought in 65 rubles at birth, yearly payments of 48 rubles from the child's first birthday to his/her fifth, which was still only 6% and 4.4% respectively of the average worker's annual wage. Only a very large family derives considerable benefits from the family allowance programme, i.e. with the 10th child, payments would total 445 rubles, which is 41.2% of the average worker's annual wage. However, very few families, 18 per million of total population, have 10 children. The 1970 census

19. Wartime separations reduced the birthrate even further. Nonetheless, the Soviet birth rate remained high in international terms until 1960. It was still rising in the villages in the fifties, though it was falling in the towns.

showed that 80-85% of Soviet families have only one to two children, (Heer and Bryden, 1967: p.156).

Family allowances have not played a prominent part in the Soviet population policy. Since 1958, family allowance payments have formed a decreasing proportion of the national income.

TABLE XX: Payment of Children's Allowances

Indicator	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1973
All mothers in receipt of benefit (mln)	...	1.1	5.0	6.4	6.1	5.1	...	...
of whom:								
All mothers of many children in receipt of monthly allowance (mln)...		0.8	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.2	2.8
of whom:								
with 4 child.(mln)	...	0.3	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.2	0.9
with 5 child.(mln)	...	0.2	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6
with 6 child.(mln)	...	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6
with 7+child.(mln)	...	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.6
Mothers receiving lump sum benefit on birth of their 3rd child(mln)	...	...	...	...	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.3
All single mothers in receipt of monthly benefit (mln)	...	0.3	2.0	3.1	2.7	1.6	...	...
of whom:								
with 1 child(mln)	...	0.3	1.8	2.7	2.3	1.4	...	...
with 2 children(mln)	...	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	...	...
with 3+children(mln)	...	0.0	0.0	0.1			...	...
Total benefits paid to mothers (mln.rub)	179	430 ¹	542	731 ²	1005	1078	1301	1451
of which:								
budgetary benefits paid to mothers of many child.and single mothers (mln.rub)	123	358 ¹	366	491	496	462	435	...
Pregnancy, childbirth, layette and feeding social insurance benefits paid to women (mln.rub)	56	72 ¹	176	240 ²	509	616	866 ³	...

1. 1946

2. Approximate data

3. Plus 97 mln.rub.from Union Centralized Collective Farm Social Security and

Sources: Narodnoe Khoziaistvo, 1973: p.640.

V.S., 1975/1: p.91.

Whereas in 1958, they amounted to 0.42% of national income, in 1963 they dropped to 0.28%. In 1961, only 0.32% of the national income consisted of family allowance payment, while in France, this was 4.8%, (Heer and Bryder, 1967: p.156). An informed opinion in favour of larger and longer-payable family allowances seems to be, however, emerging. (See, for example, Yurkevich, 1970: pp.40-41). Such an opinion has, of course, existed for much longer in the other socialist countries in Eastern Europe.

Summary

Equality of the sexes and the communal way of life, in other words, the new 'revolutionary style of living', were most prominent in the early idealistic and experimental phase of the revolution and the establishment of the Soviet system in the 1920s. Attempts to radically transform the family by establishing new institutions, e.g. house-communes and children's communes, were characteristic only during this period. Even then, these experiments affected an insignificant segment of the population. For much of Soviet history, the emphasis has been on women's employment, stable marriages, reproduction and child rearing.

Compared with the West, indeed with any other country, women's progress in the social sphere of production has been quite remarkable. While in 1920, 67% of the population was illiterate, and 75.5% of those were women, the latter now dominate the scientific profession. The Soviet Union leads all other countries in the percentage of women employed and the female share of the labour force (the latter is also due to the numerical majority of women in the population). In the USSR, women are now 51% of wage-and-salary earners and 52% of working collective farmers. The near-universal expectation that women should work and see work as a central and continuing feature of their lives has had profound psychol-

ogical consequences in terms of women's 'seriousness', their concern with intellectual and social problems.

Soviet women are assured free access to higher education, have their own source of income and consequently have the maximum ability to decide whether to live with a man or not. As far as the proportion of women studying and actually practising 'male' professions (e.g., engineering, technology, medicine, higher education), the Soviet Union is beyond comparison.

This equality at work has been, however, accompanied by only minimal social restructuring. 'The family collective' (essentially father, mother and children, i.e. the monogamous nuclear family) is the only form of intergenerational living arrangement considered acceptable and supported. Advocates of other arrangements are attacked; works of authors writing in the twenties along these lines are condemned and not published. The family is seen as a central social institution and its strengthening and support is the major concern of the Soviet government as an indispensable means for proper child socialization. The family is seen as subordinate to society, as an instrument of the socialist state. Parental upbringing is seen as a responsible task in which the state actively cooperates and provides help in the form of public child-care facilities, the school, after-school care, youth organization etc. Almost every urban child can be now placed in these institutions if it is the parents' wish.

The possible strain and contradiction which might exist between the goals of the family and the state is solved simply by avoiding it, at the level of ideology. The Soviet family is called a 'socialist family', and is supposed to be fundamentally different from the bourgeois family in the West (which is, of course, doubtful). The label of socialism implies an inherent unity of the goals and purpose of the family and the society, but the practice is not so rosy as the authorities would have

wished. The Soviet divorce rate is quite high, although it is currently falling somewhat. In the last decade the proportion of 'young' marriages (of up to four years' duration) dissolved has fallen from 40% of all divorces to 33%.

The family is also supposed to solve current social problems. In the 1930s, this referred to children's homelessness and juvenile delinquency, today it applies to hooliganism. The complaints in the media about hooliganism and 'loose' morality and the emphasis on the strengthening of the family suggest that not all is well - the family does not seem to provide all of what is expected of it. Child socialization has remained primarily women's responsibility, although there is some indication that men are now taking greater interest.

The Soviet Union regards motherhood as a social function distinct from the previous notion (still current in many Western societies) that it is a free natural 'accident' for which only the mother is responsible. Soviet motherhood is as much a social function as working, and therefore disability due to pregnancy brings public maintenance, preservation of job rights and other benefits. However, there does not seem to be a distinction made between child-bearing and child-rearing - both are considered to be women's tasks. For instance, all nursery teachers are women.

The views held on sex-roles in marriage are still very traditional and sometimes even reactionary, (see the findings of the surveys conducted near Moscow in the years 1964-1967, discussed above). These attitudes are being eroded by urbanisation and by Soviet education, but only partially and rather slowly. Despite the effects of almost universal employment, women in their overwhelming majority do, in fact, accept a role involving less autonomy and initiative than men; this is marked not only in relation to their sexuality but also in the many areas of behaviour bearing on family

and work relations between men and women.

Women occupy a disproportionately small number of positions of authority, both in the economy and in the political institutions. The regime, led almost exclusively by men, has had few advocates within the innermost circles who would fight the broader battle to liberate women from the 'tyranny' of husbands and the home. The resources allocated to the consumer sphere, which includes the socialisation of reproduction of labour power, have been wholly insufficient. Because the regime has been primarily concerned with the goals of economic growth (with the implied concern for economic efficiency in developing and allocating human resources), easing women's burden in the home has been assigned a very low priority. With the society's greater affluence, more is being invested into the consumer sector, but the assumption that technological improvement solves all the problems is mistaken. 'Technological determinism' cannot solve such issues as the element of coordination involved in the reproduction of labour power and the social effects of the sexual division of labour.

There has been no specific campaigning against sex-role stereotyping. Indeed, one could detect it in the literature produced for children, as well as in the socialisation process in the home and in pre-school institutions. School curricula also lend support to popular convictions (of both sexes) that cooking, mending and baby-care is women's work. Over half of the male population do little or nothing in the house. Women prepare most meals and give most parental help in their children's school work. In fact, some researching findings suggest that the care of children is the household activity which consumes most of the time saved in another way, (Yankova, 1970a: p.43).

Thus a reduction in the amount of domestic labour, achieved through the improvement of public household services, greater individual

usage of modern household technology and greater involvement of men, all of which are certainly taking place, does not necessarily mean that women will enter the social sphere of production on equal footing with men. Rather than seeking the same degree of recreation, sleep and further self-education as men are currently enjoying, Soviet women are quite likely to devote their newly-gained leisure to the upbringing of their children. As there is also an emphasis on higher birthrate, women's responsibility for child care is likely to be the main factor holding women back. As domestic labour involves an element of cooperation and organization which can be delegated neither to socialized household facilities nor to other members of the family, and as there is no indication that reproduction of labour power will become male responsibility, Soviet women are unlikely to achieve equality in all areas of life for some time to come.

CHAPTER FIVE

CZECHOSLOVAK WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Introduction

I have divided the analysis of the Czechoslovak women's movement into four main parts, according to the four main historical periods of Czech feminism and the working class movement. Firstly, I am going to discuss the origins and nature of the bourgeois feminist movement of the 1830-1918 period, as well as its relationship to the nationalist movement against the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The second part will cover the women's wing of the Czech Social Democratic Party during the period of 1879-1918, from the foundation of the Party to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic (prior to 1918, Czechoslovakia formed a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire).

The defeat of Germany and Austro-Hungary in World War I and the influence of the October Revolution produced a pre-revolutionary situation throughout those territories. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a detailed discussion of why this revolutionary process of 1918-1920 was stopped in Czechoslovakia, and why the relatively strong working class movement was defeated. The right-wing reformist leadership of the Social Democratic Party is partly to blame, but other factors were obviously also involved. What is important, for our purposes, is the resulting final and complete break between the left-wing and the right-wing of the Party and the foundation of the Communist Party.

The third part of my analysis will therefore deal with the women's wing of the Czech Communist Party, in the period between the wars. It is important to emphasize a basic continuity between the social democratic and communist women's movement. This continuity was expressed in terms of personnel participating in both movements, similarity of areas of activities and tactics, and the persistence of the

essentially secondary status of the women's movement within the whole working class movement.

The fourth period, from 1945 onwards, is radically different from the previous ones, due to the fact that Czechoslovakia experienced a socialist revolution, that has resulted in substantive structural changes. I shall attempt to analyse the effects of these changes on the women's movement.

I. Bourgeois Feminism

The differences in the fortunes and forms of feminist movements in various countries are related to two basic sets of factors; the political situation and the national and religious traditions, and the degree of industrialization and the consequent employment of women outside the home. Because the political, national and cultural milieu in Russia was not very favourable for an explicit feminist movement, the women's movement was incorporated in the general struggle for social emancipation.¹ In Bohemia and Slovakia, the fortunes of the feminist movement were directly bound up with another social struggle, this time the nationalist movement. The struggle for the national cultural revival, which had developed in Bohemia and Slovakia during the nineteenth century, and the demand for female education were seen in no way as contradictory. In fact, they were mostly seen as reinforcing each other.

According to Josef Jungman, an association called Jednota ku podporovani zenske umelosti (The Unity for the Support of Female Intellect) existed as early as 1813.² (Tkadleckova-Vantuchova, 1969, p.15). In 1830, the woman writer B. Rajska-Celakovska, wife of another Czech patriot and leader Ladislav Celskovsky, formed an association of girls with the

1. This was discussed in chapter three.

2. Jungman was a Czech patriot and one of the first leaders of the Czech cultural revivalist movement.

aim 'to educate patriotic mothers and teachers for the oppressed nation'. (Jurneckova, 1944, p.36) In 1843, this Association founded the first Institute for the Higher Education of girls, but it was later Germanized under pressure from the Austrian government. In 1848, the 'Association of Slavonic Women' was formed to promote higher education for women. However, none of the Czech women's schools and associations survived for very long. (In fact Czech girls had to wait for their first high school, which was incidentally the first secondary school for girls in the whole of Austro-Hungary, until 1863).

The cultural and educational struggle against Germanization, therefore, directly supported the demand for female access to education. On the other hand, the Czech nationalist movement not only failed to support any other demands related to female emancipation, but directly hindered their development. In the hostile German environment, only the institution of the Czech patriotic family could remain the protector of national values and language. The traditional feminine role as educator of the future generation, was therefore reinforced. In this sense, the ideological framework of the nationalist movement restricted the scope of women's demands. Another impetus such as the external influence of feminism from abroad or the opportunity for female employment was therefore needed for Czech feminism to go beyond the moral and educational spheres.

The external influence was provided by the American feminist movement. In 1862, Vojta Naprstek, a Czech male scientist, returned home after ten years spent in the U.S.A., and started a lecturing campaign on the subject of women's emancipation. In 1865, together with the woman writer Karolina Svetla, he founded the 'American Club for Women', which soon became the centre of the women's movement of that period. L. Bozdechova, the librarian of that club, succeeded in 1872

to persuade the Post Office Service to accept women as employees. The first real break-through came with the introduction of the School Regulation Act which opened the door of the teaching profession to women. In 1870, the private Czech Training College for Women Teachers was taken over by the State and thus became the first institution of its kind in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Association of Prague Women Teachers was founded in 1874 and eleven years later, this Association started publishing its Women Teachers' Journal.

These first women teachers played an important role in the development of women's consciousness as a whole. Their 'hard core' activism was made possible by an existing law which bound women teachers to celibacy. As a result women teachers had no domestic responsibilities and could devote more time to political activity. They could also rally women's support to oppose this discriminatory law. Thus in addition to the earlier tradition of women writers, leaders of the feminist movement were now also drawn from school teachers. For instance, Frantiska Plaminkova, the leader and representative of the Czech women's movement in the later inter-war period, developed her feminist consciousness while a schoolteacher. Even Karla Machova, the editor of the first socialist women's journal, Zensky list, was originally a school teacher.³

This is not to imply that women writers no longer influenced the feminist movement. Eliska Krasnohorska, who advocated patriotism, female education and participation in public life,⁴ Tereza Novakova, who wrote polemical articles about the women's movement and who introduced the ideas of feminists from other countries by translating their works, Bozena Vitkova-Kuneticka, whose plays and novels were characterized by an aggressive, almost hostile attitude towards men, Karolina Svetla, who is sometimes called the Czech George Sand; they were all both writers

3. Machova was discharged from her employment by the Austrian authorities for her political activity among working class women.

4. Krasnohorska is perhaps better known for writing librettos for some of Smetana's famous operas.

and feminists.

The Czech feminist movement was therefore largely composed of middle class women and women intellectuals, which gave it a bourgeois character. The feminists were mainly interested in procuring the same advantages enjoyed by men of the middle class. The main feminist demands were: the right to work, suffrage and the right to education at all levels. As most of the state education was still conducted in German and the Parliament was in Vienna, these issues were directly linked to the national struggle against the Austrian Empire. This link between feminism and the Czech national movement was emphasized by both feminist and national leaders.

For instance, Tereza Novakova criticized the American and English suffragettes for not taking into account the national struggles of the Czechs, Slovaks and Poles as this directly affected Czech Women's representation in the International Council of Women.⁵ However, Novakova also criticized the Czech feminist movement. She argued that the struggle for female access to higher education and employment and abolition of women teachers' celibacy were too limited and in some ways too abstract, because they were not put into the wider context of the woman's dual role as mother and worker. She also criticized individual middle class women for their lack of concern with working class women. She argued that middle class women and working class women should unite and fight, together with men, for a better society. (Novakova 1912, pp.76-90; 241-263; 298-306) Her analysis went beyond the nature and aims of bourgeois feminism, but the movement itself was incapable of acting upon her advice in any broad sense. Its concern with working class women was limited to charitable activities, similar to social work, as we shall see later on.

5. As Bohemia was a part of Austro-Hungary, Czech women could only be represented by their Austrian counterparts.

For T.G.Masaryk,⁶ the 'Czech question' and the 'women question' were essentially united, because he considered them as questions of humanity and society. He did not view the latter as an abstract concept, but on the contrary, his doctrine of democratic humanism was supposed to serve as the basis of social reform. For Masaryk, national equality and equality of women were essential conditions of democracy. He also pointed out that equality of rights before the law does not mean that equality in life is achieved. He also understood that women cannot participate in public life and political tasks as long as they remain virtual domestic slaves. In his lecture at the Girls' Academy at Bruno in 1904, he said explicitly:

"Women must not be domestic slaves. Housework prevents women from participating in public life, their outlook and energy narrows."
(Masaryk, 1905, p.4).

His understanding of the oppressive nature of housework is thus similar to that of Engels or Lenin, but his solution is radically different. While Marx, Engels and Lenin advocated the overthrow of the capitalist system and the socialization of domestic tasks, Masaryk called for co-operation of men and women within the family, or, more generally, for a conscious change of one's internal life within the existing social system. Co-operation within the family was supposed to cover both areas, housework and upbringing of children:

"The name of the mother is no more sacred than the name of the father, both have the task to look after the souls of their children." (Masaryk, 1905, p.4).

As a symbolic gesture, Masaryk himself took on his American-born wife's maiden name: the initial G. stands for Garrigue.

As this emphasis on personal emancipation of both sexes, was always missing from the traditional socialist analysis of the proposed solution to the oppression of women, it is unfortunate that the Czech socialist women's movement did not integrate some of Masaryk's ideas

6. At that time Masaryk was a professor of philosophy at Charles University in Prague and the deputy in the Imperial Austrian Parliament. In 1918, he became the first president of Czechoslovakia.

into its programme. The main reason for this failure lies in the fact that Masaryk's analysis of personal emancipation ignored material conditions and concentrated rather abstractedly on morality.

In his treatise Polygamy and Monogamy, he advocates equal moral purity for men and women. He calls for a strict monogamy, which he considers to be the goal of mankind's sexual development. In fact, in Masaryk's view, the main contribution women could make to public life would be to imbue society with a higher morality. This particular view reflects the very strong puritan element which characterized not only Masaryk's ideas, but much of Western feminist thought.⁷

However, the ideas of people like Masaryk had virtually no impact on the practical activities of the feminist movement. For example, the first two congresses of Czecho-slavonic women (1897 and 1908) discussed largely non-moralistic issues: female access to higher education, abolition of celibacy for women teachers and the granting of female suffrage.

Czech women were partially successful only with one demand: access to higher education. Directly after the first Congress in 1897, the Prague Philosophical Faculty began to admit women. This was, however, also due to the influence of Professor Masaryk, who lectured at the faculty. With the exception of the Medical and Pharmaceutical Faculty, which admitted women for the first time four years later, the Charles University as a whole admitted women only after 1918. Thus for most of their demands, i.e. full access to higher education and unqualified franchise, women had to wait until the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. The marriage bar for women teachers and civil servants was abolished in 1919.

7. For an empirical documentation of the prevalence of puritanism in much of Western feminist thought, see J.A. and O. Banks (1964, pp.107-113).

On the other hand, the activities of the Czech feminist movement were not limited to those two Congresses. At the first Congress, the woman teacher V. Schmidtova, suggested the idea of a women's club; Tereza Novakova, in the public lecture in 1901, followed this suggestion up and gave the final impetus to this idea. Preparations for the club's foundation started in 1902, but due to the lack of finances, the Czech Women's Club was opened in Prague only at the beginning of 1904. It followed the tradition laid down by the 'American Club for Women' and soon became the centre of the feminist movement in Bohemia. The Club consisted of a lecture hall, club room, reading room and the library, restaurants and rooms for women from the provinces.

On the political scene, the Club actively intervened on the question of education. For instance, it was against the foundation of separate girls' schools, on the grounds that they had lower standards than equivalent boys' schools. The Club also supported actions organised by suffragettes. The Club's social section acquainted middle class women with the lives of working women and encouraged various self-help charitable actions for girl servants, illegitimate children, etc. This section also ran an advisory centre for property-less girls. However, the main activities of the Club consisted of lectures, discussions and literary courses on various aspects of women's social position.

(Muzikova, 1969, p.15). After 1918, active women with initiative, educated by the Club, including its most active member, Frantiska Flaminkova, went on to join various political parties. The ideological and overall importance of the Club therefore declined. However, the Club remained a social centre for women throughout the inter-war period.⁸

In 1923, F. Flaminkova, founded the 'Women's National Council', to which fifty progressive non-political women's organizations and other

8. The Club was reopened in 1945, but was finally closed down by the Communists in 1948.

interested groups had affiliated. W.N.C. had a number of clubs throughout the country and its own gazette entitled The Women's Council. Its work was divided into departments dealing with various aspects of female equality, but most of the work had to be defensive. Continuous attacks against women in public life called for a host of memoranda, explanations, reports, etc. It is fair to say that, once the limited demands of the bourgeois feminist movement were granted it began to decline in importance. It ceased to be a political threat either to society in general, or to the Social Democratic and the Communist Parties in particular.

II. Social Democratic Women's Movement

As industrialization increased,⁹ resulting in a growing number of women entering the industrial labour force, the Czech socialist movement developed to meet the new problems facing men and women in this situation. At the same time, the growth of the socialist women's movement reflected the concern of the Social Democratic Party with the influence of bourgeois feminism on working women.

The Czech Social Democratic Party was founded in 1878, but the first socialist journal for women, Zensky list (Women's Gazette) was launched only in 1892. This was some thirty years after the foundation of the Social Democratic Party, and at the time of a very active bourgeois feminist movement. The latter forced the agitational work of the Social Democratic Party to be of a more polemical nature than otherwise would be necessary.

The First Congress of Working Class Women, which took place in Kolin in 1905, emphasized that the struggle for female suffrage is only part of the struggle for the full emancipation of women. The delegates,

9. Bohemia was the most industrialized part of the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire.

attending this conference, criticized the limitations of bourgeois feminism and related their discussion to their own appalling living situation. As in other countries undergoing industrialization, Czech women worked on average 9-11 hours a day, their wages were extremely low, they had no legal insurance, no protection during pregnancy, no holidays etc. Proposals for shortening of working hours, abolition of Sunday and night work, social insurance, legal and financial protection of pregnant and nursing mothers were therefore prominent at this Congress. (Vanickova, 1971).

This Conference preceded the First International Women's Socialist Conference which took place in Stuttgart in 1907, and which the Czech socialist women attended. They were also present at the Second International Women's Socialist Conference in Copenhagen in 1910, which called for the celebration of the International Women's Day.¹⁰ Thus from 1910 onwards, the activities of the Czech social democratic movement were strongly influenced by, and parallel with, the international socialist women's movement.

This link did not alter the original character or aims of the Czech working class women's movement, although it focused its activities on more specific issues. Since 1910, the activities of the movement culminated in the celebration of International Women's Day. It was celebrated in most big cities in Bohemia and Moravia in the period 1911-1914. As in all other European countries, World War I practically stopped all political activities of the working class movement, including the women's movement.

This, however, changed towards the end of the War, particularly after the October Revolution. As women could not be so easily victimized and sent to the battlefields, they were in a better position than men to organize themselves. Numerous hunger demonstrations and industrial

10. The history of the women's movement within the Second International and its relationship to the suffragette's movement was analysed in the previous chapter.

strikes, which occurred all over the country in 1917, were initiated by women rather than by men. Women demanded more bread for their children, return of men from the war, higher wages, shortening of the working day and week for all workers, etc. Various strikes and demonstrations took place in Prostějov (with large textile industry) in April, in Plzeň in June, in Ostrava in June and July, and in Prague, Mladá Boleslav, Pátek, Hradec Králové in August 1917. (Vanickova, 1971).

In June 1917, Prague steel workers, following the Soviet example, elected a 'Workers Council', which immediately established contacts with workers in other cities. Women workers also organized themselves and elected their own representatives to look after the appropriate allocation of food rations. They also sent a petition to the 'Workers' Council', demanding full representation. The text of their petition highlights the existing prejudices of the male workers against women. It reads:

"We showed so much courage and persistence in the critical periods, that we deserve to be recognized as an equivalent element with equal rights". (Vanickova, 1971).

It is obvious, that if women workers were treated as equals by their male counterparts, they would not have needed to emphasize their full representation as a well-deserved right.

As was said in the introduction to this chapter, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a detailed account of the defeat of the European working class movement in the period 1918-1920. The main consequence of this defeat was a new international situation in the working class movement as a whole, i.e. foundation of the Communist Parties and the III. International, "Socialism in one country", i.e. the specific way in which the Soviet Union was forced to develop, most importantly influenced the nature of the III. International and the Communist Parties.

III. Communist Women's Movement, 1921-1945.

The Communist movement was much more disciplined and more tightly organized than the social democratic movement, both internally and internationally. Social Democratic Parties were not bound by the decisions of the II. International, the opposite being true of the Communist Parties in their relationship to the Comintern. Therefore, any form of activity undertaken by the Czechoslovak Communist Party cannot be properly understood and analysed without reference to the adopted policy of the III. International at that time. The Comintern gradually became completely controlled by the Soviet Union, namely by Stalin, which obviously had some serious political implications. However, there was some continuity in terms of personnel, adopted policy and areas of struggle between the communist organization and its social democratic predecessor.

In July 1920, the First International Congress of Women Workers took place in Moscow, in conjunction with the Second Congress of the III. International.¹¹ Seventeen foreign delegates participated, and their resolution called for the establishment of the International Secretariat for Work among Women.¹² This women's section of the Comintern, modelled on the organizational form of the Bolshevik Party at that period,¹³ was actually established on 15th November 1920. Clara Zetkin became its head and thereby a representative of the women's movement in the Executive Committee of the Comintern. This is a good example of the continuation of the social democratic and communist women's movement in terms of personnel at the international level. With co-operation from an appointed committee, Zetkin prepared a Thesis on the Women's Communist

11. International Congresses of the social democratic movement also used to take place in conjunction with the main 'male' Congresses of the II. International, hence another example of the auxiliary and secondary status of the socialist women's movement within the working class movement as a whole.

12. The proceedings of the conference are published in Otchet o pervoi mezhdunarodnoi konferencii kommunistok (Account of the first International Conference of Women Communists), Moscow, 1921.

13. The origin and nature of Zhenotdel, the women's section of the Bolshevik Party, were discussed in great detail in chapter three.

Movement, which was approved at the next, i.e. the III. Congress of the Communist International.

Similar developments occurred in Czechoslovakia; the only difference being that the Women's Congress actually preceded the Founding Congress of the Communist Party. Anna Krenova and Marie Strnadova, leaders of the social democratic women's movement and members of the left-wing of the Party, organized a women's conference, in Prague on 12-13 March, 1921, while the foundation Congress of the Czech Communist Party took place two months later, on 14-17 May 1921.

The Conference was attended by 180 delegates. It first discussed the nature and implications of the defeat of the working class movement in that period, i.e. it criticized the reformist leadership of the Party and argued for the necessity to find another working class party which would be revolutionary in nature. It then aligned itself with the new Communist International and accepted its 21 principles. The women's conference also discussed some of the immediate problems facing working class women, namely poverty, unemployment, persecution of strikers, high prices of food and low wages, etc. Women delegates demanded creches, kindergartens, dining rooms and playgrounds for their children. The First Congress of the Czech Communist Party decided, on the recommendation of the already mentioned resolution of the III. Congress of the Comintern, to set up agitation committees for work among women at all levels of the Party organization.

The tradition of the social democratic women's movement was therefore continued. Separate organization for women was opposed, but special methods of work among women workers were favoured and encouraged. Class consciousness was still considered as more important than any form of feminist consciousness and no attempt was made to integrate those two, but the specific social position of women was

realized, namely 1) their biological function of child bearing and the resulting need for special protection, and 2) the greater political ignorance and conservatism of women, due to their isolation within the family, etc. (Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow, July, 1921, p.102).

These specific forms of work among women undertaken by Communists must be understood within the context of their overall tactical considerations. Following the tradition of Marxism and early social democracy, i.e. rejecting reformism within the capitalist system, the Third Congress of the Comintern re-affirmed the basic Marxist proposition that there is no "specific woman question" and no "specific women's movement". (Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow, July, 1921, p.100). The general argument went that as women could^{be} emancipated only in a socialist society, they should join the political struggle of the working class and the Communist Party, because its aim is the overthrow of the exploitative capitalist system and the establishment of socialism.

Women were therefore urged to concentrate on the general struggle for socialism rather than on their specific forms of oppressions. Cultural, psychological and other similar components of female oppression were mentioned nowhere in the Communist resolutions dealing with women. The need for self-transformation of personal relationships was also lacking. The main task of the women's section of the Communist Party was to awake the class consciousness of women workers and then recruit them to the Party, the agent of the forthcoming revolution. It was assumed, rather naively, that women's emancipation would follow automatically after the socialist revolution. Thus the origin of the socialist women's movement, both within the social democracy and within communism, is best understood as a short-term political need

to win the support of women workers, a specific social group of potential followers. The Communists were much more explicit on this subject than their social democratic predecessors.

