

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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To the Editors:

I wish to enter the discussion in the paper on the subject of cosmetics with the blunt statement that I found Jack Bustelo's article "Sagging Cosmetic Lines Try a Face Lift" both offensive and presumptuous in tone, and false in content and implications. I believe that the editors should exercise more discrimination in the publication of articles concerning which there may be controversy -- or quite possibly what is indicated is a controversy which will clear up for the editors in what way they should be discriminating. At any rate, it seemed clear to this reader that the Bustelo article was sharply out of place in the paper with its high standard of revolutionary journalism. Bustelo's subsequent letter of August 16, a fabric of half-truths laid out in a pattern of fancy but meaningless prose, only carried to its logical conclusion the implications and undertones of the first article, and for this reason, I wish to deal with the letter rather than the offending article.

His entire August 16th letter is rooted in an erroneous assumption; that the revolution will create, out of the whole cloth, entire new standards of morality and beauty, and that "not much in the lumberroom of bourgeois morals and beauty will prove very useful." I believe this to be both false and unscientific.

The revolution in technology and science which reached its highest development under capitalism in the last 40 years or so, has wrought a partial revolution in all phases of life -- in the relation between the sexes, in sexual morality, in medicine, in nutrition and health, in architecture, in art, in beauty, in hobbies for leisure, in city-planning, in child-rearing, in methods of education, in psychology -- a revolution in life and in living which cannot be completed and consummated until released from the restrictions and bonds imposed by the private ownership in the means of production. These new, progressive and highly creative developments in all phases of life stand in sharp opposition to and are caught up in dynamic contradiction with the antiquated economic system of capitalism. They cannot be deepened and extended throughout the entire social body and find their expression as the new and modern way of life until freed by the world-wide socialist revolution. Only then can the new and revolutionary developments expand unhindered throughout the world.

It is unscientific to conceive, as does Bustelo, that socialism will throw out everything which it inherits from capitalism and create everything new starting from the beginning. Rather, socialism will keep all that is revolutionary and progressive and all that men and women by their demands and desires wish to keep as good and worthy of further development. In my opinion, there will be a vast indebtedness which the socialist world will, in hindsight, accredit to capitalism, including much of its "lumberroom of morals and beauty."

Socialism, for instance, will not throw out the morality of bourgeois society in toto and create a new one out of the whole cloth. Morality has been in the process of evolution during all of the centuries of mankind and the socialist society is not going to

write off a part of the historical heritage of the human race as being totally useless. Rather, socialism will extract the hypocrisy and the mysticism out of bourgeois morality and leave the universal ideals of human brotherhood and make a reality of the Golden Rule.

Nor will socialism throw out the revolution which is taking place in modern architecture, with its unity of the natural and the man-made; nor the trend toward the decentralization and planning of cities going on before our eyes in the creation of tracts with their schools, stores and social services -- anarchistic, to be sure, at the hands of the builders and realtors. Rather, socialism will free this revolution from the bonds of the profit system, and cities will be planned for the use, convenience and beauty of living, rather than for the profit of the realtors, investors, speculators and contractors.

Nor can we conceive of socialism rejecting the revolution which is taking place in art. Art has pervaded all phases of life. Pots, pans, fabrics, furniture, lamps, stoves, landscaping, architecture -- all objects in the environment have become mediums for the creative expression of the artist and the designer. Art is no longer restricted to formalistic classifications, as sculpture or pictures hung on the walls of the wealthy or in museums, but is diffused and coordinated in the beauty and the unity of all objects in the environment of the wealthy, the upper middle class, and even in the homes of some of the more privileged workers. Socialist man is not going to dismiss these manifestations of new and vitally progressive art forms, starting all over with something new and different and inconceivable to our minds because unknown and unrelated to its past development. Rather, the revolution in art forms will no longer be just for those who can afford them, or be shackled with mortgages and time-payments, but will be the rightful heritage of every citizen in the communal world. Communist man will make an art of his way of life, surrounding himself with the creative outpourings of his inherent talent.

Nor will the socialist world create entire new forms of occupation for leisure hours out of the whole cloth. As an example, Comrade Cannon's theory of the resurgence of handicrafts is taking place on all social levels in the tremendous boom in the do-it-yourself crafts. The revolution will complete and free this trend which clearly expresses and fulfills a driving need in man, and will make it economically possible to have both the leisure and the material means to engage in craft activities.

These are only a few examples of what is meant by the revolution in living. We could go on with further illustrations, but suffice it to say that socialism will not create entire new standards in medicine, health, nutrition, child-rearing, psychology, methods of teaching, etc., unrelated from their historic past and their present development. Instead, it will extend and continue the revolution which capitalist technology has already commenced, but freed from the contradictions and restrictions imposed by a decadent, reactionary political-economic system.

What holds true for the rest of life also relates to beauty in the female form around which the discussion on cosmetics revolves.

The development of the future must be sought out in the seeds of the present. The beauty of tomorrow will not be created out of nothing, but out of the living forces and tendencies of today. This is the only scientific way to proceed in any question; we do not engage in a star-gazing or crystal-ball divining. Jack Bustelo, however, didn't look at what 40 or 50 million women want today as a basis for deciding what they might want in the future. Rather, in pompous disregard for the aspirations of modern women, he rejects these aspirations as false and depicts the women as mere ignorant dupes of the capitalist hucksters.

I personally find it inexcusable that column space should be given to a self-appointed judge of what constitutes feminine strivings and what constitutes a social norm of female beauty all under the pretext of a survey of one phase of the American economy. I wholeheartedly endorse the right of self-determination in the very personal matter of what strikes the individual as beautiful, but social norms of beauty are determined socially, not by the dictates of some individual or other. Bustelo has a right to his own opinion of what he considers beautiful. However, involved here is not his opinion, per se, but the fact that he has set up his opinion against the strivings of millions of women in capitalist society and said, in effect: "The well-scrubbed look shall be the standard of tomorrow and should be the standard of today. Let us not gild the lily. I see all this in my crystal ball."

Not only does he show a remarkable ignorance of female psychology, but as remarkable an ignorance of the history and meaning of cosmetics. As he points out with considerable flourish, the mores in beauty change, evolve and grow along with developing civilization. However, all of this change and the course of its development cannot be reduced to one source as he attempts to do -- to the dictates of a ruling class in a class society. However the mores might change, the strivings for beauty are the product of profoundly powerful forces implicit in the human personality and in the relation between the sexes, and have a more direct relation to the forces of reproduction than to those of production. The use of cosmetics and other means of bodily decoration are older than written history and women were gilding the lily long before the class struggle came into existence, and from all the signposts of today, they shall continue to do so long after the class struggle has passed out of existence. As such, this is a question which both transcends the confines of the class relationships, and, at the same time, is contained and determined by it.

The fact is, as in all other phases of life in capitalist America, a revolution has been going on in standards of beauty side by side with and flowing out of the revolution in technology. This revolution is more than cosmetic-deep. It involves the glow of physical health and good nutrition which stands in direct relation to the higher standards of living of the American economy. It also involves the freer and more informal mode of attire, the more natural gestures and grace of movement, which flow out of and parallel the concurrent revolution in sexual morality of the last 35 years or so. The long-stemmed American beauty, full of natural vitality and physical grace, with shining hair, clear eyes, smooth skin and natural cosmetics with a trace of accent here and there, is no fiction but an American commonplace. This type of beauty is the American social standard,

whatever Bustelo might think of it, but by and large it is the exclusive property of first of all youth, and secondly of wealth. If this American beauty is also neurosis-ridden, as our observant Bustelo comments upon, this only demonstrates that things are considerably more complicated than they seem. But why throw out the baby with the bath?

The cosmetic industry and their hucksters do not thrive on the natural beauty which is the birthright of youth of whatever class. It thrives on the lilies who have begun to fade, a phenomenon of nature which strikes every woman in her thirties. And in days of yesteryear, a woman was rated old by the time she reached her forties. It is an inherent part of every normal female ego to strive toward the preservation of youthful beauty, and this is a proper female goal worthy of the considered attention of a revolutionist. The goal of preserving youth as long as reasonably possible has always occupied the attention of the human race, but for the woman of the working class to achieve this goal, considerable effort and expense is entailed. Once the fresh bloom of youth is gone, the working-class woman has neither the means to patronize the beauty shops nor the energy after wrestling with pots, pans and children to devote to the preservation of personal beauty, and soon she has joined the ranks of the drab millions, cheated of a good part of life's thrill. But one look at the radiance of movie stars in their middle forties, achieved solely through a higher standard of living and the alchemy of the modern beauty temples, is enough to convince millions of women that this is something they want too. Who, we may ask, is Jack Bustelo to leave us with the implication that this is something ridiculous? And who is he to set himself up as a self-styled authority on the merits of soap and water (not to speak of rice-powder!) as opposed to all the women who find that creams and lotions do a better job? And who is he to say that the quest for personal beauty is not a legitimate goal of all women; that character is more the ticket?

This finding of beauty in the spirit and character of the working class woman is legitimate for a revolutionist. But let us not confuse means and ends. There is nothing beautiful in the dishpan hands, the premature wrinkles, the scraggly hair, the dumpy figures in dumpy housedresses, the ugly furniture and the hodge-podge accessories of the working-class woman and her home. To find beauty there is nothing other than the ultra-leftism of the radical snob -- an affectation -- belonging to the days when long hair and dirty ears were the hallmark of the real honest-to-goodness radical. If the hungry spirit of the working-class woman did not yearn for the beautiful surroundings which are the exclusive property of the leisure and upper middle class; if the women did not hunger for personal beauty in their bodies, in their clothes, in their environment, there wouldn't be any struggle, nor any revolution, nor any socialism. The spirit is, indeed, a beautiful thing because it is alive, vital and progressive. But the spirit moves out and away from the dirt, squalor and the grind of today toward the beauty of the free world of tomorrow. He who finds magnificence in squalor, or even satisfaction in it, will never rise above it. But he or she whom the spirit moves shall find at the end of the struggle the true goals of the human race.

Marjorie McGowan

MORE ON COSMETICS

Jack Bustelo's article on cosmetics and his letter entitled "Is Beauty Deeper Than Cosmetics" makes the point that the beauty of working class women, like the beauty of the pioneer women "lies in their character and it is manifest not in the cosmetics they indulge in but the deeds they perform."

Let me say, first of all, that working class women do not "indulge in" cosmetics. Our use of cosmetics is far from an indulgence -- it is basically an economic necessity and from this has become an esthetic necessity.

If a woman applying for office work, a waitress job or domestic work forgets about her personal appearance and ignores it, she will surely be the last to be hired, unless she has some really exceptional skill or background.

In unskilled factory work the appearance of physical strength and stamina counts the most. But even in this case, the appearance of stamina, youth and vigor is augmented by cosmetics. You can't go out hunting even a factory job, looking as tired as you might feel -- cosmetics brighten up a weary face and give the illusion of the necessary vigor and youth.

Do you know, Mr. Bustelo, that a young woman who has only minor office skills, is already a glut on the labor market at the age of 25? Employers advertising for office help will very often indicate that "under 25" is all they are considering. Youthfulness is admired by the employer not for esthetic reasons at all, as one might imagine, but merely because it indicates a greater capacity for energetic work. Do you disapprove if women "indulge in cosmetics" to acquire the bright-eyed, youthful, healthy and vigorous look needed to get such jobs?

But all women cannot work and support themselves. Jobs are not as plentiful for women as for men. Those jobs which are open to women pay a great deal less. And this simple economic fact creates the great competitive enterprise known as "getting and keeping a husband." (One would think that men would recognize this and fight for equal job rights for women, if only to free themselves of the compulsive element in marriage.)

This grandiose competition, which has countless forms, both open and subtle, consumes a great part of women's time and thought. And one of the major tools of this competition is sexual accentuation through the use of cosmetics.

Although this is often viewed as more of "women's trickery" it is not something to be laid at their doorstep. At bottom it is an economic problem. Capitalism cannot provide jobs for all the members of the working class -- male and female. The male half of the population is expected to support the female half -- marriage is the medium for this -- and the most complex, fantastic and subtle attitudes of morality and esthetics are developed to help bring this male-female relationship into operation. (And by the way, this relationship which was once taken for granted, breaks down in the decline of

capitalism and forces many married women to take on the double burden of domestic service in her home and wage-work in the outside world.)

Accentuation of sexuality through cosmetics is necessary in the competition for a husband and economic security. This may be unfortunate, or ridiculous, or degrading, but it is also a bare fact of contemporary existence, stripped of all its romantic trimmings.

Mr. Bustelo may laugh at cosmetic "improvement" and sexual accentuation and ridicule the women victims who concentrate on this to the detriment of the rest of their personalities, but the capitalist system has conditioned him, and men in general, to respond to this kind of sexuality -- often without even knowing what he is responding to.

However, it is true that if all the "ordinary women" had good health, a buoyant, optimistic attitude, well-made clothing, it would go a long way toward the destruction of the cosmetic industry. Good health, a good figure, a clear skin, sparkling eyes, lustrous hair -- all these things come first of all from a good diet -- not a starch-filled diet of too much bread and potatoes but a diet that includes plenty of eggs and steak and fresh vegetables. And a buoyant, optimistic attitude is the product of a happy life with perspectives for the future. Can capitalism give these things to all women?

Bustelo may be able to retain a warmth and affection toward the working class woman who has had too little rest and too much anxiety and worry -- he may admire her "moral beauty" but she herself and her husband and her friends will not find this consideration too useful. Very few people today can go along with Bustelo's attitude that "ordinary" women "are beautiful no matter how toil-worn" -- especially very few men. This moral beauty which is treasured by those who are more conscious than the average is not much use to the "ordinary" husband and wife whose esthetic and sexual ideals are built on the "ordinary" standards.

Why shouldn't a woman paint her face, dye her hair, use perfume and whatever else is necessary to help fulfill the esthetic and sexual desires of both herself and her husband? Between Mr. Jack Bustelo and the world at large, she is damned if she does and damned if she doesn't.

It is quite true that the great use of cosmetics today is "one of the signs of the barbarism of the times," but not as Bustelo understands it. (Cosmetics are ancient, and have been used for many reasons, good and bad. They will probably be used even under socialism, by both men and women, for the pleasure of personal adornment.) The great use of cosmetics today is "a sign of barbarism" because it is obligatory and necessary. Because we do not always use cosmetics simply because we choose to do so. This is the barbarism, not the thing in itself. And it is a sign of barbarism because it exposes the fact that the physical appearance of women is made to assume such a great and decisive importance in this society, and the other aspects of her personality are subordinated almost to the point of extinction. But I for one, want to have my cake and eat it too. I wish to improve and enjoy my physical appearance and at the same time improve and develop all the other sides of my personality. And I think all women have a right to both these things.

