

## NEWS & LETTERS

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July 5, 1983

Dear Raya:

Here is a very preliminary response to your question on Marx on women in the 1850s. It might interest you to know that in the entire decade the Index to the volumes of the Collected Works lists only one reference to the word "women"! That was certainly not a category they were very interested in. However, here are four moments from Marx in the 1850s that I hope will be of interest:

1) CW, Vol. 10, pp. 245-246. This is from Marx's review of G. Fr. Daumer's book, Die Religion des neuen Weltalters, published in the NRZ-R, in #2, and written in Jan-Feb. 1850 the month before the "Address on Permanent Revolution":

"It is the same with the cult of the female as with the cult of nature. Herr Daumer naturally does not say a word about the present social position of women; on the contrary it is a question only of the female as such. He tries to console women for their civic destitution by making them the object of a rhetorical cult which is as empty as it would fain be mysterious. Thus he seeks to comfort them by telling them that marriage puts an end to their talents through their having to take care of the children, that they retain the ability to suckle babes even until the age of sixty, and so on. Herr Daumer calls this the "devotion of the male to the female". In order to find the necessary ideal women characters for his male devotion in his native country, he is forced to resort to various aristocratic ladies of the last century. Thus his cult of the woman is reduced to the depressed attitude of a man of letters to respected patronesses-- Wilhelm Meister." [from Goethe]

2) Padover, Karl Marx: On Education, Women and Children, pp. 135-136. This is a postscript to a letter to Adolf Cluss (in the USA), written on Oct. 8, 1852, telling Cluss what sources to use to attack Karl Heinzen's account of the historic development of marriage. Marx lists six works on the history of women that could be used, and which he has obviously read, including one that is in the "Hegelian conception", which Ruge failed to count. I doubt that very many people ever knew that Marx had been doing such reading on this subject in the early 1850s.

I am xeroxing the pp. for you.

3) CW, Vol. 12, pp. 460-470. Articles written for the NY Tribune on Nov. 11-15, 1853 on the strike/lock-out in Preston, England. Actually, Marx follows the strike wave of 1853 and the resurgence of the Chartist movement from July 1, 1853 (pp. 168-72), and especially the Preston events, (pp. 331, 412-13, 447, 460-70).

15743

What is so striking to me about this material is the way it exposes the falsifications of so-called feminist critics of Marx who want to say that Marx was for "pushing women out of the factories", etc.-- that he supported the male workers "demands" that women be excluded. Yet here is the actual strike in Preston 1853-54 which Marx deeply supported and followed daily, most especially listening to the voices of the women workers.

In the article on 11/11/53, he attacks the Economist for claiming that the working class had missed "golden opportunities" afforded by free trade, by "marrying and multiplying". Marx (p. 460) says: "The golden opportunity of not marrying and not multiplying, except at the orthodox rate allowed by Malthus and his disciples! Golden morality this!"

In opposition to such a fantatstic position Marx takes up the actual meeting of the Preston workers, 15,000 of whom gathered to hear Ernest Jones. The next article "Prosperity-- the Labour Question" written 11/15/53 returns to a fuller description of this meeting, prefacing it with a description of horrors of child labour (pp. 469-70):

"Boys of nine and ten working 60 hours consecutively, with the exception of three hours' rest! Let the masters say nothing about neglecting education now. One of the above, Ann B., a little girl of nine years of age, fell on the floor asleep with exhaustion, during the 60 hours; she was roused and cried, but was forced to resume work!:" (Emphasis Marx's).

"The factory operatives seem resolved to take the education movement out of the hands of the Manchester humbugs. At a meeting held in the Orchard by the unemployed operatives at Preston, as we hear:

"Mrs. MARGARET Fletcher addressed the assembly on the impropriety of married females working in factories and neglecting their children and household duties. Every man was entitled to a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, by which she meant, that he ought to have such remuneration for his labor as would afford him the means of maintaining himself and family in comfort; of keeping his wife at home to attend to her domestic duties, and of educating the children. [Cheers] The speaker concluded by moving the annexed resolution: 'Resolved, that the married portion of the females in this town do not intend to go to work again until their husbands are fairly and fully remunerated for their labor!'"

4) Padover, Marx: On Education, Women and Children, pp. 76-80. This article, written Aug. 4, 1858 for the NY Tribune, has not yet appeared in the CW, so I am citing it from this source. It is entitled "Imprisonment of Lady Bulwer-Lytton". I am xeroxing the article.

This piece, about the wife of a BRITISH politician-aristocrat who was locked up in an insane asylum for threatening to express differing political views during her husband's re-election campaign, has quite a contemporary ring to it.

I hope some of this is helpful.

Yours,

Mike

15744

Dear Mike:

Also please translate for me "Aber das Verhältnis der Göttinnen in Olymp zeigt Rück Erinnerung an frühere freiere und einflussreichere Position der Weiber." (p. 14)

Marx says as he reads if the high state of women as measure of progress of fairy & says that once "career of property"--Marx's phrase--will be abolished & earlier freedom restored, but not as a unilinear line, but dialectically as we can see from Greek mythology fully 50% of mythology Juno/Minerva accts for this quest of freedom of women; the other 50% is a projection into heaven is INVERSION OF ACTUAL POSITION OF WOMEN IN GREEK SOCIETY.

But the proportion of women Gods on Olympus <sup>indicates demonstrates</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>earlier, freer and more influential</sup> ~~position of woman~~ <sup>reminds of</sup> ~~earlier~~ <sup>position of woman</sup>

zeigt Rück Erinnerung an