For example, the already mentioned III. Congress of the Comintern in 1921 was devoted to the discussion of revolutionary tactics. One session dealt exclusively with the methods of work among women. The debate centered around the tactical problem of how to win the support of the masses of women workers for the common struggle of the proletariat, of how to develop their class consciousness. The setting up of a specific political organization of proletarian and semi-proletarian women, was the only answer to the political danger which unorganized women workers posed to the Communists. The resolution said specifically:

"Whenever the question of the taking of power arises, the Communist parties must consider the great danger to the revolution represented by the inert, uninformed masses of women workers, housewives, employees, peasant women, not liberated from the influence of the bourgeois superstitions, and not connected in some way or other with the great liberating movement of Communism. Unless the masses of women of the East and the West are drawn into this movement, they inevitably become the stronghold of the bourgeoisie and the object of counter-revolutionary propaganda."
(Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow, July, 1921, p.98).

Thus if the Comintern and the Communist parties in general did not attempt to win the support of women through the Party's special organ for work among women, women would support Communist political enemies, i.e. the bourgeois and religious institutions, prejudices, etc.

"Hence, the direct task of the Communist parties: to spread the influence of the Communist Party to the widest circles of women population of their countries within the Party; organizing a special party body and applying special methods: appealing to the women outside of it, to free them from the influence of the bourgeoisie and the compromising parties.
(Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow, July, 1921, p.99).

Thus while warning women workers against entering into any form of alliance and co-operation with the bourgeois feminists, (Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow, July, 1921, p.100) the Third Congress of the Comintern, at the same time, points to another 'enemy' the opportunistic social democratic parties and the Second International. The Comintern criticised the opportunism and lack of concern with female emancipation of the II. International, i.e. the fact that women socialists had to work outside the II. International, because within it they had neither representation nor decisive vote. (Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow, July, 1921, p.100-1). However, I will show later on that the situation within the III. International was not fundamentally better or different.

The Czechoslovak Communist Party expressed similar views to those quoted above on several occasions. A speech given to honour the first celebration of the International Women's Day since the war, on 8.3.1922, at the biggest hall in Prague at that time, urged each class-conscious woman to take care of at least five other politically apathetic and indifferent women and try to win them on the side of the proletarian struggle against capitalism. (Brejchova, 1960, p.58) The first Conference of Communist Women in Slovakia, which took place in Vrutky on 2.9.1922, set up an 'Agitation Committee of Women' with the explicit task to recruit as many women as possible to the working class movement. In 1936, the executive Women's Section of the Party charged women's sections at all levels of the Party hierarchy to gain 1500 new members for the Party to honour the 7th Congress of the Party. This task was even overfulfilled. In fact, the Czechoslovak Communist Party had the highest percentage of women in the whole Communist International. However, the class struggle and the Party was considered of greater

importance than women's specific oppression or their own feminist organization.

Czechoslovak communist women were thus in greater numbers and were better organized than their social democratic predecessors, but the areas of their activities was pretty much the same. The woman's journal, Zensky list, founded by the Social Democratic Party in 1892,¹⁴ was in 1923 replaced by Komunistka (The Woman Communist). In 1926, the Party instructed the women's movement and its journal to no longer concentrate on Party members only, but to expand the Party's influence on female masses as a whole. An open discussion on the new character of the women's movement took place on the pages of Komunistka. Another journal, Rozsevacka (Dissemination) replaced Komunistka to symbolize this change in political tactics.

Rozsevacka and its editor Jožka Jaburkova, played then a particularly important agitational and organizational role in the women's movement. Because of a legal ban and commercial competition of general competition of general women's magazines, Rozsevacka could not be sold commercially in shops. As a result, the paper's distributors played a significant agitational and political role. Through personal contact, they attempted to recruit women to the Party. Rozsevacka also published letters from readers and women's agitational groups which served as a forum for an exchange of political experiences.

The socialist women's press did not merely inform and agitate, but it also organized the women's movement. For example, the editor and the journal initiated various female campaigns which uncovered the real character of the bourgeois society and the equality that it offered. It campaigned against the rising prices, unemployment and female discrimination

14. Machova, the journal's original editor, joined the Communist Party, which is another example of the continuation between left-wing social democracy and communism in terms of personnel. Other women who came to the Communist Party from the SPD and who played an important role in the women's wing of both parties were the already mentioned Anna Krenova and Marie Strnadova, and Anna Mala and Lusla Landova Stychova.

in teaching, banking, the civil service and industry.

At the same time, the Communist Party did not focus its activities in the 'female sphere' solely through the women's press. Once more in the tradition of social democracy, it celebrated the International Woman's Day. However, its content had changed, because the struggle for female suffrage was no longer an issue. The 1918 Constitution granted women legal equality, thus giving them the right to vote. The Communist Party also no longer needed to struggle against bourgeois feminism, because it was politically no longer significant. The idea that the struggle for female suffrage is only a limited part of the social struggle for female equality also became obsolete. Instead, the 8th March celebration became an active demonstration against unemployment, economic depression, (which hit Czechoslovakia very severely), hunger and poverty. For instance, on 8th March 1935, working class women filled Prague's largest hall shouting "We want work! We want bread!" As such, the International Women's Day had a similar function to the celebration of the 1st May.

8th March was also used as a platform for various solidarity campaigns, both within the Czechoslovak working class movement, and internationally. For example, the celebration of the International Women's Day in 1929, was characterized by support for the demands of the striking textile workers, 70 per cent of whom were women. The 1936 celebration was used as a mobilization against fascism. In 1937, the central women's section called for an action with a slogan "We shall clothe 1,000 children of the dead Spanish heroes." The figure was later raised to 2,000, but in the end, 3,200 Spanish children were sent some clothing by women, who themselves were quite poor. The 1938 International situation, concentrated on the defence of the Republic.

The Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia and the creation of a separate Slovak State in March 1939, drastically interrupted all forms of political activities. Naturally, the Communist Party was hit hardest, but other parties suffered too. Joska Jaburkova, the editor of Rozsevaccka, as well as F. Plaminkova of the Women's National Council and the National Socialist Party, and Betty Karpiskova who worked in the women's wing of the Social Democratic Party, were liquidated by the Nazis. However, even under the difficult conditions of Nazi occupation, the W.N.C. published an underground periodical, 'Woman'. The Communist Party published in March 1942 the first number of an illegal journal, 'Ceska zena (The Czech Woman), with a leading article by the famous journalist, Julius Fucik, entitled 'Upwards, Women'.

To sum up, before 1945, the main task of the working class women's movement was to gain the active support of women workers for the proletarian struggle, by drawing them to the Party, which was supposed to represent this struggle, e.g. either the early Social Democratic Party or the Communist Party. I have shown how the socialist women's movement initially emerged as a tactical response to the influence of bourgeois feminism rather than the 'inner' desire of the Party for a separate female organization. By putting the women's movement on a firmer organizational footing, the III. International continued and even strengthened this tradition. The Communists no longer needed to combat the influence of the suffragettes; on the contrary, they now had to concentrate on winning the votes of the newly enfranchised half of the population. In this task, the Communist Party was not alone, i.e. all the political parties in bourgeois Czechoslovakia had women's wings and women MPs, and all of them tried to win masses of

women on their side. The Communist Party had been quite successful in this tactical political struggle.

Out of the 16 women MPs in the Parliament, seven were Communists. They gradually won the support and confidence of many working-class women. The predominant emphasis on working class women stems from the conception of the Party as the vanguard of the proletariat, as the tool for winning political power. The tactical change of orientation in 1926 on the broader female masses was forced upon the Communist Party by the parliamentary system of Czechoslovakia. All parties were trying to capture the largest possible number of votes and as women constituted the greatest 'unexplored' source, the Communist Party could not stay behind. The concern with the rest of the female masses occurred only after the socialist revolution, when the Party became the main administrative organ and as such had to deal with all sections of the population.

I have also mentioned the influence of the Soviet Union and the Communist International on the policy and organizational structure of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Most of the leading Party cadres, including those working in the women's movement, such as Jaburkova, Hodinova, Prokopova, Holeckova and others, went to Lenin's school for foreign Communist cadres, in Moscow, where they received political education. In fact, after 1929 the leadership of the whole Party was in the control of Moscow trained cadres. This had no important political implications before the war, because the Party was not in power. This changed after 1945.

IV. The Women's Movement in Socialist Czechoslovakia, 1945 onwards.

The immediate post-war period was politically very favourable for the well organized, highly disciplined and centralized Communist Party. Several political parties, labelled as 'collaborating with the Nazi occupiers' were eliminated from the political scene. After 1945, only eight political parties were formed, four in the Czech lands and four in

Slovakia. After Britain and France abandoned Czechoslovakia in Munich in 1938 and Nazi Germany occupied the country, the authority and prestige of the Soviet Union was strengthened among the whole population. As a large part of Czechoslovak territory was liberated by the Red Army, her troops were still stationed in the crucial areas of the country, including Prague, in 1948. Success in the general election in 1946, gave the Communists further numerical strength and key positions in the state apparatus. Thus the Party, with her national mass support and Soviet backing, was well prepared for the final Communist take over in February 1948. Within this context, the need for political support of women was clear to the Party. As the Party has always openly declared its support for the complete emancipation of women, it was in a more favourable position than its rivals in this sphere.

1. The period 1945-1948

In each of the re-formed parties, women had their own headquarters, representation on the executive committee, and each party had its own women MPs. Women of the four political parties in the Czech lands created a 'Woman's National Front', which was a co-ordinating committee, composed of three representatives of each political party. Chairmanship was held in rotation. The Woman's National Front also co-operated with women members of the Agriculturist's Union, the Union of Czech Youth, the Trade Unions and the Council of Czechoslovak Women. The latter co-ordinated the non-party feminist movement. Milada Horakova, a National Socialist, was elected as chairwoman and Julie Prokopova, a Communist, as its vice-president. The remaining four vice-presidents were delegated in rotation by each of the political parties in the W.N.F.

This description of the political form of the feminist movement in the period 1945-8 shows that all political parties considered active

support of women as a specific social group essential. As the Communist Party did not hold more key positions than its political rivals, the women's movement was democratically balanced. W.N.F. organized the First All-National Congress of Women in Prague from 26th-28th October in 1946. The Congress was attended by the President, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Prime Minister and a number of cabinet ministers, K. Gottwald, the Prime Minister of the coalition government and the Communist leader, emphasized in his speech the commitment of the socialist regime to actual emancipation of women. He also urged women to support the Two-Year economic programme of the government.

The State's demand for female labour in the post-war economic reconstruction appealed to the patriotic feelings of women. As this was fully in line with the Marxist analysis of women's emancipation, the Communist Party found this advantageous.

2. The Period 1948-1966

After the successful takeover of the Communist Party in February 1948, the women's section was faced with the same problem as the Party itself. The Party was no longer the tool of the proletariat in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, on the contrary, it now became the main state administrative organ. It had to find a new conception and role for itself in a society where it was the dominant, even the only, political force.

As far as the women's movement was concerned, this problem was simply solved by its abolition. The establishment of socialism legitimised the abandoning of separate women's organizations. As the entry of women to public industry was supposed to bring full female emancipation, political activities of employed women and the solution to their newly created problems was transferred to the traditionally male dominated trade unions.¹⁵

15. By 'male domination', I mean lack of serious concern of the Union officials with issues which are important to women.

This practice closely followed the Soviet experience, which is another example of the crucial influence of the Soviet Union on the social and political transformation of Czechoslovakia.

Thus since 1952, for a period of 16 years, women had no democratic representation in the political system of the Czechoslovak society, because their organization did not really exist. The transfer to the trade unions was very slow. The resolution of the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions, which laid down the principles of trade union activities among women, was passed only in 1957. It was argued that all problems concerning employed women must be readily discussed with their direct participation. The Central Council of the Trade Unions also decided that an auxiliary body, a 'Women's' Commission of the Works' Committee, with the same status as other commissions of the 'Works' Committee', should be set up in enterprises which employed a lower percentage of women. These bodies were considered unnecessary in enterprises where women were in the majority because it was assumed that the trade unions were objectively forced to deal with women's problems.

What were the problems which the trade unions were supposed to solve for the employed women? First of all, they were to create the material conditions necessary for the full realization of the equality of women. This meant the improvement in quantity and quality of various social institutions and services and the raising of women's qualifications. However, data on nurseries and kindergartens will show us that very few of the trade unions devoted their resources to the construction of these institutions, they were mostly built by the local authorities. The task of political education which is necessary if men and women are to change their self-perceptions and prejudices, was also

largely ignored.¹⁶

On the whole, female demands did not figure on the list of trade union priorities until 1959. The difficulties encountered by women in industry were one of the points on the agenda of the Fourth Trade Union Congress in that year. One of the points raised by Bedrich Kozelka, secretary of the Central Council of Trade Unions, was that most women were unskilled or semi-skilled, while only a fraction were highly skilled. So while women received equal pay for equal work, they were not actually doing equal work and earned on average one-third less than men.¹⁷

The solution which had been suggested at the congress was more factory schools for raising workers' qualifications, with courses arranged at hours convenient for housewives. Unions were to 'insist' that such schools be made a point in every annual collective agreement signed with the management. The trade union bodies were also to 'insist upon' mechanization of minor operations and organizational changes so that women would not have to lift heavy weights or stand when they could just as well sit. The unions were also 'finally' to solve the question of what to do about the small child who is kept at home from school with a minor illness, and thus reduce the absenteeism of employed mothers - one cause of employers' prejudice against women workers. It was suggested that local Red Cross branches seek out older women who would like occasional employment and who would be under contract to the plant to act as baby sitters (Scott, 1974, pp.102-3). The National Trade Union Conference

16. This was officially acknowledged in an internal publication of the ideological section of the Central Committee of the Party, entitled Cisla, aktuality, state. Leninske pojeti zenske otazky a aktualni problemy zenskeho hnuti v soucasne dobe. (Figures, News, Articles, Leninist Conception of the Woman Question and Topical Problems of the Women's Movement in the Contemporary Period), Prague, 1970.

17. This particular aspect of women's inequality will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

in 1965 and the 6th Trade Union Congress in 1967, put forward more concrete proposals for the solution of the problems of employed women. The basic problem was, and incidentally still continues to be, the discrepancy between the high rate of female employment and the insufficient growth of social services and institutions.

The National Trade Union Conference in May 1965 called for an extension of such services as laundries, cleaning and repair shops, housecleaning services; shortening of their delivery terms and improvement of their quality. Setting up of shops close to enterprises employing women in large numbers and priority to shops with complex assortments of foodstuffs and essential industrial products both in the centre and in the outer districts of cities as well as an extension of shopping on order and the home delivery of goods services were recommended. (Brejchova, 1967:27-33).

As the traditional sexual division of labour, an important component of female inequality, is not challenged in these trade union proposals (it is simply taken for granted that women do the shopping and housework, even if they are engaged in full-time jobs), these recommendations do not represent a fundamental step forward in the realization of female equality and emancipation. Rather than challenging and attempting to change an important source of female inequality, i.e. the outdated sexual division of labour, the trade unions merely try to ease the burden of employed women, to help them to cope better with their dual role.

Similar development occurred in the organization of non-employed women. The political activity among housewives was transferred from the Party's women's section to the so-called women's committees, which were established by the local authorities at all levels of their hierarchy. Modelled on the Soviet experience with delegates' meetings, it was assumed

that by drawing women into the activities of the local authorities, women will be drawn into the public administration and thus participate in social life.

As housewives could be approached only in areas of their experience, e.g. care of children, housekeeping and nursing, women's committees served in an advisory capacity precisely in those areas. Consequently, the traditional sexual division of labour was strengthened, the only difference being that the traditional female role was transferred from its private nature within the family to a public one in society. The directives for the elections to the committees of women, published by the Cabinet Office in 1954, express this tendency very clearly. The directives state five main tasks and functions of the women's committees:

Firstly, they should help employed women to solve the problems of care of their families and children (my italics), by demanding the establishment of creches, kindergartens, childrens' messrooms, shops with semi-finished foodstuffs, etc. in their particular locality.

Secondly, they should ^{put}/forward able candidates for the consumer control of the quality of food in shops and public canteens.

Thirdly, they should take a general interest in the health and social services, e.g. they should look after the aged and disabled persons, and control the hygiene in the children's institutions and in the locality in general.

Fourthly, they should keep under review women's participation in employment and help them with raising their professional qualifications

Fifthly, they should mobilize women for various activities, e.g. the harvest. (Csanova, 1954, pp.4-5).

It is clear that only the fourth principle is a specifically feminist demand. The first three directly reinforce the traditional content of the female role and as such merely accept the pre-socialist ideology which makes issues such as housework, child care, shopping, cooking, hygiene, etc. appear as women's concerns and demands. Rather than challenging the pre-socialist ideology that it is the female responsibility to look after their husbands' and children's well-being, the Party merely alters the form of this responsibility - women now look after their husbands and children not merely within the private family, but also by co-operating with the public institutions. Their 'servicing' role in the process of reproduction is not challenged, but reinforced, even if the form is slightly different. The female traditional house-keeping role is upheld by their task of controlling the quality of consumer commodities. Another consequence of these activities is the fact that they, ironically, confine women only to local problems. Only the first two of the above mentioned principles have wider societal application, yet the primary function of the women's committees was to draw women from their narrow family circle to wider society!

The situation in the trade unions was similar. Their work among women was also directed only at local issues. They were supposed to solve the immediate daily problems facing working women by easing the burden of their dual role, rather than by challenging it. Wider social issues of female inequality, namely equal representation in various social institutions, were totally ignored by the unions - although women form 40 per cent of the total trade union membership, the number of women officials is proportionately much lower and has a decreasing tendency in the higher trade union bodies. (Brejchova, 1967, p.21).

It is clear that in the 1950s and early 1960s, a mass political women's movement did not really exist. Women were supposed to work politically either in the trade unions or in their own organization,

women's committees. The latter, however, served only in an advisory capacity to the local authorities (the so-called national committees). In fact, women's committees were under greater influence and control from the local authorities at the corresponding level of the bureaucratic hierarchy, than from the hierarchical structure of their own organization. Because of this, the women's committees were more concerned with helping local authorities to fulfil their economic assignments, and much less concerned with the specific problems of women.

In 1963, the women's committees attached to local authorities in towns had been dissolved, although they remained at the district and regional level and in the farm villages and the smallest communities. Again the reason given was that there was no separate 'woman question' and there were enough other organizations through which women could express themselves. The Central Committee of Czechoslovak Women also had no political existence of its own. It was rather symbolic in character. Its main function was to represent Czechoslovakia at international women's meetings, to play host to foreign delegations, to hold special seminars and conferences from time to time and to publish two women's magazines in Czech and Slovak.

Its opinion on issues which affected women at home was either entirely ignored by the authorities or the recommendations were politely appreciated but rarely acted upon. (Scott, 1974, p.101). For example, the government-sponsored research into the problems of employed mothers with small children, undertaken in the early 1960s, at no stage consulted the Central Committee of Czechoslovak Women, not even after the research had been completed. (Hakova, 1967). Yet these issues were of direct relevance to women, and should have been of some concern to 'their' representative organization.

3. The Period 1966-1968

In the mid-1960s, within the context of economic reform and

public debates on the 'effectiveness' of women's employment,¹⁸ some women communists in the Central Committee of the Party, in the presidium and apparatus of the Committee of Women and in the trade unions, began to press for a new women's organization. In 1965, the Czechoslovak Women's Committee put forward a 'thesis' for a public discussion in preparation for the Thirteenth Party Congress which proposed that a firmer organizational basis was necessary if the activity of women in economic, political and cultural life was to be intensified. It was argued that the previous way of doing things did not correspond to the current task. (Scott, 1974, pp.112-113).

The XIII. Congress of the Party in June 1966 agreed to the creation of a new mass women's organization. The resolution of the Congress read:

"In accordance with the results of the pre-Congress discussion, the XIII. Congress charges the Central Committee with the task of elaboration of suggestions for the consolidation of the organizational basis of the women's movement and enhancing the co-ordinative and directive role of the Czechoslovak Committee of Women." (Vlasta, No.27, 6 July, 1967).

It only took six months to begin the construction of a new female organization. Public meetings which elected local and town committees of the new Czechoslovak Union of Women, took place during the period 15.11 - 31.3.1967. On 30 and 31.5.1967, the founding Congress of the Czechoslovak Union of Women in Slovakia met in Bratislava. The Slovak Congress of the CUW discussed the problems connected with the employment opportunities for women (which are lower in Slovakia than in Bohemia), problems facing peasant women, the Gipsy question, the placement of 15 year old girls who do not want to continue their education, etc. A suggestion that employed women with lower wages should stay at home and either society should pay them directly for the upbringing of children or their husband's salaries should be increased, was rejected by the Congress. (Vlasta, 1967, No.24, 11 June).

18. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in the next Chapter.

On 5.7.1967, 650 delegates attended the founding Congress of the CUW. Helena Leflerova, chairwoman of the former Czechoslovak Committee of Women gave the main report, in which she criticized the previous state of affairs and explained why the new woman's movement was created:

"Czechoslovak Union of Women was created to overcome, by its activities, the hitherto scatterness, disunity and accidental character of approach of other institutions to the solution of women's problems, to unite these institutions to common course of action.... The task of the woman's organization is also to check what is happening to our proposals, and how various institutions deal with them. It is necessary to solicit from them concrete standpoints which contribute to the solution of the problem". (Vlasta, 1967, No.29, 19 July).

Thus the July 1967 Congress reacted to the objective worsening of the position of women. Although the CUW formally became autonomous, (it no longer formed a section of the Party, but became a regular member of the National Front), it could not escape from political and practical formality which characterized the whole political bureaucratic system. In other words, most political and administrative institutions did not take much notice of the new political organization. It was a radical innovation that the CUW had the right to give its opinion on issues concerning women, but on the other hand, the Party and government organizations were not obliged to ask for consultation or take much notice of the Union's proposals and suggestions.

The newly elected Central Committee of the CUW put together various comments and suggestions which were expressed at the Congress to send to the main political and administrative institutions: the National Assembly, the Central Committee of the Trade Unions, the State Planning Commission, ministries of agriculture, consumer industry, internal trade, finance, education, justice, health, transport, interior, the State Office of Social Security and others. The Committee demanded

from these institutions specific and concrete expressions of standpoint on the proposals put forward.

All ministries expressed at least an interest in a contribution to the solution of the social problems of women, but the attitude was in most cases insufficient and formal. For example, the Ministry of Justice merely claimed that appropriate laws solve certain problems, but it did not mention the concrete application of laws which is often distorted and abused. For instance, protective legislation frequently achieves the opposite from what it is intended for, because it is used against women in a discriminative way. Women are assigned work below their qualification, with worse pay, and protective legislation is conveniently used as justification.

The trade union reply, signed by the chairman of the Central Committee of the Trade Unions, was very vague and inconclusive. It did not even mention that duties, which the trade unions have towards employed women, are not always fulfilled in practice. The chairman of the National Assembly, B. Lastovicka, did not both to answer the CUW letter at all.¹⁹

Thus the CUW was autonomous only formally - the leading role of the Communist Party had to be uncritically and obediently accepted. The Party could choose to take notice of the organization or to ignore it. The organizational structure and the scope of activity of the women's movement was also defined by the Party. For example, individual women could not join unless they were members of an elected committee, which could then join as a collective.²⁰ This was forced upon the women's organization by the Party leadership. As late as April, 1968 (the 'Prague Spring' started in January 1968), the Central Committee of the CUW complained to the Party and the government about the prevalent prejudiced

19. Quoted in 'Otevrene slovo' (Open Word) in Vlasta, No.21, 22 May, 1968.

20. This practice will now be referred to as a collective membership.

attitudes toward women and their organization:

".... we are expressing our dissatisfaction with the fact that henceforth, as it was in the past, the state and the party organs do not take into account the complex and difficult situation in which Czechoslovak women are living,... It is no longer possible to take silently into consideration discrimination of women in their financial reward, particularly in the shifts towards the lower limits of wage categories and the contemporary system of tax. The condition of women is further aggravated by the hitherto insufficient standard of services and trade. Only a slight number of women work in the leading positions, even in decidedly feminized sectors such as the educational system, health service, textile and food industry, from factories to ministries...." 21

4. The period 1968-1969

On 10-11 April, 1968, at the plenary session of the CC of the CUW, the old leadership resigned. Some women, who used to work in the women's movement before the war, and who were not allowed to do so after 1948, were co-opted to the Central Committee. At the 26-27, June, 1968 plenary session of the CC of the CUW, the Action Programme of the Women's Movement was adopted. It had seven sections:

1. Women in the public and political life
2. Woman and the Family
3. Position of Employed Women
4. Woman in Agriculture
5. Development of the Woman's Personality
6. Women for Peace and International Co-operation
7. The Mission and Construction of the Czechoslovak Union of Women

The last section is particularly important within the context of the present discussion. For the first time in socialist history, the women's movement rejected its subordinate and auxiliary role within the socialist party or within the socialist society. The leading role of the Party was rejected and a total autonomy and political equality was advocated. The CUW saw itself as an independent organization, as a pressure group within a pluralist political system, an equivalent to

21. Quoted in 'Dopis Vlade' (Letter to the government) in Vlasta, No.17, 24 April 1968.

political parties or other social organizations. Feminist consciousness was thus considered to be the most important issue and the chief concern of the organization. CUW thought that feminist issues should be its exclusive responsibility, i.e. women's organization should be the first one to initiate any feminist demands and campaigns. The Action Programme stated explicitly:

"Through the medium of its organization, women must have a direct influence on state policy, its formation and realization. It puts forward proposals to the Parliament, government and other accountable organs from the central to the local ones, and demands their realization. It participates in the formation of laws which are somehow connected with the position and problems of women, families and children. And the condition for the Czechoslovak Union of Women to have such a weight in our political system is the introduction of voluntary membership and activities of the largest possible number of women of all ages, professions, positions and opinions." 22

The Czechoslovak Union of Women saw itself as a specific feminist organization. Its Action Programme was well accepted and individual membership began to grow. (The principle of collective membership of elected committees was abolished in June 1968). By January, 1969, the organization had 300,000 individual members, which was almost the double of the previous year. Feminist institutions, i.e. Clubs of the CUW, which were social centres for women, were beginning to be established. The Soviet invasion in August 1968 did not put an immediate stop to the activities of this organization. Its activities continued for another year. The chairwoman of the Czech Union of Women (in January, 1969, the organization became federal, like the rest of the country, i.e. with autonomous Czech and Slovak sections), could claim the following as late as May, 1969:

"The Czechoslovak Union of Women became the equivalent partner of other members of the National Front. From the former formal organization, the Czechoslovak Union of Women became an independent organization, equivalent to political parties and other social organizations.... Practically, it means to openly express demands of women, making full use of variant approaches and argument, to put forward proposals, to demand that the National Front will discuss legitimate demands of women, and insist on their solution." 23

22. Small extracts from the Action Programme were published in Vlasta, No. 28, 10, July, 1968.

23. Jarmila Knoblochova at the session of the Central Committee of the Czech Union of Women on 6-7 May, 1969, published in Vlasta, No. 20, 20 May, 1969.

5. The period 1969 onwards

In September, 1969, the leadership of the CUW was collectively forced to resign and the movement was brought back under the complete control of the Party. The leading role of the Party is the main ideological and practical guiding principle for the activities of the present women's organization. I have used an internal document of the contemporary CUW, a duplicated pamphlet entitled 'Directives for the Activity of the Czechoslovak Union of Women and the Politico-organizational Provision of the Congress', for my evaluation of the present status of women's organization in Czechoslovakia.

The clearest statement expressing the political status of the female organization can be found on pp.2-3:

"The Czechoslovak Union of Women enlists the support of her members and other women for the policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.. It develops in the woman's movement politico-educational and organizational work in the spirit of resolutions of the congresses of the CP of Czechoslovakia, the Central Committee of the SCP and the CC of the National Front of CSSR. It participates in the system and administration of the state, it co-operates with state organs above all with local authorities, and with initiative puts forward proposals for the solution of questions concerning the lives of women. It proposes its best members to the representatives organs and other public functions."