Why doesn't Mr. Bustelo advocate good wages, plenty of money to meet the necessity of cosmetics -- or a good diet and high standard of living to lessen the need for cosmetics?

Don't offer us "moral beauty" or a new esthetic standard as a solution for today's "ordinary woman" in today's every-day world. Let's look forward to socialism for that, when everyone can develop new cultural and esthetic ideals.

The point is this, Mr. Bustelo: AS LONG AS THE WORLD DEMANDS COSMETIC IMPROVEMENT, either for economic or esthetic reasons, WOMEN HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO WHATEVER MEANS ARE NECESSARY TO MEET THAT DEMAND. And to ridicule us for bowing to that demand is rather poor taste, and an example of that cheap humor which makes a butt out of an easy victim. This alone is unworthy of the pages of the paper.

However, in addition, your point of view contains a political error. We are not going to change the world by revolting against such a side-line issue as this -- and that seems to be what your article would have us do. If working class women boycotted all cosmetics I doubt very much if it would help build a Labor Party or lessen Jim Crow or halt the war drive.

Jeanne Morgan
Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles, California
September 9, 1954

Attention: Political Committee

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed is a document which I wish to submit for your consideration and for publication in a discussion bulletin.

The document requires a preface which I submit, also, in the form of this letter. You will, perhaps, be both unprepared and taken aback by the sharp, factional tone with which this document is written. This is neither accidental, nor does it have its beginnings here. Over a year ago, Comrade Reed and I engaged in an exchange of correspondence in which she was warned that her interpretations were false and that if she persisted along the lines of her thesis I would consider it my duty to expose her theories as incorrect. She has elected to continue and even had the temerity to publish in the magazine rather than in a discussion bulletin.

It may seem to some that the question under consideration is only an academic subject over which so much heat and sharpness is unwarranted. However, such is rarely the case when we are dealing with the underlying forces of life. A correct interpretation of the primitive social forms and the forces which brought them into existence is in direct relation to their subsequent evolution; and most especially concerns us in their relation to the role of the family today and of the future. We cannot hope to correctly interpret the forces which underlie the family today, nor those which have determined the modern relation between the sexes, without a scientific knowledge and interpretation of their historic sub-structure, for today's family is only an historic continuation with its roots buried deep in our primitive and primeval past. It is to the past that the women must turn in seeking out the keys of their destiny, before they can with knowledge and certainty turn to the future.

The sharp tone employed in this document is not the result of any personal antipathy toward any individual. It arises irrepressibly out of my firm inner conviction that such interpretations of primitive society and primitive social forms as are current in the party today, and have been for the last 75 years or so, are not just accidentally false or innocently misguided. I feel they are an integral part of and the historic extension of the general current of sexual factionalism which is and has been rife in the revolutionary movement. This undercurrent of conflict and struggle which boils up on the slightest provocation is, in turn, only an extension of that which takes place throughout capitalist society as a whole. It will not be resolved until such time as the socialist world brings forth new generations of men and women into a culture which will permit each sex to develop its own capacities and potentialities to the fullest.

We live in a world in which the masculine values appear to have submerged the feminine values virtually into a state of obliteration, and the battered feminine ego must either accept ignominious effacement or seek restitution through a cheap and second-rate imitation

of maleness. We, none of us, can function as whole women in today's society, and we wreak our vengeance on the men through destruction of the male personality in childhood and through inability to respond to and find delight in the complementary qualities of the opposite sex. Thus, in capitalist society, half-men and half-women glare at each other across an abyss at the bottom of which can be found the beaten spirits and destroyed personalities of the children -- the future generation.

The socialist society will free the sexes. However, freedom is but the recognition of necessity. The male ego will find that it must move over and make room for that of the female, else the victory shall turn to ashes and the struggle not worth the effort. But this will not come about through wishing it, nor passing laws, nor a correct theoretical appraisal of the situation. It will come about, like everything else, in direct relation to the degree to which man gains control and mastery over his environment. Above all, it will come about as the communal world finally turns its attention to the needs of the immature human young and to the realization that with the child lies all of the hopes, all of the daring, all of the dreams, all of the future of the communist world.

In the young, pliable, eager, responsive minds of tomorrow's children lies the certain success of our communist future. The molding of each developing personality, with all of its vast potentialities and its essential human dignity, into patterns of self-fulfillment and happiness will be the most exalted task which can be performed in our communist future, and in the performance of this task women will come into their own.

I firmly believe that the women can look to the future with the certain knowledge that theirs will be a glorious position of dignity and human worth. But this position will never be achieved, nor do I believe that women in their vast majority will seek to achieve it, by the route current in the party today -- through continued competition and conflict with the men. To conceive that this competition and conflict will be carried over into the communist world is to admit the defeat of the historic aims of mankind -- that of the happiness and the self-fulfillment of the individual. It means that all which is detestable between the sexes in the decadent society of today will be carried over into the new,

I, for one, see no such perspective for the communist society. Rather, this will be a world in which neither the male values nor the female values will monopolize the attention of the new culture, but will be as two opposite halves which together make a unified whole. And from the whole men and women of tomorrow will come the whole child, certain in his knowledge that he no longer lives in a hostile world but lives in one which considers him its most precious asset, and in an environment of love and consideration for him as an individual he will grow to maturity along with his millions of brothers and sisters. Thus, generation will succeed generation in which self-fulfillment of the individual male and female becomes the prime goal and motive force of life.

It will be clear from the brief outline of my views above that I differ seriously with the evaluations current in our movement on

on the woman question. The differences are not only deep-going but of long standing. It is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain an objective, disinterested and academic tone on a subject which bears a direct, even though not apparent, relation to our life today as women, and on which such serious differences exist.

This brief explanation accompanies my document and should be published as its preface.

Comradely yours,

Marjorie McGowan

* * *

A CRITICISM OF THE EVELYN REED ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECT
OF THE PRIMITIVE FAMILY

By Marjorie McGowan

This criticism deals with some aspects of the Reed articles published in the Spring-Summer issues of the magazine. At the outset, I wish to state that I believe it imperative that the editors of the magazine disassociate themselves from any possible suspicion of official sanction of these theories and make it clear to the public that these articles represent the opinions of Evelyn Reed, alone, and in no way represent an official position.

Possibly not one comrade in 100 within the party is capable of forming a critical judgment of the Reed articles through having made a comprehensive survey of the new source material involved. In spite of this obvious drawback to the formation of an official, or even of a personal opinion, some individuals have become virtually lyrical concerning the Reed articles and it is not inconceivable that a concerted move will be on foot to spend party funds for their publication in pamphlet form.

The comrades of the PC and of the party as a whole should be informed that these articles stand on a very low level of academic achievement and that any good bourgeois anthropologist could quite easily make short work of them. We make ourselves look ridiculous in the eyes of informed individuals in the bourgeois academic world by any official sponsorship of this scholastically irresponsible attempt at defining primitive social forms and the forces which brought them into existence. It will be clear from the brief criticism below that such is the case and it is to be hoped that steps will be taken to thwart any move for official sanction of these theories.

The main body of this criticism does not deal with Comrade Reed's first article entitled The Myth of Women's Inferiority which appeared in the Spring issue of the magazine. Much of this first article is given over to the enumeration of facts regarding the role of primitive women in relation to the evolution of primitive production.

There is nothing new in any of these facts. They have been set down time and again by able anthropologists and Reed has quoted most of the major authorities correctly enough. What is new in this listing of factual information is the historical context given to these facts by Reed. Her attempts at defining the social forms which flow out of primitive woman's role as producer, the role of the primitive male and the dynamic relationship between the two, must pass the tests of scientific methodology, and in this she fails miserably.

It would take nothing short of a book to unravel the falsity of the sweeping generalizations by which she wrenches primitive woman, the producer, out of historic context, and erects a tower of theory regarding the general relation between the sexes from primitive society down to the present day. In this, also, there is nothing new. She has simply taken the old feminist empiricism, superficiality, and the preconceived theoretical baggage of "women's enslavement to the lecherous male" which has never solved the enigma of the "woman question" for it remains to this day nothing more than that -- a "question" -- and added to all of this old junk some theories of her own invention.

This is a charge which the author of this criticism can make without a twinge of compunction. Let the comrades be the judge of the value of her feminist generalizations regarding the general relationship between the sexes throughout the whole of history found in her first article, when we inspect the content and the method used by Reed in her second article entitled Sex and Labor in Primitive Society in which she deals with the specific relation between the sexes of primitive society.

Comrades trained in the dialectic should react with a conditioned reflex of suspicion and wariness when confronted with any attempt at reducing highly complex social forces and relationships to a handful of criteria, all neatly and formally catalogued into convenient lists of A's, B's and C's. Indicative of Reed's method is just such an attempt at the start of her second article, Sex and Labor in Primitive Society, in the summer issue of the magazine. Even to many comrades uninformed on this subject, the attempt to reduce to formal classification the differences between the matriarchal and the patriarchal cultures should quite properly arouse mental reservations that such is not the method of the social scientist, regardless of the subject under investigation. Since it is necessary that we keep Reed's formal classifications freshly in mind during this brief criticism, we will quote them below for purposes of easy reference:

"What are the outstanding characteristics of patriarchal society? Men play the dominant role in the labor process. Private property and class differentiation exist. The sex partners live together as man and wife under one roof, and are by law united in marriage. Fathers stand at the head of the family. The family is composed of father, mother (or mothers) and their children, and is the basic unit of society, through which property is inherited and passed on. These characteristics of the patriarchy are all features of class society.

"In the matriarchy, on the other hand, women, not men, predominated in the labor process. There was no private ownership of com-

Matrilocal residence prevailed. Briffault says: "Marriage was matrilocal. Where there were two wives, each remained in her own home, the husband visiting them in turn. Not infrequently, especially in the Theban district, there was no cohabitation; both husband and wife remained in their respective homes. . . All landed and house property was in the hands of the women; if a man built or acquired a house, it passed immediately to his wife . . . The women, whether married or single, administered their property personally; the husband was not consulted and was generally ignorant of his wife's affairs. . . Marriage does not appear to have been associated with any religious ceremony. It was essentially an economic transaction." (p. 381-382, Vol. I, Ibid).

Matriarchal Egypt, which produced a dazzlingly high civilization, can in no instance be called a "primitive society." Private property and class differentiation existed in its most vicious form -- that of slave labor. The family was composed of mothers, fathers and children, and was the basic unit of society, but the property was inherited and passed on through the female line. Fathers did not stand at the head of the family in this matriarchy, but fathers, as fathers, were known. It didn't really matter whether they were known or not known, since there were no illegitimate children in Ancient Egypt. (See p. 380, Vol. I, Ibid) Briffault relates how the Greeks made merry over the hen-pecked husbands of Egypt.

Clearly, Ancient Egypt doesn't fit, no matter how hard we might squeeze and wriggle it around, into the Reed categorical imperative. And Ancient Egypt cannot be dismissed as simply a minor exception to the rule since many of the keys to the dynamism of the Mediterranean development must be sought in this venerable and brilliant civilization.

When we turn to the culture of the Australian aborigines, an even more extraordinary mass of contradiction appears. We must give

the term "patriarchy" to the Australian social order, but only for want of a better term. A patriarchal relationship of forces between the sexes exists among the Australians, but due to the association of this term with a higher level of culture among those who must fit all phenomenon into formal classifications, the term is somewhat misleading.

Among the Australians, evidences of the existence of a former matriarchal order exist in abundance. Briffault says:

"Australian aboriginal society is, in fact, more patriarchal in character than many that are in a far higher stage of cultural and social development, and it is only owing to its low culture and isolation that the patriarchal social system and the patriarchal family have not entirely supplanted amongst them the primitive organization of maternal clans." (P. 727, Vol. I, Ibid)

Descent may be either matrilineal or patrilineal, but far and away the greater number of clans trace descent through the mother and the maternal totemic clan system is remarkable for its complexity. Robert Lowie says:

"Of the Australians some tribes are matrilineal, others patrilineal, but the lot of woman is not one jot better or more dignified among the former." (P. 189, Primitive Society)

Marriage is, by and large, patrilocal. Lowie says: "The Australians are patrilocal, at least often in the sense that a woman removes to her husband's band." (P. 161, Ibid)

Briffault says: "Among the Australian tribes ... the general rule, so far as recent observation goes, is for the husband to take his wife home to his own tribe, and nowhere, as has been seen, is the condition of women more degraded and oppressed." (P. 337, Vol. I, Op. Cit.)

Speaking of the position of women, Briffault says: "...among the Australian aborigines the condition of the women is utterly degraded. 'Nowhere else,' remarks a resident of long standing amongst them, 'is it possible to meet with more miserable and degraded specimens of humanity than the women of Australia. The women are treated by the men with savage brutality.'

"... 'The woman's life is of no account if her husband chooses to destroy it, and no one ever attempts to protect her or take her part under any circumstances. In times of scarcity of food she is the last to be fed and is not considered in any way.' ... 'Blows over the head with a stick are the more common modes of correction, and spearing through the body for a slight offence.' ... 'Few women,' says Eyre, 'will be found upon examination to be free from frightful scars upon the head or the marks of spear wounds about the body.'"
...and to this Briffault adds:

"Female Australian skulls commonly show, in fact, huge scars from old fractures. Any female, old or young, found unprotected is almost invariably ravished, and in most instances killed afterwards. Queensland natives chastise their wives by rubbing hot coals over

their stomachs. A central Australian native, being annoyed with his wife, was with difficulty dissuaded by some missionaries from roasting her alive over a slow fire." (Pages 311-313, Vol. I, Ibid)

Clearly, in this culture, fathers stand at the head of the family. Is this a consequence of knowledge of paternity? Briffault says:

"The tribes of Central Australia so carefully studied in the classical investigations of Sir Baldwin Spencer and Mr. Gillen were stated by them not to recognise any relation between sexual congress and reproduction, and the suggestion that there exists any such relation is, when made to those natives, received with derision...The accuracy of the report appears to be now fully established." (P. 446, Vol. II, Ibid)

Paternity, it must be noted here, among most primitive tribes is not a physiological relation, but a sociological one. Lowie says:

"Biological paternity is one thing, sociological fatherhood another. The polyandrous Toda (An Australian group) do not trouble themselves about the former but establish the latter by a purely conventional rite." (P. 167, Op. Cit.)

And Briffault: "The notion of paternity was not generally regarded in ancient and modern times, and is not regarded by the majority of primitive peoples, as representing a physiological relation, but a social and juridic claim. A father is "responsible" for a woman's child in the economic and juridic sense..." (P. 445, Vol. II, Op. Cit.)

Clearly, the ascendancy of the males in Australian culture is not the product of their knowledge of fatherhood, "as fatherhood." Is it then the result of a revolution in primitive economics? Quite the contrary, the Australians reside on a very low level of primitive culture and there exists no private ownership of communal wealth. Briffault quotes Mr. Taplin:

"In the clan (of the Australians) there can be no personal property...all implements, weapons, etc., belong to the tribe collectively; every individual regards them as possessions of his clan, and to be employed for its welfare and defense as occasion may require.' And further on:

"An individual has no personal rights to game, fish or vegetable food he may obtain." (P. 493, Vol. II, Ibid)

Briffault maintains that the patriarchal character of these primitive tribes is due to the unique circumstances in which their development took place, i.e., their isolation on the Australian continent. This, it must be maintained, is only begging the question. No small number of primitive tribes live in isolation and under conditions of supreme backwardness and wretched conditions, but have maintained a matriarchal character. Furthermore, Australia is not the only culture in which women hold an abysmally low position among primitives. In Melanesia, in Fiji, and in parts of Africa similar conditions prevail. Briffault says:

"In some parts of Africa things are as bad. The Bangala of the Congo do quite commonly eat their wives. Not longer since than the year 1887 a Bangala chief coolly informed a missionary that he had eaten seven of his wives, and that he had invited their relatives to the feast in order that there should be no family unpleasantness." (P. 315, Vol. I, Ibid)

The isolation involved, or the lack of it, provides the external setting in which the development took place. It in no way defines for us the human forces which brought into existence the patriarchal relationships of primitive Australia, nor does it define the human forces which account for the matriarchal form in Ancient Egypt coexisting with a class society in a high state of civilization.

The Reed method, foreign and repugnant to Marxist ideology, finds its author in difficulties at the start. The development of her subsequent theory is a veritable masterpiece of sleight-of-hand tricks designed to somehow or other squeeze the facts into the pre-designed mold of the theory. This is accomplished, finally, by the simple technique of throwing out or ignoring all of the facts which contradict the theory and only mentioning those which appear to support it. No one could read even a small portion of the massive accumulation of new facts involved in any discussion of primitive social forms and the course of their development without reaching the conclusion that in the Reed articles is a deliberate distortion of the facts, and deliberate omission of them, resulting in a totally perverted picture of primitive society.

It will be clear to the reader that both Comrade Reed and the author of this document refer extensively to Robert Briffault's monumental work, The Mothers. Reed, in her articles, has taken Briffault's conclusions on the matriarchal theory of social origins and has adapted them to some conclusions of her own regarding a "labor collective" and the primitive sexual relation. Her dishonesty lies in this: that what contradictions and discrepancies might appear in Briffault's conclusions as to the matriarchal character of our social origins arise out of the fact that he, as an honest scholar and researcher, has set down all of the facts as he found them. He did not resort to wishing them away or omitting them, and the contradictions between his massive accumulation of facts and his theory are there for all who have the eyes to see. Reed, on the other hand, resorts to what is known in psychology as wish-fulfillment. Are the facts contradictory? Away with them! Let us fulfill the wish regardless of the facts! It could only have been in the interests of sexual factionalism that Reed has presented to an uninformed audience -- her comrades in the SWP -- such an utterly distorted and untruthful interpretation of the facts.

She says: "Under the totemic (kinship) system, humanity was divided into two categories: kindred and strangers. All who were members of one totemic group were kin; all others were strangers." (P. 88, Op. Cit.) (Once again, formal divisions and categories!) She then goes on to elaborate that the brothers and sisters of the "labor collective" had to find their sex partners among the strangers and since the strangers were identified with the Enemies, we find that "the very strangers who were sex-mates of the women were at the same time enemies to the brothers of these women. That is, the

brothers of Group A fought the sex-mates of their sisters in Group B." (P. 88, Ibid) And she goes on to quote Briffault at length that since the members of an outside group are the "enemies," and a state of warfare exists between clans, "it is quite impossible," says Briffault, "for a man to visit or hold any intercourse with another clan without running almost certain risk of being murdered." (P. 89, Ibid)

Reed then goes on to sketch out a lurid picture on the basis of this quotation torn out of context, of sexual anarchy prevailing outside the clan, in which mating takes place only in secrecy and in a "no-man's land" outside the limits of the compound, with the relationship of the sexmates confined to sexual union; socially they were strangers to each other. The "husbands and wives" did not live under the same roof, nor in the same compound or area; they did not provide for each other, and that between them existed a deep social gulf. (P. 89, Ibid)

Incredible as it may seem, this entire picture is a creation of Reed's fertile imagination. Briffault, her own authority, gives us no such intimation of anarchy in sexual relations in clans where the rule of exogamy is in force. (Exogamy, incidentally, is not universal. There are endogamous tribes at a low level of culture in which marriage and the sexual relation takes place within the clan.) Rather, Briffault goes on to point out the actual state of things which Reed chose to ignore:

"There is in nearly all the surviving examples of such societies (i.e., exogamous) an understanding whereby the members of a given group obtain their sexual partners from some other particular group, or groups, the members of which have intermarried with their own for generations. To marry into a totally strange group, between which and the group of the suitor there exists no established custom of intermarriage and no understanding in this respect, is an unusual and difficult procedure. Those elaborate tribal conferences, negotiations, diplomatic parleys and conciliatory exchanges of presents which have been noted in Australia, Melanesia, or Polynesia, do not, of course, take place on the occasion of every marriage; but they are necessary in the case of the marriage of members of two different tribes between whom a regular practice of intermarriage has not already become established. A man cannot marry into a strange group without an agreement being concluded by the two groups which will permit of intermarriage between their members. Those negotiations and that agreement have reference secondarily and incidentally only to the particular individuals concerned; it is not the relation between those individuals, but the relation between the two groups which is considered and discussed. The contract, if concluded, is not an individual contract, but a group-contract, and will permit of further intermarriage between members of the two groups without the necessity of new negotiations. The considerations affecting the relations between the groups, and not those between given individuals, are paramount, and are the object of the transaction, the formal, diplomatic and juridical character of the proceedings have reference to the former and not to the latter. Marriage, in the most advanced societies has preserved that character; it is a formal juridic transaction. But that juridical character had not originally reference to the relations established between the man and the woman, but to

the relations between the groups to which they respectively belong. In the ideas of more advanced phases of society the direct purpose of the contract is to legalize the relation between the man and the woman, giving it a juridic sanction, and thus distinguishing it from "illegitimate" sexual relations. But such is not quite the original character and purpose of the juridic transaction; its prototype is the agreement whereby intermarriage is rendered possible between the members of two groups. Such a contract is, in the most rudimentary and primitive human societies, a primary necessity if the rules against incest are to be observed; and it must of necessity have been the first 'institution' or juridic regulation, of marriage. The original purpose of the institution of marriage, was thus quite other than the regulation of sexual relations or the safeguarding of claims of individual possession. It had not reference to individuals, but to collective groups; it was not an individual marriage contract, but a group-marriage contract." (p. 562-563, Vol.1, Op.Cit.)

These two intermarriage groups, therefore, were not normally the Enemies and in a state of perpetual warfare with each other, as Reed would have us believe. Quite the contrary, the group-marriage contract which prevailed between the two (or more) groups was the basis for the strongest social and juridic ties. Robert Lowie says:

"A striking feature of the moieties (dual-organization of exogamous clans) is the development of reciprocal services. At an Iroquois burial the functionaries are always selected not from the deceased person's but from the opposite moiety, and the same holds for the remote Cahuilla of southern California. On the coast of northern British Columbia certain festivals are never arranged except in honor of the complementary moiety...Other functions of moieties have already been cited. Those of the Iroquois are characteristic of the Eastern Indians. At such games as lacrosse members of opposite moieties are pitted against each other. At feasts and ceremonies there is a corresponding spatial grouping; one moiety faces the other, each being represented by a speaker." (P. 133-134, Op. Cit.)

The principle of sexual separation laid down by Comrade Reed as an immutable law of social unification becomes, in fact, transformed into its opposite when we deal with the larger social body. Sexual unification is the only possible basis for social unification of two otherwise warring and antagonistic units of primitive society, and the sexual relation, far from being the prime disrupter and disorganizer of all primitive human relations, is the very cement and bond holding together the larger social group. All generalizations are dangerous regarding primitive society if they do not account for all of the facts, as they rarely do, but no generalization is perhaps safer than that sexual separation, or the rule of exogamy, within a group is only achieved through sexual unification with some other group or groups. Under the conditions of primitive society, given the heterogeneous and antagonistic character of the diverse groups and the miles of hostile wilderness which may separate them, no group could long survive if the sexual relation was banned within the group and only sexual anarchy prevailed without.

The matriarchal form, far from being the self-sufficient and self-contained clan of Reed's invention is a dual organization. It is composed, in its simplest manifestation, of two parts, and it is

impossible to consider or to understand the one part except in its relation to its opposite part -- the group (or groups) with which it is "married" and which provides for the needs of reproduction. In the relationship of forces between these two parts of the organic whole are to be found all of the basic ingredients upon which civilization has been subsequently constructed. These dynamic relationships, needless to say, do not correspond all over the globe and at all stages of culture to Reed's formalistic and rigidly conceived "classic" matriarchal form composed of mothers, sisters and brothers, with husbands excluded from all participation in the economic and social life of the clan into which they have married. Quite the contrary, the relationships between the two intermarriage groups are of the greatest variety and fluidity and anthropologists by the dozens have set down tons of facts indicating that no such formal schema as Reed's exists, and have attempted to find some sort of pattern and law which has governed the direction of development in this vast diversity of primitive relationships and primitive social forms. We can only say that Reed has acted in an irresponsible manner when she ignores the great wealth of new facts found in her own source material showing that none of her absolute values or generalizations have any universal application whatsoever.

It would seem, from reading the Reed articles, that primitive marriage, for instance, does not exist. In fact, she says so in her criteria on what constitutes a matriarchy. "Marriage," she says, "did not exist." (P. 85, Op. Cit.) This is nothing short of incredible! Robert Briffault, her principle authority, has no less than two full columns in the index of Vol. III, The Mothers; no less than 70 index references to primitive marriage and includes some of the following references:

"marriage, attempts to define...often difficult to distinguish from irregular relations...not regarded as arising out of personal inclination...from love, condemned as immoral...not regarded as a private concern...regarded as a social institution...traditions of its institution...not distinguished from other sexual relations...distinguished from...rules, of, primarily intended to avoid incest...economic, sexual and sentimental aspects...economic grounds for...arranged in infancy...by parents and others...consent of whole tribe or village required...acquiesced in by parties concerned...contracted and celebrated by all members of respective families...agreement between two groups..group-marriage, between intermarriage classes, or fraternal sororal families...of cross-cousins...juridic conception of...not regarded as concluded before birth of child...stabilized by birth of children...not severed by wife's death...loose and unstable character of...lasts only as long as husband can provide adequate supply of food...temporary and trial...by service...associated with tests of endurance...by purchase, a commutation of marriage by service...(See Index, p. 794, Vol. III, Ibid)

These are only a few of the references found in Briffault's index. They refer to discussion, interpretation and factual information on primitive marriage of from one to 100 pages in length per reference. And Reed can say that "Marriage did not exist"!! To what purpose, Comrade Reed?

It would only be charitable to suggest that Reed may have been blinded into wishing the marriage relation away by the virtually

unanimous verdict of anthropologists who testify to the instability of the individual marriage relation. However, Reed, who finds it quite easy to accept the principle of "social motherhood" and "social brotherhood" shows a singular blind spot when it comes to "social marital relations." While it is undeniably true in primitive society that the individual sexual and marriage relation is highly unstable, the social sexual and marriage relation, that is, the relation between two tribes who are "married" is of the greatest stability.

Thus, it is more common than not and, in fact, is virtually universal, to find that the adult males present in the maternal clan are precisely those husbands (whom Reed banishes away by enclosing the term in quotation marks) who perform all of the duties incumbent upon the adult males and which Reed claims can only be performed by de-sexed brothers -- that is, the husbands are the providers of animal food and the protectors of the clan of their in-laws. While, they may, with the greatest of frequency change their sexual partners and their marital status within the group, this in no way affects their role as protectors and providers of animal food for the group as a whole. No matter to whom they are married at the moment, their loyalties and their duties apply to the entire group of in-laws as a whole in the clan with which their own clan has an intermarriage agreement.

The "husbands and wives," says Reed, did not provide for each other. "The relationship between sex-mates was confined exclusively to sexual union." (P. 89, Op. Cit.) Another incredible product of Reed's imagination!

Robert Lowie says: "A Kai (for instance) does not marry because of desires he can readily gratify outside of wedlock without assuming any responsibilities; he marries because he needs a woman to make pots and to cook his meals, to manufacture nets and weed his plantations, in return for which he provides the household with game and fish and builds the dwelling." (P. 66, Op. Cit.)

Throughout the whole of primitive society, it is axiomatic among anthropologists that the adult males do not marry to obtain sexual gratification which can readily be obtained in most primitive groups outside of marriage. The male marries to obtain an economic associate, to have a woman who will cook, sew and make life comfortable for him -- just as the woman marries to obtain a provider and protector.

Griffault says: "Individual marriage has its foundation in economic relations. In the vast majority of uncultured societies, marriage is regarded almost exclusively in the light of economic considerations." (Vol. II, p. 1)

He goes on: "The answer of the Australian aborigines to the question why they desire a wife will bear repeating, for the purposes of primitive individual marriage could not be more clearly and accurately stated. If a native is asked why he is anxious to possess a wife, he invariably answers, 'to fetch me wood and water and prepare my "mudlinna" (ffod).' ...In the Pelew Islands 'marriage is regarded as a matter of business, love is left to youth'...The same is true of all uncultured peoples. Among the natives of northern Papua 'a woman is acquired in the first place as a worker and only incidentally as a wife.'...