Thus the organization has quite a lot of autonomy and initiative, but in the final analysis, as the Party is the leading force, its overall status is subordinate. The Party determines the chief orientation of the woman's movement. For example, at the moment, the chief pre-occupation of the Party is with population policy, therefore the women's movement is pre-occupied with that issue as well. The government resolution of 1, September, 1971 about the solution of the population, ^{situation} specifically urges the CUW to 'orient its activity on the systematic education of women towards parenthood'.²⁴

The CUW readily complied with that resolution. The above mentioned internal pamphlet has a whole section devoted to the 'enhancement

24. "Informace o jednani a usneseni vlady CSSR ze dne 1. zavi 1971 o reseni populacni situace", Deti. nase budoucnost, Prague, 1972, p.50.

of social significance of motherhood'. The pamphlet emphasizes that the CUW will support the pro-population policy of the society, popularize the ideal of a multi-membered socialist family and educate women towards conscious motherhood. Thus the traditional female socializing function within the family is again uncritically reinforced by women's own organization.

The failure to challenge the existing division of labour within the family and in society emerged also in other places of the pamphlet. CUW does not challenge and does not seek to alter the existing female 'responsibility' for housework, it only seeks to ease its burden. CUW attempts to "help women to extend their leisure by organizing special-interest activities; to teach them to use all types of services and facilities easing work and to teach them how to organize housework more easily and rationally." There is not even a suggestion that the housework should be equal responsibility of both spouses.

This attitude has also found its expression in some of the activities of the youth organization. In 1969, Young Pioneer Houses at district and regional levels founded the first so-called Girl's Clubs. These clubs provide facilities for girls attending elementary schools,

"Who have realized the importance and true meaning of the old Czech saying that 'love passes through the stomach', preferably full stomach, we might add... the clubs enable young girls to learn to cook well and fast, shop economically, and to know their way around the stores. Also to sew, embroider and make laces... the clubs turn out modern, able and prudent housewives who will retain their typically female qualities and talents even though they will actively participate in the building of our socialist homeland." (Stetinova, 1974).

One must add that the author wrote the article for a propaganda journal intended for 'bourgeois' readership abroad, which might account for some of its conservative and un-Marxist leanings, but the bourgeois character of these views is nevertheless quite startling. The author, as well as

the clubs themselves, do not define the goals of good and fast cooking, economic shopping and rational housekeeping in general as at all applicable to boys!

Thus the most publicized activities of the women's and youth organization occur in the traditional 'female' sphere. The Slovak Union of Women took the task of education of young people towards marriage and parenthood very seriously and worked out a project called The Little Family School. The project consists of two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part has 10 lectures, seminars, discussions with films and slides, etc. The topics covered are: Czechoslovak Communist Party for the better life of women and children, the position of women in socialist society, what I know about myself as a woman, what should I know about a young man, care of socialist health service about the mother and the child, physical and mental development of the child in the first year of its life, infectious diseases, and the struggle against them, the position of women in the family and in society, inter-human relationships, friendship and love, woman and marriage, woman as mother-educator, about beauty, ideals and duties. The practical part consists of courses in cooking, knitting and management of the household. (Hinnerova, 1973, pp.27-28).

The Slovak Union of Women thus left the practice of sporadic individual actions behind and started to concentrate on more systematic educational activity and co-operation with other special-interest organizations. During the academic year 1971/71, fortytwo such Little Family Schools took place throughout Slovakia, with average participation of 25-30 attendants. The main Slovak woman's magazine, Slovenka has a regular column under the same title and thus helps to popularize the whole project. The Central Committee of the Slovak Union of Women is not intending to determine the content of these schools -

local committees should arrange it according with the interests of young women.

However, the above 'model' outline shows on which lines the Slovak Union of Women is thinking - further strengthening of the family, which is regarded as the primary unit of socialist society, and reinforcement of the traditional female roles, especially in the practical part of the School. On the other hand, unlike the Girls' Clubs, the Central Committee of the Slovak Union of Women suggested that similar schools should also be arranged for boys and young men. It also emphasized that the theoretical part of the project should be more important than the practical part. As quite a few topics of the theoretical part cover interpersonal relationships - an area which had been traditionally neglected by the socialist theory and practice, the Little Family Schools project can be regarded in this sense as a step forward. Nevertheless, it is quite ironical that a socialist woman's and youth organization emphasize motherhood rather than woman's economic role in society.

On the other hand, we must realize that this is a change in emphasis and priority rather than a fundamental reorientation of policy. The Czech and Slovak Union of Women or the Communist Party are in no way advocating return of women to the family or motherhood as the only meaningful function and role of the 'socialist' woman. The Czechoslovak Council of Women has specific commissions for employed women in industry, in public services and in agriculture. "Activation of Women for Fulfilling the Tasks of the Development of the National Economy and Care about employed Women" forms another heading and section of the above discussed internal pamphlet, which is of equal importance. Moreover, since the mid-fifties, the political activities of employed women have been concentrated in the trade unions rather than in a women's organization.

In April 1974, 3,652 committees of women, totalling 18,000

members, existed within trade union organizations at the local and district levels. 2,594 of these committees were sent up within the local trade union branches. (Ruzickova, 1974) Their concrete tasks were defined as follows:

- " i. Politico-educational Work - foundation of collectives competing for the title of socialist work, deepening of relations of comradely co-operation, mutual support and help at the place of work, enlisting women for higher participation in public and political life.
- ii. a. Improvement of working and hygienic conditions and of the whole standard of enterprises! care for working women.
- b. Women technicians, researchers and prominent workers should be more active in initiating and following suitable adjustment of the technological process of enterprises with regard to different physiological conditions of women.
- c. Jointly with the committee for the protection of safety of work, following women's comments with regard to the adjustment of working tools, facilities. The protection from unfavourable climatic effects. Checking whether women are provided with suitable protective clothing, shoes, warm drinks, etc.
- Increase in specific women's health care and deepening of enlightenment - to find out the type of accidents, occupational illnesses, and causes of working disability amongst women.
- d. Committees of women should make sure that the suggested measures for implementation are assigned order of priorities and order of actual solution.
- iii. Enlisting women for enterprise canteens.
- For instance, women frequently refuse cooked meals during their

shift on the grounds that they have them later at home after finishing work.

- iv. In co-operation with other committees, committees of women should check that enterprises make full use of women's qualifications and the principles of the existing wage policy in rewarding women. This must be connected with provisions for the various forms of further education available to women. This includes part-time courses and political study.
- v. Women's committee should assist other committees responsible for children and workers' recreation.
- vi. Women's committees should also check the distribution and capacity of creches and kindergartens, with regard to present as well as future needs. Women's committees should exert pressure on their enterprises to establish enterprise creches and kindergartens either by themselves or in conjunction with other enterprises." (Ruzickova, 1974).

We can see that these activities are indeed extensive and cover most specifically feminist aspects of women's working lives. It is quite interesting to note that the care of children is not considered as their primary task, on the contrary, it seems to be one of the least important ones. Marie Ruzickova, who is the secretary of the Czech Trade Union Council, concludes her article with the following words:

"The solution of the problems faced by working women is the task of the whole society. They cannot be solved in isolation from all-state problems of our socialist construction. On the other hand, it cannot be assumed that the problems of women will be solved automatically with the development of the socialist society. They also cannot be a matter for women alone - the whole society must pay attention to them, but they cannot be solved without women." (Ruzickova, 1974).

One cannot but agree with this statement, but the problem of how many of these principles are actually put into practice remains.

Moreover, one also has to add that the article and presumably the whole trade union movement, does not say anything about the nature of the family and the structural connection between the spheres of social production and private reproduction. Yet unless this contradiction is realized and eventually solved, real women's equality in social life is impossible to achieve.

Summary

Despite the fact that the socialist women's movement in Czechoslovakia had a much longer tradition than the corresponding movement in the Soviet Union, its political fortunes were quite similar. This is mainly due to the lack of autonomy of the women's section. In other words, the same historical conflict between a separate feminist organization and the single revolutionary Party occurred, and the compromise achieved was not always satisfactory to women. The Communists saw the Party, not women themselves, as the primary agents of their liberation. The Party, rather than women, set the goals and tasks of the liberating process, and later created the foundation for it, such as jobs and child-care institutions. Women themselves could not fulfil these goals. It was assumed that women will liberate themselves by helping the revolution by implementing tasks set by the Party. Before the socialist revolution these tasks generally coincided with women's demands and needs. However, after the revolution, this was not always the case. In such situations, an autonomous women's movement is essential.

Initially, the women's section's important task was to combat the influence of bourgeois feminism among working class women. The organized 'male' working class movement gradually realized that ^{the} support of a large social group of working-class women, especially if they were

militant, was crucial to the success of the working-class movement.

Women workers realized that the bourgeois feminist movement, composed of middle class, leisured women, did not have much to offer them.

The bourgeois movement was not, on the whole, interested in their problems in the factories, and the middle-class slogan for the female right to work was quite meaningless in their situation.

After the establishment of the new Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, when the whole population became enfranchised, the women's section was concentrating on winning the votes of women for their Party, as well as recruiting women activists into the Party. The initial orientation was, naturally, towards women workers, but this was broadened in 1926 to women at large. In the pre-socialist period, most of the emphasis went on the overall socialist struggle, on the need for a fundamental economic and political change of society. Specific feminist demands, where they were different from overall working-class demands, were somewhat (but not entirely) neglected, because it was assumed that they could only be satisfied in the future socialist society.

Individual forms of female oppression of a psychological and cultural nature were largely ignored. The Czech socialist women's movement did not incorporate in its analysis and programme, Masaryk's ideas about the need for the change of personal attitudes in the areas of division of labour based on sex and in personality structure. In a way, this failure became more significant after the socialist revolution. The women's section was no longer needed for the Party's power struggle and its main task should have been to concentrate on changes in inter-personal relationships. As it was, the Party rather naively assumed that people's consciousness and women's equality will automatically follow from the establishment of self-declared socialism. There was no perceived need for a separate women's organization (women are

emancipated in a socialist society⁾ went the argument) and the women's section was therefore abolished. Thus for a long period, Czechoslovak women had no representation of their own. This was during the difficult transformation period, when women obtained equality of a dubious value - it often meant multiplication of their functions rather than liberation and freedom.

Moreover, women were unable to determine the course of their emancipation. The women's section did not function as an on-going pressure group, having a voice in policy-making at all levels of the hierarchy (with the brief exception of the 'Prague Spring'). In the 1950s, this lack of autonomy meant that women were unable to resist and prevent the abolition of their organization. They were also unable to reverse the investment priorities - they could not force the Party to devote more resources to the consumer sector of the economy, especially to public household services. Although the current women's organization was re-established partly under the pressure of (leading) women themselves, it nevertheless remains under complete Party control. A separate, potentially autonomous women's organization, as well as other pluralistic social forces, have traditionally been incompatible with the tightly organized, centralized and disciplined Party or Party-State. In this sense, the question of socialist feminism extends into the problem of internal Party democracy, on the national as well as the international level.

At present, the Czechoslovak Communist Party happens to pursue a pro-nationalist population policy. The women's organization has no option but to support this policy in all of its aspects, even if some of them might not be satisfactory to women: the lack of distinction made between child-bearing and child-rearing, failure to challenge the existing

sexual division of labour, etc. In this sense, the direction of specific Party policies, as well as the unequal sexual composition of the leadership, reflect existing power relations and the domination of male social values. The regime is inclined to use women and their organization for maximizing economic production and social control, and implementing specific social policies. Genuine emancipation of the individual, as well as other forms of socio-cultural transformation, which would be satisfactory to women, are usually of secondary importance. For instance, the traditional division of labour, based on sex, which is an important cultural component of women's inequality, is being reinforced rather than challenged for the sake of economic expediency.

CHAPTER SIX

WOMEN IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In this chapter I will attempt to draw upon some similarities and also some differences between the countries for a number of reasons. The ideological, moral and political commitment to the emancipation of women from various previous forms of subjugation is characteristic of both countries. It also stems from the same source - Marxist ideology of female emancipation.

The traditional Marxist model was particularly important in the initial stages of the 'socialist transformation'. Although Czechoslovakia was already highly industrialized at the point of the socialist revolution, and its masses were culturally and politically more advanced than their Soviet predecessors,¹ this difference is not as important as the similarity. In neither country were women emancipated in the socialist sense of the word. The rate of employment of married women was very low and sex discrimination in family law, employment and financial rewards, was quite common in the period between the wars. Thus in the post-war period, the victorious Communist Party was explicitly committed to remedy this politically unacceptable situation.

Engel's recommendation to emancipate women through their re-introduction into public industry has served as a guiding principle in the Party's policy towards women. The accompanying recommendation for the transformation of the family has never been applied with the same force. Although the left-wing avant garde architects belonging to the Communist Party drew up a number of architectural designs in

1. Female illiteracy was practically non-existent. Women had already acquired equal legal rights in most spheres of social life in 'bourgeois' Czechoslovakia, but these rights were somewhat abstract and not fully implemented.

the 1920s and 1930s, their only practical realization came in 1947, with the Litvinov 'Koldum' (Collective-house). On the whole, the official Czech goal has always been the successful combination and simultaneous performance of woman's professional, civic and family role. To this end, the State is supposed to help her to become an equivalent partner of the man by providing public household services and child care facilities.

As in the Soviet Union, female emancipation has not formed the only objective in Czech policy towards women and the family. The Party also had to consider the goals of the upbringing of children in line with its objectives, and the demographic and economic need to enhance population growth. As some of these goals are contradictory (rapid population growth and extensive women's employment), a policy which attempts to satisfy all these objectives simultaneously is necessarily somewhat inconsistent and contradictory. The Czechoslovak social policy has therefore encountered similar difficulties to those of its Soviet predecessor and some of the policy changes and modifications accordingly involve an attempt to eradicate unanticipated, deleterious effects of earlier policies.

As in Chapter four the analysis of the role of Czechoslovak policy towards women is therefore divided into four parts - the family, female employment, child-rearing and population growth. As I am going to cover a shorter span of time, i.e. only twenty-five years in comparison with over half a century, the specific contents of the main headings slightly vary from the previous chapter. In each section, I shall consider the extent to which the Marxist model and the official policy run ahead (or lag behind) the material and spiritual possibilities of specific periods.

I. The Family

As in the Soviet Union, theoretical priority given to female emancipation has been consistent throughout Czechoslovak socialist history, but it played a particularly prominent part (both rhetorically and in practical measures) in the initial stages of the socialist transformation. This is not surprising since the new regime inherited various forms of legal and economic inequality, which had to be changed straight away if the society was to become 'socialist'.

1. Legal Changes

a) Capitalist Czechoslovakia

The Constitution of the newly established republic in 1918 guaranteed formal legal equality to women and gave them full voting rights. The existing formal discrimination against women in education were also abolished (before 1918, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, girls were excluded from the study of law, technical sciences, arts and agriculture). Nevertheless, gender discrimination was widespread. As soon as the First World War was over, women were dismissed from most of the war industry, mainly on men's demand. The economic depression of the 1930s hit Czechoslovakia particularly hard - there were more than one million unemployed in a population of fourteen million and women were the first to be dismissed from work. Throughout the inter-war period, female wages in industry were one third or even one half lower than those earned by men, and the principle of unequal pay for the same work was quite official and legal. The year 1939 began with the dismissal of married women from their jobs in public services.

Female inequality was also explicitly expressed in the family code. The matrimonial law, passed on the 22nd May 1919, introduced only minor changes in the traditional 1811 family code of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These changes did not fundamentally affect the status of the woman within the family. Only the indissolubility of

marriage had been abolished, i.e. divorce was permitted and both forms of marriage, the civil and the religious, had the same legal status. The paragraph stating that the marriage between Christians and persons of another religious faith or those without a religion was deleted from the new code. (Schiller, 1964 and Prokopec, 1972:19-24).

However, the so-called paternal authority, i.e. the right given by law to the father as the head of the family remained intact. The code laid down that a wife must adopt her husband's name, was bound to live with him and to help him in farming or business, to keep the house in order and to see to the execution of his orders. Such rulings explicitly upheld female inequality within the family. Various reforms of the family law were suggested in the inter-war period, e.g. the replacement of the concept of paternal authority with that of parental authority, but no change actually occurred (Bednarikova, 1947). It was left to the new communist government to enact this principle and thus express its ideological model of female equality in the legal code.

b) Socialist Czechoslovakia

The May 1948 Constitution enacted principles of equality between women and men in all aspects of social life.² Motherhood, marriage and the family were given special protection by the State in the new Constitution. These principles were declared to be socialist and served as a basis for the revision of the family code (Schiller, 1964:5).

The new family code was approved in December 1949 and came into operation from January 1950. This particular matrimonial legislation concentrated on the revision of inequality of relationships within the family (as mentioned above) rather than on the wider aspects of the family's relationship to society. It was assumed that the relationship between family and the newly-developing socialist society was still at an early stage. (Schiller, 1964). The whole question was therefore left

2. This also applied to children. The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children was deleted from the law.

open for another eleven years, until the enactment of the new socialist Constitution of July 1960.

This Constitution marked the end of the transitional period from self-declared people's democracy to self-declared socialism. In the field of family relations, the Constitution specified the social dependence of family relationships on society as a whole. The upbringing of children was emphasized as the most important social function of the family, involving both partners equally. The principle of equality between the sexes within the family was thus upheld, but the Constitution did more than that, especially in the field of equality between men and women in society at large. Going beyond mere acknowledgement and reinforcement of the ideological principle of social equality of men and women, it specified, in article No.27, the basic principle and means necessary for the actual realization of female equality. In other words, it formally granted equal rights to women (in the same way as the bourgeois Constitution in 1918), but it also provided guarantees for their implementation. It stated:

"The equal status of women in the family, at work and in public life shall be secured by special adjustment of working conditions and special health care during pregnancy and maternity, as well as by the development of facilities and services which will enable women to fully participate in the life of society." (The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, 1960:Article 27, p.60).

The last principle, i.e. encouragement of the use of public facilities and services, is important, representing, in a modified form, the Marxist principle of the socialization of housework. Yet it is important to note that co-operation between the nuclear family and public institutions is advocated, rather than its total socialization of 'female' household duties, as Engels and revolutionary Russia suggested. In relation to housework, the official ideology and propaganda generally emphasizes public facilities rather than the family, while in relation to child care there is more emphasis on the family as the primary

socializing agency.³

However, the ideology of female equality expressed in the Constitution, in the civil, family and labour laws, only represents the official thinking and attitude of the Party. It seems to bear very little relation to social reality. In fact, in the early 1950s, during the height of Stalinism, official propaganda and social science often confused legal and ideological principles of female equality with the daily reality of social relations. Legal aspects of women's equality were magnified and over-emphasized, thus obscuring social reality. The socialist principle of female equality was vulgarized, i.e. formal legal equality was used as a disguise and substitute for various inadequacies, with which the Party was unable or did not want to deal.⁴ This has changed since the 1960s, i.e. various problems facing women are now publicly acknowledged and discussed, but the gap between the ideology, advocating public facilities for housework, and their actual availability and usage continues to persist. How does the principle of socialization of housework look in practice?

2. 'Socialist' Housework

It has been estimated that the time spent on the socially unproductive work (in the traditional economic sense), i.e. shopping, cooking, cleaning and washing, in individual Czech families amounts to more than 5 million hours per year, which is roughly the same time as spent on productive, i.e. paid labour, of the whole population.

(Wynnyczuk, 1962:14). To reduce this great volume of economic, political and social wastage, the Party has adopted three simultaneous policies:

3. Article 32 of the 1963 Family Code states explicitly: "The decisive part in the upbringing of children are the parents", See Zakon o rodine ze dne 4. prosince 1963, c.94 Sb., in Schiller, (1964:171-199)
4. Officially admitted in Radvanova (1963:1481). Her article was published in a periodical entitled NOVA MYSL, which at that time was the Party's main theoretical journal.

greater use of public facilities, introduction of modern household technology and greater sharing of household duties among the family members. Let us consider each policy separately.

a) Public Facilities

Following the Russian model, Czechoslovakia initially devoted most of its resource to heavy industry, relatively little having been invested in the consumer sector. As a result, priority given to the expansion of heavy industry slowed down the technological development of consumer industries. Because of this rationalization and mechanization of housework, trade and services, are of a lower standard than in advanced Western capitalist countries.

For example, while the shop assistant-customer ratio in West Germany is 1:25, the equivalent for Czechoslovakia is 1:102. Consequently long queues and frequent lack of various items cause a great deal of irritation and weariness. (Kohler-Wagnerova (1974:171, note No.50). A lot of physical and mental energy therefore has to be wasted every day to ensure basic family needs. The table below shows just how time-consuming daily shopping is.

Average Time Spent on Shopping on a Working Day

<u>Social Group</u>	<u>Average for the Group</u>	<u>Childless</u>	<u>3 or more</u>
Women Workers	55 min.	53 min.	58 min.
Women White-Collar	45 min.	43 min.	42 min.
Women Farmers (Members of the co-operatives)	35 min.	28 min.	38 min.

Source: Votruba, 1973.

On the whole, Czech public services are not a significant time-saving device. Because of the queues at laundries and dry cleaners, it is often quicker to wash clothes at home. Although this inefficiency and lack of public household services has been officially recognized for some time, so far very little has changed in practice. The National Trade

Union Conference in May, 1965, for the first time devoted its agenda specifically to the discussion of possible improvements in the quantity and quality of public services. The adopted resolution called for an extension of such services as laundries, cleaning and repair shops, housecleaning services and for the shortening of their delivery terms as well as improvement of their quality. To enable women to shop speedily, the NTUC recommended the setting up of shops near to enterprises employing women in large numbers, priority to shops with complex assortments of foodstuffs and essential industrial products (both in the centre and in the outer districts of the cities), extension of shopping on order and the home delivery of goods, as well as improvement in the assortments of meals and semi-finished products or any other new appliances. The government's decision of January 12, 1966, on certain problems concerning the position of women at work and in society generally, emphasized that it considered the gradual implementation of these proposals as a matter of urgency. (Brejchova, 1967:23-27) As in the Soviet Union, it was not envisaged that the responsibility for shopping necessarily lie with the woman.

However, the implementation has been so slow that up to now the impact of these services has been practically nil. They are still too few in numbers, their cost is too high and thus prohibitive for frequent use, and their quality poor. It is therefore not surprising that individual Czech families do not make much use of them.

For example, the investigation of 500 women occupying leading economic positions revealed that 80 per cent of the respondents never used the house cleaning services, ironically called Liberated Housework (Osvobozena Domacnost). Only 2 per cent of the respondents used them regularly and 17 per cent used them 'occasionally'. This meant that these services were used only a few times a year, at special occasions - after moving and/or interior decorating, during the pre-Christmas or spring clean up, etc. Even then, the usage of the service usually

required that one member of the family had to stay at home to let the charmen and charwomen in. (Bauerova, 1970:456).

Similarly, only 37 per cent of women from the sample were relieved from the task of washing clothes. Moreover, even if this service was used, only linen was sent to the laundry, and smaller items, especially personal and children's clothes, were invariably washed at home. (Bauerova, 1970:496). In fact, given the delay in deliveries,⁵ there is no other alternative. No Czech family has so much clothing 'in stock' as to be able to afford to have half of it more or less permanently 'tied' in the laundry. So at least one day a week, usually Saturday or Sunday, has to be devoted to washing, ironing and mending.

However, the low number of existing public laundries is also to blame for this unnecessary wastage of women's energy. Laundries are virtually non-existent in the villages, so that even with the best of intentions, families of collectivised farmers cannot possibly use them. In 1964, communal laundries washed annually only 2.30 kg. of clothes per inhabitant and dry cleaned the same low amount. (Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:102) By 1970, this already low figure dropped even further, i.e. Czech laundries washed only 2 kg. clothes per citizen annually and Slovak laundries washed even less, 1.70 kg. (Havelka, 1972:34) By 1973, the situation remained basically unchanged, both in terms of regional variation and overall low usage of these facilities

Laundries, Dry-Cleaners and Dye-Works in 1973

<u>Washed Clothes per 1 citizen in kg</u>		<u>Dry-cleaned or Dyed Clothes per 1 citizen in kg</u>
CSSR	2.08	2.77
CSR	2.29	3.10
SSR	1.64	2.05
Prague	4.75	5.24
Bratislava	7.86	5.97

Source: Statisticka rocenka CSSR, 1974:389.

5. The waiting time is two to three weeks with an extra charge for more rapid service. There are no home deliveries.

Public laundries now take care of only about 5 per cent of family wash; the goal is something like 10 per cent by 1980. They are used only occasionally, and then only by 17 per cent of families. Dry cleaners have a somewhat better record - 73 per cent of women use them frequently or very frequently. But here again there are complaints about quality and waiting time. "Express" service takes five days and the charge is one-third higher. The customer is asked to remove buttons, and not all establishments accept all fabrics. Self-service cleaners are all but non-existent and public laundrettes were introduced only quite recently. Washing, ironing and wringing services are used at least sometimes by 31 per cent of women. (Kohler-Wagnerova 1974:110, Scott 1974:195).

Proportionate Household Services Expenditure (in%)

	1961	1964	1965
Households			
Working class	11	11.2	11.5
White collar	13.	13.4	13.5
Collectivized Farmers	10	11.2	10.4

Source: Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:101).

In 1969, working-class families with a non-employed housewife spent 10.7 per cent of their income on household services, while working class families with both spouses employed spent only a little more, 11.8 per cent. The expenditure for white collar families was the same regardless of whether the woman was employed or not - 13.9 per cent. (Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:101).

In fact, public catering is the only sphere of 'socialized housework' which has made some impact in Czechoslovak society, and even here, the progress is far from being remarkable. Furthermore, significant variations exist among different sections of the population, i.e. adults and children. The table below documents the modest, though continuous expansion, of school canteens. It must be emphasized that

school canteens cater for a relatively small proportion of pupils - the number of pupils using the canteens in an individual year represents only 40 per cent of all the pupils.

School Canteens in Czechoslovakia

	1953	1965	1968	1969
Number of Canteens	4,962	7,539	8,753	8,976
Number of Pupils using them	359,807	912,753	1,033,800	1,109,113
	1970	1971	1972	1973
Number of Canteens	9,137	9,350	9,577	9,916
Number of Pupils using them	1,152,402	1,227,720	1,292,834	1,377,537

Source: Brabcova and Kabrhelova 1973:92, Statisticka rocenka CSSR 1973:506 and 1974:510

Adult catering is much worse, to the extent that the number of canteens in factories and offices had actually declined. 1,350 enterprise canteens were closed down during the period 1964-1970 (Kosnierik 1972:57) and the poor quality of food (worse than in the school canteens) deteriorated even further. Originally, these eating places were heavily subsidized by plant management. Measures taken since 1963 to put them on a paying basis have resulted in closing some and raising the prices in others. Since 1971, the number of enterprise canteens has very slightly increased, from 8,463 in 1971 to 8,650 in 1972 and 8,871 in 1973 (Statisticka rocenka CSSR 1974:409), but the improvement is quite negligible. In fact, in 1973, only 17.4 per cent of employees took their meals at their place of work. (Kohler-Wagnerova 1974:110). To compensate for the closure of canteens, employees are supplied with luncheon vouchers to use in restaurants and by 'substitute' canteens selling chiefly cold snacks.

Main meals are therefore invariably cooked at home in the evening, and 51.9 per cent of employed women cook main meals every day. The highest proportion is among rural women (78 percent) and the lowest in

white-collar families - 35 per cent. However, only 21 per cent of employed women do not cook a main meal almost every day. (Kohler-Wagnerova 1974:110) Families which make use of canteens limit their participation in public catering to a necessary minimum - one main meal a day. Sundays are then frequently devoted to the preparation of huge and elaborate meals, to 'make up' for the untasty canteen food during the week. This 'excessive' cooking then adversely affects Sunday leisure patterns - very little time is left to activities other than cooking, cleaning, washing, etc., but more on this in the following section.

It is therefore clear that the policy of socialization of housework has not been very successful in that it has not made a significant impact on the daily lives of Czech women and their families. Objective conditions, i.e. insufficient resources leading to poor quantity and quality of public household services, as well as their high cost, form the material basis for the subjective conditions, i.e. the unwillingness of most women and individual families to use them in a significant way. Like the communal dining rooms, other services were put on a paying basis in the mid-1960s in order to enable them to modernize, mechanize, and pay higher salaries to their employees. Between January 1964 and the end of 1970 services as a whole recorded a retail price rise of 40 per cent. While their receipts were in absolute figures in that period, their share in total consumer spending dropped from 31 per cent in 1966 to 24 per cent in 1970. (Scott 1974:195). The expansion of the service including, as promised in the present Five-Year Plan (1970-1975), which calls for a 20 - 30 per cent increase in their volume. At the same time, it was admitted by government officials most closely connected with the problem that a real analysis of needs and a realistic conception on which the desired reconstruction and expansion could be based were still lacking. (Adamec 1972, Kerner, 1974). The single women member of the Presidium

of that Communist Party of Slovakia pointed out that

"research in this area directed at a substantial nationalization of housework is at least as far as we know, minimal, not to speak of the fact that any existing proposals..... find their way into practice very, very slowly". (Litajova 1973:195).

As a result, reproduction of labour power, takes place almost entirely within the individual household. As in other countries, these private, unpaid housework duties demanded by the family have traditionally fallen upon the woman. To reduce (rather than fundamentally alter) the amount of these 'female' duties, two basic policies can be adopted - greater application of labour-saving and time-saving devices or a greater contribution by family members. Combination of both of these policies is naturally also possible.

b. Household Technology

We have already said that because of the priority assigned to the expansion of heavy industry, resources poured into the consumer industries were wholly inadequate. When we look at the consumer sector itself, we can detect a similar political and ideological assignment of priorities. In accordance with the 'new revolutionary style of living', most of the limited resources were initially invested in the 'collective' household services rather than in individual items of modern household technology. Rationalization of private domestic labour was considered as anti-socialist, (Hakova and Svarovska 1961) even counter-revolutionary⁶. The advocates of the counter-revolutionary view of individual housework emphasized particularly its negative psychological and political implications on a woman's personality.

These views were more or less disregarded by the more pragmatic policies of the 1960s and 1970s. Vlasta Brablcova, A Czech sociologist and economist who briefly held a government post, wrote that in view of

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6. This view was expressed by a leading member of the pre-war socialist woman's movement, Luisa Landova-Stychova (1961)
 7. D. Fukalova (1967:23) says explicitly in her dissertation: "The woman, excluded from other activities and isolated in the home, makes out of her livelihood a complicated system and fetish... The house would be for her the centrum of the world, the only proof of her individuality, which she cannot otherwise realize."

the difficulties of automating services, the impossibility of expanding manpower in this sphere and in the face of changing consumer preferences, it seemed likely that both socialist and capitalist countries would take the path of mechanizing domestic work through home appliances in the coming decades. This was in contrast to the earlier conception held in the socialist countries,

"that gradually all domestic economic activity would be shifted from the family to society, which would ensure the development of appropriate types of services." (Brablcova 1967).

In fact, the practice of mechanizing domestic work through home appliances was adopted long before this change in policy was announced. Even before the 1960s it had been possible for the economy to supply individual households with enough washing machines, vacuum cleaners, mixers, refrigerators, sewing machines, etc., at relatively low cost, because of the higher level of economic development. Research conducted in southern Moravia in 1963 showed that most families where both spouses worked, i.e. 70-100 per cent of the sample, were all well supplied with such appliances. (Brablcova 1967). The table below reveals that this situation even improved in the last decade.

Average Number of Household Appliances
in Czechoslovakia

<u>Appliance</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1970</u>
	per cent of households	
TV set	23.6	73.2
Washing Machine	54.2	69.3
Refrigerator	13.3	60.6
Vacuum Cleaner	No data	51.3
Kitchen Automation	No data	8.6

Source: Havelka 1972:30 and Populacni Zpravy, 1971:31 (no author quoted)

On the other hand, some products, such as dishwashers or the new textile products from artificial fibres, which do not have to be ironed, are hard to find on the market or they are too expensive. Similarly, disposable children's nappies made from cellulose are also very scarce and costly, so that mothers are forced to spend excessive time washing

them, even if it is done in the washing machine. There were also many complaints about the quality of these aids. Fully automatic washing machines were not generally available until 1972 and at the estimated rate of production it will be 1980 before half of Czechoslovakian homes have them. In 1971 - 1972 ten thousand brand-new refrigerators refused to function, and the wait for servicing was usually three months. (Scott 1974:196).

Thus housework is still an extremely time-consuming and energy-consuming task. Most households still have very old-fashioned kitchen equipment, requiring a great deal of effort to satisfy basic family needs. It is within this context that greater sharing of household duties among family members is of particular significance to the woman's position in society and within the family. How much energy, both physical and mental, do Czech women still spend on housework and how much has been taken over by their husbands and children?

c. Housework and Its Sharing

It is a well known fact that women spend far more time on housework than men do. Research on the time-budget of employed women, conducted by the State Population Commission in a big Prague factory Tesla in 1959-1960 concluded that employed women spend on average 5 - 5.6 hours daily on housework (shopping, cleaning, cooking, washing of clothes and dishes, etc.); $1\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours was devoted to child rearing and only 100 minutes was spent on the physical and mental recreation of the respondents themselves. The total rest period of those employed women, including sleep, averaged a mere six hours daily. (Radvanova 1963:1483).

Things did not change very much in the following decade. In fact, the time spent on domestic labour in individual households has only been reduced by one hour in the period 1960-1967. (Hakova 1970:440).

At present, 60 per cent of women spend daily 3-4 hours on housework, roughly one third of women work 1-2 hours daily as unpaid domestic labourers and 7 per cent of women work more than 5 hours daily in the home, (they are presumably housewives and do not have an outside job). (Bauerova 1970:455).

How is housework distributed among the spouses? A nation-wide sample survey on leisure time activities, conducted in 1961, showed that employed women spend 22.2 per cent of their day on housework, while men do not 'give up' more than 8.3 per cent of their day. Consequently, they have almost one third more free time than their employed wives.⁸ (See table below).

	<u>Out of Work Activities</u>			
	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
	<u>in hours</u>	<u>in per cent</u>	<u>in hours</u>	<u>in per cent</u>
Transport to and from work	0.35	2.4	0.30	2.1
Housework	2.00	8.3	5.20	22.2
Sleep and Eating	8.45	36.5	8.10	34.0
Passive Rest	2.10	9.0	1.20	5.6
Leisure	3.30	14.6	2.10	9.0

Source: Bozovaka and Vyllacil (1963) and Svorenova-Kiralyova (1968:96)

Another nationwide survey carried out by the State Population Commission, this time on married women, in 1962-64, touched on the same problem more specifically. One of the questions read: "Do you get any permanent help with your housework?" Individual answers were then classified according to the combination of socio-economic group of both the husband and the wife. Considerable differences between the

8. Incidentally, the same situation exists in England. Wilmott and Young carried out a survey in London in 1970, on time budgets of married men and women aged 30-49. They found that men spent 10 hours per week on household tasks, mainly at weekends, while women in full-time employment spent 23 hours per week on housework. Leisure hours on average were found to be 32 hours per week for men and 26 hours per week for employed women. See Social Trends, No.5, 1974:21.

various types were found, e.g. men working in agriculture helped least with housework; in white-collar families the situation was slightly better, while the highest amount of egalitarianism existed in families where both spouses were engaged in manual work in the factory. On the other hand, this relatively frequent help of the husbands was counterbalanced by lesser help of the children, while in rural families, the opposite was the case - children helped more than did the husbands. (Musil 1971).

A more recent nationwide sample survey came^{up} with similar findings.

Answers to the Question: How Often does your
Husband Help you with Housework?

	<u>Daily</u> (in per cent)	<u>On most days</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>No husband</u>
Sample (1,225)	23.0	12.2	41.5	14.6	8.7
CSR (893)	23.1	11.3	40.4	15.9	9.3
SSR (332)	22.9	14.8	44.3	11.1	6.9
Socio-Economic Group of the Woman:					
Unqualified Worker (1,228)	21.5	13.6	39.1	16.2	9.6
Qualified Worker (228)	25.9	10.4	37.8	10.4	15.5
White-collar without secondary education, equivalent to 'A' levels (183)					
	24.0	10.9	38.8	13.7	12.6
White-collar with secondary education, equivalent to 'A' levels (252)					
	29.1	13.9	40.6	9.2	7.2
Farmer (91)	18.7	12.1	47.2	17.6	4.4
Housewife (249)	15.3	12.0	49.4	21.3	2.0
Socio-Economic Group of the Husbands:					
Worker (577)	23.7	12.1	42.2	18.2	3.8
White-Collar (476)	25.6	14.7	45.7	11.1	2.9
Farmer (72)	15.3	9.7	54.2	19.4	1.4
Other (28)	39.3	10.7	32.1	17.9	0.0

Source: Mineni zen o zamestnani, domacnosti a rodine, Part II, 1972:13.

The traditional patriarchal pattern is therefore still strongest in farming families (it is 'beneath the dignity of man to engage in housework') despite the fact that agriculture had been completely collectivized. The 'socialist transformation' has therefore influenced urban families to a far greater extent than the peasant rural families. The proportion of farmers now daily helping their wives in running the home has increased to 18.7 per cent. In fact, on a national basis, only 14.6 per cent of husbands never help with housework at all. About 33 per cent of Czechoslovak men help daily or on most days.

On the other hand, the greatest proportion of men work as unpaid domestic labourers only occasionally. This means that housework still demands more physical and mental energy from the woman than it does from the man. Housework does not merely involve the number of hours daily devoted to it, but also physical and mental weariness, wastage of energy. The very way the research question was framed implies that the individual and social responsibility for domestic labour still rests with the woman. Men are only required to help and share, they are not urged to take over the responsibility. The woman has to ask for help and delegate her traditional tasks to the rest of the family,⁹ thus being unable to devote her mental resources to some more worthwhile activity.

The traditional sexual division of labour therefore still persists in contemporary Czechoslovakia. Although it is fixed culturally rather than economically (the material conditions of traditional agricultural or capitalist production no longer exist), the official policy does not seem to have devoted sufficient attention and propaganda to a conscious alteration of this cultural basis of the sexual division of labour. On the contrary, one could argue that in many instances, sex-roles have been

9. Children in average Czechoslovak families help even less than do the husbands. 35.8 per cent of children do not help at all, 24.7 per cent help sometimes and only 19.3 per cent help daily or on most days. Mineni žen....., p.13.

upheld and reinforced. For example, I have seen a book-shop window on the main street in Prague entitled 'Books for Women', which was filled only with cookery books. This sort of thing reinforces the notion that cooking is a largely female activity which affects the way that both sexes see their respective roles. In many cases, women themselves uncritically accept their so-called family duties and responsibilities. Young women who are not good cooks feel guilty about it. Older women usually require male help only if they are physically too exhausted to cope with all the tasks by themselves - they usually do not question or rebel against the existing sexual division of labour. And naturally if women accept this responsibility, why should men question it!

The sexual division of labour affects women in three different ways: (1) it largely determines female self-perception of their role within the family and in society at large (it naturally also affects male perception about what the female role ought to be); (2) it locates women within the private sphere of reproduction (given the fact that reproduction of labour power takes place within the individual family) and (3) it affects the nature of women's participation in the social sphere of production. Because women are forced to spend so much time and energy on domestic labour, they are unable to devote sufficient time to such activities as education, obtaining further professional qualifications and advancement, political participation, etc. Moreover, the sexual division of labour also influences the type of work which women do when they go out to work. This ghettoization of women in certain types of work has further implications for the levels of their income. Let me elaborate on these points in the following section.

II. Female Employment

The gainful employment of women in Czechoslovakia has a long historical tradition: in the second half of the last century, women

already comprised two-thirds of all working people. The majority of them were engaged in agriculture, trade and small businesses. By 1921, over 2 million women were employed: 758,464 were engaged in agriculture, 24,049 were teachers, 9,076 worked in the civil service, 2,490 were lawyers and solicitors, 7,695 worked in posts and telecommunications, 9,948 were employed in the health service, both in medical and white-collar capacities, and the rest, the highest proportion, worked in industry. (Mala, 1925:14-21). Thus in 1921, women comprised 29.4 per cent of the labour force. This proportion quite rapidly increased in the following decade until it reached 34 per cent in 1930. The Great Depression reduced this proportion to 28 per cent, but shortly before World War II the number of women entering the labour force began to rise again. In 1948, at the point of the Communist take-over, 2,098,000, i.e. 37.8 per cent of women were gainfully employed.

The rapid post-war expansion in the employment of women, especially married women, was caused by economic and ideological factors: overall expansion of the economy, and political commitment to female emancipation, which was conceived in terms of female participation in the labour force. It has been argued that in view of manpower needs in the socialist countries, a large degree of opportunism was involved in the inducements offered to women to leave the home, and that these countries made a virtue of necessity. The importance of ideology must not be underestimated. Although the growth of women's employment is a world wide phenomenon, especially since World War II, with the exception of the Scandinavian countries, none of the Western capitalist countries accompanied the rapid entry of women into employment with comprehensive legislation designed to give them equal rights. All the socialist countries did so, basing their programmes for the most part on those measures already adopted in the Soviet Union. The socialist countries also experienced a much more rapid rate of increase in the employment of women than did their capitalist

counterparts.

Within Czechoslovakia itself, the rate of increase of the employment of women has been much faster than that of men or of overall employment generally. During the period 1948-1970 the overall accretion of economically active persons was 1,489,000, out of which women comprised 1,189,000; that is, almost 80 per cent. (Zizkova, 1973). The highest number of employed women - the reserve labour force - came from the 20-24 age category, i.e. mostly women with small children. In 1961, 68.5 per cent of employed women came from this age-group. However, the table below, which breaks down female employment in 1961, according to a specific age-category, shows that the differentiation according to age is minimal. This is quite different in Western countries, where the employment of women in the 20-30 age category is much lower than in the other age-groups.

Rate of Female Employment according to Specific Age-Groups in 1961
(in per cent)

15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64
53.7	68.5	57.4	59.1	65.4	67.7	66.1	59.4	42.5	29.7

Source: Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:36

Czechoslovakia takes fourth place in the world in the number of women employed in the 20-24 age-category, second place for employed women in the 40-49 years group, and, third place for the 25-29 category. (Vanek, 1971:193). Even when we talk about the overall rate of female employment, Czechoslovakia is at the top. For example, in 1971, only the USSR (with 51 per cent) and the GDR (with 48.7 per cent) had a higher rate of women's employment and this was probably due to the demographic sex-imbalance existing in these countries. The table below shows that the overall Czechoslovak women's employment has been consistently and rapidly rising ever since the Communist Party gained power, to the extent

that it now cannot be increased any further. The proportion of women in the labour force now corresponds almost exactly to their proportion in the population as a whole.

Women's Employment (in per cent)

1948	1950	1953	1955	1960	1961	1964	1965	1967	1970	1971
37.8	38.4	41.3	42.6	42.8	43.5	44.6	44.8	45.2	46.7	47.0
1972	1973									
47.4	47.6									

Source: Statisticka rocenka CSSR, 1974

However, in order to properly assess socialist emancipation of women in Czechoslovakia, more than mere figures on the rates of female employment are needed. One has to analyse the type of work women do and the implication this has for women's incomes and positions of authority. One also has to reconsider the link between women's position within the individual family (which, as I have shown above, is far from being equal) and the public position in social life. In the absence of the transformation of the traditional women's functions demanded by the nuclear family, a woman's employment becomes an additional job to that within the nuclear family, rather than a source of emancipation.

1. Feminization of Certain Sectors of the Economy

It is well-known fact that the pre-industrial, sex-based division of labour persists in all industrial societies. Since the beginning of industrialization, women have been concentrated in sectors which are consistent with, and in fact, reinforce, the female maternal role (though now in a wider social context) as child rearers, social workers and nurses. In fact, teaching and nursing were the first professions which were open to women. Bohemian women were already allowed to teach in 1870, although their careers were restricted to municipal and high schools for girls. In 1909, women were introduced as professors in girl's lycea.

They could study medicine at the Charles University in Prague by 1900, but they had to wait another 18 years to be able to study law, technical sciences, art and agriculture.

What changes have taken place since then? More specifically, to what extent has the rapid post-war increase in women's employment altered this pattern of extending the female role of private service within the family into a public one (although for a wage) in society? Which sectors of the economy have played a cardinal role in absorbing the additional female labour force?

In 1951, the United Steel Works in Kladno issued a call for women to become welders, lathe operators, crane operators and engine drivers, with the promise of three times the pay they had been earning as dressmakers or office clerks. After a few weeks of training (Scott, 1974:95), the engineering industry, the spearhead of the country's economic drive was accepting girls for its apprentice-training programmes. In 1960, women made up 26 per cent of workers in heavy engineering and 37 per cent of the work force in general engineering. 25 per cent of places in apprentice training programmes in general engineering went to girls.

However, a decade later, only 5 per cent of all apprentices in engineering and metallurgy were women. This was justified by the fact that the girls who were trained in engineering did not stay in the field.

"Our enterprises threw out three millions of crowns between 1952 and 1962, training girls who left to work in entirely different occupations from those for which they had been trained".

complained a director of the apprentice training programme at CKD, the country's largest engineering complex.¹⁰ Only 9 per cent of the girls trained in the CKD Stalingrad plant in Prague during that decade remained in engineering. A big Brno engineering plant lost all but its six of its

10. Miroslav Hora in a round-table discussion sponsored by the Czechoslovak Union of Women, reported under the title "Into the Ditch with the Girls?", Mlada fronta, 1 May, 1968.

original 600 trained girl apprentices, two engineering plants in Prague did not have a single one and twenty-four heavy-industry plants elsewhere had only little over 8 per cent. This information, published in the trade union daily, Prace (The Work), was accompanied by the conclusion that the plants had not created the kind of working conditions that would keep women satisfied, and that apparently they were not very anxious to do so. (Scott, 1974:4).

Most women went into light industry and into non-technical occupations. In 1948, only two sections of the economy employed more women than men: health and social care (60 per cent) and agriculture (53.1 per cent). By 1963, eight of such 'feminized' sectors already existed: health and social care (75.5 per cent); trade and public catering (70.9 per cent); housing administration (62.5 per cent); finance and insurance (60.6 per cent); education, culture and physical education (59.7 per cent); communications (54.9 per cent); public services (53.4 per cent) and agriculture (52.5 per cent). As far as industry is concerned, traditionally, the greatest number of women were employed in the consumer industry (62.4 per cent) and food industry (47.4 per cent). (Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:65).

Thus women were primarily absorbed in such occupations where a significant proportion of women had been already employed before the war. The table below shows that individual sectors of the economy continue to have different proportions of women in relation to their total numbers in the economy.

Proportion of Women in the Total Number of Employees (in per cent)

	<u>1955</u>	<u>1968</u>
Health Care	71.9	78.4
Trade, Public Feeding	57.7	69.1
Finance and Insurance	46.7	65.6
Education, Culture	55.8	62.9
Communications	44.6	62.0
Public Service	49.5	53.0
Agriculture (State Sector)	55.1	51.5
Other Material Services	43.6	51.0
Administration, Justice	37.5	47.9
Industry	34.9	42.7
Forestry	29.8	31.1
Science, Research	23.9	31.4
Transport	15.1	21.5
Building Industry	<u>10.0</u>	<u>14.9</u>
National Economy in Total	38.1	45.0

Source: Bastyr, 1971:807.

Thus the traditional division of labour between the sexes operates within society at large as well as in the family. 61-80 per cent of all Czechoslovak women are employed in the traditional female industries such as textiles, ready-made clothes, tanning and fur, post and communication, internal trade and public catering. 77 per cent of all employees in the health service are women, 71 per cent in education and 84 per cent in social work.

(Steker, 1972:5). Similar division of tasks along sex-lines exists in agriculture.

a) Agriculture

Although the overall rate of employment in agriculture has declined, the female rate has remained constant throughout the socialist history of Czechoslovakia. Women comprise over a half of the labour force engaged in agriculture. However, the majority of those women work in predominantly manual, unskilled jobs. Although this is partly due to the lack of female technical qualification (the average age of a farmwoman is 46.3 years, which is usually too advanced for the possibility of some sort of training),

the traditional division of agricultural tasks between the sexes seems to be more important.

In live-stock production, women comprise 35 per cent of the labour force, but the division of the work day and work weeks is disadvantageous and unattractive, particularly for young mothers and young people generally. Thus the majority of farmwomen, 65 per cent, work in the fields, where they do mostly unmechanized, unskilled jobs, e.g. hoeing, sugar-beet cultivation, etc. Work with machinery and drag animals in plant production is considered a 'male' province. (Buresova, 1966:38). The increased mechanization of agriculture¹¹ does not seem to have affected the character of female work, it only reduced its volume. For example, unskilled female work is no longer required for harvesting, which is now done by machines, but this does not mean that women were transferred to new jobs; on the contrary.

Protective legislation of the Labour Code of 1966, which forbids female employment in 'perilous workplaces' has been interpreted and applied in a specifically 'masculine' way by those in the positions of authority. All tasks connected with any form of mechanization were defined as perilous, thus reserved for men only, while unskilled agricultural work, which is usually pretty hard and often dangerous to the health, but above all, less well paid, was still considered suitable to women.¹²

This 'masculine' interpretation of protective legislation is a good example of how the existing patriarchal culture determines not only female responsibility for housework and child-care, but also the type of work (with lesser social prestige and worse pay) which women do when employed outside the home. One can find similar examples in industry and in the professions. However, one has to emphasise that the traditional images of

11. In comparison with other COMECON countries, Czechoslovakian agriculture is more mechanized and productive.

12. This practice was criticized by the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Union of Women in an open letter to the government, published in Vlasta, No.17, 24 April, 1968.

the types of occupation 'naturally' suitable to women affects both sexes - it determines male prejudices towards general or specific women's employment, but it also directs women themselves toward the selection of traditional economic branches.

b) Industry

Despite the fact that the increased mechanization of industry makes it possible for girls to choose traditionally 'male' occupations in electronics, to optical industry or even some branches of heavy industry; the majority of girls entering various apprentice programmes continues to specialize in 'female' branches, e.g. consumer and food industry. When analysed historically, the proportion of girls specializing in technical branches was substantially higher, but when compared with men, it was still quite disproportionate.

Number of Apprentices according to Trades

	1960		1971	
	total	girls only	total	girls only
mining	7,488	-	3,817	-
steel	1,872	113	725	26
engineering	77,972	5,894	105,490	5,007
machine-tool in electronics	20,253	1,832	35,100	2,732
technical chemistry of silicates	2,050	588	2,635	1,393
technical chemistry of others	2,409	486	4,859	2,554
food industry	5,096	2,505	7,800	4,047
textiles and ready made clothes	13,371	12,374	27,273	25,354
tanning, shoe production	3,755	1,739	3,763	2,980
wood, musical instruments	4,914	392	10,432	998
polygraphics, paper, film photography	1,712	899	4,216	1,673
building	39,054	307	53,803	216
transport, post, communications	2,738	567	3,618	2,467
agriculture, forestry	36,290	11,180	26,203	4,348
economics, organization, trade, services	22,276	19,096	65,568	52,883

Source: Císla pro každého, 1973:84

The predominance of girls in the spheres of economics and organization, textiles and ready-made clothes is also a significant indicator of the future trend in female employment. Among girls applying for apprentice-servicing courses in 1971, there were ten applicants for every place available to learn jewellery - making, and ten for every apprenticeship in glass - painting. In order of popularity there followed photography, window arrangements, hairdressing, pastry - making, porcelain - training, dressmaking, and switchboard operators, while boys wanted to be housepainters, electronic mechanics, automobile mechanics, butchers, cooks and waiters. This division into girls' occupations and boys' occupations is intensified by the reluctance of most industries to take their quota of girls. Of the 288 available types of apprentice training courses, most of them lasting two or three years 99 are now exclusively reserved for boys, 20 exclusively for girls. 173 are open to both, but not in equal numbers. (Scott, 1974:8, 12). In this sense it is very unlikely that the present pattern of female industrial employment is going to fundamentally change in the near future.

c. Professions

The pattern is quite similar among university-educated women. The table below shows that women specialists in Czechoslovakia tend to concentrate in the non-technical, 'female' sectors such as health care, economics, law and education.

Distribution of Specialists (in per cent)

	<u>Specialists in Total</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
Technical Branches	42.2	11.6	62.9
Economics and Law	29.6	41.3	21.8
Health Care	10.7	19.9	4.4
Education, Culture	17.5	27.0	10.9

Source: Kuba, 1964.

However, even the feminized branches themselves are affected by

the pre-conceived public ideas of femininity and masculinity. Let us look, for instance, at the research findings into the problems facing women - doctors in Slovakia. Although the theoretical standard of female medical students is, on the whole, higher than that of their male colleagues, when it comes to practice, it is the male doctor who is considered as more talented and skillful. Patients tend to prefer and trust male doctors more than female ones. The latter are not so much appreciated for their expertise as for their 'human' (presumably maternal) approach to patients. Women doctors are also further handicapped by their family duties, which prevent them from acquiring further qualification and higher income. (Bartova, 1973:209).

A similar situation exists in the technical branches. While in 1934, only 3.8 per cent of students enrolled at Czech technical universities and colleges were women, by 1963 this proportion had risen to 20 per cent. This is certainly a significant improvement, when analysed historically, but when one is concerned with the contemporary differences between men and women, this percentage is still too small. One also has to look at the ways in which technically-educated women make use of their qualification. And once again, we shall find it difficult to locate a woman in the position of foreman, technologist, enterprise director or some other technical function. The majority of women specialists work in administration, and this applied to the 'male' chemical industry as well as the 'female' consumer one. (Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:55).

Thus, both men and women still hold traditional images of the type of occupation which is 'naturally' suitable for a woman. Women employed in administration, or women performing industrial tasks which require adroitness, skill and refinement of fingers, are socially acceptable and generally approved of, while women technicians or women in leading positions are still considered something special. Typical was the comment of a woman economist published in Women's Weekly, Vlasta in 1966, charging that stricter

standards were applied to women than men in entrance examinations for secondary schools and universities, she wrote:

"And so another campaign is born... The apparition of feminisation has emerged suddenly in horrible disguise stalking the colleges and secondary schools, the relevant organs of government and institutions; and horrifying everyone. Thy name is woman and therefore know thee that thou must relinquish any desire for medicine, teaching, philology, sociology and I don't know what else. Some years ago we were carried away by the number of callings which had been invaded by women and in which they had proved worthy. Now we are carefully, pedantically weighing and choosing one occupation after another which women must not be allowed to enter.

..... What bitterness and disappointment will a fifteen year-old girl with top marks carry away with her into life who is now placed before the dilemma: either you study aircraft engines or you don't study at all. No-one is interested in whether she has any particular feelings for engines. What is important is that this particular vocational school should fulfil its quota. Its unusual interest in girls is explained to their parents without mincing words. Graduates will step up to the drawing board in the factory for 900 crowns monthly, something no man would do....", Vlasta, July 20, 1966.

The comment points out to the crux of the matter. Female concentration in specific sectors of the economy does not, in itself, constitute female inequality. What is more significant is the reward structure which is associated with this public division of labour between the sexes.

2. Income Inequality

All the 'feminized' sectors of the economy discussed above are characterized by wages which are very much below the national average.

In 1963, average wages in the 'feminized' industries were between 1,000-1,200 Kcs, while the average for industries which employed no women or only very few, was 2,000 Kcs. (Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:55).

In 1965, the highest number of women was in the low income category, 1,000-1,200 Kcs (32.4 per cent women workers compared with a mere 3.2 per cent male workers, and 32.2 per cent female white-collar employees in comparison with only 1.9 per cent male employees). The income category 1,200-1,400 Kcs included 28 per cent women manual workers compared with 8.1 per cent men manual workers, and 27.2 per cent female white-collar

employees in comparison with 5.8 per cent male employees. (Storenova-Kiralyova, 1968:65-66). Incomes around 1,000 Kcs monthly were earned by only 2.65 per cent men, but by 22.3 per cent women, salaries up to 2,000 Kcs monthly were earned by 49 per cent of men, but by full 98 per cent of women. Wages above 2,000 Kcs were earned by more than half of economically active men, i.e. 51 per cent, but only by 2 per cent women. (Tomasek, 1968:20).