"With the Eskimo, 'in a man's choice of a wife the feelings are not taken into account,' he 'marries because he requires a woman's help to prepare his skins, make his clothes, and so forth.' 'The marriage relation was entered upon from reasons of interest or convenience with very little regard for affection as we understand it.' Among the North American Indians 'industry and capacity for work are above all valued, and next fertility.'...Among the Banyoro 'marriages are seldom, if ever, the outcome of love, but are entered into for utilitarian and economic reasons.'" (Pages 164-166, Vol. II, Ibid)

"The considerations which determine primitive woman's choice of her mate, are, however, of the same practical nature as those which may influence a man's choice of a wife. Thus of the woman of the Sea Dayaks it is said that they 'generally regard marriage as a means of obtaining a man to work for them'; and 'a woman will often separate from her husband simply because he is lazy.' Among the Eskimo a woman 'appears to desire a husband who is industrious and a good hunter.' 'They cling to us,' said an Eskimo, 'because we give them food and clothing.' When a hunter is sick, his wife goes to another. Skill in hunting and prowess in war is amongst all the North American tribes the chief recommendation in a prospective husband. 'Natural affection,' says the Rev. D. Jones, 'seems very small. By women beauty is commonly no motive for marriage; the only inducement seems to be the reward which a man gives her.' Among the tribes of Louisiana a woman's 'only care is to inform herself whether he who asks her is an able hunter, a good warrior and an excellent workman.' Among the Hidatsa 'parents commonly advise their daughters to marry men who will never leave the lodge unprovided with meat.' The advice appears, however, superfluous. The manner in which a Pennsylvanian Indian expressed the motives which influence the choice and attachment of an American Indian woman could not be improved upon for terseness: 'Squaw,' he said, 'loves to eat meat -- no husband, no meat -- so squaw do everything to please husband -- he do same to please her -- live happy.'" (pp. 181-182, Vol. II, Ibid.)

And Briffault goes on: "No primitive woman will willingly consent to marry a man who has not given proof of his functional fitness to perform his share in the economic division of labor which constitutes the marriage association." . . . "The capacity to provide such samples of the hunter's skill is the indispensable prerequisite of individual marriage throughout primitive society." (pp. 183-184, Vol. II, Ibid.)

And Robert Lowie says: "Marriage, as we cannot too often or too vehemently insist is only to a limited extent based on sexual considerations. The primary motive, so far as the individual mates are concerned, is precisely the founding of a self-sufficient economic aggregate." (pp. 65-66, Op. Cit.)

Wherefore, then, is Reed's "labor collective" composed solely of mothers, sisters and brothers, with husbands excluded from all social and economic participation in the group, and a relation between husbands and wives reduced exclusively to sexual union? Wherefore, is Reed's "motherhood-brotherhood" in clans where the "social brothers" show an unfortunate tendency to marry and settle down in the clan of their in-laws, as is true in the overwhelming majority of maternal clans with matrilineal residence. These husbands, far from causing

the entire clan to fly apart through sexual conflict, are the principle providers of animal food and protectors of the clan, since the mature brothers of their wives have generally departed on a similar quest elsewhere. Far from being an exception to the rule, the marriage of individuals as an economic consideration . . . and as an economic necessity . . . is absolutely universal in primitive societies, from the rudest hunting tribes to the most sophisticated, and it is not unknown, although certainly not the rule, among the very rudest of cultures to find "matrimonial relations that would be rated exemplary by a mid-Victorian moralist. Among the Andaman Islanders 'conjugal fidelity' till death is not the exception but the rule." (R. Lowie, p. 167, Op. Cit.)

The "classic" matriarchy, which Comrade Reed would have us believe is universally found at all levels of culture and is representative of primitive relations as a whole, far from being found at the lowest level of primitive society, is found almost exclusively at the higher levels of neolithic culture verging on civilization. And the examples of this "classic" matriarchy . . . of what a self-respecting matriarchy ought to look like . . . are few and far between, the Iroquois and the Pueblos being the examples, par excellence. However, even here, Reed has given us a distorted picture of the primitive sexual and marriage relation.

Among the Zuni, a Pueblo tribe, where a woman's authority is absolute . . . "When a man returns from his day's work his wife drops whatever work she may be doing and goes to the door of the house to greet him. Whatever he brings she takes from him and carries into the house. Then she sets out food for her husband. These gestures demanded by etiquette symbolize the economics of marriage. The house belongs to the woman and she receives her husband in it as a guest. He in turn brings the produce of the fields and ranch; as it crosses the threshold it becomes the property of the woman. Any omission of these formalities on the part of the woman would be interpreted by the man as an indication that she no longer regards him as her husband.

"The economic interdependence of men and women is one of the great stabilizing forces of family life. It does not prolong the life of any individual marriage but it helps to maintain the institution. The Zuni change mates frequently but the man-woman-child constellation remains constant. There are no bachelors, spinsters, or abandoned children." (p. 370, Boas and Others, General Anthropology)

And Briffault reports, speaking of the Zuni "' . . . In the living and cooking-room, round the wood-fire, the inmates might be seen sitting assembled in the evening . . . fathers, mothers and children . . . Though the husband takes up his abode in the wife's family dwelling during her life and his good behaviour, he belongs still to his own family . . . ' . . . with the woman rests the security of the marriage ties; and it must be said, in her high honour, that she rarely abuses the privilege, that is, never sends her husband to the home of his father's unless he richly deserves it.'" (pp. 272-273, Vol. 1, Ibid)

And continuing . . . "'The domestic life of the Zunis,' says Mrs. Stevenson, 'might well serve as an example for the civilized world.

They do not have large families, and the members are deeply attached to one another . . . The young mothers would be seen caring for their infants, or perhaps the fathers would be fondling them, for the Zuni men are very devoted to their children, especially the babies. The grandmother would have one of the younger children in her lap, with perhaps the head of another resting against her shoulder, while the rest would be sitting near or busying themselves about household matters.' 'The house,' says Dr. Kroeber, 'belongs to the women, born of the family. There they come into the world, pass their lives, and within the walls they die. As they grow up, their brothers leave them, each to abide in the house of his wife. (!) Each woman, too, has her husband, or succession of husbands, sharing her blankets. (!) So generation succeeds generation, the slow stream of mothers and daughters forming the current that carried with it husbands, sons and grandsons.'" (p. 273, Vol. 1, Ibid)

Even giving Reed all the benefits of the doubt, and selecting as an example one of the most perfect cases of primitive matriarchal form extant, where, we may ask, is this supposed gulf between sexual partners as a universal criteria? Where, we may ask, is a sexual relation in which sedulous separation of the married couples must be maintained else all of primitive society would fly apart through sexual conflict of the adult males? Of separate abodes which must be maintained as a necessity, everywhere and always . . . when, as a matter of fact, sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't? Of a sexual relation which must take place in secrecy and in a "no-man's land" beyond the compounds for fear of detection by the "ENEMY"?

Even on this last statement, Briffault makes no such categorical statement as does Reed. He lists, in fact, the Tahitians, the Maori of New Zealand, the Eskimo, the Creeks, the tribes of New Mexico, the Botocudoes, the Indians of Paraguay, the Choroti of the Pilcomayo, the Negritos of the Andaman Islands, the Guegians and the Australian aborigines, as being some of the tribes in which copulation quite normally and naturally takes place in public, before any observers who happen to be around including the relatives of the female participant, with the most complete indifference to any sense of indecency or fear. (pp. 260-261, Vol. III, Ibid)

And he goes on to point out that while privacy in the sexual relation is almost universally sought out and while it can be the effect of actual danger attending such relations at the hands of a man's in-laws, that "The privacy demanded remains, in fact, desirable chiefly for its own sake, and the main consideration in seeking it is the desire to be sheltered from all disturbing influences." (p. 262, Vol. III, Ibid)

Where, in this brief review of some of the contradictions, discrepancies and unfounded generalizations of the Reed articles can we find evidence to support her sweeping statements that "under the totemic system a sexual gulf separated those who, as kinfolk, lived and worked together in the same totemic group, or labor collective. Conversely, a social gulf separated those who, as strangers, were united sexually"?

On the contrary, there exists no such mechanically contrived cleavage of sex and society in any primitive culture . . . from the most savage to the most civilized. What contradiction and dualism

exists lies in the fact that the sexual relation is at one and the same time the great divider and the great unifier of primitive social relations. Needless to say, this dualism in the relation of sex to society has far wider and more profound implications when we consider its origins and its application to the larger aspects of theory. The supporters of the matriarchal theory of social origins, and Comrade Reed in particular, must explain for us how a dual organization such as is the matriarchal form could ever have arisen out of the animal world. Even so arch conservative and cautious an observer as Robert Lowie says: ". . . we may reasonably doubt whether a dual organization is really the simplest for primitive man." (p. 136, Op. Cit.) And, indeed, we may not only reasonably doubt, but we may find that when we attempt to bring such a dual organization out of the animal world we can only do so by route of a fantasy, outlined as follows:

In the days of long, long ago, an animal herd from which we are descended, composed of mothers, sisters, daughters and sexually immature brothers and sons, which had advanced far enough along in consciousness to so label and comprehend these relationship-concepts, found it necessary to somehow or other retain the adult brothers and sons within the group for the purposes of protection and provision of animal food, and for the purposes of founding a "labor collective."

Because the sexual relation is the great disrupter of the labor process going on within this animal herd, the animal "brothers and sons" were arbitrarily banned from the herd on reaching sexual maturity through being advised that the animal females within the group were their "social mothers" and "social sisters" and, therefore, taboo under the laws of incest.

We must assume that these adult male animals, "sons and brothers," simply roamed at large, taking sex and sustenance wherever they found it, excluded from all participation in the "labor collective" which was in the process of formation.

When it became apparent to the mothers and sisters that they could no longer do the job by themselves, they cast around for ways and means whereby the adult sons and brothers could be kept at home and, at the same time, sexually satisfied since we assume these male animals were not eunuchs.

The Reed solution to their dilemma is that the mothers and sisters, by what strange sorcery we know not, simply told their brothers and sons to stay home after this, and if they wanted to indulge in sexual intercourse, they would have to content themselves with whatever stray Enemy happened to pass by. To which, forthwith, the obedient animal sons obliged. . . . and there they have been ever since, assisting in the construction of the "labor collective."

The solution to their dilemma according to Robert Briffault and other supporters of the matriarchal theory, goes something as follows: the mothers, and sisters looked around for some other herd in the same fix and between the two of them they thrashed out this burning problem on which the fate of humanity depended.

Thus it was, that a Founding Convention of Humanity was called, the purpose of which was to unite two otherwise warring animal groups.

The tendency of the adult males to squabble over the females is overcome by a juridical arrangement that each of these two herds shall henceforth provide for the sexual needs of the other in order that the adult male animals, who are forthwith transformed into "social brothers" can stay at home and help their Moms. We must further assume that at this primordial Founding Convention the adult males were disenfranchised by their mothers and sisters, since we cannot conceive of a male animal making rules which will in the future regulate his sexual life to his own disadvantage. At any rate, since they hadn't been invited in yet, they were probably still roaming at large, unaware that their destiny was being taken into hand.

And so it is that the human race ceases to be animal and becomes human by a convention decree regulating sex in which one-half of the human race, the men, were excluded from participation and probably didn't even have a consultative vote. Since there must have been at least as many independent origins of mankind as there are races, this absurd conception is advanced by the supporters of the matriarchal theory as having occurred not once, but at least five times. And so, we have the picture well in mind of the primeval mothers, two-by-two, launching the male animal onto the ark of human experience.

We do not mean to sound fresh, but the entire conception is so preposterous that the temptation to succumb to sarcasm cannot be contained. Comrade Reed can erect a tower of theory on the basis of a supposed vast gulf and irreconcilability between sex and society only so long as she omits the facts. With the inclusion of the facts, a quite different perspective on the origins and the evolution of the matriarchy is possible. It becomes clear, in fact, that the matriarchal form could not have been the most primitive but was preceded by a far more primal, now extinct form, of which it was the negation.

Los Angeles, California
September 9, 1954

New York, N.Y.
October 13, 1954

Los Angeles

Dear Comrade McGowan,

At its last meeting, the Political Committee considered your letter and your request that the editors of the magazine dissociate themselves from the position taken in the articles by Evelyn Reed.

The Political Committee felt it unnecessary to take a position either for or against Comrade Reed's articles. On such subjects the feeling was that considerable latitude is permissible so long as the author defends the materialist viewpoint, advocates and tries to apply the dialectic method and seeks to supply material of an educational character (facts, presentation of various theories that try to account for them, etc.).

Within such a framework there is room for differences of opinion as to how successful the author was in achieving these objectives. From this standpoint, the editors were entirely correct in publishing the Reed articles.

Comradely yours,

Farrell Dobbs
National Secretary

THE WOMAN QUESTION AND THE MARXIST METHOD

By Evelyn Reed

As we have frequently pointed out, the past 14 years of war boom and prosperity have produced a conservatizing effect upon the working class which we describe as a "bourgeoisification." One of the forms this takes is the readiness of the workers to accept bourgeois opinions and propaganda as scientific truth and adapt themselves to it.

Like the whole working class, the party is under constant pressure and bombardment from this massive bourgeois propaganda machine. As the conscious vanguard, however, we must not permit ourselves to become influenced by it to the slightest degree. On the contrary, we must counter this mood in the working class through unremitting ideological struggle.

Certain discussions now taking place in the party reveal that a certain amount of adaptation to bourgeois propaganda has arisen which, although probably unwitting, is a signal that should alert us to the danger. These discussions revolve around a very important and highly complex subject, the Woman Question. Since many aspects of this question are still obscure, and all aspects are sensitive, it is all the more imperative that we begin such a discussion on the basis of utmost clarity and objectivity.

For some months an informal discussion has been going on among some comrades on the problem of "male chauvinism" as it relates to the party. A few comrades have felt that the party itself is not free from this and that women comrades are seriously hindered and handicapped by it. However, this question would require a document by itself to deal with all the elements involved and to discuss it on a historical and scientific basis.

The discussion on the Woman Question as it now exists, has been opened up through two written criticisms as follows:

1. A criticism of Jack Bustelo's article in the paper exposing the hucksters and economic perspectives on the cosmetic sector of Big Business is centered around women and beauty.
2. Comrade McGowan's criticism of my last article in the magazine centering around women and anthropology.

At first glance these appear to be two entirely different topics; one is a daily question concerning modern women and cosmetics, the other is a scientific question concerning women and anthropology. The comrades supporting one criticism may even be opposed to the other. The fact is, however, there is a connection between them. They both reveal that on the daily level and the scientific level, we have become influenced by the bourgeois propaganda machine. Such an influence can only lead to adaptation to bourgeois methodology unless it is countered by its opposite, the Marxist method. The time is at hand, therefore, for a fresh review of the Marxist method as it is concretely applied to this important Woman Question.

COSMETICS, BEAUTY AND LABOR

The discussion which was unleashed by Jack Bustelo's article in the paper has shifted the axis of Bustelo's limited aim; namely, to expose the profiteers and hucksters in the cosmetics sector of Big Business, who get rich by exploiting the ignorance, oppression and fashion regimentation of women.