In 1970, the situation was roughly the same. The following table, which shows the structure of income distribution in the socialist sector of the national economy, (i.e. it excludes collectivized farmers), highlights the existing discrepancies very clearly - sex-differences are, in fact, greater than the overall national income differential. 38.59 per cent women earn 1,000-1,400 Kcs monthly, compared with only 4.92 per cent of men or 16.7 per cent of the whole population. Half of the men earn between 2,000-3,000 Kcs monthly, but only 13 per cent women earn as much.

The Income Structure in the Socialist Sector
of the National Economy in May 1970

Income Category (in Kcs)	Number of Employees (in per cent) out of which		
	total	men	women
up to 600	0.06	0.02	0.12
601-1,000	3.23	0.90	6.46
1,001-1,400	16.97	4.92	38.59
1,401-2,000	35.57	28.34	45.56
2,001-3,000	35.02	50.93	13.05
3,001-4,000	7.28	11.83	1.00
4,001+	1.87	3.06	0.22

Source: Císla pro každého, 1973:89

This unequal distribution of income between males and females has thus remained constant throughout the post-war socialist period, despite the overall rapid increase in female education and employment. In 1946,

the ratio of average income of men and women was 100:64.6 and this sex-disparity has changed only slightly to the present time, as the following table shows.

Average monthly wage	<u>Income Distribution</u>					Accretion 1970/59	
	1959	1964	1966	1968	1970 1	Kcs	per cent
- Total	1,405	1,543	1,614	1,814	2,012	607	43.2
- Men	1,598	1,781	1,871	2,105	2,336	738	46.2
- Women	1,057	1,196	1,232	1,400	1,565	508	48.1
Ratio of Average Wages (in per cent)							
- Women: Employees in total	75.2	76.3	76.3	77.2	77.8	+2.6	+2.9
- Women:Men	66.1	66.1	65.8	66.6	67.0	+0.9	+1.4

Source: Bastyr, 1971:9

In 1946, women earned about 35 per cent less than men did and in 1970, their earnings were still 32 per cent lower than those of their male counterparts. This discrimination against women in terms of reward for their work operates in two ways, between as well as within industries. The overall average income of 'feminized' sectors, is below the average of 'male' sectors, but discrepancy among men and women occurs within the same industry, even within the 'feminised' sectors themselves. Female salaries in the sphere of education and cultural work were 70.3 per cent of those of their male colleagues; the corresponding figure for health and social care was 61.6 per cent, in retail trade 73.5 per cent, in public services 71.2 per cent and in public catering 74.9 per cent. (Svorenova-Kiraloyva, 1968:66). The situation within the 'feminized' consumer industry (where women comprise 58 per cent of the total number of workers) is similar

women earn on average 30 per cent less than men.

Number of Women Falling into Specific Income Categories
in the Consumer Industry in 1961
(in per cent)

Monthly Earnings (in Kcs)	1,401-1,600	1,601-1,800	1,801-2,000	2,001-2,500	2,501-3,000
Proportion of Women	15.2	6.4	3.0	1.4	0.6
	3,000+				
	0.2				

Source: Hakova and Svarovska, 1961:313.

Even greater differences between male and female earnings exist in the 'male' industries. For example, among the 4,202 employees in the machine-tool industry who were earning 2,501-3,000 Kcs monthly, only twelve were women. Only one woman out of 827 fell into the highest 3,000-3,500 income bracket. (Hakova and Svarovska, 1961:313). In May, 1960, female wages in the heavy machinery industry averaged 73 per cent of their male colleagues. A similar situation existed in the machine tool industry, where women's wages reached 76.5 per cent of male wages. The average monthly wage was exceeded by 62.2 per cent of men, but only by 10 per cent of women in the heavy machinery industry; in the overall machinery industry, 50.9 per cent of men but only 8 per cent of women exceeded the average monthly wage. (Blucha, 1966). One decade later, that is, in May 1970, these discrepancies remained unchanged. Female wages in the fuel, and coal products and oil industries formed only 59.6 per cent of those of their male colleagues. In the wood-processing industry, women's wages were 73.3 per cent of men's wages. As far as the other industrial branches were concerned, average women's earnings ranged from 60.2 per cent to 70.6 per cent of men's average earnings. (Nentlickova and Janderova, 1971:19).

Although women comprise 42 per cent of the total number of workers in industry, 90 per cent of women fall into the lowest three classes of the income tariff. Only 25 per cent of women are engaged in skilled work which corresponds to classes 4, 5 and 6, and only 2 per cent are in classes 7 and 8, the highest, which require specialist work. (Tomasek, 1968:21). In 1965, the average income tariff classes of male workers in industry was 5.3 per cent while for female workers, it was only 3.6 per cent. (Cap and Peltramova, 1965:414).

The lower level of female skill and qualification accounts for some of this income discrepancy, but its contribution must not be overestimated. In 1964 the Communist party committee at one of the plants of the ready-made clothing industry in Prostegov, employing 70 per cent women, found that where women were employed in the better-paid medium grade jobs (e.g. technical controllers, norm-setters, foremen, technologists, planners and designers), in almost every category a much higher percentage of women than men had the necessary qualifications as far as training and experience was concerned. When it came to pay, however, women controllers earned less than men controllers, women foremen, less than men foremen, and qualified men workers earned more than qualified women on the same job. Various reasons were advanced: women themselves were not eager for more demanding work; management tended to regard the man as the head of the family whose pay was decisive; foremen favoured men in the distribution of work; men were stronger, tired less easily, had a higher output. None of this however, seemed adequate to the Communist daily Rude Pravo ("Women, Qualifications, and Equality", Rude pravo, November 16, 1964). At the Tesla-Parolubice electrical engineering plant making TV sets and tape recorders where women outnumbered men by more than three to two, in 1965 only 0.3 per cent of women earned more than 1,200 Kcs monthly compared to 70 per cent of men. (Kohout and Kolar, 1966:547).

While in 1955, every third girl who left school directly joined the labour force, without any further education and/or apprentice training, by 1961, only every tenth girl left school without pursuing any further education and qualification. (Svorenova-Kiralyova, 1968:38). On the other hand, at the end of 1963, only 32.7 per cent of all apprentices were girls, a proportion which does not correspond to the overall proportion of women in the labour force. Since 1963, the proportion of girls in the apprentice programmes has either remained unchanged or even declined, as the following table shows.

	<u>Apprentices in Czechoslovakia</u>				
	1964	1966	1968	1970	1971
total	361,642	339,131	356,414	348,670	355,774
girls only	117,366	104,494	107,676	101,440	106,787

Source: Císla pro každého, 1973:83

According to the results of a 2 per cent sample survey conducted in 1970, there were only 20 women apprentices for every 100 women with primary education, while out of 100 men with primary education, 75 were apprenticed. Thus, the proportion of women school-leavers who directly joined the labour force without pursuing any further education and qualification has slightly increased in the last decade. (Kadlecova, 1974).

On the other hand, the proportion of girls acquiring higher education has also increased and the situation at secondary schools and specialized secondary schools is much better. In the mid-sixties in these two types of school, girls formed 62 per cent and 49 per cent of all pupils, respectively. (Cap and Peltramova, 1965). However, the last figure must be read with caution, because the relatively large number of girls in the secondary specialized technical schools also includes girls enrolled in economical, medical and teacher training secondary schools - traditional 'female' areas.

The lower level of female qualification (in comparison with men) cannot however, be blamed solely on lack of girls' education. Once again, the interaction between the private sphere of reproduction and the social sphere of production, and its implication for the role of women in both spheres, is more significant. The findings of a survey on the attitudes towards increasing one's skill and qualifications showed, that while 49.6 per cent of the men expressed a positive attitude towards better qualifications, only 29 per cent of the women in the sample answered in the same way. (Blucha, 1966). The following table, which breaks down the negative replies, shows very clearly the adverse relationship between the housewife's role within the individual family and her equality in social life.

Negative Attitudes towards the Improvement of
One's Skill (per cent)

	Men	Women
higher qualification could not be made use of	43	18
advanced age	37	23
undue burdening of housework	-	45
other	20	14

Source: Blucha, 1966.

The majority of women could not increase their qualifications because of their private role within the family, i.e. involvement with housework and child care. No man faced such a problem. Even if men share the various household tasks (as is increasingly, although too slowly, the case), they are not responsible for them, and if a more urgent need arises, such as the possibility of increasing qualifications and income, they can always opt out of housework and concentrate on their further education. Such a choice will not be open to the majority of women as long as, culturally and socially, they are held primarily responsible for housework and child care.

However, the lower earnings of women cannot be explained only by their lower levels of skill and qualification, but also by official discrimination, i.e. the practice of women, having similar ability and qualifications to men, being assigned work which is below their qualification level and thus less well paid. In the spring of 1965 the Central Commission of People's Control and Statistics took a sample survey of 2,429 women who, in 1964 and 1965, entered once again into employment i.e. housewives and women after at least two years of suspended employment. Out of this sample, 1,971 women re-entered industrial enterprises - 52 per cent being housewives and 48 per cent after suspended employment. (Srb, 1966:97). 81.5 per cent of these women came to work as manual workers, the rest as technico-administrative employees. This figure, i.e. 81.5 per cent, was much higher than the existing 17.7 per cent of female manual workers, and yet the new women had much higher level of education. (Srb, 1966:17). A higher level of education has not therefore significantly altered women's subordinate occupational roles and associated incomes.

In several light-industry plants, when it came to positions requiring training and responsibility, women had to fulfil all the necessary conditions to qualify while lack of education and experience was often overlooked in men (Kaliberkova, 1968). In an investigation of nearly five hundred medium-level technical and administrative personnel in two textile plants, men averaged higher pay and higher bonuses in every category, even though the women were equally and sometimes better qualified. Some women who had been promoted to these jobs pointed out that when the posts had been previously occupied by men they had their own secretaries,

"and for the most part attended conferences and meetings while their work was done for them by this subordinate. When they were replaced by a woman, however, she had to do all the work including that which had been done for the man by someone else". (Baverova, 1971:12).

A majority of these women acknowledge that men were objectively more desirable workers than women because they were not burdened by home

worries. One third added that many women themselves preferred less responsible jobs which left them more time and strength for their household duties.

In capitalist economies, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, with lesser qualification requirements are traditionally filled from the cheap reserve pools of either immigrant labour from the underdeveloped countries or migrant labour from rural areas. As none of these sources exist in the urbanized and industrialized Czechoslovakia, women provide the only 'economic alternative'. The maternity function, the secondary status of female earning within the family (the man is considered as the main 'breadwinner'), lower productivity of female labour (given the degree of physical exhaustion produced by two jobs, one in the factory, and one within the family), etc., are all factors which make women conveniently 'fit' for the subordinate, supportive occupational roles. It is therefore not surprising that the above discussed enterprises accepted women for jobs which were below their qualification level - 22.9 per cent of women in the sample were assigned to jobs for which they were overqualified. Furthermore, the enterprises expected that only 9.2 per cent of the newly employed women would be promoted and transferred to a higher position. (Srb, 1966:77).

Income discrimination is also practised against women who perform the same type of work as men with the same qualification and tariff category. As most enterprises have income categories with a rising scale, women are invariably assigned to the lowest possible limit, while men (the 'breadwinners'), are usually assigned to the highest possible level, particularly in areas where there is a shortage of labour.¹³ Bastyr has calculated that this latter type of income sex-discrimination accounts for 8-9 per cent of the overall 26 per cent of the discrepancy between males and females. Feminization of certain lower-paid sectors of the economy accounts for two thirds of the existing difference; the greater

13. The Deputy Minister of Work and Social Affairs openly acknowledged how widespread this practice is. See Tomasek, 1968. An open letter to the government by the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Union of Women, published in Vlasta, No.17, 24 April, 1968, also criticized this practice. See also the examples discussed above.

working experience and productivity of men as well as a greater amount of over-time (women are too tied to their family 'duties' to be able to work over-time), account for the rest of the income discrepancy between the sexes. (Bastyr, 1971:813).

A similar discrepancy along sex lines can be found (and is reflected in) the distribution of positions of authority.

3. Positions of Authority

With such a rapid increase in women's employment (women now form almost half of the active labour force) and education (for example, in 1963, the proportion of women with secondary and university education was 40.7 per cent, which was in accordance with their overall employment of 44.8 per cent), one might expect corresponding improvement in the sexual distribution of positions of authority. Yet the latter has remained virtually unchanged - at present, less than 5 per cent of leading economic and political positions are occupied by women, compared with 46.6 per cent of their overall employment.¹⁴ (Bauerova, 1970:450 and Bartova, 1973:203). The following table shows that this discrepancy exists in all individual branches but it is particularly startling in sectors with the highest concentration of women.

Women in Leading Positions in Czechoslovakia in 1961
(in per cent)

Directors of district and county organs of state administration	3.6
Directors of productive, building and transport organizations	1.6
Leading technical specialists	2.4
Directors of working and production units	5.4
Constructors, designers, technical accountants	12.4
Leading economists	18.2
Inspectors and auditors	27.0
Academicians, professors, scientific researchers at the universities	9.0
Medical directors of health institutions, main district and county leading doctors, heads of various hospital departments	12.2
Arbitrators, chairmen of courts and senates, judges and prosecutors	11.8
Leading employees in communication	27.8

14. Official statistics do not provide detailed figures on the number of executive posts or responsible government jobs occupied by women.

Leading employees in internal, retail trade	14.1
Leading employees in communal services and housing administration	30.1
Directors of organizations of administrative services, heads of administrative and economic units	14.6

Source: Encyklopedie moderní zeny, 1964, and Čap and Peltrámová, 1965

Take, for example, the health service. Women comprise 43.7 per cent of all doctors 77 per cent of all the medical personnel, but only 12.2 per cent of authority positions are occupied by women. In insurance and finance, women total 65.5 per cent of the labour force, but only 27 per cent are employed in leading positions - yet they are doing very well compared with other economic spheres. Only 3.5 per cent of the executive and specialized positions in the co-operative movement in agriculture are held by women, compared with their overall labour participation of 51.1 per cent. (Buresová, 1966).

Teaching - predominantly a feminine profession - offers another interesting example. As far as rural schools are concerned, women teachers predominate in primary schools, while men teach mainly in secondary schools. This trend is repeated in urban schools, although many more women teach at the secondary level. As far as the distribution of positions of authority is concerned, the highest proportion of head-mistresses is in one-class rural schools - 42.2 per cent. There are 17.23 per cent women among heads of basic educational rural schools (predominantly in smaller towns), but only 10.68 per cent of urban basic educational schools are headed by women. (Bartová, 1973:203).

One could go on to list other examples. In the food industry, half of whose employees are women, only 5 of 579 plant directors were women in 1973. A male executive in this industry explained to the interviewer that:

"a woman in an executive post is an anomaly. Matriarchies exist in only primitive societies". ("Women and Leading Jobs in Industry", Hospodářské noviny, December 21, 1973).

So general is acceptance of the fact that management jobs belong to men that the trade union paper saw nothing incongruous in publishing, as one of their International Women's Day human interest stories, an interview with a Mr. Veselyi, the head of Prague's central telephone exchange, whose main worry was how to congratulate all 760 members of his all-female work force in one day (Prace, 8 March 1972).

One could go on to list other examples, but the pattern would invariably be the same - women tend to concentrate in middle-range jobs, and if they finally succeed in reaching higher positions of authority, these tend to be associated with lower-prestige institutions. This applies to industry, headmistresses and type of school, as well as to political institutions.

Polity

Initially, in the first stages of socialist reconstruction, the number of women representatives elected to the national committees of all levels was increasing. In 1957, 31,374 women representatives were elected, which was 16.6 per cent of all representatives. In the 1960 election, this figure increased to 44,137, which was 21.7 per cent. In 1960, women comprised 22.3 per cent of all representatives in the National Assembly; 28.3 per cent of those elected to the district national committees: 35.5 per cent of those in county national committees and 21.4 per cent in local national committees. (Kalmunzerova, 1972:10). In the following decade, however, the number of women representatives in political institutions actually declined. In 1964, only 19.3 per cent of representatives of all national committees were women. By 1970, this proportion declined even further: women comprised only 17.7 per cent of all elected representatives. In response to directives calling for greater participation of women in public life, more women were elected in the 1971 election, so that at present, women comprise 23 per cent out of the total number of elected representatives. (Kalmunzerova, 1970:10).

However, as in all state socialist societies, effective political power in Czechoslovakia does not reside in the Parliament and the local authorities, but in the appointed government, and, above all, in the Communist Party. Since 1948, no more than two women at a time have occupied a ministerial seat, and then it was, without an exception, either the Ministry of Food or the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. At present, there are no women ministers or vice ministers or ambassadors. The female situation within the Communist Party is equally bleak. For instance, after the last Party Congress, only 8 women were elected to the 115-strong Central Committee. They form only 13 per cent of all the Candidates to the Central Committee. As far as the specialist Party organs are concerned, the highest representation of women is in the Revision Commission - out of 45 members, six (17.6 per cent) are women, which is, obviously, still a very small proportion. (Kohler-Wagnerova, 1974:54). There are no women members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

The Trade Unions present a similar pattern. For example, before the Trade Union Congress in 1967, over 40 per cent of members were women. 31 per cent of all the 1,364,299 officials of branch organizations were women, which is relatively a high proportion, but the number of women officials had a rapidly decreasing tendency in the higher Trade Unions bodies. (Brejchova, 1967:21). By 1974, 431,904 women were elected to all Trade Union organs and commissions, which is 43.6 per cent from the total number of union officials. Men tend to regard these as positions that carry little real power, since there is a parallel Communist party organization at every level whose decisions take precedence, but that require patient, plodding, day-to-day administrative work of the kind women are supposed to be good at. There were only 42 women in the plenum of the Czech Trade Union Council, and only nine women among the secretaries of regional Trade Union Councils, Chairmen and Secretaries of district Trade Union Councils. (Ruzickova, 1974).

A disproportionately small number of women in leading positions of authority is therefore evidenced in all areas of social life. As the new active forces - continuously increasing employment of women and the rapid rise of the level of their education - have not improved the position of women in industry, we have to look for negative factors which hold women back.

At the most general level, the cause of this contradiction lies again in the inter-relationship between production and private reproduction, in the dual role of the woman. The woman as a mother and housekeeper becomes 'lost' as a worker, since, in most cases, she cannot devote herself to her occupation in the same way as a man can. Each leading position requires almost total commitment - a high degree of concentration and time flexibility, both of which present major obstacles to employed mothers. She finds it difficult to concentrate, because she is constantly interrupted and her concentration dispersed by the trivial activities inherent in housework and the upbringing of children. Moreover, the realization of domestic and family duties often demands that she has to leave her work, leave an important meeting or interrupt her experiment at a fixed hour. This is obviously also connected with the still insufficient development of public services in the broadest sense of the word. To secure basic family needs requires so much physical and mental effort in Czechoslovakia, that not much is left to other activities, such as recreation or further study. This then conditions the fact that, though a considerable proportion of women - especially up to 35 years of age - has acquired a high qualification, they stagnate in their further expert development and self-realization. For example, Slovak women doctors spend only 2 hours daily on their further study, while their male colleagues can afford 3-10 hours per day. (Bartova, 1973).

Another cause of the low number of women in leading positions, especially in the higher ones, lies in the anachronisms surviving in the

consciousness of people - of both men and women. Comparative research conducted on Images of the World in the Year 2000, organized in 1967 by the European Center for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences, in which Czechoslovakia took part, showed some interesting differences in attitudes between men and women concerning hopes and expectations of 'more or less women in leading positions'. The expectations of males and females were quite similar, but their hopes differed quite radically. Explicitly, the hopes of women attained or exceeded the level of their expectations, while the hopes of men remained at a considerably lower level on the scale. In other words, men favoured a greater number of women in leading positions less than they expected it, and they also wanted it considerably less than women did. The differences between hopes and expectations of men were great, but the differences between hopes of men and hopes and expectations of women, were even greater.

It was quite surprising that the greatest discrepancies existed in the socialist countries, Poland and Czechoslovakie. (The rest of the sample consisted of Yugoslavia, Finland, Holland, Norway, Spain and Japan.) In other words, great discrepancies between the attitudes of men and women concerning the female position in society seems to exist in all modern industrial societies, but a far greater number of men who do not favour more women in the leading positions of authority seems to exist in the socialist countries, Poland and Czechoslovakia. (Bartova, 1972). It is unlikely that this has something to do with the socialist societies themselves - emphasis on consistent equality between men and women has characterized these societies since the early days of their existence. Furthermore, public statements are made from time to time by leading public figures and organs, which also emphasize the need for more women in leading positions.¹⁵ The answer is therefore more likely to lie with particular

15. See the speech by president L. Svoboda, made on the occasion of the International Woman's Day, published in Rude pravo 6 March, 1971. The XIV Party Congress also stressed that the Party will strive for the increase of the proportion of women in higher levels of economic and political life, See MIV Sjezd Komunistické Strany Československa, Praha 25-29.5, 1971, Prague, 1971.

individuals, with the bases from which they form their attitudes.

It seems quite plausible to argue that men's views about women's subordinate position in society stem from two main sources: cultural past and current experiences. The cultural past, characterized by images of man's privileged position in society, and its present survival in the consciousness of the masses, seems to be common to all contemporary societies, and as such, cannot constitute an explanatory factor why so many more men in the socialist societies do not wish to see more women in the leading social positions. Their current experience must be therefore of greater importance and it seems to be chiefly associated with their personal experience of widespread women's employment. Woman's gainful employment outside the home has some negative consequences for various aspects of man's personal life, especially for his previously unlimited freedom. In the absence of adequate provision of public, household and child care facilities, and with the woman out at work full time, many tasks connected with housework and child care have to be passed on to the man and many men might resent this. The degree to which this is required is naturally related to the rank, commitment and responsibility of the woman's economic or political position - the greater a woman's position of authority, the more it infringes on aspects of a man's personal life and freedom. The individual male's prejudiced attitude concerning females in positions of authority might therefore reflect his personally negative experiences associated with women's entry to the labour force.

A good example of this was published in the party daily Rude pravo ("Misplaced consternation", February 1971). Describing an election meeting of a Communist party group in a farm co-operative, a reporter noted that while more than half of those present were women, not one of them had been nominated for the executive committee, nor did they take part in the discussion

"'Oh, they know how to say what they think when something is really at stake', I was assured by one of the newly elected officials. 'But nominate them for the committee? It's tough. Women get up early, they're always busy, and give them a function on top of it? We can't really ask that of them'."

Such consideration may seem very appealing, the reporter went on, but it would be still more gallant of the men to give the women more help in the household and in caring for the children.

Such male prejudices, then constitute unwritten, but continuously effective social barriers against women's advancement in the social sphere of production. Public debates in the media, are the concrete reflection of all this, the still continuing differentiation between occupations suitable for men and those suitable for women, and the appointment of only very few women into leading functions (leading positions are 'suitable' for only exceptionally talented women!). This ideational climate influences both men and women in their perception of their respective roles. Moreover, due to the double role they are playing, most women are objectively prevented from developing their working qualification, or their development takes place at a slower rate. Subjectively, they are, to a certain degree, prepared by their socialization and life-experience to accept this reality and to strive for leading positions less frequently than men - or even to refuse them on the grounds that they are unsuitable for women!

Thus more than two decades of socialist transformation have affected the traditional values concerning social roles of women to much lesser degree than one might expect. In fact, when we talk about values and attitudes towards women, we can identify definite polarization of opinions to the extent that we can find two opposing camps. The Marxist model, accentuating the activity of woman in the outward direction, towards broader social entities, has not penetrated the masses, largely because it runs ahead of the material and spiritual conditions of contemporary Czechoslovakia. As a result, the traditional model,

considering the basic functions of women to be the functions of mother, wife and housekeeper, appears more attractive and persistently continues to hold its own in the thinking of both men and women. This crisis in the model of the 'socialist' woman in Czechoslovakia became particularly apparent in the late 1960s, in the course of the stormy public debates and polemics on the question of the effectivity of women's employment. Rude Pravo, the Party daily, published a number of letters on the subject during the period of October 1966-February 1967. The debate was sparked off by a slightly emotional letter from a woman in a small farming village, which was published under the heading, "What Have you Got Against Us?".

"At the present time an employed woman is almost afraid to read the newspapers or listen to the radio or TV. It's not her life that's at stake, but her peace of mind..."

The employed woman is the cause of the current economic difficulties, rising divorce rates, etc. She is insufficiently productive, not enough watchful and caressing at home..."

(H. Prazakova, Rude pravo,
September 28, 1966)

The publication of this letter provoked a strong reaction. Various conflicting opinions were expressed:

"We can't go on increasing outlays for nurseries, after-school care, and nursery schools indefinitely. These social advantages are used by many families which could get along without them. Today women themselves are calling for the defeminization of some fields - schools for example - because they themselves would benefit from this. Feminization and the overemployment of women are concepts that are very close to each other."

(Dr. Pernica, Rude pravo, 12 October 1966)

"What can we expect from the upbringing of children who from the age of ten are left to play on the street unsupervised?"

(E. Vlaskova, Rude pravo, 26 November 1966)

"The movement for the emancipation of women was and is a just one. I think that it should be realized slightly differently. Not by blindly imitating men, but by allowing for what is specific to women, and give women the assurances that housework is just as important as other work which is paid for."

(An anonymous reader from Istebne, Rude pravo, 26 October 1966)

"That women belong to the kitchen is today no less reactionary than it was yesterday."

(Dr. Sprynarova, Rude pravo, 19 October 1966)

"The employment of women is actually a whole cluster of questions. Where, and in what branches do we have a surplus of women? What other occupations can we offer to these women? Where employed women do not suffice their qualification for the requirement of the job they are executing? What qualification do we and shall we require from them? How quickly and with what shall we substitute unqualified work of women? How do we solve the situation of women with insufficient qualification, who work in a branch without a perspective, in addition have small children, but notwithstanding want and have to work somewhere, because their wage is essential for the livelihood of their family?

Of course, as soon as we ask these questions, it becomes clear that with the exception of the last one, they are applicable not only to women but equally also to men. Why then are these questions only asked with a view to women?"

(Dr. Hakova, Rude pravo, 8 December 1966)

"There is also another solution. We can stick to the opinion that creative work is the meaning of life, but in the interests of society, only men will be considered as people in the full sense of the word. This solution seems very promising, because its adoption would represent the greatest saving....

If things go on like this, and if any kind of measures are taken against the employment of women instead of society's creating favourable conditions for their work, socialism will lose all its attraction for me personally, and I will be intensely sorry that two of my three children are girls."

(Tesarova, Rude pravo, 9 November 1966)

Some men and women consistently defended the female right to work, and its economic and humanitarian implications for female personality.

Others saw in women's employment only a means to while away time and justified women's gainful employment only if it was financially necessary for the livelihood of the family. Some women expressed weariness and irritation from constant discussions, which do not lead anywhere, because the objective situation remains the same. A significant proportion of men and women called for the creation of such economic conditions, which would enable male income to be sufficient for the whole family, so that the woman could stay at home and devote herself to 'home making' and the full time bringing up of children. A number of readers blamed the current economic difficulties and stagnation solely on the high rate of employment of women. It was argued that woman's labour is too costly and unproductive (in terms of educational wastage, high operating cost

of pre-school child facilities, loss of production resulting from frequent absence from work of mothers of small children who tend to be frequently ill, etc.); that feminization of certain sectors of the economy is harmful, because those sectors experience the greatest difficulties; that employed women are to blame for juvenile delinquency, etc.

Noting that they had published dozens of letters and had received many more, the editors of Rude pravo brought the discussion to a close, with a lengthy interview with representatives of the State Planning Commission. It was published with the title "No new Policy" and its message was full employment. There would be a shortage of labour in the future as there had been in the past and woman power would be needed. Overemployment in particular instances, and the closing of economically unprofitable enterprises, were not women's questions, but questions which touched all workers. Half as many nursery places in nursery schools (for 100,000 children) and 25 per cent increase in kindergarten places (to cater for 400,000 children) were promised. (Rude pravo, 8 February 1967).