The arguments against him center around the "needs and wants" of women in the realm of sexual beauty which Bustelo, it seems, does not understand. Let us then listen to the women themselves on what they need and want. After reading through the criticisms, however, I find two main propositions, both of them contradictory, which may be summed up as follows: "Women want what they do not want."

This is not intended as a joke. These contradictions are a reflection of a society torn by contradictions of all kinds. They reveal, moreover, that while we are in the forefront when it comes to challenging bourgeois propaganda on economic and political questions, we are lagging behind in exposing bourgeois propaganda on questions that concern women; sex, female beauty, the family and so on. We have been leaving the field to the bourgeoisie and their propaganda machine, with the result that some comrades have swallowed some indigestible bait but don't quite know what it is.

The two contradictory propositions are quite clearly, innocently and honestly articulated by Comrade Jeanne Morgan. The first goes as follows:

1. In the competitive sex market which features capitalism, women are obliged to compete with other women for economic security, whether it is in the form of jobs or husbands. Therefore, women do not "indulge" in cosmetics. We are under social compulsion to use them.

2. The use of cosmetics is good and necessary because they help to make women beautiful. We have the right to use them.

Here free choice and the right to use cosmetics is coupled with social compulsion. To uphold social compulsion in the name of free choice is contradictory.

The second proposition goes as follows:

1. If Bustelo would spend his time fighting for higher pay, better conditions, better diet, etc. there would be more health and therefore more natural beauty for women. This would "lessen the need for cosmetics."

2. Don't give us the Bustelo standard of natural beauty, which is a "moral beauty" unsuited to modern demands. The world demands cosmetic improvement of beauty, and so long as the world demands it, we have the right to meet that demand.

Here again, free choice in the matter of improved or unimproved

beauty is coupled with social compulsion. To support social compulsion in the name of free choice is contradictory.

Bustelo, however, is attacked on the basis of his propositions, devoid of contradictions, as follows: 1. Women are naturally beautiful. Under capitalism, to "gild the lily" is simply to pour billions into the coffers of the profiteers. Beauty is not identical with fashion, but with higher, finer, more enduring values.

Now it is my opinion that some of the comrades are incensed not because they really question the validity of Bustelo's propositions, but because they are caught in the trap of their contradictions and wish Bustelo, or somebody, would help them get out of it. But to do this, we must begin not with an article in the paper on cosmetics, but with class contradictions and the class struggle.

A Class Question

The contradictory position of the comrades arises out of the notion that questions concerning women in the realm of sex, beauty, and so on, transcend class lines. The discussion, therefore, is taking place in an abstract void, apart from history and the class struggle. This notion arises out of the bourgeois myth that the needs of all women in the realm of sexual beauty are identical for all classes of women because of their common identity as women.

This is completely false. The class distinctions between women transcend their sex identity as women. This is above all true in modern capitalist society, the epoch of the sharpest polarization of class forces.

The Woman Question cannot be divorced from the class question. Any confusion on this score can only lead to erroneous conclusions and setbacks. It will divert the class struggle into a sex struggle of all women against all men.

Historically, the sex struggle was part of the bourgeois feminist movement of the last century. It was a reform movement, conducted within the framework of the capitalist system, and not seeking to overthrow it. But it was a progressive struggle in that women revolted against almost total male domination on the economic, social and domestic fronts. Through the feminist movement, a number of important reforms were won for women. But the bourgeois feminist movement has run its course, achieved its limited aims, and the problems of today can only be resolved in the struggle of class against class.

The Woman Question can only be resolved through the lineup of working men and women against the ruling men and women. This means that the interests of the workers as a class are identical; and not the interests of all women as a sex.

Ruling-class women have exactly the same interest in upholding and perpetuating capitalist society as their men have. The bourgeois feminists fought, among other things, for the right of

women as well as men to hold property in their own name. They won this right. Today, plutocratic women hold fabulous wealth in their own names. They are completely in alliance with the plutocratic men to perpetuate the capitalist system. They are not in alliance with the working women, whose needs can only be served through the abolition of capitalism. Thus, the emancipation of working women will not be achieved in alliance with the women of the enemy class, but just the opposite; in a struggle against them as part and parcel of the whole class struggle.

The attempt to identify the interests of all classes of women as a sex takes one of its most insidious forms in the field of female beauty. The bourgeois myth has arisen that since all women want to be beautiful, they all have the same interest in cosmetics and fashions which are currently identified with beauty. To buttress this myth, it is claimed that fashion-beauty has prevailed throughout all ages of history and for all classes of women. As evidence, they point to the fact that even in primitive society, women painted and decorated their bodies. To explode this myth, let us briefly examine the history of cosmetics and fashions.

In primitive society, where there were no classes, no economic and social competition and no sexual competition, the bodies of both men and women were painted and "decorated," and it was not for the sake of beauty. It was a necessity that arose out of certain primeval and primitive conditions of labor, which I shall explain in detail in future articles.

It was necessary at that time for each individual who belonged to the kinship group to be "marked" as such. These "marks" were not merely ornaments, rings, bracelets, short skirts, etc., but actual gashes, incisions, tattoo marks, etc. as well as different kinds of painting. These marks indicated not only the sex of each individual but the changing age and labor status of each individual as he matured from a child to an elder.

These marks identified the kindred members of the same group or Labor Collective. Since primitive society was socialist, these marks also expressed social equality. The bourgeois anthropologists will not reveal all of this to you, but neither can they reveal anything about the underlying economic and social forces that govern either primitive or modern society.

Then came class society. The marks that signified, among other things, social equality under primitive socialism, became transformed into their opposite. They became fashions and decorations that signified social inequality; the division of society into rich and poor, into rulers and subjugated. Cosmetics and fashions became the marks of social distinction between the classes and the apex of this social distinction is found in the French Court before the French Revolution.

Among these kings, princes and landed gentry, both men and women were dressed in the height of fashion, with their painted faces, powdered hair, lace ruffles, gold ornaments and the like. Both sexes were "beautiful" according to the standards of the day. But, more decisively, both sexes in the ruling class were demarcated by these cosmetics and fashions from the peasants

who sweated for them on the land and who were, by the same standards, not beautiful. Fashion at that period was the mark of class distinction of both sexes of the ruling class against both sexes of the working class.

Then, for certain historical reasons we will not go into here, men left the field of fashion primarily to the women. The Big Bourgeois, who emerged after the French Revolution, established his class standing through the fashions of his wife, and in other ways, in place of himself wearing gold pants and lace ruffles. Among the women, however, fashions were still the mark of class distinction and not sex identity in the days of "Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady."

But as capitalism developed, there arose an enormous expansion of the productive machine and with it the need for a mass market. Since women represent half the population, profiteers in "beauty" eyed this mass and lusted to exploit it for their own purposes. And so the fashion field was expanded out of the narrow confines of the rich and made socially obligatory upon the whole female population.

Now, for the first time, class distinctions were covered over and concealed behind sex identity, to serve the needs of this sector of Big Business. And the bourgeois hucksters began grinding out the propaganda: All women want to be beautiful. Therefore all women have the same interest in cosmetics and fashions. Beauty became identical with fashion and all women were sold on their common "needs and wants" for these fashions.

Today, billions are coined out of every department in the fashion field; cosmetics, clothes, hair-dos, slenderizing salons, beauty salons, jewelry, fake and real, and so on. Beauty, it was discovered, was a very flexible formula. All you had to do to become rich was to discover a new aid to beauty and convince the whole population of women that they "needed and wanted" this aid.

To maintain, perpetuate and expand this profitable field of Big Business, however, it was necessary to disseminate certain other myths through the propaganda machine at the disposal of the profiteers. These are as follows:

1. Women, from time immemorial, have been competing with other women for sexual attention from the men. Since this is virtually a biological law, from which there is no escape, and since it has existed for all time and will continue to exist for all time, women must submit to their fate and forever compete with each other in the capitalist sex market.

2. In modern society the natural beauty of women does not really count. Indeed, it is insinuated, nature has really abandoned most of the women in the realm of beauty. To make up for their natural disfigurements, they must resort to artificial aids, which the kind profiteers have placed at their disposal.

Let us examine these myths:

Sex Competition -- Natural or Social?

Through a study of the sciences of biology and anthropology, we discover that sex competition among women does not exist in nature and did not exist in primitive society. Sex competition among women is exclusively the product of class society and did not exist before class society came into existence which means, for almost a million years of human evolution.

Throughout the animal world there is no such thing as sex competition among females for attention from the males. The only sex competition that prevails in the animal world is that which is inflicted by nature upon the male sex, although this is simply nature's way of assuring perpetuation of the species. Moreover, this natural affliction was eradicated with the building and consolidation of the first human social system, primitive socialism.

The total absence of sex competition among females in nature was one of the reasons why women led in the creation of the first social system, and why the first social system was founded in their image; namely, free from competitive relations. The absence of sex competition among primitive women is unchallenged even by the bourgeois anthropologists. Sometimes, in bewilderment and amazement, it is true, even the reactionary anthropologists point out this "strange peculiarity" or "quaint custom."

But class society succeeded primitive society. Together with the competitive struggle for property and wealth, there arose the competitive struggle among women. But this social affliction imposed upon women has nothing natural about it. It is un-natural, and exclusively artificial or social.

Sex competition among women arose with the sex market. The sex market, in turn, arose side by side with the commodity market as a whole. And the commodity market arose with class society. As the commodity market expanded, the standard of female beauty gradually became transformed from natural to artificial, or fashion, beauty. And sex competition developed side by side with this artificial form of beauty, reaching its peak in modern society.

In the earliest period of barter exchange, women were bartered for cattle and cattle for women. The natural beauty and health of a woman was then at a premium, in the same way and for the same reasons that the natural beauty and health of cattle were at a premium. Both were necessary in the productive and reproductive life of the farm community and the healthiest and most beautiful specimens were best able to carry out their functions.

With the consolidation of the patriarchy and then class society, certain women were accumulated by rich men as one form of all the different kinds of property they were accumulating. These were the concubines. The custom arose of embellishing their natural beauty with decorations and ornaments in the same way and for the same reasons that the palaces were decorated and ornamented. This reached its apex in the Asiatic palaces and harems. These women became the sexual property of the Prince or Khan, and the more he possessed of these luxury products, the more he gave

evidence of his standing as a wealthy man. Sex competition among women moved side by side with and indeed, was even overshadowed in the early days, by property accumulation and competition. It was the buyers of the women who competed with each other for possession of the most beautiful women. The women themselves were sexual property and commodities.

As monogamy displaced polygamy, in the early period property considerations overshadowed sex competition. A rich heiress, regardless of her beauty or health, made a desirable wife to a man accumulating property, and vice versa. Naturally, a man would choose, if he had the choice, the more beautiful and healthy woman, but property considerations came first. These marriages, involving property mergers, were conducted in business-like fashion between the families of the man and woman involved, and had only incidental reference to the wishes and desires of the individuals involved. This type of marriage, conducted through family negotiations, or a marriage broker, remained in force generally throughout the long agricultural period, when property was primarily landed property.

Then came capitalism, money property and "free enterprise." This brought free enterprise not only in competitive "free labor" and in business competition, but also in female sex competition. In the wealthy class, it is true, marriage-mergers continued side by side with property mergers and the two were frequently indistinguishable. Indeed, with the rise of monopoly capitalism, these two kinds of mergers narrowed down the ruling plutocrats to America's 60 Families.

But in America, for certain historical reasons, certain peculiarities arose. Class lines could be transgressed by a man of money, unlike in Europe where class distinctions were established at birth. Thus, a worker or petty-bourgeois in the heyday of capitalism here, could by fluke or accident become a rich man and thereby change his class status.

Similarly with a woman. Through fluke or accident, or even the natural endowment of beauty, a woman might marry a millionaire and change her class status. This Cinderella fairy-tale, American capitalist style, is most graphically illustrated by Bobo Rockefeller, the miner's daughter.

These peculiarities of American life prepared the psychological ground for the mass commodity market, the mass sex market and mass sex competition. Just as the Horatio Alger stories became the handbook for men on how to leave your class of rags and enter the class of riches, so with the romance stories for women on how to get and marry the boss's son. Or even the boss himself. All you had to do was rush to the Beauty Market and buy all the commodities guaranteed to transform you from a Cinderella into a Princess.

The fashion world became a capitalist gold mine with virtually unlimited possibilities. All a Big Businessman had to do was to change the fashions often enough and invent enough new aids to beauty and he could become richer and richer. That is how, under capitalism, the sale of women as commodities was displaced by the sale of commodities to women. Correspondingly, natural

beauty became more and more displaced by artificial beauty; namely, fashion beauty. And that is how the myth arose that beauty is identical with fashion and that all women have identical fashion needs because they all have identical beauty needs.

The Fashion Profiteers

There are three main gangs of profiteers who batten off the mass of women they dragoon or wheedle into their sex-commodity market in search of beauty:

1. Those who profit by the manipulation of female flesh into the current standardized fashion mould;
2. Those who paint and emulsify this manipulated flesh with cosmetics, dyes, lotions, emulsions, perfumes, etc;
3. Those who decorate the manipulated and painted flesh with fashionable clothes, jewelry, etc.

In the first category, a woman to be beautiful must be so tall and no taller or shorter. She must weigh so much and not an ounce more or less. She must have certain arbitrary hip, bust and waist measurements and no other, and so on. If a woman varies from these arbitrary standards, she is not beautiful.

This causes enormous suffering among women who vary from this standardized, assembly-line mould. Weighed down and frustrated by the real burdens of life under capitalism, which they do not understand, they tend to view their beauty "disfigurements" as the source of all their troubles. They become victims of inferiority complexes.

And so they flock by the thousands and tens of thousands to the manipulators of flesh, who put them through various ordeals in their beauty and slenderizing salons. Accompanying them are the face-lifters, nose-bobbers and other surgical rescuers of female beauty. And new improvements are being added all the time. I am told, for example, that the padded bra has now been improved, in that the sponge rubber is inserted directly into the breast through a surgical operation. In this way it becomes invisible under The Skin You Love To Touch.

Through Hollywood stars and Beauty Contests of all kinds, these fleshly standards are maintained and ballyhooed. As "beauties" they are paraded before the eyes of the hypnotized mass of women through every available means; in the movies, on television, in the slick and pulp magazines. But the monotonous uniformity of these "beauties" is appalling. Every vestige of variety, the keynote of real beauty, has been erased. They might as well be so many sugar-cookies stamped out of the same dough with the same mould.

Next come the cosmetic dealers, perfumers, dyers and emulsifiers of this manipulated flesh. Perhaps only the workers in the factories of these cosmetic manufacturers know that the same cheap raw materials that go into the \$10 jar or bottle of this and that which is sold in the fancy stores, also go into the 50-cent bottle

or jar. To the naive and innocent, however, the \$10 jar must contain some special magic that is not present in the 50-cent jar. The propaganda machine says so, and so it must be true. These poor women strain their financial resources to get the magic jar, hoping this will transform them from miners' daughters into Rockefeller horesses.

Finally, come the profiteers who decorate and clothe this manipulated and painted flesh. An agonizing choice is placed before the women. Shall they buy for quality or for quantity? The rich, who can do both, have ordained a round-the-clock fashion circus; fashions for mornings, afternoons, cocktails, evening, night and bedtime. They have ordained a different fashion for "every occasion," but there are endless "occasions." And each hour of the clock and each occasion requires, in addition, a vast collateral assemblage of "accessories," to "go with" whatever they are supposed to go with.

And all this mountain of commodities sold one week, can the next week be declared obsolete through a new fashion decree. Here we get a good example of whether the women get what they need and want, or whether they are compelled to need and want what they get. The New York Times recently pointed out that Christian Dior, the famous couturier of the rich, whose styles are copied for the poor, had the power to raise the skirts of fifty million American women overnight, or lower them, or both.

This difference of three or four inches in a hemline can convulse the female world, socially obliged to abide by the latest fashions. It may be fun for the rich to throw out their wardrobes and get new ones. But it is disastrous for the poor. Yet it is precisely through such fashion decrees that the profiteers grow fat.

Thus, when the comrades defend the right of women to use cosmetics, fashions, etc., without clearly distinguishing between such a right and the capitalist social compulsion to use them, they have fallen into the trap of bourgeois propaganda. Even worse, as the vanguard of women, they are leading the mass of women into this fashion rat-race and into upholding and perpetuating these profiteers, exploiters and scoundrels.

Opposition -- Not Adaptation

It is contended that so long as capitalism prevails, we must abide by these cosmetic and fashion decrees. Otherwise, we will be left behind in the economic and social rear. This is true. We must give at least a token recognition of the harsh reality.

But this does not mean that we must accept these edicts and compulsions complacently, or without protest. The workers in the plants are often obliged to accept speedups, paycuts and attacks on their unions. But they always and invariably accept them under protest, under continuing struggle against them and in a constant movement to oppose their needs and will against their exploiters.

The class struggle is a movement of opposition, not adaptation.

and this holds true not only of the workers in the plants, but of the women as well, both workers and housewives. It is because the issues are more obscured in the realm of the women as a sex that some of our own comrades have fallen into the trap of adaptation. In this respect we must change our course. Let us begin to demonstrate, through history, that the modern fashion standard of beauty is not a permanent fixture, and that the working women can and should have something to say about it.

We can point out, for example, that the use of cosmetics by women today is a fairly recent innovation. In the past century, for a woman in search of a husband to use cosmetics was a sure road toward destroying her chances of getting him. In that period, cosmetics was the badge of the prostitute, and no "respectable" man would marry such a woman.

We can point out that some great reforms in women's clothes were achieved as a result of large numbers of women entering the field of social labor after World War I. They cast off their whalebone corsets, the sixteen petticoats, the big pompadours and the bigger hats, and adopted clothes suited to their working needs. The attractive and useful "casual" clothes of today grew up out of the needs of the working women, and were taken over by the rich women for their sports and play. Recently, even the proletarian denim cloth of the factory worker has become socially elevated. Perhaps the rich women were nettled by the sexually attractive appearance of the factory workers in their denim dungarees, overalls and sweaters, but denim is now made into garments for the rich to wear on their fancy estates.

In this attack on fashions, I am not speaking against good clothes or even a variety of clothes or even changing the kind of clothes we want to wear. New times, new productive and social conditions will bring changes of all kinds. What I am against is the capitalist rat-race of commodity buying that is imposed upon us. As Comrade Jeanne points out, this consumes an inordinate amount of time and attention. Time is the most precious of all raw materials, for time is life. We have better things to do with our lives than dissipate them in this costly, vulgar and depressing frenzy of fashions.

Under socialism, the question of whether or not a woman wishes to paint and decorate her body will be of no more social consequence than when children today wish to paint up on Halloween and other festive occasions, or when actors paint up for the stage or when clowns paint up for the circus. Some people may consider them more beautiful when they are painted. Some may not. But this will be a purely personal opinion and nothing more. There will be no more social compulsion for all women to become painted and decorated regiments. Therefore, let us not defend this fashion regimentation in the name of "beauty."

Beauty, Art and Labor

Fashions are not immortalized by the artists as beauty. On the contrary, the artists are concerned with totally different values and standards. There is common agreement on the enduring

values in art and these enduring values are established when art corresponds most closely to life itself, in its changing historical phases; in its changing moods.

The artists hold up the mirror to life in a reflective mood, or in anger, or compassion or sardonic humor. They seek to capture the joy and sorrow of life; its strength and weakness, its evils and grandeurs. When these moods and values are captured by the artists, their productions become works of art and of beauty. Great art, among other things, reflects the class struggle. And great art is beauty.

Among the forms of beauty captured by the artists, is the beauty of the human form. But this includes both sexes and all ages. The Greeks, in their statues, portrayed the beauty of the male as well as the female form. Neither sex was represented in cosmetics and fashions. On the walls of the art galleries, human beauty is found in pictures of old women and old men, of the very young, of the sweated peasants and proletariat. Beauty is an expression of the variety as well as poignancy of life and of people. It is not an expression of fashion juvenility and vapidty.

There is one form of "beauty" which has not been and never will be captured by the artists. And that is the dummy in the fancy shop windows which we see in its ridiculous human form on the fashionable streets and in the fashionable houses. The artists do not consider this dummy beautiful and they are quite right. Portraits are painted of these human dummies, but they are painted for the sake of money, not for the sake of beauty.

Thus, when Bustelo pointed out the heroic pioneer woman of America as an example of beauty, he was singling out a good example. It is, indeed, a "moral beauty," and a truthful beauty. And it is also true that this beauty represents our morals and our truth, for it does not represent the morals and truth of the hucksters. But in the realm of genuine beauty, is there any other kind than that which rests upon our morals and our truth?

I applaud Bustelo as a man who hasn't been sold on the huckster standards of beauty and whose sense of the real beauty of women remains fresh and clean. Such men are to be admired and not sneered at. We want more such men to help us emancipate women from the bourgeois mire of tinsel and trash. Together with such men we can hold up our standard of beauty.

Beauty has no identity with fashions. But it has an identity with labor. Apart from the realm of nature, all that is beautiful has been produced in labor and by the laborers. Outside the realm of nature, beauty does not exist apart from labor, and never will. For the beauty of all the products of labor, and of all the arts produced in and through labor, are incorporated within these products and these arts.

Humanity itself, together with the beauty of humanity, was produced in and through the labor process. As Engels pointed out, when the humans produced, they produced themselves as humans. They cast off their ape-like appearance and became more and more

beautiful. When the capitalist social disfigurement of exploited labor is removed, the true beauty of labor and of the laborers will stand forth in their true dimensions.

It is only in class society that the myth has grown up that labor is identical with exploited labor. This myth serves the needs of the ruling class who maintain themselves as a parasitic excrescence on the backs of the workers. Through the identity they make between labor and exploited labor, they perpetuate a split between producers and consumers, glorifying the latter at the expense of the former. The less you produce and the more you consume, the higher you rise in the world of the snobs and the idle rich. Not labor, but the conspicuous waste of the products of labor, is the mark of capitalist social distinction.

But this did not always exist, despite their propaganda to the contrary. In primitive society, where exploited labor was unknown, there was no split between producers and consumers. Every member of society produced, according to his age and ability, and every member of society shared in consuming their productions and in the enjoyment of them in common. Social value and distinction were registered in the realm of production, and that is why the women of primitive society were so valuable and regarded so highly. They labored, and taught the arts of labor, and carried on the traditions of labor and advanced labor to ever higher levels of production.

To cover up their empty, vapid, parasitic existence, the idle rich of capitalist society propagate the notion that the idle life is the "good life" and the "beautiful life." As evidence, they hold up their flabby, lily-white hands with long red fingernails as tokens of "beauty," and the "good life."

What a mockery this is of the gift of labor -- the primary creative force of humanity. The truth is, the idle life is the most corrosive and corrupting of all influences upon the mental, moral, physical and psychological fiber of human beings. Without labor, whether of hand or brain -- and these are interdependent -- humans rot away. Without labor, the human is less than the potato in the ground and does not deserve the gift of humanity.

One of our tasks is to overthrow this bourgeois lie that labor is identical with exploited labor. Another is to restore labor to its rightful place as the most honorable, the most necessary, the most useful and beautiful of all human attributes. In the process, we will destroy the split between Art and Labor. In primitive society there was no such split. These were two forms of labor and both forms created beauty. In the coming socialist society, we will make a return to this harmony between Art, Labor and Beauty.

Under socialism, when the workers take command of society, they will decide what labor is valid and what is not. They will make everything that is necessary, useful and beautiful to serve their needs. But beyond that, they will not be the slaves of things as the property accumulators of capitalist society are. They will be occupied with higher aims, loftier goals and far more

interesting occupations and preoccupations than the scramble after fashions in houses and clothing. There will be a new outpouring of productive, scientific and artistic achievement for social advancement and not personal greed. For these socialist workers will be the conquerors not only of this planet, but of the universe. Those who wallow in bourgeois propaganda cannot see this kind of future. It is our task to show it to them.

The Massive Propaganda Machine

As the capitalist commodity market expanded, more and more attention was directed toward the population of women as important buyers of consumers' goods of all kinds; homes and home furnishings, wearing apparel for themselves and their children; maternity needs before, during and after the birth of babies; their sexual beauty needs in holding the love and attention of husbands, and so on.

Many of the useful products sold as commodities are genuine necessities for these women and their families. As such, they do not need to be "sold" through expensive advertising and promotional campaigns. But under the anarchistic system of "free enterprise," with its enormous unnecessary duplication of products, the various manufacturers and dealers compete with each other to gain access to this women's market. This has produced the huckster field, a parasitic adjunct to Big Business, and in itself another form of Big Business. The hucksters not only tout the different wares for sale, but they are also part of the propaganda machine which disseminates bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology.

The propaganda machine as a whole is a vast institution. It has control of the mass arenas for selling commodities and bourgeois ideology; the radio, television, but above all the press. Capitalist newspapers and magazines are built around and maintained by, the pages of advertising. In addition to the general press and publications, a large number of magazines, directed exclusively to women, came into existence over the past years, and have been advancing with giant strides. These are the "slick" magazines.

Production-wise, these magazines are very handsome indeed. Beautiful color plates of luscious commodities of all kinds are reproduced on the finest of slick papers. But the contents are also slick. They sell not only all the profitable merchandise guaranteed to enrich Big Business, but they also sell capitalist propaganda in the slickest and most subtle manner.

Some of these slick magazines are frankly directed to the top class of bourgeois women and make no bones about it. Others, however, are aimed at a larger field. The most successful of these national magazines are those which are best able to identify the needs of all women on the basis of their identity as a sex.

Much of the editorial space in these magazines is given over to the maternity needs of married women, and to problems connected with home and family. But as more and more women entered the field of social labor, white-collar workers, career women, and even industrial workers came in for increasing attention.

"Scientists" and "specialists" of all kinds were produced to write articles for all the different kinds of women. These professors and writers deliver homilies on child care, mother care, family relations, husband and wife relations, etc. Other specialists discuss problems connected with career women. The career woman is pitted against the housewife and vice versa, leaving both with a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction. For all women, there are prominent doctors, psychiatrists and others to discuss problems concerning sex, psychiatry and other matters of this kind.

All of these articles, some of them containing interesting facts and figures, and some of them even bordering on good sense, are completely abstract; namely, totally devoid of any concrete reference to class relations and the class struggle. Writers who wish to discuss these class questions are not invited into the pages of these slick magazines. Thus, the "science" that is peddled in these magazines is exclusively bourgeois science, analyzed with the bourgeois method and aiming at bourgeois goals.

In both the advertising and editorial sections of these magazines there are beautiful color plates depicting the Great American Dream Come True. There are pictures of the beautiful streamlined American family, composed of a glamorous father and mother and two streamlined children standing near their streamlined car, television set, refrigerator or some other product. Or we find the streamlined career woman enjoying the sea breezes on a streamlined ship or at a glamorous vacation resort, and so on.

The poor housewives and low-paid white collar workers, who view all this in the pages of these beautiful magazines are torn by unrest and discontents of all kinds. What is the matter with them as women which dispossesses them from this Great American Dream? Why is it a phantom for them instead of a reality? Not understanding their problems as class problems, they view them as sex problems and develop more inferiority complexes.

Large sections of housewives and white-collar workers do not identify their interests with the proletariat. On the other hand they cannot identify themselves except in imagination with the rich bourgeois women. They chafe and churn, having none of the advantages of the proletariat such as their unification into trade unions, and yet none of the advantages of the bourgeoisie. The middle class is indeed a class torn by contradictions, situated as it is between the two class poles.

Our task is to win this lower middle class of housewives and low-paid white collar workers. We must break the hypnosis of the bourgeois ideology under which they suffer. We must teach these women that their interests lie with the working class. And we must show them the road to the working class.

But this task cannot be carried out if we ourselves fall bait to Big Business propaganda and ideology. To accept the capitalist standards in any field is to uphold capitalist ideology. To accept its ideology is to accept the capitalist system as a whole. Any attempt of any kind to find a common ground or identity between us and the class enemy, can only lead to a petty-bourgeois infection.

That this infection may already exist is revealed in Comrade McGowan's contribution to the Bustelo discussion. Here is her description of the "American Beauty:"

"The long-stemmed American Beauty, full of natural vitality and physical grace, with shining hair, clear eyes, smooth skin and natural cosmetics with a trace of accent here and there, is no fiction, but an American commonplace. This type of beauty is the American social standard, whatever Bustelo might think of it, but by and large, it is the exclusive property first of all youth, and secondly of wealth."

There is no doubt that this is the capitalist social standard. But I know what I think of it. I think it sounds like a description of the female counterpart of the Nordic Hero; of the female White Supremacist. Where, in this "standard" of beauty is there any place for the dark-skinned Negro woman with kinky hair, or the short-stemmed women of the Puerto-Rican, Jewish, Japanese, and other European and Asiatic races, all of whom make up the working population of this country? In my opinion they are all more beautiful than the model set before us by Comrade McGowan.