These assurances must have considerably dispersed the apprehensions of women. No more grievances against 'feminization' and 'female over-employment' were published in the mass media in the 1960s. In fact, no restrictive measures against women's employment were taken, although the policy became more flexible in the area of maternity and child care. How does then child rearing look in practice in Czechoslovakia?

III. Upbringing of Children

It is somewhat paradoxical, in terms of the Marxist model of female emancipation, that the closest fit between the Party ideology and practice exists in the sphere of motherhood rather than in the sphere of women's gainful employment. The official attitude towards the upbringing of children has been quite consistent throughout Czechoslovak history: active co-operation between the individual rearing within the

nuclear family and collective upbringing, rather than total socialization of child-care has been advocated and practised throughout. However, one can find more emphasis on collective forms of upbringing in the initial stages of socialist transformation, while the priority given to family upbringing, especially maternal upbringing, is more characteristic of the recent period. Let us first look at the Party objective in child-rearing, that is, at the ways in which it should be conducted, as it is expressed in the family code.

1. Family law

The 'socialist' principles of family relationships were already established in the 9 May 1948 Constitution and in the family code of December 1949. The new socialist Constitution of July 1960 and the new family code of December 1963, did not introduce any fundamental changes. However, as the latter is more recent, and as it is still in force at present, I shall analyse the contemporary family code, which began operating in April 1964.

It has seven basic articles, which cover basic relationships within and outside the family; marriage, the family, motherhood, parents and children, the care of society for youth, members of the family, and the use of main principles for interpretation.¹⁷

The first article on marriage makes it clear that "the main social purpose of marriage is the foundation of the family and regular upbringing of children." (Schiller, 1964:171). It is therefore not surprising that the largest part of the family code is devoted to the relationship between parents and children. First of all, both parents have equal rights and responsibilities towards their children. (Schiller 1964:178). This principle represents the ideological and constitutional principle of equality

17. Zakon o rodine ze den 4. prosince 1963, c.94, Sb. (Printed in Schiller, 1964:171-199).

between men and women within the family, but when it comes to a divorce, it is the mother rather than the father who is usually given the custody of the children.

The law also specifies the relationship between the family and society. Firstly, and most importantly, the family is subordinated to society. Following Makarenko's and Soviet ideas on this subject, society 'delegates' the responsibility for child rearing to the family. Article 4 of the 1963 Family Code states explicitly:

"Parents are responsible to the society for the all-round mental and physical development of their children, especially for their regular upbringing in such a way that the unity of interests of the family and society is consolidated." 18

The argument about the unity of the educational appeal of the family and society is then further developed and expanded. Paragraph 30 states:

"Upbringing of children is taken care of by the inseparable unity of the family, the State and social organizations, especially the Czechoslovak Union of Youth and its Pioneer Organization". (Schiller 1964:177).

As another paragraph specifies that parents are legally (and ideologically) regarded as the main and basic educational functionary,¹⁹ the law also states basic criteria of socialist education in order to avoid possible conflict of family and social goals, and achieve the desired educational unity. These criteria are:

- "1. The foremost educational task is to be effective on the emotional, intellectual and ethical development of children in the spirit of moral principles of the socialist society.
2. Upbringing must be conducted in such a way, so that children will acquire for ever wider and deeper education, will acquire responsible attitudes towards work and their consciousness and behaviour will be penetrated by such moral principles as love for one's native

18. Schiller 1964:171. See also paragraph 33, p.178, with a slightly different wording.

19. Paragraph 32, in Schiller 1964:178.

country, friendship among the nations, protection of social property, subordination of personal interests to the interests of collectivity, voluntary and conscious adherence to the rules of socialist common life, respect for others, personal modesty, integrity and self-sacrifice".²⁰

Thus the upbringing of the new generation is primarily entrusted to the family, but the above mentioned principles of socialist upbringing, which the Party felt necessary to be specified in the family code, ensure, at least on the ideological level, that the individual upbringing is in line with the socialist objectives of the Party. The principle of subordination of personal interests to the collective interests is particularly important in this context, because it represents both the theory and practice of all socialist societies. Participation of other social institutions in child rearing, e.g. social organizations, national committees, courts and public child care facilities, serve as another mechanism which ensures the adherence to socialist principles.

However, although the law influences individual citizens, it cannot in itself create the desirable socialist relationships within the family and outside it, in the wider society. In fact, as law represents only the most institutionalized form of social relations, it may bear very little relation to actual social reality. Examination of the family law can tell us a lot about the ideological objectives of the Party, but an evaluation of actual participation of public institutions is necessary to be able to discuss the nature of upbringing in socialist societies. Empirical examination of the availability of public child care facilities will enable us to state to what extent women have been freed from this particular 'responsibility' in order to participate equally in other spheres of social life.

20. Paragraph 31, in Schiller 1964:178)

2. Public Child Care Facilities

The growth of public child care facilities is definitely a post-war phenomenon, which must be credited to the Communist regime. In 1921, Bohemia had only fifty day nurseries and Moravia had only twenty such institutions. Slovakia had virtually no nurseries. (Mala 1925:50). The expansion of crèches was so slow during the following three decades, that in 1937, Czechoslovakia had 87 crèches with 1,286 places (Janouchova 1973) and in 1946, day nurseries amounted to only ninety-four. The capitalist economy and the Great Depression prevented investment in such 'unprofitable' undertakings as the building and staffing of crèches. Demand for nursery places was also lower, due to the lower rate of employment of women with children under three years of age.

The availability of kindergartens was much better, although far from being satisfactory. In 1921, there were 543 kindergartens in Bohemia and 418 kindergartens in Moravia. (Mala 1925:50). Their growth had been also faster than that of crèches, i.e. in 1937, Czechoslovakia had already 2,713 kindergartens with 10,000 places, (Janouchova 1973) while in 1948 at the point of the Communist take-over, there were 4,664 kindergartens. However, even this rate of growth was very modest, if we compare it with the post-war development.

Crèches in Czechoslovakia

	<u>1946</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>
Number of Crèches	94	268	1,155	1,178	1,526	1,617	1,643	1,613	1,622
Places in Crèches	2,542	6,050	35,024	37,864	59,746	65,276	67,382	66,874	67,657
Places in enterprise crèches			5,553	6,474	14,851	17,278	17,948		

Source: Dunovsky 1971, Brablocova and Kabrhelova 1971:191, Cisla pro kazdeho 1973:257 and Statisticka rocenka 1974:503

Kindergartens in Czechoslovakia

	<u>1948/49</u>	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1965/66</u>	<u>1966/67</u>	<u>1968/69</u>
Number	4,664	6,633	7,569	7,725	8,067
Classes	6,107	9,853	12,568	13,070	14,200
Children	205,416	285,863	330,084	345,207	371,013
	<u>1970/71</u>	<u>1971/72</u>	<u>1972/73</u>	<u>1973/74</u>	
Number	8,227	8,292	8,412	8,624	
Classes	14,803	15,139	15,511	16,084	
Children	377,593	384,980	395,341	414,433	

Source: Kabrhelova and Brablcova 1971:191, Statisticka rocenka 1972:489 and Statisticka rocenka 1974:490

There is no doubt that the growth of these institutions has been quite remarkable, but the situation is more complex than it might seem at first, particularly in the sphere of crèches. As the initial number of crèches was so small, their growth has been more spectacular than that of kindergartens, but a closer analysis of the data will reveal that the most rapid expansion took place in the 1950s. The following decade witnessed a much more modest rate of growth of crèches, and at present, the number of crèches has either remained the same or even declined. Why did such a development take place?

Initially, i.e. in the early 1950s, there were no problems, at least not on the official level. The ideological and economic need for female labour and emancipation nicely coincided with the socialist pedagogics of that period, which emphasized that child care should take place mainly in collective institutions, and from birth. Developments and activities of crèches were then determined more by the needs of society and employed mothers than by the needs of individual children - it was simply assumed that collective upbringing would be beneficial for them too.

These views underwent a marked change in the 1960s. The harmful effects of an impersonal, institutional environment to the child's mental development, which had been pointed out by some paediatricians, psychologists

and other specialists in the 1950s, began to be echoed in the official circles. In 1960, Dr. Langmeier addressed the second national congress of psychiatry in Prague on sensory and emotional deprivation and its importance for mental hygiene in childhood. Although there had been critical studies published before this, he summarized the shortcomings of collective care and clearly formulated for the first time the objections to the official ideology that man prospers in a collective under any circumstances. The Czechoslovak Pediatrics Society had discussed similar problems at a national congress for the first time in 1961, previous congresses having been devoted wholly to medical questions.

While the specialists were very careful not to confuse day care in nurseries with the system of institutional care for abandoned and orphaned children, this was ignored by the mass media. For they changed the nature and emphasis of the problem. The analysis of and attempts to solve the situation of children without families, who passed through institutions for infants, for toddlers, for pre-school children, and finally for school-age children, thus experiencing a change in their environment and their caretakers four times in the first six years of life, were broadened to all children. A documentary film, Children Without Love, made by the director Kurt Goldberger in co-operation with two psychologists, Langmeier and Matejcek, was particularly important in this respect.

The film compared the life of babies and toddlers in model Czechoslovak children's homes with that of a child from a secure family who spent a few hours a day in a nursery. It caught the hunger of institutionalized children for demonstration of affection and physical contact with a sympathetic adult and the extent of psychological deprivation when faced with the unfamiliar - in this case a huge teddy bear - in contrast to the calm curiosity of a normal child. Children in nurseries were observed to become restless at four o'clock in the afternoon. The filmmakers also

interviewed the director of an all-week, 24-hours nursery from which children were taken home only for weekends. She regarded these institutions as an unfortunate necessity and hoped to see them cut to a minimum. This picture was shown in parliament and seen by the entire government. (Scott 1974: 178-179).

The mass media of the 1960s were then full of sharp exchanges of opinions about the usefulness or harmfulness of crèches. Suggestions of the return to the old system of housewives being solely responsible for child rearing also emerged, but they were finally rejected as unrealistic, both economically and ideologically (see the above mentioned discussion of 'overemployment of women' published in Rude pravo in the autumn 1966). One result of these debates was a review of the whole system of children's homes and the introduction during the next decade of various types of substitute family care in small homes and children's villages. An increased number of children were given out for adoption: and finally, in 1973, legislation re-instituting foster care was passed.

Another result was the decline of weekly and 24-hour nurseries. The Ministry of Health issued a firm statement that these were to be regarded as social institutions for emergency situations: that mothers should work morning shifts so that their children could be in the nursery during the day: and that under no circumstances should nurseries be run on a shift basis, with children spending nights or days there depending on what hours their mothers were working. (Scott 1974:179). While in 1961, 24-hour nurseries had formed 15 per cent of all crèches, in 1965 their proportion declined to 5 per cent of the total and in 1968, it dropped to less than 3 per cent. (Dunovsky 1971:154). Day-nurseries were not affected in the same way; they did not decline in numbers, but they grew at a much slower rate than in the previous decade. The net growth for the period 1966-1971 was only 1,033 places and the number of crèches actually declined.

The whole question of the precise impact which crèches have on children is complex and controversial and requires a more detailed inquiry. It is important to distinguish between the physical and mental aspects of children's development because the effects of crèches need not necessarily be the same in each of these spheres.

Crèches in Czechoslovakia care for the children of employed mothers in the age category 6 months to 3 years. They are built and administered either by the national committees (territorial crèches) or by enterprises (enterprise or agricultural co-operative crèches). One crèche normally caters for 50-60 children. It has three sections, one for suckling children, one for toddlers up to 18 months and one for toddlers from 18 months to 3 years. Each section has 3-4 paediatric nurses and about 20 children. The state health administration and its employee - part-time paediatrician, paediatric nurses and governesses - are responsible for the health and educational care of the children. The standard of care is quite satisfactory, partly because the staffing is reasonable - one paediatric nurse to 6-7 children and partly because paediatric nurses are well qualified. They are required to undergo a four-year training in a health school and they also have to take additional courses in psychology and pedagogics.

This expertise has enabled paediatric nurses to approach child-rearing in a really scientific and comprehensive way. Various elements of crèche-pursued education, physical, rational, musical, artistic, emotional, etc. for instance, aim at the child's full self-realization. The emphasis of physical education, for example, is on movement and specific exercises which prevent bad posture and on the system. As a result of this comprehensive approach, crèche-reared children were found to grow and move faster than children reared entirely within the nuclear family, to speak earlier, to have more hygienic habits, to be more self-reliant while eating, dressing, etc. Children in crèches were also found to have

a better and a more balanced diet than their 'family' counterparts. Frequent bad habits associated with eating food such as disorder around the plate, not eating up, etc. were found missing among crèche-reared children. (Polivkova, 1974).

On the other hand, crèches have also some undeniably negative effects on children's physical development. Recurrent early rising is unfavourable to children, because children forcibly woken up (to reach crèches before their parents start work) were found not to sleep any more during the day than 'family' children whose sleep was not interrupted and acted tired. (Polivkova 1974). However, this problem can be relatively easily solved by later start in the working day of one of the parents.

The main problem, a complete solution to which has not yet been found, is frequent illness, particularly diseases of the upper respiratory tract of children of all age categories who are reared in crèches. The incidence of infectious jaundice of crèche-reared children was reported to be five to ten times more frequent than that of children living entirely in the family environment. Infants, that is children younger than eighteen months are particularly susceptible to frequent illness. Doctors therefore recommend $1\frac{1}{2}$ years as the earliest age for the child's entry into collectivity to minimize the health risk, but most children enter earlier. (Dunovsky 1971:154).

On the other hand, the collective way of life and the early age of the children's entry into crèches are not the only factors directly responsible for the frequency of illnesses. Other, specifically health factors, such as low children's immunity and high cumulation of infectious factors, particularly viruses, against which no specific preventive protection or cure has yet been developed, are equally important. Crèches attempt to struggle against illness by putting emphasis on fresh air, a well distributed

and adhered to time-table, a correct diet with sufficient vitamins, hardiness and all other available preventive measures, in close co-operation with the parents.

The latter is especially important, yet parents are frequently unable to do all that is required of them. Insufficient convalescence of children returning to crèches after their illness has been pointed out as another factor responsible for the recurrent illnesses of small children. Yet parents usually cannot afford to keep children at home for the medically required time for the very reason for which they send their children to the crèches in the first place - they have to go out to work. Thus, if children spend long periods of time ill at home, crèches do not serve their original purpose - to ease the burden and responsibilities of parenthood by enabling the parents to go out to work.

Total absence of children in crèches is, on average, about 60 days a year, half of which is spent in illness. (Dunovsky 1971:154). This is quite high, as employers, eager to prove the lower productivity and 'wastage' of female education and employment, often point out. Although regulations do not specify who has to stay at home with children, it is almost invariably the woman. Although the mother is entitled only to 3-6 days leave at a time, which is often not sufficient for the child's full recovery, the frequency of this leave nevertheless adversely affects a woman's professional performance. Yet the whole area of the care of ill children has been very little researched and no solution has as yet been indicated.

The mental and emotional development of children in crèches presents fewer problems for the children and parents concerned than the health aspects of their care, despite some research findings to the contrary.²¹ Each child

21. These researches were on children already deprived (coming from broken homes) and living in totally institutionalized environments. The inference to normal children, who return daily home from crèches is, therefore, invalid. These findings also came from within specific 'conservative' disciplines, such as psychiatry and psychology, which affected the interpretation of results. I shall elaborate on these points in my Conclusion.

has its own neuropsychic chart, which shows all the basic characteristics of physical and mental development. As instruction in psychology and pedagogics forms a prominent part of the training of paediatric nurses, they are better qualified to follow and compare children's physical, mental and emotional development than the children's mothers. Housewives tend to have fewer experiences with appropriate child-rearing techniques than the paediatric nurses. Moreover, the former tend to be so busy with their various household tasks that they are less able to devote sufficient time specifically to children's education and stimulation. They tend to be less patient with the child, do not always regularly keep the child's daily routine and often stimulate him/her passively (for example by television) rather than actively. Children reared entirely within the nuclear family also tend to suffer from lack of contact with other children.

On the other hand, one has to realize that the child's initial experience of crèches could be quite traumatic. In fact, about 80 per cent of newly-admitted children tend to have certain adapting difficulties, lasting, on average, 2-4 weeks. Children newly entering crèches tend to be restrained, aggressive or solitary; they also tend not to keep clean and refuse to feed themselves. However, after the initial six week period, most children began to behave quite naturally and seem to be very happy and satisfied in the crèche environment. On the other hand, about 10 per cent of the admitted children do not get used to crèches even after 4-6 weeks and continue to suffer from various physical and mental disturbances. (Polivkova 1974). For these children, family or micro-crèche care is probably a better alternative than the large collectivistic environment in crèches and kindergartens.

For the rest of children in crèches, the extent of initial difficulties is best minimized by a more gradual transformation from the family to the crèche environment. In order to avoid a drastic and abrupt form of change, the parents should get to know crèche's daily regime

beforehand and prepare the child accordingly while it is still at home. A number of short visits before the actual admission to the crèche might be also useful. Once in the crèche, the only practical problem affecting children adversely, seems to be the length of their daily stay. Most children spend nine hours in crèches daily plus one hour for the journey, while doctors recommend six hours as an optimum. (Dunovsky 1971:154).

The conflict seemed to be not between the home and the collective but between the ideal nursery and the real one. Dr. Hanus Papousek of the Department of Preventive Paediatrics in the Institute for Care of Mother and Child in Prague declared that the question of the best time to transfer a child from all-day care in the family to part-time care in the nursery had not yet been thoroughly studied, and that current hypotheses were based on nurseries as they were and not as they might be. He considered that infants over six months old might be admitted for four hours a day and children over a year old, for six hours. He hoped to see experimental nurseries and collective care, and deplored the lack of funds for this purpose. (Scott 1974:181).

This brings me to another, probably the most important problem surrounding the crèches, i.e. their high economic cost. It has been estimated that in Czechoslovakia, operating cost (including food) per place is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as high in crèches as in kindergartens. The cost per place in nurseries was equivalent to about 30 per cent of the average salary of employees of all grades. (Fogarty, Rapoport and Rapoport 1971:88). R. Husek has calculated that a child's three-year stay in a crèche costs the society more than the child's whole twelve-year's school attendance. (Husek, 1963). Such a high operating cost of public care of small children, of which the State bears the highest share,²² then considerably lowers the economic effectiveness of employment of women. This applies

22. The state (or in about 18 per cent of cases, a large factory) pays all of the original investment in a nursery and meets five-sixths of the operating costs. Parents pay only 5-8Kcs daily which is, in fact, cheaper than if the child is kept at home, for children get all their meals in a crèche.

especially to women with lower qualification and income and greater number of children. The table below shows the overall expenses of public child care facilities in greater detail:

Levels of Operating Costs of Care of Children of One Employed Mother (in Kcs)

Number of children of one mother	Operating costs for children in:				Total
	crèches	kindergartens	school canteens	after-school care	
1	5,720	-	-	-	5,720
2	5,720	1,500	-	-	7,220
3	5,720	1,500	340	550	8,110
4	11,440*	1,500	340	550	13,830

* Two children in a crèche

Source: Cap and Peltramova 1965:413

We can see that the operating costs of pre-school child care institutions are very high indeed, especially those of crèches. In some cases (e.g. mother with four children earning 1,000 Kcs monthly), the overall crèche and kindergarten expenses exceed the economic value of the product which the employed mother creates for society by her labour in the social sphere of production. On the other hand, such a strictly economic argument is too instrumental and pragmatic - female equality and the nature of child care is a social and political matter in which more than the question of cost is involved. Child rearing is in no way exclusively the women's responsibility, it is a social matter, which the arguments about the high cost of child-care institutions and the lower degree of productivity and efficiency of female labour (due to their frequent absence from work) totally ignore.

If a society demands more children - the future generation of workers - then it has to pay for their upbringing, especially if there is individual demand for crèches. Yet the growth of crèches has been very slow, too slow to satisfy women's demand for them. In 1961, 35.9 per cent of all

economically active women were mothers with children under 3 years of age. By 1967, this proportion reached 45 per cent, (Dunovsky 1971:154). and most of these women presumably required places in crèches, which they were frequently unable to obtain. For example, in Prague, in the centre of the city, there were twice as many applications in 1965 as available places in crèches. As only 374 places were available an additional 380 applicants could not be satisfied, (Hilbertova 1968:17-21). At present, no more than 12 per cent of the children population is looked after in crèches, which is nowhere near the rate of employment of mothers of small children. The actual decline in the number of crèches in recent years (the 1972 figure has dropped to pre-1966 level) suggests that further expansion of crèches is not envisaged by the Czech authorities. It does not take much mathematics to figure out that, in view of the funds now being spent to permit mothers to be at home, it will not be possible to invest heavily in nurseries.

The situation in kindergartens is slightly better, because they have been given priority over crèches, but even they still cater for only 50 per cent of all the children in the 3-6 years age category. (Brablcova and Kabrhelova 1971:92). What then, are the alternatives for women with pre-school children, who want to go out to work (either because of financial necessity or out of desire not to interrupt their careers or just simply because they do not want to stay in an isolated nuclear home) and are unable to place their children in crèches or kindergartens?

3. Microcrèches

In 1966, the local authority of the above mentioned Prague district decided to set up so-called 'microcrèches'. They are very different from crèches, because child care takes place actually within the individual family. A mother, who herself has children older than 3 years, takes care of 3 more (or less, if she cares for children in the age-group 1-3 years). She is paid by the local authority and the parents of the children also.

contribute 8 Kcs daily. Microcrêches are thus similar to the system of child-minders, which exists in England. The Czech 'child-minder', however, must undergo a short course of child care, which is conducted by the district paediatrician and the district paediatric nurse.

This example and experiment was followed at some factories. For example, the electronics factory, Tesla Pardubice, instead of a local authority, set up microcrêches and paid mothers for their work. (Hilbertova 1968). Setting up of this type of crêche is naturally much cheaper and it is also more beneficial to the children who are inclined towards illnesses. The rate of children's illnesses is likely to be much lower when less children are put together. Microcrêches are thus an institutionalized form of individual family upbringing. However, lack of an adequate supply of institutional facilities for child care also leads to some informal family pattern, such as the strengthening of the social function of kinship and growing involvement of the fathers.

4. Three-Generation Families

Another question in the nationwide survey on married women, carried out by the State Population Commission in 1962-64 read: "Who is mainly responsible for the upbringing of children in your family?". Women engaged in agriculture and housewives were usually exclusively responsible for the upbringing of children, while in the families, where both spouses participated in gainful employment (excluding agriculture), both parents were responsible for child care; or the upbringing was entrusted to the grandmother. In working-class families, both parents shared equally while for the white-collar families, father is less important, but other relations are more involved. (Musil 1971).

Thus white-collar women, with higher education and income, were more likely to seek the help of grandparents than working class women, where kin seems to play a less important part. This is probably also caused by the rules which govern the admission to crêches and kindergartens.

Unmarried mothers and applicants with lower income and education are privileged, i.e. their children are more easily accepted to crèches; yet demand for crèches increases with the rising level of education and income, because professionally educated and qualified women are likely to value their economic and professional career more than their motherhood. For example, the above mentioned 380 applicants for nursery places in Prague 1, were entirely composed of women with higher education and income. (Hilbertova 1968). Those women were lucky enough to be able to resort to formal means of family child care, that is microcrèches, but most employed women are forced to rely formally or informally on relatives.

The formal reliance on relatives means that households of employed women are more often composed of three generations than households where women are not employed. (Musil 1971). This was confirmed by later research findings. In the late 1960s, Vlasta Fiserova conducted a nation-wide research on the type of households. She found that her sample consisted of a relatively large number of respondents who were living in multi-generation families, i.e. 19.1 per cent out of all respondents. This can be further subdivided, i.e. 12.4 per cent were living with old parents and 7.5 per cent lived with families of their children. Living with old parents was more frequent in Slovakia, in less developed rural areas and in municipalities up to 1,000 inhabitants. (Fiserova 1969:456).

However, living together in a house does not in itself necessitate an integrated and mutually supporting wider family unit. For example, the earlier nationwide sample on married women showed a relatively low frequency of relatives' participation in child care in farmers' families. (Musil 1971). Other factors, such as appropriate social values, are needed, so that classification according to the level of education and income seems to be of greater significance in this context. The family pattern in which three generations live together seems to be more common among families

where both spouses have a university education or where they are engaged in professional or skilled manual work. (Fiserova 1969:456). Musil claims that, in his sample, 10 per cent of children of university-educated women were brought up by persons other than the parents. However, this situation creates a special paradox and might lead to new kinds of tension. Social involvement of kin in child rearing is higher among professional middle class families, and yet these women probably disagree with their kin's (or, more specifically, their mother's) views on children's upbringing more than women less educated and with lower income, where kin plays a less important part.

Thus the specific social and economic conditions in socialist Czechoslovakia, i.e. lack of public facilities for housework and child care, combined with a high rate of female employment, strengthen the family in a specific way - by strengthening the social functions and importance of kinship. Child care seems to play a more significant role in this particular development than housework. The ideological emphasis on public trade and services, coupled with some genuine attempt to improve the quality, quantity and availability (i.e, lower prices) of these facilities, so that families can take real advantage of them, implies that it is hoped that in the not too distant future individual housework will be minimized. In other words, it is hoped that these public services will bring genuine saving of and reduction in the volume of unproductive, individual housework. On the other hand, ideological emphasis on parenthood, motherhood in particular, seems to point in the opposite direction - there seems to be more priority given to the individual family than to public child care. This is mainly caused by demographic factors, that is, by the social desire to increase or at least maintain the existing low birth rate.

IV. Population Growth

The timing of the various population measures has to be understood within the context of three main factors, which have characterized post-war Czechoslovakia: the declining birth rate and the ratio of the population in the group of persons between 15-59 years of age, from which most labour is being recruited; the high rate of employment of women, and, consequently, exhaustion of all other possible labour reserves. Czechoslovakia has been suffering from a chronic shortage of labour since the war. Initially, unemployed women, e.g. housewives, provided the necessary reserve pool of labour, but this pool is now exhausted, as I have emphasized in the previous section. Another alternative, the employment of foreign labour, which has been used so successfully by the Western countries in the post-war economic boom, is very restricted in a socialist country like Czechoslovakia. The employment of immigrant labour from the capitalist or underdeveloped countries is ideologically and politically unacceptable, so that only import of labour from countries within the Eastern block is possible. At present, Czechoslovakia assigned a number of economic projects, e.g. building of roads, factories, etc. to Polish and Yugoslav workers, but this 'solution' is unlikely to be a permanent one. With the increasing levels of industrialization, it can well be assumed that Poland and Yugoslavia will not be able to spare their abundant labour for ever.

In this situation, a constant natural replacement of the work force is the only way of avoiding severe future manpower shortages. Yet Czechoslovakia has been characterized by a very low level of natural replacement, largely due to the rapid decline in the birth rate, particularly in the last decade.

Birth Rate in Czechoslovakia (in per cent)

1937	16.3	1962	15.7	1968	14.9
1945	19.5	1963	16.9	1969	15.5
1948	23.4	1964	17.2	1970	15.9
1955	20.3	1965	16.4	1971	16.5
1960	15.9	1966	15.6	1972	17.3
1961	15.8	1967	15.1	1973	18.8

Source: Zpravy statni populacni komise, No.6, 1966^r Deti.nase budoucnost
1971:10 and Čísal pro kazdeho, 1973:59

Initially, in the first decade after the War, the birth rate was relatively high. Consequently, not much attention was given to population growth and motherhood - ideological and economic emphasis on women's emancipation in terms of their economic participation was of greater social and ideological importance and significance. However, since 1952, the population situation began to worsen and in 1962, the birth rate reached its lowest level since the war. Various measures were therefore introduced in that particular year. The following two years saw some increase, but since 1965, the birth rate again began to decline. It reached its lowest post-war level in 1968 - a mere 14.9 per cent live-born babies per 1,000 inhabitants. The latest population policy is therefore a response to this unfavourable demographic development and to the gloomy prospect of actual population decline towards the end of the century. As abortion is thought to have significantly contributed to the declining birth rate, the latest unfavourable and restrictive attitude has to be understood in this context, too.