It is a short step from becoming lyrical over this American Beauty to becoming lyrical over the capitalist system which has produced it. How short this step is, is spelled out by Comrade McGowan:

"The revolution in technology and science which reached its highest development under capitalism in the last 40 years or so, has wrought a partial revolution in all phases of life...In the relations between the sexes, in sexual morality, in medicine, in beauty, in hobbies for leisure, in city-planning, in child-rearing, in methods of education, in psychology...a revolution in life and living."

In this epoch of the mounting evils of capitalism, of its death agony, with all the crucial issues of war, depression, fascism, still unresolved, Comrade McGowan tells us we have been living through a period of capitalist revolution, with everything virtually solved except for a few minor touches here and there. This proposition is taken lock, stock and barrel out of the slick magazines, just as her standard of beauty comes from that source.

Finally, what does this super-sensitivity of some comrades on the question of Bustelo's lampooning the bourgeoisie mean? Some of them complain that Bustelo ridiculed women when he used the sardonic method to attack the cosmetic profiteers and hucksters. This method of social satire has been used not only by some of the greatest artists and writers, but we ourselves have frequently used it in our press. There was no such criticism when we ran the Laura Gray cartoons some years ago, lampooning Mrs. Rich-Bitch. If we ran these cartoons today, would Laura Gray be accused of ridiculing women, or insulting the Woman Question?

It may be that some middle-class women were offended by the Gray cartoons, but all this demonstrates is that they were sold

on the merits of Mrs. Rich-Bitch and wished to emulate that Lady. This did not concern us, for we were addressing ourselves to the workers, and they chuckled over the cartoons. There is no lampooning or laughter under a police state régime or fascism on such solemn matters as the plutocratic rich, so let us laugh now while we can.

Women Leaders

The Woman Question is a very big and very complex question. It has always been approached by us very carefully and quite correctly so. Like the question of religion, questions concerning women, of maternity, sex, the family, etc. are extremely sensitive questions that touch the most profound emotions, not to speak of the most profound prejudices. In dealing with this question, it has been found that it is not always necessary or advisable to say everything that can or should be said on it at any given time.

In the last century, for example, to use the term "sexual intercourse" instead of "marriage" was to virtually cut yourself off from your audience. This prejudice has placed a serious obstacle in the road of anthropological research which to this day has not been overcome.

But as new times bring new changes, we can break through more and more of these prejudices and this sensitivity. The Kinsey Reports are a signal that a distinct change of this kind has now occurred. In our scientific work we can now make an open distinction between the natural need of sex and the social institution of marriage, which up to now the bourgeoisie have declared identical. By the same token, we can now extend and broaden our daily propaganda and agitation on questions concerning women, even the more sensitive ones.

This makes it all the more imperative, however, that we do not run pell-mell after the bourgeoisie either in their scientific propaganda or in their commodity market propaganda. We must continue to develop and expand our own theory, our own ideology, on all fields and all fronts. We must oppose our method to theirs. This, then, touches the question of the vanguard leadership.

The Woman Question is analogous to the Negro Question in this respect: that in the former it is the women, in the latter it is the Negroes, who must take the lead. The party as a whole carries forward our general Marxist positions and program on these as well as all other questions. But the leadership of women and Negroes, in a personal, directional sense, must come from those who are directly involved.

Since the interests of the party are paramount, however, if this leadership gets off on a wrong course, it must be corrected by the party. The primary duty of women and Negro leaders is first of all to be Marxists, and only after that women and Negroes. Certain failures of Negro leaders in the past were due, among other things, to the fact that they did not understand this elementary principle of class struggle and were therefore not genuine Marxists.

The responsibilities of leadership are enormous. Let no one think that a leader is simply a holder of a "post," or that leadership consists merely of personal distinction and glory. These are, of course, bourgeois formulas for leadership, but not ours. Because the Woman Question is so fraught with special problems and special responsibilities, it must be approached soberly and thoughtfully and not with superficial, impressionistic solutions.

Above all, it is necessary to develop a collective leadership of women. In this respect I hold up, as the finest example, the women of the matriarchy. We do not know much about them individually. But all together they were the creators of the first socialist society, and they did not do this alone, but in collaboration with the men. In our party there is a wealth of wonderful women of the same caliber. They are only partially aware of their talents, powers and potentialities, but they will become better aware of it as they work and develop.

The women of the Trotskyist movement are the genuine descendants of the women of the Matriarchy, and the inheritors of their traditions and techniques. We must follow the example set by them, not in the capitalist spirit of sex competition, but in the socialist spirit of these pioneer women. For this is the spirit of Marxism. The fate of humanity lies in the hands of the working class of men and women, and that means in our hands as leaders. Let us carry out this task as we should.

* * * *

ANTHROPOLOGY -- MARXIST OR BOURGEOIS?

My Reply to Comrade McGowan

Comrade McGowan launches her attack against me on the following propositions:

1. The "interpretations of primitive society and primitive social forms as are current in the party today, and have been for the past 75 years or so, are...false and misguided." Even worse, these interpretations are not just "accidentally" false, or "innocently" misguided. Evidently we have been deliberately misled.

In this respect, I know of only one interpretation of primitive society which has been current in the party for the last 75 years or so, and which, indeed, we have openly embraced. This is the Marxist interpretation, as it was set down by Engels in his Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. I would like to hear further on this point from Comrade McGowan, since my own studies are based upon the work of Engels.

2. Reed's "articles stand on a very low level of academic achievement and any good bourgeois anthropologist could quite easily make short work of them." Even worse, "we make ourselves look ridiculous in the eyes of informed individuals in the bourgeois world by this...scholastically irresponsible attempt at defining primitive social forms and the forces which brought them into existence."

I must confess that I did not set forth my propositions in the articles as an "academic achievement," "low" or otherwise. I set them forth as Marxist contributions which, in some points, are opposed to the academicians. Marxist contributions of any kind and on any score, are always considered "low" by certain bourgeois academicians. Nor did I concern myself with appearing ridiculous in the eyes of bourgeois "informed individuals." On the contrary, these informed individuals appear ridiculous to me, since they are unable to answer questions on subjects that they are supposed to be best informed about. They have left the answering of these questions to the "uninformed" Marxists.

Finally, my study is not scholastic, irresponsible or otherwise. On the contrary, scholastic individuals are terrified at the very thought of embarking upon my road of investigation, for this would soon expose the fact that modern bourgeois society represents only a fragment of time in human history and even that fragment is reaching the end of its road. Only the Marxists, who are polar opposites of scholastics, can look fearlessly into the past, because they can look fearlessly into the future and prepare for a socialist society.

3. Reed attempts to "reduce to formal classification the differences between the matriarchal and patriarchal cultures."

Comrade McGowan evidently did not read my article very carefully, or did not understand it. I was not "reducing this subject to formal classifications," whatever that means. I was declaring flatly that there was a historical sequence of these two social forms, and that the matriarchy came first in this historical sequence.

What is Comrade McGowan's position on this decisive question? I have searched very carefully for her position on this score, but can find only a cryptic reference to it in the very last sentence of her presentation, as follows: "It becomes clear, in fact, that the matriarchal form could not have been the most primitive, but was preceded by a far more primal, now extinct form, of which it was the negation."

What exactly does this sentence mean, Comrade McGowan? All I can deduce from it is that if the "more primal" or first form was not the matriarchal form, you have rejected Briffault's theory, and stand on the side of his opponents. His opponents declare that the patriarchal form goes all the way back to the animal kingdom. Once we leave the animal kingdom, we can discuss only two social forms; the matriarchal and patriarchal. Regarding the central question of which came first -- on which side do you stand?

For the benefit of those comrades who are unfamiliar with the big debate around this question, let me briefly explain its implications. The bourgeois anthropologists are not in agreement among themselves on many points. But the most fundamental difference is represented in this matriarchal-patriarchal debate. In fact, the position of each anthropologist on this question determines which of the two main schools of thought he belongs to, and is a guide to his aims and methods.

One school adheres to the materialist and historical method of analyzing the anthropological data, even if only in limited or partial form. The other school is hostile to the historical method and substitutes for it mere fact-finding, accompanied by impressionistic and superficial interpretations of these facts. The one school, therefore, is progressive and leads forward; the other is obscurantist and reactionary.

We do not stand on the sidelines in this matter. We support the materialist school, as Engels did when he supported Lewis Morgan and polemicized against Edward Westermarck. We may, and do, use the findings of all schools, but we are extremely selective and highly critical when it comes to embracing interpretations and theories.

In the matriarchy-patriarchy debate, there are two opposing theories on the question of which came first. Edward Westermarck is perhaps the most explicit and authoritative spokesman for the position that the patriarchal system of marriage and family relations goes all the way back to the animal kingdom. His theory may be summed up in the popular picture of the ape "patriarch" who provides for and domineers over his "harem" of wives and offspring exactly as the patriarchal father in class society. As for the matriarchy, it never existed. Or, if it did exist, it was only a kind of social aberration found here and there on the sidelines of history.

Robert Briffault is the foremost exponent of the opposite position and in fact has set forth his proposition as "The Patriarchal Theory of Social Origins." All those who support Briffault, therefore, are declaring themselves on the side of the position that the matriarchy came first.

The Marxists are vitally concerned with this debate for the following reasons: The bourgeois myth that class society existed for all time and will continue to exist for all time is an obstacle in our path. We declare just the opposite; that class society is only a transient stage of human history, which arose at a certain historical juncture for certain specific reasons and will disappear at the next historical juncture for other specific reasons.

This bourgeois myth about the permanent fixture of class society is upheld and reinforced through the myth that the institutions of marriage and the family are also permanent fixtures. The Westermarckian theory, indeed, makes the modern social institutions of marriage and the family as virtually a biological law that goes all the way back to the animal kingdom. These two myths regarding class society and its marriage institution act as a kind of pincers by which the working people are held in ignorance, superstition and subjugation. Our task is to demolish both aspects of this bourgeois myth.

Two great bourgeois theoreticians have prepared the groundwork for us in this big task of demolition. These are Lewis Morgan and Robert Briffault. Engels utilized Morgan's findings to demonstrate that before class society came into existence there was an earlier social system which he called "primitive communism." But as the science of anthropology developed, new terms came into existence, and the full meaning of these terms was not always

immediately apparent. Thus, as I have tried to point out, the term "matriarchy" represents an equivalent term for "primitive communism," but this information is not widely disseminated. Discussions on the matriarchy usually center around its marriage form, called "matrilocal marriage," rather than on its economic and social structure which was primitive communistic. This has created a big smoke-screen of heated debates on marriage forms, and has derailed the subject from its economic and class base.

To declare oneself on the side of the matriarchy as the earlier form of social organization, therefore, is to openly or implicitly declare oneself in agreement with the theory that primitive socialism or communism preceded class society. And that is the rub. To declare that primitive communism preceded class society is to admit that class society did not always exist and by the same token will not always exist. It is, in effect, to support the Marxist position and theory. And what bourgeois scientist who values his professorial chair, will make such an admission?

All this is concealed behind the debate on matriarchy-patriarchy. It involves a question of class struggle and class ideology. That is why, out of the whole field of bourgeois scientists in anthropology, over the past century, we have embraced the theories of only two: Morgan and Briffault. And it is noteworthy that both were subjected to intimidation, attack and even partially suppressed. Today, under the pressure of bourgeois reaction and propaganda, to support these scientists is almost equivalent to supporting the Marxists and being classified as a "commie."

Apart from these two great theoreticians who dealt with social history, there is a great body of anthropological investigators, scholars, fact-finders, and interpreters whose work, as important as it is, cannot be accepted uncritically. Even among these "reputable" scientists, there is a division, although it is more muffled and more difficult to discern. On the one hand, there are those who search for roots and causes, which involves the historical approach even on a limited scale. These are represented by such giant figures as Sir James Frazer, Robertson Smith, Fison and Howitt, Spencer and Gillen, W. H. R. Rivers, Andrew Lang, Hutton Webster and a number of others. They were motivated primarily by scientific interest rather than the need to uphold class society and class prejudice.

On the other hand there is the modern superficial and impressionistic school of anthropologists, who are as much concerned with upholding bourgeois institutions as they are with science. Representatives of this school are Franz Boaz, Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski, Lowie, Goldenweiser, and a host of others, as well as the popularizers, such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict.

The favorite theory of the impressionistic school of anthropologists is that society is a "diversity of cultures." This is certainly true. But it is no substitute for probing into social history and explaining the evolution of human society as it advanced through the ages. It is like pointing out that all human beings are somewhat different from each other, no two being exactly alike as a substitute for declaring flatly that all human beings belong to the species Homo sapiens, and that this species had a million-year history beginning with the animal kingdom.

Against my preoccupation with the history of social forms, Comrade McGowan writes: "Anthropologists by the dozens have set down tons of facts...to find some sort of pattern and law which has governed the direction and development in this vast diversity (her emphasis) of primitive relationships and primitive social forms." Evidently it is this impressionistic and reactionary school of anthropologists that Comrade McGowan supports, for nowhere do I find any description of the "laws" governing primitive social forms. All I find is a bulky array of quotations, with no reference to their historical sequence, to prove merely the "diversity" of marriage and social forms.

This is simply applying the argument of the "diversity of cultures" school of anthropologists. According to their theory, since both matrilineal and patrilineal marriage forms are found in the relics of primitive groups, all you have to do is pay your money and take your choice. This is like saying that because there are still relics today of feudalistic and even slave class relations, there was no historical sequence of Chattel Slavery, feudalism and Capitalism; that all we have is merely a "diversity of forms."

If Comrade McGowan agrees with the anti-historical school of anthropologists, and has dumped Briffault, it is incumbent upon her to come out openly and say so. Instead, she mixes up quotations from Briffault with quotations from his opponents to give the impression that they were all in agreement. The fact is, Briffault was opposed to the anti-historical school and I am in agreement with Briffault.

The great bulk of Comrade McGowan's presentation is devoted to making two main points: 1. Marriage is "universal." 2. "Economic considerations" governed marriage in both the matrilineal and patrilineal forms. Neither of these two points has anything whatever to do with the great debate on matriarchy-patriarchy. Thus Comrade McGowan is using the same techniques and methods as the school she supports to divert the discussion and obscure the issues.

Regarding the first point, of course marriage is "universal" in the same way and to the same degree that class society conquered primitive communism (or the matriarchy) and became the universal social system.

Regarding the second point, of course "economic considerations" governed ancient marriage forms. The fact is, economic considerations have governed marriage from its first form, matrilineal marriage to its last form, modern capitalist marriage or monogamy.