1. Family Incentives

After 1945, the new government introduced a new system of family allowances and provision of tax deduction. The period 1947-1951 saw a slight increase of family allowances. In 1953, another increase occurred, but this time their progression rose, too. This was even more explicit in 1959, when family allowances were significantly increased from the third child. Reduction of prices of consumer goods, including children's clothing and shoes in the same year, and the introduction of free school textbooks in the academic year 1960-61 were also intended to help families with many children. These measures were introduced on social and humanitarian rather than strictly demographic grounds, to affirm society's responsibility to support the family rather than to explicitly increase fertility. However, since the mid-sixties, demographic objectives became the principal reasons for the adoption of the various pro-natalist measures.

In 1962, after a decade of rapidly declining birth rate, the XII. Party Congress initiated legal measures which lengthened paid maternity leave, graded age boundaries of women due to retirement according to the number of brought-up children, and introduced rent deductions depending on the number of children. Thus, from 1962, motherhood was recognized in real terms, i.e. beyond the level of propaganda and formal family code. The Constitution and the family code state explicitly that motherhood was under the protection of the State, but this slogan was until then meaningless for the majority of individual women, because only real financial measures of social recognition of motherhood could have some effective meaning.

However, from 1962 onwards, women who had been employed for at least 25 years and who had raised five or more children, were entitled to an old-age pension at 53; mothers with two, three or four children, who had also been engaged in gainful employment for at least 25 years could retire at 55. Women with no children qualified for an old-age pension at 57. However, these 'benefits' and 'privileges' derived from raising children are extremely low. In fact, on the ideological level, these measures have a negative impact because they reinforce the traditionally held views which do not separate child-bearing from child-rearing and consider upbringing of children as a mainly female task.

The XII Congress of the Party also set up a special population body, the State Population Commission. It was set up in December 1962, as an organ of the government, for reasons connected with the population development of Czechoslovakia. Its main tasks were:²³

1. to evaluate the development of the population situation, to give reports to the government and appropriate organs, to give initiative suggestions, judgements, etc.

23. These tasks are stated in the manifesto of the State Population Commission. See "Status Statni Populacni Komise", Zpravy statni populacni komise, No.1, April 1963, and No.4, November 1963.

2. theoretical research of all questions and problems which are connected with demographic development, particularly correlations among demographic, economic, social and health factors; furthermore, examination of the development of the individual functions of the family, relations between the family and society.
3. preparation and contribution to the preparation of educative, politico-propaganda actions about the questions of the socialist family and education for conscious parenthood.
4. co-operation with all central organs and all social organizations in the development of education of conscious parenthood.
5. following and evaluation of all measures from the point of view of increasing the living standards of families with children so that families with a greater number of children will be secured first of all.
6. following the experiences from the application of abortion law.

to

Education/wards parenthood, i.e. the attempt to increase the existing low birth rate, seems to have been the most important task of this body. In 1963, the State Population Commission helped with the preparation of a serial entitled 'Family and Society', which was broadcast by the Czechoslovak Television during the second and third quarter of 1963. The Radio cycle entitled 'Intimate Conversations', which was broadcast during the same period, also followed the specific directives of the Party to educate people, first of all youth, for the correct approach to questions of parenthood.²⁴

The State Population Commission also conducted a number of surveys on the social aspects of female employment. The research findings convinced the Party that the 'woman question' is far from being solved in socialist Czechoslovakia, that female employment, in the absence of other social

24. See Party's directives entitled 'Principles of Utilization of Mass Media for the Education of People, First of all Youth, for the Correct Approach to the Questions of Parenthood', published in Zpravy statni populacni komise, No.4, November 1963.

measures, such as adequate public facilities for housework and child care, does not constitute women's emancipation. However, this official recognition emerged as a by-product of the Party's concern with the unfavourable demographic development.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the recommendation of the State Population Commission, paid maternity leave was extended from 18 weeks to 22 weeks. A new measure, unpaid maternity leave to 1 year from childbirth, was introduced. Such a measure could clearly not so easily be introduced in capitalist countries, because it is economically unproductive. Czech enterprises, employing nursing mothers, were obliged to retain their jobs for them for one year, until they came back from the unpaid maternity leave. This is certainly costly and unproductive, but the cost could be spread throughout the whole society, which is not possible in private, profit-seeking capitalist economy.

However, these population measures did not have the desired lasting social effect. The XIII Congress of the Party followed the previous one and devoted a lot of attention to unfavourable population development. As a result, the existing maternity benefits were further extended, i.e. paid maternity leave was extended from 22 weeks to 26 weeks, for unmarried mothers to 35 weeks. As 1968 witnessed the lowest birth rate since the war, other measures followed. In 1970, unpaid maternity leave was extended for another year, i.e. until 2 years of the child and it is unlikely that it can be extended any further.

Research conducted in 1969 showed that 52 per cent of women returned to work immediately after the expiration of paid maternity leave and an additional 37 per cent returned after 1 year, i.e. after the end of unpaid maternity leave. (Havelka 1972:30). Thus a relatively large proportion of women, i.e. over a half, did not take any advantage of the provision of unpaid maternity leave. This means that the majority of women go to work for financial reasons and that professionally qualified women,

who get greater satisfaction out of their work than women workers, did not want to lose their qualifications.

Thus only the latest population measure, the law about maternity contribution, seems to have had more significant social impact and represented a real family incentive. This legal measure was introduced on 1.7.1970 and it provided for a monthly salary of 500 Kcs which was given to all employed women from the birth of the second child until the child reached 1 year of age. On 1.1.1971, maternity contribution was also applied to housewives and its provision was extended to 2 years. At the same time, assistance given at child-birth was doubled; it was increased from 1,000 Kcs to 2,000 Kcs.

Although 500 Kcs is only slightly more than a third of the average monthly income, this amount seems to represent a real family incentive. Research findings indicate that in the first year of this scheme's operation, 90 per cent of all mothers took advantage of maternity contribution for one year and 75 per cent for two years. However, similarly to the unpaid maternity leave, women with higher education took less advantage of this opportunity than women with lower level of education and income. (Havalka 1972:42). On the level of ideology, this latest measure represents social recognition of motherhood as socially necessary and productive activity in the economic sense, which has to be paid. On the other hand, it again reinforces the idea that child-rearing, like child-bearing, is specifically a female activity.

In June 1971, the State Population Commission was changed into the Government Population Commission. As the composition of this population body was also affected, this change goes beyond mere renaming. It is no longer a mere organ of the government, but it consists of representatives from various ministries and other state and social institutions and organizations. The Trade Unions, the Socialist Union of Youth, and most importantly of all, the Czechoslovak Council of Women, are all represented.

Thus women have at least some sort of representatives who could express their opinion on issues which affect their individual life as child-bearers. External specialists, that is, researchers from various aspects of social science and medicine, are also involved.

The first discussion of the Government Population Commission centred around similar problems which had emerged and been discussed more than a decade earlier; the lack of adequate public trade and household facilities, their high prices, long delivery terms and small network; education towards parenthood, children's institution, housing, abortion, especially its high rate and possibilities of curbing it, etc. (Havelka 1972a). Education for parenthood seems to have been again the most prevailing issue of discussion. An enlarged journal of the Commission, Populacni zpravy, Nos.4-5, 1972, published several articles dealing with this particular problem. The 'Directives of the Government Population Commission about Education for Parenthood' were also issued in this particular number.

Mass media were given the task of leading the educational work in order to realize favourable changes (from the societal and Party point of view, though) in the thinking and feeling of citizens, first of all young people, in their relation towards children, to overcome the widespread consumer approach. According to the directives, mass media should emphasize:

1. what a great irreplaceable value children represent, because they make life really full and rich.
2. deep and firm moral and emotional relationships, mutual love and respect between the boy and the girl, between marriage partners, and thus on this basis strengthen the family.
3. warning about only children on the basis that it is unfavourable to the child.
4. that the best ideal is the family with three children, which creates

- a children's collective, which is favourable for their education.
5. education of women for the care of their health and thus refer to the danger of abortion.
 6. the enforcement of real equality between the sexes, e.g. equal division in labour in housework.
 7. improvement of life conditions:
 - expansion of social devices for the care of children
 - improvement of services of trade and supplies e.g. children's goods
 - limitation of cooking, e.g. expansion of canteens, semi-finished products
 - expansion of services which will lighten the burden of housework
 - improvement of working conditions for women, e.g. part-time, shorter time, etc.
 8. convincing people that conditions for families with children will continually improve.
 9. explanation that unfavourable development of population would seriously and negatively influence economic development.

The first four points confirm the existence of consumer consciousness among the majority of the population, particularly among young people. Most young people preferred consumer luxuries such as cars or weekend houses before having any children at all. The most prevalent family type seems to be with 1-2 children. However, demographers and economic planners argue that this average, specifically, 1.9 children per family, has to be increased to 2.5 children in order to maintain the existing population between 14 and 15 million. Thus the aim is to have typical families with 2-3 children, i.e. many more young spouses are required to have three or more children to reach this desired figure. (Havelka 1972a:35).

While in 1950, 16 per cent out of all live born children were

third children, in 1970, this figure dropped to 11.5 per cent. (Sestak 1972:12) In 1973, there were fewer families with only one child and more families with two children, but the proportion of families with three children remained constant and there were even fewer families with more than three children. (Havelka 1974:2). Thus ideological propaganda would not be enough, some real incentives had to be introduced as well. In January 1973, monthly family allowances were again increased. They remained the same for one child (90 Kcs), but for two children, they rose from 330 Kcs to 430 Kcs, for three children from 680 Kcs to 880 Kcs and for four and more children from 1,030 Kcs to 1,280 Kcs. (Matejcek 1973). These amounts represent a significant contribution to the family income - the increments from the second child onwards are quite large.

April 1973 saw the introduction of a new advantageous loan for young married couples under 30 years of age, with very low interest rates (1-2 per cent). The loan is designed for the obtaining or furnishing of a dwelling. The value of the loan is up to 30,000 Kcs and repayment falls due in ten years. If a child is born to the couple after the contract had been signed and if it lives to be one year of age, 2,000 Kcs is written off the debt if the child is the first in succession, and 4,000 Kcs is written off if it is a second or subsequent child. (Pelikan 1973). This provision represents another effective family incentive. The government is thus attempting to redirect the consumer approach of young couples from cars to children and this financial strategy seems to be achieving the desired goal - an increase in the birth rate.

The 1970 birth rate rose to 15.9 per cent and in 1971 it reached 16.5 per cent. The increases in 1972 and 1973 were even more substantial - the birth rate rose to 17.3 and 18.8 per 1,000 population respectively. On the other hand, this relatively rapid increase has been also caused by a more favourable female age composition, which accounts for at least 20 per cent of the current Czech 'population explosion'.²⁵ and also by the stricter

25. Stated by Matej Lucan, deputy chairman of the government and chairman of the Government Population Commission, in an interview published in Deti a My, Vol.IV, No.4, December 1971.

application of the abortion law.

2. Abortion

Czechoslovakia, like the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, has a relatively long history of socially acceptable illegal and legal abortion. On the whole, it is not considered sinful or disgraceful for a woman to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Abortion in hospitals was allowed in Czechoslovakia as long ago as 1920, but in 1936 the new interpretation of the relatively liberal law restricted it to the case when pregnancy or child-birth would directly endanger the life of the woman. Thus, until 1950, any form of individual-induced abortion was a criminal offence. In 1954, restrictions on abortions were relaxed, but full legalization of abortion occurred only at the end of 1957, following the lead of the Soviet Union in 1955.

The extent to which a woman has a legal right to determine the fate of her pregnancy is differently interpreted in several socialist countries. Only in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic is abortion available on request during the first trimester of pregnancy, provided the woman has had no previous abortions during the immediately preceding twelve months. In Czechoslovakia, each woman seeking an abortion must first apply to a special abortion commission in her locality, which might decide positively or negatively about her application. These commissions are composed of doctors, elected members of local national committees, representatives from the population commission, the trade unions and the Council of Women. The local abortion commissions are often very bureaucratic - it can easily happen that the required 12 week period passes before any decision is reached. They also frequently refuse to accept responsibility and refer applicants to higher bodies, which naturally also prolongs the procedure. They are also often moralistic or even shrewd in their attitudes.

Abortions in Czechoslovakia

1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972

total	89076	105536	114602	120304	115902	99533	99211	105758	115807	121198	123822	127232	125074	122853	119630
of which															
on request	61418	79131	88288	94306	89815	70546	70698	75591	90263	96421	99666	102797	99766	97271	91292
spontaneous	27110	26062	26070	25847	25966	25245	28414	26098	25494	24722	24124	24410	25288	25559	28302
others	548	343	244	151	127	142	99	69	50	55	32	25	20	23	36
Applications for abortions	69633	87327	96866	105029	100703	81995	79828	86569	97013	104166	108008	110334	107107	104647	98790
Abortions per 1000 inhabitants	6.6	7.8	8.4	8.7	8.4	7.2	7.1	7.5	8.1	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.6	8.5	8.3
Abortions per 100 completed pregnancies	27.3	32.5	34.3	35.3	34.6	29.6	29.0	31.2	34.0	35.8	36.5	36.2	35.2	34.0	32.1
in which on request	19.0	24.5	26.5	31.7	26.8	20.9	20.6	23.5	26.5	28.5	29.4	29.2	28.1	26.9	24.4
spontaneous	8.3	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.7	8.7	8.3	7.7	7.5	7.3	7.1	6.9	7.1	7.1	7.5
Abortions per 100 live births	37.5	48.1	52.2	54.5	52.8	42.0	40.8	45.3	51.6	55.7	57.5	56.7	54.4	51.4	47.3
in which on request	no data	no data	no data	no data	40.9	29.6	29.0	34.1	40.2	44.3	46.6	45.8	43.3	40.7	36.1
spontaneous	11.4	11.9	11.9	11.7	11.8	12.3	11.7	11.2	11.4	11.4	11.2	10.9	11.0	10.7	11.2
Performed abortions per 100 applications	no data	no data	no data	no data	89.2	86.0	88.6	91.9	93.0	92.6	92.3	93.2	93.1	93.0	90.4

Source:

Vyvoj společnosti ČSSR v číslech, Prague, 1965, p.30

Statistická ročenka ČSSR, 1963, p.95: 1964, p.102: 1965, p.105: 1967, p.94: 1969, p.102: 1972, p.99: 1974, p.115.

"Few members of the commission realise," wrote one mother of five children to a weekly magazine, "what it means for a sensitive mother with human feelings to sit before them as in a pillory".

Another described her feelings this way:

"The operation itself caused me no specific trouble but every time I think of the commission (and especially one of the woman members) I'm filled with panic and I can't bring myself to sleep with my husband". (Hajkova and Tuckova 1965).

Other critics of the procedure pointed out that it encourages hypocrisy. Because it may speed up the hearing before the commission if the woman claims to have conceived out of wedlock she and her husband fabricate a lover. The commission, although suspecting the story to be an invention must still accept it since it can hardly order an investigation. This procedure also encourages irresponsibility on the part of men. The woman is the one who decides whether she gives birth to a child or not. She makes the application, she must go before the interruption commission, she is the one who receives the moralistic lecture, is subjected to pressure to have the child, is reproached for getting herself 'into trouble', she is the one who pays the fee. The man does not need to 'worry much either about conception or about its after-effects, since all the responsibility for the future of the unborn child is put on the woman. Nonetheless, on the whole the commission's attitude towards authorizing abortions has been quite permissive, especially if the pregnant woman persisted in her request. This lenient practice has been then reflected in high abortion rates. The table below shows notably the number of requested abortions in individual years, but also the ratios between abortion and pregnancies, and abortions and birth rates.

Abortions in Czechoslovakia can be performed for health reasons as well as for other reasons. These include advanced age of the woman, minimum of three children, loss of husband or his disablement, break up of the family, financial hardship which the child would bring, unmarried status, housing stringency, rape, etc. Only 20 per cent of the requested and performed

abortions are on health grounds. The rest, that is full 80 per cent, were authorized for social reasons. In 1970, the most frequently stated and accepted social reasons were: three or more children (17.8 per cent), unmarried status (16.3 per cent) and housing stringency (17.8 per cent). (Havelka 1972:34). In Prague, this order was somewhat reversed: 33 per cent of applications for abortion were based on the grounds of unmarried status and 16 per cent were due to housing stringency and a greater number of children. (Vanek 1971:291).

The relative stagnation or even decline in the number of performed abortions on request, which occurred in the period 1963-65 was largely due to a new, slightly more strict abortion legislation, which was passed in December 1962. For instance, abortion was no longer free, its cost ranged from 200-800 Kcs, rather high in view of the average industrial wage of 1,200 Kcs monthly. The socio-economic measures, initiated by the XII Party Congress, which were outlined previously, probably also contributed to the lowering of the abortion rate. The same applies to the relatively large drop in the number of abortions performed on request in 1971. The abortion commissions were officially urged in the early 1970s to limit the number of positive responses to applications for abortions based on social reasons, so that a greater number of women were unable to terminate pregnancy. 'Motherhood' incentives are likely to have contributed to the drop in the abortion rate as well as the greater use of modern forms of contraception.

Nevertheless, the restrictive measures adopted towards induced abortions are of some interest and must be primarily understood within the context of the declining birth rate. In 1967, 96,421 abortions on request were performed, so that there were 44 abortions for 100 live born babies. In 1969, there were actually more abortions than live births. Thus, given the low level of births, the relatively high abortion rate represents additional loss of population. Furthermore, abortion

also frequently has unfavourable after-effects. When Czechoslovakia introduced legal abortion, they also introduced a statutory one year follow-up as a legal requirement. The results were appalling - 25 per cent had chronic inflammatory disease leading to infertility or ectopic pregnancy and 5-10 per cent had incompetence of the cervix.²⁶

Moreover, the relatively high incidence of late complications became apparent only when a woman who had had one or more abortions decided to have a child or actually became pregnant. The incidence is substantially higher among young women and among those whose first pregnancy had been interrupted. A review of five thousand abortions in Czechoslovakia showed that 17 per cent of women visiting fertility clinics had legal abortions in their case histories, while 53 per cent had had 'spontaneous abortions' with inflammatory complications. In fact there is a suspicion that many 'spontaneous' abortions in hospital records are actually self-inflicted. For whenever the commission adopted a stricter attitude the number of recorded 'spontaneous' abortions rose noticeably but dropped again when the commissions relaxed their stance. (Scott 1974:147-148). Czech demographers estimate that abortion and its after-effects account for 30-35 per cent of the annual decline of the birth rate. (Havelka 1972a:34). On the other hand, the present unfavourable demographic composition cannot be blamed solely on a high abortion rate. The birth rate started to decline in 1952, that is, 5-7 years before full legalization of abortion, although the latter has certainly speeded up the drop in the already declining birth rate.

The reasons stated by women seeking abortions indicate that the inability of the socialist State to create the necessary material conditions for the foundation of a family with a number of children, seems to be of overwhelming importance. The findings of a public opinion survey on the existing social and economic conditions (91 per cent), better knowledge of

26. Denis Hawkins, consultant gynaecologist of Hammersmith Hospital, in an interview with Carol Dix. See Dix 1975.

contraception (70.2 per cent), improvement of sexual morality and responsibility (60.8 per cent) and education towards family planning, will lower the high abortion rate. (Vanek 1975:4). Only 16 per cent of that particular opinion sample considered the existing knowledge and availability of contraception as sufficient. As the Party has also been advocating contraception as one way of reducing the abortion rate, I shall now examine its social influence.

3. Contraception, Family Planning

Socialist Czechoslovakia inherited a network of voluntary, pre-marital, eugenic advice centres. In the early 1950s these institutions were abolished and not substituted by anything else. This was mainly due to the prevailing Stalinist ideology, which did not officially recognize genetics and therefore considered eugenic centres as unnecessary. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, new pre-marital advice centres were set up, but they were very few, with a low level of activity. Information about family planning was not included.

Thus until the early 1960s, the official attitude towards contraception was similar to that of the Bolshevik Party, i.e. it was not discouraged, but there was no propaganda actively advocating it. Instruction about contraceptive devices was limited to women undergoing abortion, because contraception advice centres existed only in women's departments of hospitals. (Zelenkova 1970). Research conducted on the problems connected with marriage, contraception and abortion confirmed that the propaganda, availability and price of contraception was wholly inadequate. (Srb, Kucera, Vysusilova 1971).

In June 1964, the Ministry of Health arranged a special conference about contraception, which recommended both oral and mechanical forms of contraception. In 1966, the Ministry of Health agreed to the production and wide distribution of IUD called DANA. Besides being a girl's name, DANA's initials also stand for Good and Unharmful Contraception (Dobra

a neskodna antikoncepcie). The safety of DANA is between 94 per cent and 96 per cent, but it could be inserted only in hospital outpatient departments. Oral contraception, Antigest, has been available since April 1966, but there were complaints that supplies were sufficient for only 100,000 of the three million customers, that only 15,000 women were using pessaries, and that only eighteen million sheaths were being produced annually. (Scott 1974:151). As the pill was not yet fully available and quite expensive, it was primarily prescribed to women who had more than two children or those who have already had an abortion. (Dvorak 1966). Supplies of the pills also tend to run out from time to time. There was a shortage of the pill in 1969 and I was informed about its current shortage during my last visit to Prague in December 1974. However, it can be now prescribed also to unmarried young women.

Thus, at present, contraceptives are available and the Party's attitude towards them is quite favourable, but because of insufficient propaganda, the majority of women do not use them. Coitus interruptus is still the most widely used method. It is estimated that only 6 per cent of all women in the fertile age-group use modern forms of contraception. (Zelenkova 1970:41). Research conducted by the State Population Commission on the sexual life of young married couples, showed that more than a quarter of the men and half of the women of the sample considered their sex education wholly insufficient or missing altogether. Books rather than the family or school seemed to be the main source of information. Knowledge about contraception was generally missing, the majority of women were dependent on the responsibility, experience, skill, etc. of their partners, both before and after the marriage. (Prokopec 1966).

Education on this subject was either non-existent or minimal. Sex education in the schools during my time consisted of a single lecture to fourteen-year-olds in the eighth year, given by the school doctor to boys

and girls separately. There was a woeful lack of suitable literature for children and young people and even for parents, on this subject. At the same time, the number of school girls who became pregnant was increasing, and young people and their parents were regularly castigated in the press for their 'irresponsibility' and 'lax morals'. It was not until 1972 that the Ministry of Education announced that it was finally at work on a comprehensive new system of 'education for parenthood', which would be taken into consideration the recommendations of gynaecologists to start sex education in childhood.

Thus the Party still has a long way to go to achieve its population goals. The conscious limitation of children (it is usually personally unpleasant, given the lack of use of modern forms of contraception) has been the female answer to the Party's unwillingness and inability to solve their problems which they face when they enter full time employment. Public debates and outcries about the poor quantity and quality of household services have been going on for more than a decade, but not much has been achieved in practical terms. The latest population measures, e.g. maternity contribution and increased family allowances, loans for young couples, etc. are likely to have contributed to the desired goal (the birth rate in 1970 was 15.9 per cent and in 1973, 18.8 per cent), but a longer perspective is needed for the assessment of the long-term effectiveness of these measures. Family incentives, which were introduced in 1962, had the desired effect for the two following years only and it is too early to say whether a similar situation will not be repeated a decade later.

This possibility cannot be ruled out, because despite those population measures, the rate of female employment does not seem to be declining, i.e. it rose from 45.2 per cent in 1967 to 46.7 per cent in 1971. Higher level of education of women, an important anti-natal factor, is also increasing rather than declining. On the other hand, the rate of

female employment has probably reached its upper limit, i.e. as almost all women in the productive age category are already working, further increase is impossible.

Summary

What emerges clearly from the preceding discussion is the fact that the Czechoslovak official policy towards women and the family followed the same aims and chronological pattern as its Soviet predecessor and contemporary. Initially, in the first period of 'socialist reconstruction', women's emancipation, conceived in terms of female social participation in the economy, was given priority over other issues concerning women and the family. The remaining forms of legal discrimination were removed. Moreover, to enable women to participate equally with men in various aspects of social life, socialization of household tasks and child rearing was advocated. Although Czechoslovakia never pursued a policy of total socialization of housework and child care such as communal living, a modified form of this classical socialist strategy has formed a consistent part of its policy, at least on the ideological level. Instead of communes, co-operation of public services and facilities with the family have been consistently advocated.

As far as housework is concerned, the rhetorical emphasis has always been on public services and facilities. However, when we analyse the practice, we can see that the resources, which the Party or its auxiliary, the government, have devoted to this particular sphere of the economy were and still are, wholly inadequate. The impact of public household services has been so minimal that the majority of the household tasks, e.g. washing, cleaning, cooking, are performed individually, within each family. There are therefore no basic differences between the nature of reproduction of labour power in Western capitalist and socialist societies -

both are private in character, the latter probably even more so than the former.

The introduction of modern household technology is higher than in the Soviet Union, but lower than in most of the advanced capitalist countries of the West. However, modern household appliances only reduce the volume of domestic labour, they have very little impact on its character and none whatsoever on the traditional primitive organization of labour. Each particular gadget is used in the most unprogressive way, for the benefit of very few people within the individual nuclear or three-generation family. Moreover, housework is still performed mainly by women. Although fathers and children are gradually helping more and more with the various household tasks, the culturally defined female responsibility for running the home remains unchallenged and unchanged.

Excessive female involvement (in comparison with men) in the private sphere of reproduction, then, negatively affects their performance in the social sphere of production. They are unable to devote sufficient time to their physical and mental recreation, their professional qualifications and further education tend to stagnate, or develop at a much slower rate. Their incomes, continue to be, on average, 30 per cent lower than those of men. All the feminized sectors of the economy, e.g. medicine, education and the consumer industry, are characterized by wages well below the national average. Within the industries themselves, women tend to predominate in the lower paid jobs, with a lesser degree of commitment and responsibility, despite their greatly increased level of education. Their domestic duties and commitments also tend to prevent them from working over-time and thus earning more money. The distribution of the positions of authority is similarly unequal for similar reasons. As no man face these problems, it is quite clear that the traditional patriarchal views about and prejudices against women are still quite strong among the population.

As far as child rearing is concerned, initially, in the 1950s, the official emphasis was also on collective rather than individual forms of upbringing. There was no perceived conflict between the female maternity and occupational roles. It was even argued that the female 'disadvantage' of child-bearing is, so to speak, cancelled out by the male two-year 'disadvantage' of national army service! These views, however, underwent a marked change in the 1960s, particularly in relation to very small children. The harmfulness of crèches for very young infants was publicly debated and some productivity-concerned economists were suggesting that it would be more efficient if women did not go out to work, but remained at home and looked after the children full-time.

A modified form of these views gained new prominence in the context of the declining birth rate and its implication for the possible future labour shortage. As socialist countries have no further labour reserves (most women are already employed, frequently in jobs below their qualification), the declining birth rate has a special significance and serious overall implications. The 'solution' to this problem in terms of maternity contribution, i.e. the direct payment (or financial compensation) given to mothers looking after small children, represents a form of social recognition of motherhood as socially necessary and productive activity in the economic sense, which has to be paid. It acknowledges the importance of the female contribution to upholding the level of the natural replacement of the population, previously not recognized in socialist theory or practice.

On the other hand, this measure also reinforces the idea that child-rearing, like child-bearing (the distinction is only rarely made in official socialist circles) is a specifically female activity, and that the mother-child relationship is qualitatively more significant than the father-child or society-child relationship. While Engels wanted to challenge the myth of motherhood by socializing the private reproductive process within the family, the present Czechoslovak demographic policy seems to move in the opposite direction - elevation of motherhood and reinforcement of woman's responsibility for the private sphere of reproduction.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, we have seen that the USSR and Czechoslovakia are not, and never have been at any time in their histories, 'truly egalitarian societies'. Despite the official commitment to sex equality and despite policies designed to emancipate women, in neither country have the communists created a society in which sexual inequality, any more than other forms and types of inequality¹, are absent. What then are the implications of the Soviet and Czechoslovakian experiences for the more general questions raised in the introduction to this thesis? How successful have the state socialist societies been in implementing their ideology of equality, what has hindered them and what can we learn from their experiences about the 'optimal' conditions necessary for achieving ideological goals? What do the case studies tell us, in comparative terms, about the implications^{of policies} affecting the sexual division of labour for broader social processes? Finally, what is the relevance of these cases for feminist ideology and practice in the West?

1. State Socialism, Egalitarian Ideology and Sex Equality

There are significant differences among the various egalitarian goals pursued in the state socialist societies. For instance, the goal of full income inequality, unlike full sex equality, was never on the socialist agenda. It was not the original intention of the Bolsheviks to abolish the wage

1 For a discussion of other dimensions of inequality in the state socialist societies, see Lane (1971)

system or to introduce equal distribution of commodities (as advocated by the anarchists), although declared policy was initially aimed at considerable equalization of incomes and living standards. This egalitarian policy was cut short and replaced under Stalin by a system of greater wage differentiation. Stalin's immediate justification for the change was the need to reduce labour mobility, to introduce incentives for the unskilled to become skilled and to attract workers to industries essential for rapid industrial growth.²

In other Eastern European societies, wage differentials have followed a similar pattern to that in the Soviet Union. The socialist drive for income equalization was strongest in the period immediately following the nationalization of property and the seizure of political power (the period of 'revolutionary optimism' and 'idealism'); later, with the consolidation of power by the new elites, greater pay-differentials were introduced. According to Marxist theory, egalitarianism would only be reached with full communism, when all would receive 'according to their need'; while in the course of building transitional socialism, workers could be paid 'according to their [ability and] work'. Consequently, workers who have skills requiring training and education and/or who are in short supply, have tended to receive a greater financial reward. Not unlike the situation in the West, income inequality has been closely linked with the occupat-

² For a historical examination of Soviet wage policy, see Bergson (1954), Kostin (1960) and Lane (1970 and 1971).

ional structure, although decisions in the state socialist societies about "preferred" and "non-preferred" occupations (in heavy industry and mining as opposed to medicine or teaching) have been determined by the political elites.

In contrast to income equalization, sex equality has been consistently taken for granted as a goal and never queried by the communists, as has their view of women playing the threefold role of mother(housewife)-worker-citizen; a counterpart to the woman's triple role has never been spelled out for men. However, there have been important shifts in what has been emphasized with respect to female roles, particularly from work to motherhood in response primarily to the declining birth rate. One can also detect a shift from the original revolutionary optimism and idealism regarding the position of women to a position that recognizes existing inequalities between men and women and even advocates steps that would increase them.

Practically all socialist works on the 'woman question' have been based on Engels' hypothesis that the emancipation of women would result from the abolition of private property (along with class-rule and exploitation), the productive employment of women (giving them a public social role and economic independence) and the socialization of private domestic work and child care (which would give time for self-cultivation and public life). However, much of the writing has concentrated upon the first two factors to the exclusion of the third. Stalinist writings, in particular, tended to imply that formal legal equality was equivalent to day-to-day practical equality, and that high level of labour participation among women was tantamount to complete

liberation; the question of socializing housework came to be largely ignored. In other words, the assumption was made that women's emancipation and equality were automatically guaranteed in a socialist economy with a high level of female participation. A recent article by J. Bauerová, a Czech sociologist, illustrates the bland question-begging of much of the state-socialist literature:

"For the first time in history, socialist societies broke through the barrier erected between men and women by class antagonistic societies, religions of all kinds and bourgeois ideologies. In the socialist societies, women have the same opportunities as men as concerns work, working and living conditions, education, habitation, utilization of culture and political activity." (Bauerová, 1974: 29).

This quotation also evokes a typical theme - "what socialism has given to our women" - that appears to imply that equality is a benevolent grant rather than a basic right.

Although Bauerová represents a continuation of the earlier tradition in the literature, some changes in official thinking about sex equality became apparent in at least some of the East European countries in the late 1960s. In Czechoslovakia, women's weeklies and the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Union of Women were among the first to point out publicly the discrepancies between the ideal and legal positions on the one hand, and the real situation of women on the other. At about the same time (1967), the Literaturnaya gazeta in the USSR launched broad discussions on motherhood, the 'double shifts' of women, illegitimacy, and called for new legislation to regulate alimony payments.

The professed axioms of sex equality in the state socialist societies are thus gradually giving way to the

recognition of rather extensive sex inequality: illegal but real practices of discrimination in hiring, pay and promotion; concentration of female workers in low paid jobs and "non-preferred" occupations; lack of significant lightening of domestic burdens; difficulties experienced by employed mothers of small children; conflict between maternal and work roles; a wide discrepancy in terms of quantity and quality of leisure for women and men, and the survival of traditional values of male supremacy.

These manifestations of sex inequality are not essentially different from those prevailing in Western liberal democracies, but they demonstrate that the state-socialist countries have only partially attained their declared goal of sex equality. To be sure, there have been impressive achievements. As one would expect, the authorities eliminated legal inequality between men and women, obviously the easiest step to take. More significantly, they have succeeded in broadening the accepted scope of women's education and work and in creating social provisions for maternity and child care. The near-universal participation of women in paid economic activity, the high proportion of women in professional occupations, the length of paid and unpaid maternity leave and other maternity benefits (the state-socialist societies do not regard motherhood as a private matter), and the now-widespread provision of child care facilities in working hours are the most visible privileges women in the state-socialist societies enjoy over those in the

capitalist ones. However, as I have noted, the creation of equal opportunities in education and employment has led to a multiplication rather than a redefinition of female roles, as women continued to remain responsible for the labour in the home.

Why has sex equality been achieved only partially? What has held the socialist countries back? I have argued in the foregoing chapters that the persistence of sex inequality can be attributed to (1) the relatively low level of economic development at the time of the socialist revolution (although this factor does not apply to Czechoslovakia and East Germany); (2) the Stalinist policy of rapid industrialization, giving marked priority to the expansion of capital-intensive sectors and consequent low priority to easing women's burden in the home; (3) the minimal re-structuring of the family; (4) the survival and reinforcement of traditional values and attitudes of male supremacy; (5) the lack of educational campaigns aimed at breaking down sex role stereotypes; and (6) the nature of the state socialist power structure.

As the first five factors have been discussed rather extensively in the foregoing chapters, I shall now concentrate on an issue neglected thus far - the nature of the communist power relations - and show how it is related to some of the other factors. Conflicting interpretations of how power is structured in the state-socialist societies reveal the complexity of the problem involved. The debates

about the power structure in Soviet-type societies centre around the applicability of concepts of 'ruling class', 'nomenklatura' (control over personnel appointments), 'elites' and 'ruling bureaucracy' (or bureaucracies).³ For present purposes, it is sufficient to discuss the communist power structure in terms of elites and bureaucracies. The concept of elites is very useful in the analysis of social stratification of any kind, be it stratification based on income, education, sex, prestige or power. In turn, the concept of bureaucracy helps to take notice of the growing number of those who make their living by administering the lives of other human beings.

There are important differences between communist bureaucracies and bureaucracies of the Western type. Because of the overlapping of political and organizational structures, communist bureaucracies are strongly opposed to all organizational improvements which might endanger the existing balance of power. Moreover, because of the full control of the party-state over the economy and the interpretation of official ideology, communist bureaucracies can enforce and pursue aims of their own and cover up all sorts of organizational inefficiencies, instead of trying to implement targets determined by social demands and goals.

Marxist ideology performs essentially a legitimizing function for those in power, although in certain circumstances, with diminishing returns, witness the case of post-1968 Czechoslovakia. Thus far, the socialist regimes have tried to reconcile ideology and reality by justifying their basic policies in Marxist terms. For instance, the repress-

³ These various approaches are discussed in Bell (1961), Lane (1970 and 1971) and Nove (1975).

ive morality canonized during the Stalinist period is said to express the objective requirements of the first phase of building of socialism, which is, of course, a doubtful explanation, but a useful legitimation.

In view of these characteristics, bureaucratic rule in the state socialist societies does not conform to the values of egalitarianism. Political criteria seem to be as important as (and often more important than) expertise and professional qualifications; as a result, favouritism, clique-forming and patronage are significant characteristics of personnel policies. This subtle network of bureaucratic relationships makes the life of the elites much more comfortable and much easier than that of ordinary citizens, since those who have the administrative power, who occupy strategic positions in the system of distribution, and who have the opportunity to control the allocation of sought-after goods, can appropriate an unfair share of what society can produce (Hirszwicz, 1976).

Equity in treatment for all ordinary citizens is difficult to accomplish in this kind of political system, but women are further disadvantaged by the persistence of attitudes of male supremacy among the elites. At a general level, Mandel (1975) argues that the tenacity with which views on sex-role stereotypes are held reflects the relatively recent emergence of the Soviet Union (and by extension many other areas of Eastern Europe) from feudal, agrarian relations and peasant ways of thinking. However, while the influence of the past is important in determining

behaviour, one cannot help wondering why such rigid attitudes persist in East Germany and Czechoslovakia which have long been industrialized; neither do these attitudes show much sign of weakening as industrialization proceeds in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. In fact, private family sex-role training can be counteracted by public action (witness the case of Sweden) but, in Eastern Europe, the media and educational institutions (and generally the state apparatus) have, in recent years, done much to foster some traditional concepts and to impart to them an aura of socialist respectability. For example, etiquette books instruct the woman to play essentially a role of feminine passivity - she is to be assisted onto buses and into her coat by a man, and he asks her to dance and pays for her entertainment. Furthermore, recent pro-natalist policies have continually reinforced the idea that child rearing is women's work. State socialist legislation contains no provision for paternity leave.

One important manifestation of these lingering prejudices and their official sanction can be seen in the considerable hesitation in ruling party circles to promote women to positions of real authority - witness the miniscule number of women on the top nomenklatura list. Indeed, one could even argue that access to positions of political and managerial leadership is more difficult for women in the state-socialist societies than it is in the capitalist ones: the 'male chauvinist' prejudices (or authoritarian calculations) of powerful and highly selective elites in the former are more effective in 'keeping women in their place' than the comparable prejudices of

elites in less controlled societies. General employment opportunities and child care arrangements are, of course, superior in Eastern Europe, but access to top positions for career women is probably easier in some countries in the West.

Given the paucity of females in elite positions in Eastern Europe, there have been fewer opportunities for women to influence priorities in economic planning or policies relating to the material reward structure of society. As a result, women have been political bystanders, in a situation in which the prevailing strategy for industrialization has had complex implications for sex equality. On the one hand, the patterns of economic growth in Eastern Europe, based as it has been on a quantitative rather than a qualitative development of the labour force, has required a substantial increase in the employment of women. On the other hand, the heavy emphasis placed upon increasing stocks of capital goods has led to growing wage disparities between the "preferred" industrial occupations, largely dominated by men, and the "non-preferred" occupations in the basically feminized service sector. Moreover, this emphasis has meant that rather low priority has been given to easing women's domestic responsibilities, as they have been eased in the West by the relatively greater commercial provision of such things as labour-saving devices and convenience foods. Thus, with so many women in the labour force, the state-socialist societies have been in a better position than Western capitalist ones to use available female talent. However, in practice, full utilization of women's labour power has been precluded because of disci-

minatory practices and the failure to relieve women of the exhaustion they experience from having to fulfil the dual role of housewife and worker.

Women are caught in a further contradiction between their roles in social production and the reproduction of labour power that stems from the structure of political power. Underlying the doctrinal commitment to a labour-extensive and heavy industrial strategy of economic growth is a reluctance on the part of top bureaucracies to advocate any shift in production priorities that might undermine the position of managers of heavy industry and the military. However, this strategy has led, among other outcomes, to the exhaustion of labour supply - in Czechoslovakia, for example, virtually all individual farmers and housewives have been drawn into the labour force. As the possibility of importing labour from non-socialist countries is limited for ideological and political reasons, further extensive growth depends upon increased levels of natural replacement in the labour force. Hence, we have seen the emergence of pro-natalist policies to reverse rapidly declining birth rates. As a result, women have been placed under increasing cross-pressures between having more children and remaining full-time in the labour force.

The reluctance of decision-makers in the state socialist societies to switch to a more intensive form of growth, involving the improvement of labour productivity and greater emphasis upon consumer goods and services can therefore be attributed largely to the strong opposition of communist

bureaucracies to organizational improvements that might endanger the existing balance of power. An 'optimal' achievement of sex equality requires a reversal of this condition. Until social life is more effectively controlled by individual people, the economic and social emancipation of women gives them only an equal share in other forms of inequality.

2. State Policy, the Sexual Division of Labour and Social Change: the Case of Population Control

There are obviously many issues one could discuss in an examination of the broader implications of state policies relating to women and the sexual division of labour. I shall restrict myself to one question to which I think this study has a particular contribution to offer: population policy. What do the comparative experiences of the Eastern European countries tell us about the extent to which there is a unified socialist approach to the problem of reproducing labour power in the context of feared severe shortages of labour in the future? What can we learn from the Eastern European experience of pro-natalist population policies about the effectiveness of this sort of planning in inducing desired patterns of social change?

While all Eastern European societies have a state owned, more or less centrally controlled, planned economy, and a politically dominant communist party, they do not constitute a monolithic entity. Considerable differences exist in social and economic development, urbanization, living standards, social habits, religion and other characteristics, all of which have influenced and continue

to influence population trends in varying degrees. All of the COMECON countries therefore have their unique features as well as common ones. All face somewhat similar population situations as a result of the official commitment to the strategy of labour-extensive growth, the gradual exhaustion of the labour supply and the inability to import labour from elsewhere, characteristics to which we referred in the previous section. By increasing the opportunity structure for women in the social sphere of production, and by implementing other policies favouring a lower birth rate,⁴ the socialist countries have created a virtual certainty of future labour shortages. In the USSR population aged 20-59 will fall in the late 80s, after big rise in the 70s and early 80s. And there will be fewer labour reserves to draw from: in 1959, there were 18 million housewives outside the labour force, but in 1970, only 6 million out of a total population of 250 million.

As a result, we have witnessed the emergence in Eastern Europe of pro-natalist population policies that attempt to reverse this declining birth-rate and find ways of inducing women to have more children. However, while all Eastern European countries are seeking to increase their birth-rates, their policies in this respect have differed in both the areas of procreation and family welfare.

Compared with the advanced industrial countries of the West, modern contraceptive methods have only recently become

4 These include rapid urbanization, inadequate provision of housing, insufficient investment in consumers' goods and services, relatively free availability of abortion, and low wages.

available in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, Eastern Europe has a long history of socially acceptable illegal and legal abortions. On the whole, it is considered neither sinful nor disgraceful to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. However, the extent to which a woman has a legal right to terminate her pregnancy differs in the various socialist countries. Only in the Soviet Union, Hungary and the GDR is abortion available on request during the first trimester of pregnancy provided that the woman has had no previous abortions during the preceding twelve months. In Czechoslovakia, where it has recently become more difficult to obtain an abortion, each woman seeking one must submit her case for decision to a special abortion commission in her locality.

Thus far, only Romania has made abortions illegal, although the Soviet Union had such a policy in the '30s and '40s. In Romania, abortions were freely available until 1965, when four abortions took place for every live birth—the world's highest recorded figure. Abortion was made illegal in October 1966, and this measure was coupled with increased family allowances, taxes on childless adults, prolonged divorce procedures, and a cessation of official importation of contraceptive pills and inter-uterine devices (legislation not dissimilar to that effect in the Soviet Union in the '30s and '40s). A dramatic rise in the birth rate followed, from 14.3 per 1,000 population in 1966 to 27.3 in 1967. But women gradually turned to traditional birth control methods (coitus interruptus in particular), illegal abortions

and smuggled contraceptives, and by 1971, the rate was down to 20 per 1,000 population.

Family allowance schemes have been broadly similar (favouring two to four children in a family), although the Soviet one seems to be effective only at the top end of the scale (eight or nine children in a family), and has therefore been less geared than those elsewhere to encouraging procreation. With respect to maternity allowances, the socialist countries have differed considerably. Monthly payments to mothers who wish to stay at home to raise a child during its first three years are now provided in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, but not elsewhere. When such a policy was proposed in the Soviet Union, it received a hostile response in the public press. Most correspondents who commented on the proposals were professional women who wanted nothing that might keep them away from work and prevent them from being up-to-date in a world of rapidly changing technology. These women were also concerned about the disadvantages of individual upbringing by mothers with a low level of education, and preferred a universal, qualitatively better, nursery school system (Mandel 1975: 318-9).

Similarly, East Germany, which has the lowest birth rate in the entire communist world (10.6 per 1,000 population in 1973), has opted for expanded and improved child care facilities than for fiscal incentives that would encourage individual forms of upbringing. The GDR

has probably the most highly developed system of child care facilities in the whole world. 80% of all pre-school children and 40% of all children in the age category 0-3 years attend public child care facilities. Czechoslovakia, which is almost as prosperous, has very few such facilities - no more than 12% of children 0-3 years old are cared for in creches. Many influential Czech and Hungarian psychologists came to a conclusion opposed to that reached by the Russians and Germans. The Czechs and Hungarians hold that institutional care, even if only during the day, has detrimental effects on a child's physical, intellectual and emotional development, and that maternal upbringing in the early years is preferable. The policy-makers in these countries have also found public child care facilities too expensive and consequently have opted for the cheaper alternative of maternity allowances.

How does one evaluate maternity allowances? In so far as they represent an attempt to transform maternity into a paid social activity, these allowances give new social recognition and prestige to the role of the mother, thus expanding the opportunity for choice for women, but women only. Thus far, men in the state socialist societies have not been given as much opportunity as women to spend time with their children. As far as I know, Sweden is the only country in the world which has adopted a policy of paternity leaves and allowances, thus altering the sexual division of labour with respect to child care.

When we look at the question of effectiveness, we can

see that these policies have met with varying degrees of success. The birth rate has gone up most noticeably in Czechoslovakia (from 15.9 per 1,000 population in 1970 to 18.9 in 1973), which now has one of the highest birth rates in Europe. The Hungarian birth rate, however, rose only very little - from 14.7 per 1,000 population in 1970 to 15.0 in 1974. Thus, the long term effects of various pronatalist measures are difficult to determine. It is quite possible that the birth rate might start to decline again in Czechoslovakia when the age composition of the population changes. It is also possible that the national governments may find that the cost involved in paying maternity allowances and supporting large families is too high compared to the value of the results. Furthermore, once means of controlling births are widely known and available, it is families, and above all, women, who decide how many children there will be. The Five-Year Plan in Czechoslovakia did not envisage a 'population explosion' such as has occurred and accordingly did not sufficiently expand the network of creches and kindergartens. Many mothers who are finding it difficult to place their children in a kindergarten will certainly think twice before deciding to give birth again.

It is therefore quite probable that without more concessions from the government and the male population, women will prove reluctant to cooperate with plans to bear and raise more children. While the state socialist laws and benefits concerning maternity are very impressive when compared with those of most capitalist countries, the former fall short of providing any satisfactory solution

to the problem of integrating women's productive and reproductive roles. The East European policies have attempted an integration that trims women's productive roles to allow them to play a larger part in the reproduction of labour power, thus sustaining the sexual division of labour and jeopardising the considerable gains that women have made in social production and social life generally.

At this point, it becomes important to ask whether the pro-natalist goals and the goals of feminism are compatible, and, if so, what kind of supportive social welfare policy is essential to encourage voluntary motherhood and sex equality.⁵ In a situation in which a socialist country wants an increased birth rate, one way to proceed would be by providing seven-day, twenty-hour four nurseries, encouraging commune-living, implementing various schemes of community care and ensuring equal participation of men in child upbringing. When one advocates child day-care centres, one would not say that these centres are needed so that women could work outside the home, but rather so that young parents could work outside the home. One would not continue to talk about dual roles and children as if they only applied to women, but to men as well. Only in this way could such a population policy be reconciled with the goals of feminism.

5 The social need for a higher birth rate must be recognized as a theoretical possibility for all societies, it is by no means restricted to the current East European debates about labour resources and the declining birth-rate.

3. Socialism and the Women's Movement

In assessing the relevance of the socialist experience of feminism for the contemporary women's liberation movement in the West, it is instructive to address the following questions. Do the orthodox Marxist assumptions about women workers and their revolutionary potential need re-examination? Can we learn anything from the strategic conflict between an independent women's movement and a single revolutionary party of the working class? What have been the shortcomings ~~of~~ the socialist theory and practice of feminism, and to what extent can they be avoided?

Orthodox Marxism has considered gender differentiation less important than the division between social classes as defined by their relationship to the means of production. This has meant that, ~~at~~ the level of strategy, the class struggle and the exploitation of the industrial worker have been seen as politically more significant than the specific oppression experienced by women. The socialist parties saw women as having revolutionary potential only when they entered the industrial labour force. This attitude was reflected at the organizational level, for few systematic attempts were made to mobilise the wives of industrial workers, though some socialists tried to do this individually in their personal relationships. For instance, G. Bareš^v, a Czech historian, noted that many Czech workers before and after the First World War presented their wives and girlfriends Bebel's book in the hope of politicizing these women and drawing them

into the proletarian struggle (Bareš[✓], 1962: 5 and Scott, 1974: 57-58).

We need to know more as well about the implications for political education of husband-wife relationships in working class families. Traditional Marxist theory and strategy have had little to contribute to our understanding and changing the social relations of the family. Not only have housewives and their labour in the home been considered marginal to the socialist struggle, but so have other 'personal' concerns. While the Eastern European Marxists have been right in emphasizing the centrality of production, they have been wrong in assuming that the social relations of personal life can be transformed without self-conscious struggle. They appear to have erred in arguing that changes in the relation of production would necessarily transform, as if by reflex, the sphere of private and family life (Zaretsky, n.d.: 73-74).

In turn, the socialists have paid insufficient attention either to the question of male prejudices against women or to practices of discrimination against women members of the party. The questions of male hostility to women workers in the labour market and within the party have seldom been openly discussed in the socialist parties, though there have been sporadic pronouncements on the need to combat male prejudice. The available evidence suggests that the issues in the socialist women's movement hardly concerned men at all. ~~They~~ were some kind of unimportant "women's work", left entirely to the women members of the party.

As we have seen, the socialists and the communists initially opposed separate women's organizations. However, recognizing the special needs of women and the need to develop their leadership capacities in all-female meetings, Zetkin argued for separate women's sections/departments within the party framework, not made up only of women, but for work only among women. She was thus suggesting that the idea of separatism does have certain positive values vis-a-vis the party's strategy towards women workers; enhancing women's support for social democracy and also, for women themselves, increasing their confidence and developing their leadership capacities. However, the special methods of agitation and organization of women workers were to be stopped at the point where they disturbed the unity of the working class. Class oppression came first, sex oppression second.

The Bolsheviks were also initially opposed to a separate organization of women workers. They believed that independent activity of women workers would undermine the party unity necessary for overthrowing capitalism (a view that remains current in many left-wing groups today). The Bolsheviks were compelled to revise their assumptions about the 'woman question' and the separate women's section when women workers began to demonstrate their political independence. The growing militancy of many Russian working women after 1910 challenged the Marxist practice of subordinating the women's struggle to the class struggle and called into question the prevailing view that a separate female organization was necessarily 'bourgeois'. In order not to lose the po-

political support of women workers to the opponents of Bolshevism, the Bolshevik Party was compelled to incorporate women's issues in their programme of agitation and to find ways of recruiting more women to the party.

As a result, the Bolsheviks abandoned their initial opposition and established separate women's sections. These, however, remained subordinate to the party, its goals and strategy, and did not really function as ongoing pressure groups having a voice in policy-making at all levels of the hierarchy. Furthermore, the party rather than women themselves, set the tasks and goals of the liberating process. It was assumed that women would help themselves by helping the revolution, which meant implementing tasks set by the party - providing electoral assistance (in the case of the German SPD), recruiting women to the party, celebrating International Women's Day, publishing a women's paper and organizing women's conferences.

The question of autonomy became crucial with the communist seizure of power. In Czechoslovakia, the establishment of socialism was used to legitimize the abolition of the women's section: in line with the traditional Marxist argument that there is no distinct 'woman question', it was claimed that women were emancipated in a socialist society and that they, together with men, could express themselves through other organizations. As women's entry to social production was supposed to bring their full emancipation, the political activities of women were transferred to the mixed trade unions. However, this transition came about slowly.

The resolution of the Presidium of the Central Council of the Trade Unions, which laid down the principles of trade union activity among women, was passed only in 1957. Female demands did not figure on the list of trade union priorities until 1959, more than a decade after the communist victory, during which time women's share in the labour force has increased from 38 to 43 per cent. From the point of view of women, experiencing so many new problems and difficulties in their daily lives, there was certainly still a need for their own organization.

Under the pressure from the few women members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Central Committee of the Union of Women, and in response to the debates about the problems of 'overfeminization' and the 'social profitability of women's employment' in the mid-'60s, the Czechoslovak Communist Party began to re-examine its attitude towards a women's organization in a society claiming to be socialist. A separate women's organization was eventually established in 1967, but under the full control of the party, with the brief exception of the 'Prague Spring'. In all state-socialist societies, the ruling communist parties insist on a monopoly of power and doctrine, and a potentially autonomous political force would be

regarded as a threat to this monopoly. An independent feminist movement of the current Western type therefore cannot legally emerge to campaign against male domination or for change in the sexual division of labour.

The advice-centres run by the women's organization in Czechoslovakia today do not, by and large, challenge the existing sexual stereotypes and the division of labour. They rather suggest ways in which women can become more efficient in housekeeping, child-care, solving marital problems, etc. - in short, ways in which they can cope better with their present overload. The existence of the 'double burden' of females is recognized, but accepted as being, by and large, inevitable. Discussions and proposals for change are conducted in terms of deficiencies in human nature, such as male resistance to housework, or of inefficiencies in the consumer sector of the economy, rather than in terms of structural, historical analysis. The traditional Marxist interpretation of female oppression, formulated by Engels, still constitutes the guideline. The need to go beyond Engels to develop a Marxist-feminist perspective incorporating analysis of such issues as domestic labour, sexuality and emotionality, has not been given the recognition in Eastern Europe that it has in the West by Marxists associated with the Women's Liberation Movement.

As far as the general question of socialist women's organization is concerned, the main historical problems

seem to have been reaching women (who were in the mass neither militant nor political), integration of women's issues at the party level and the lack of influence of women on decision-making within the party. If the goals of feminism and socialism are to be reconciled, these problems have to be avoided. A women's section of a revolutionary socialist party today has to ensure that the issues concerning women are seen by the party to be integral to its programme and influence policy decisions to this effect at all levels of party hierarchy. If and when the party seizes state power, women's influence on decision-making has to extend to economic planning and allocation of available resources to make sure that women's issues are not sacrificed at the expense of some 'more important' male issues. In other words, there is a need for an autonomous Marxist-feminist power-base before a revolution, sharing in priority-allocation after it.

The experience of Eastern Europe clearly show that a state-socialist transformation is insufficient to bring about the liberation of women. Women have entered the productive labour force in large numbers, yet still suffer from inequality - an important lesson for women socialists (and men too) who argue that the socialization of the means of production is all that is required. Nevertheless, the cases we have studied do confirm the thesis that female participation in the labour force is a prerequisite of emancipation, and

that this participation determines women's status in society.

My conclusion is that the liberation of women in any society involves, therefore, a dual process: entry into the national economy and relative withdrawal from the domestic economy. In Eastern Europe, for a variety of reasons, the two processes have not proceeded in a smooth and simultaneous way. The experience demonstrates that the burden of domestic labour is not automatically lessened by nationalization of the means of production, and confirm that structural changes must be accompanied by a cultural revolution, aiming at the elimination of sex-role stereotypes. Only a situation involving equal sharing of domestic labour by both spouses (or several adults in a communal setting) can yield practice aimed at eliminating excessive drudgery. It is hard to see how such a transformation could occur without a social and political climate supportive of both the socialization of housework and child-care and of new cultural dynamics governing male-female relationships. In the absence of such a climate, the development of which would appear to require many more women in positions of political importance, women in general can hardly hope to play equal roles in society. Thus one cannot but agree with the position taken by many socialist feminists in the West today that the struggle for women's liberation has its own specificity. It is related to the class struggle, but it is at the same time independent of it.

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