But what have these points got to do with the question at hand, namely, which form of marriage came first historically? Briffault left no ambiguity on this score. The reason why he centered so much of his attention upon matrilineal marriage was precisely to demonstrate that it was the universal form of marriage before patrilineal marriage came into existence. He was dealing with the question from the standpoint of historical sequence, and not from the standpoint of demonstrating any "diversity" of cultures or marriage.

There are three main forms of marriage historically; the first was matrilocal marriage which is associated with the matriarchy; the second was patrilocal marriage, associated with the patriarchy; and the final, most complete form, is monogamy which is the form we know. It took Briffault twenty years to amass the material on the universality of the matrilocal form of marriage as the earliest form, and with it he knocked the props out of the Westermarkian theory of the permanence of the marriage institution. This did not prevent a whole school of Westermarkian academicians from continuing his imaginary natural and social history. They were seeking not scientific truth, but professorial degrees.

What I am doing with my presentation of the epoch of "No-Marriage" is just that: taking the history of marriage back to the time when it was not in existence at all, not even in its first form. Once I reach that remote epoch I must use other terms and designations, for how can I describe a system in which marriage was not yet born in marriage terms?

Some of these pre-marriage terms are already in existence. But they are not widely disseminated, are still treated gingerly, and are still wrapped in obscurity and "mystery." For example, how many people know about the stage of "cross-cousin" mating as the transitional form of marriage which preceded matrilocal marriage? And what came before cross-cousin mating? My answer is, as I shall show, sex exchange. And before sex-exchange, the sex-mate was the "stranger-enemy" that Comrade McGowan is so incensed about.

It is quite valid for Comrade McGowan to demand further information and proof of these propositions, and to want to know how the stranger-enemy ultimately became the husband-father. Indeed, I shall also show how the stranger-enemy also became the God. It is also valid to raise the question of the Dual Organization, for this was a decisive part of the process. I shall deal in detail on the question of how the Dual Organization arose out of the split of the primal horde into two moieties, and how this was the beginning of a system of exchange relations which led, on the one hand, to the expansion of the Labor Fraternity, and on the other, to cross-cousin mating and finally marriage. But this exposition of exchange relations is new; so far as I know, it does not appear in the existing books on anthropology.

I am only too eager to set down the answers to these questions, but it is a question of time since this is not the only work I am occupied with. However, I can assure Comrade McGowan that this presentation will be made as soon as possible and perhaps I may even convince her of its validity and correctness.

To do this job, however, I shall be obliged to deal with the basic question of social origins. And this is another aspect of the study that is repugnant to Comrade McGowan. She refers to this in her introduction, when she speaks of an exchange of correspondence between us a year and a half ago, when she warned me that it was impossible to either start or to stop with social origins. (Her emphasis).

I do not propose to stop with the question of social

origins, but I do propose to start with it. And this will collide with her theory that there was no primeval or sub-human stage of humanity. Comrade McGowan, if I understand her correctly, is challenging not only the Darwinian theory of the evolution of man out of the animal kingdom, but the whole bourgeois, not to speak of Marxist, school of archaeologists and historians who subscribe to the Darwinian theory.

Understanding that in this study of social origins, I shall take up where Briffault left off, Comrade McGowan challenges us both with the following vulgarization of certain propositions:

"The solution to their dilemma, according to Robert Briffault and other supporters of the matriarchal theory, goes something as follows: the mothers and sisters looked around for some other herd in the same fix and between the two of them, they thrashed out this burning problem on which the fate of humanity depended. Thus it was that a Founding Convention was called, the purpose of which was to unite the two otherwise warring animal groups...And so it is that the human race ceases to be animal and becomes human by a convention decree."

If Comrade McGowan will refer back to my article, she will find that I did not mention any convention decrees -- nor, indeed, any other teleological proposition that the first social cell was organized through conscious contract. What I said was that humanity was driven by needs; the biological needs of food and sex and the social need to form the labor collective. I stated that the primal horde arose through the biological avenue of maternity and the social avenue of labor. These are not my theories; the first is that of Briffault, the second that of Engels. I am only using these theories as the foundation stones of my work. Where do you stand, Comrade McGowan, on these two basic theories? Are you in agreement with them or not?

The reactionary anthropologists are against Engels, Morgan and Briffault. Where do you stand, Comrade McGowan? The same reactionary anthropologists uphold the twin myths of bourgeois society: 1. That class society is a permanent fixture. 2. That its institutions of marriage and the individual family are also permanent fixtures. Where do you stand, Comrade McGowan? Do you reject both propositions, or only one? Or neither? Let us settle this question of theory, and of methods and aims, before we proceed to the fine points in the science of anthropology.

Comrade McGowan is surprised and even pained at my insistence upon pursuing this dangerous study of social origins and the institutions of marriage and the family. It is obvious that I am embarked on a course that can only undermine capitalist myths, prejudices and institutions. And so she asks: "To what purpose, Comrade Reed?"

My purpose is clear from my method. It is to completely expose the bourgeois myth that this foul system of capitalism existed for all time and will continue to exist for all time, through historical proof. It is to cast illumination upon the magnificent

history of labor from the very beginning of human time, and the vital role played in it by the women. It is to tell the workers of today that labor came out of a socialist system and is going forward to a new and higher socialist system. It is to encourage the workers in the task of conquering the colossal dangers they face today by showing how our ancestors conquered equally colossal dangers in the past. It is to demonstrate that the modern oppressed, sick and anguished family structure will be replaced by new forms of sexual and reproductive relationships corresponding to a new and better society. These, and other interesting and important data, are my aims and goal.

Perhaps it is in order to ask Comrade McGowan: What do you propose to demonstrate through your study of the science of anthropology? What is your method, your aims, your goal?

It is commonly supposed that the science of anthropology is a very lofty, esoteric science, relegated to the special province of special professors and intellectuals, and forever beyond the grasp of the average working men and women. This is not true. Like any science, of course, anthropology has its special aspects, difficulties, terminology, etc. and requires study.

But beyond this, there is a special reason why the ruling class and its professorial watchdogs do not wish working people, and by the same token, Marxist social scientists, to have anything much to do with this science. The reason is -- it is loaded with social and political dynamite. And it is loaded against the ruling class, its institutions, its myths, its propaganda, and obscurantism. That is why Engels, Morgan, Briffault are so hated by those who uphold and perpetuate the sacred rights of private property and the exploitation of the working class. To uncover the true history of human society and of labor contained in this science, would be to deal a powerful blow against the whole capitalist system and its reactionary church.

That is one side of the picture. On the other side, the science of anthropology covers the pre-historical epoch of human social history, that is, before written history came into existence. This history can only be reconstructed and restored through a system of logic. Even more, not any kind of logic, but the Marxist dialectical logic. Thus, in the final analysis, it will be the Marxists, or those who approach them most closely in method who will ultimately crack the "secrets" and "riddles" that the reactionary anthropologists declare can never be understood, and reconstruct the ancient history of mankind. That is why method is of such decisive importance. And that is why there is such an immediate reaction against this method, whenever it is applied even to the smallest degree, by the bourgeois academicians.

Thus, over and above the natural difficulties inherent in the science itself, there exists this added difficulty of the collision between two polar opposite class points of view. To enter the field of anthropology is to enter the field of ideological class struggle.

ON THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE
FAMILY AND SOCIETY UNDER CAPITALISM

The following is a preliminary exposition on the subject of the family under capitalism, in anticipation that this will be part of the whole Woman Question now raised for review.

I begin with the Marxist premise that all human societies, past and present, are founded upon two forms of production: labor and procreation. As Engels writes:

"According to the materialistic conception, the decisive element of history is pre-eminently the production and reproduction of life and its material requirements. This implies, on the one hand, the production of the means of existence (food, clothing, shelter and the necessary tools); on the other hand, the generation of children, the propagation of the species. The social institutions under which the people of a certain historical period and of a certain country are living, are dependent on these two forms of production; partly on the development of labor, partly on that of the family." (Preface: Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State)

We know more about the history of labor, or production, however, than we do about the history of marriage and the family. One of the reasons for this disparity in our knowledge is that the history of marriage and the family is one of the newest of all scientific studies. As Engels writes:

"Up to the beginning of the sixties a history of the family cannot be spoken of. This branch of historical science was then entirely under the influence of the decalogue...No historical development of the family was even recognized." (Ibid)

Thus, while the Marxists have succeeded to a large degree in undermining the myth that the capitalist mode of production for the benefit of the profiteers has always existed and will always continue to exist, the myth that the capitalist institutions of marriage and the individual family are permanent fixtures still remains. Our task, therefore, is to close this gap in our knowledge to further our propaganda and education.

The institutions of marriage and the family arose with the beginning of class society. These institutions passed through certain changes corresponding to the changes in class society itself, as it proceeded from Chattel Slavery, to Feudalism and now Capitalism. I do not propose to go into all these changes here, but for my purposes, make a distinction between the family structure during the long agricultural epoch and the family structure as it became under bourgeois or capitalist society.

During the agricultural epoch, the "farm family" was the unit of society. This farm family was generally a large group, comprising several generations, attached to a piece of land where they produced in common and consumed in common. They produced not

only food, but the other necessities of life through handicraft labor. This collective family paid tribute in one form or another to their overlords or landed proprietors. But the relationship between the two was a mutually dependent one and the peasant families as well as the ruling families were provided for on the land. Although the peasants were exploited by the landed gentry, this collective family was consistent with and not in flagrant contradiction to the prevailing low level of the productive forces. Large families were desired as additional farm hands.

But with the release of the productive forces, after the emergence of bourgeois or capitalist society a few hundred years ago, the collective family was dispossessed from the land and broken up. Driven from the land into the factories, the peasants were transformed into the proletariat. The family, from a producing unit, became a consuming unit; the mother and children being dependent upon the wages of the father who worked in the factory. Under conditions where a single breadwinner had to provide for a group, the family gradually shrank in size.

It is this shrunken, individual family which is the unit of modern capitalist society. It arose in and through the process of the changing forces and relations of production that transformed landed peasants into urban proletariat. And it was this same process that brought about a colossal expansion of production on the one hand, and a shrinkage in the family on the other, that gave rise to the contradiction between the individual family and society. This contradiction became more and more magnified as capitalism entered its stage of monopoly and death agony.

It is commonly supposed that the modern individual family is an institution that transcends class lines. Since both the ruling class and the working class are composed of units of families, the family as such appears to be in harmony with the needs of both classes. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The main purpose of marriage and the family institutions from the very beginning of class society was to breed legal heirs through whom property was passed on in family perpetuity. Rich children are the human transmission belt for family property. But today this institution has reached its most debased and hideous form. The rich babies of the plutocrats have become the human depositories of fabulous wealth, while the poor proletariat parents struggle single-handed to provide for their children.

A graphic illustration of this occurred in recent weeks, when a struggle took place between two brigands in the same family for possession of a "\$58,000,000 baby," as it was headlined in the newspapers. While the church proclaims, and most people believe, that the family is an institution that protects and upholds the bonds of love and tenderness, the truth is it upholds and protects nothing but the private property interests of the rich. How much love and tenderness was involved in this struggle over the \$58,000,000 baby was irrelevant and immaterial. It was a contest over a human depository of multi-millions.

But, it may be argued, since working people do not marry for property considerations, and do not bear human bank vaults as babies, the institutions of marriage and the family, at least for them, can be vehicles for expressing their emotions of love and tenderness for one another. This is completely false. The tender sentiments that grow up among the members of the same reproductive group can exist, and history demonstrates that they have existed, without these legal institutions. In fact, just the opposite is true in modern society. The tender sentiments that are expected to prevail within the individual family group do not seem to prosper at all. They are highly adulterated with open or secret antagonism, friction and even hatred. Why is this so?

The fact is, the institution of marriage and the family is not enforced by law and sanctified by the church to further the cause of tender emotions. It is enforced and upheld in order to dump upon each individual family the total economic responsibility of providing for itself the means of subsistence -- a responsibility that properly belongs to the whole society.

Individuals who are too young or too old to work must rely upon the subsidies of parents or working members of the family. Each individual father or mother, or both, are saddled with this burden. Even more cynical, no guarantees are provided for them to carry out this task. If the parents fail, through death or disability the children and dependents go down too -- unless some other relative with sufficient love and tenderness can be induced to shoulder the economic burden. In every crisis of his wife, such as sickness, unemployment, disability, etc., the individual is obliged to turn to his family. Without some kind of family connections, he is abandoned to the tender mercies of the capitalist social jungle.

This intolerable economic and social burden placed upon each tiny individual family is covered up through churchly pontifications about the "holy family" on earth as it is in heaven, and the "sacred" character of family obligations and ties. The truth is, the family is no more holy and sacred than is private property, despite the lies of the church and state that both are sanctified. What this cynical system has done is to exploit the natural desire for love and affection to help perpetuate its exploitation of the working class on the economic and social arena. Playing upon the emotions, fears and ignorance of the masses of workers, what it amounts to is a double exploitation of the working class. But there is more to the matter than even this.

The tiny, individual family is a unit, not of a rational, planned society, but of a social jungle, and it behaves accordingly. The family institution is organized on a separatist, competitive, isolated basis. This is in harmony, of course, with the needs of the monopolistic ruling families, where America's 60 Families have been narrowed down to a few giants devouring everything in their path. But it is not in harmony with the needs of the working class.

The cannibalistic slogans: "Dog eat Dog," and "The Devil Take the Hindmost" which characterize business relations in capitalist society finds its counterpart in the competitive struggle

of each individual family to outdo the other. "Keeping up with the Joneses," is a race to keep ahead of the Joneses, and if one Jones family succeeds at the expense of other Jones families, that is not only in order, but extolled as the virtues of "free enterprise."

This organization of the family along separatist, competitive lines is in flagrant contradiction to the need of the working class for a fraternal labor and social organization which will provide for all families and into which all families will be subsumed. The individual family system, therefore, acts as a brake upon the process of class unification of the working class.

Family separatism and individualism in the working class is broken down during periods of great class struggles. The individual families are then temporarily lifted out of isolation and competition into a movement of class unification against their exploiters. Indeed, even the plutocrats are often obliged to declare a temporary truce among themselves, while they combine against the workers. The struggle is fought out class against class. It is a social struggle and the polar opposite of the individual family struggle. The family struggle pushes the working class back; the social struggle pushes it forward.

In periods of prosperity and labor conservatism, a "back-to-the-family" movement interrupts the process of social unification. Labor ties are loosened and even dismembered; family ties, religion, and "all the old crap" are revived. The fascists, understanding the reactionary character of the family institution, devote considerable effort to propping up and reinforcing this institution.

Such a "back-to-the-family" movement occurred over the last 14 years of prosperity, brought about by the war boom. Partaking of a few more benefits of the vast wealth they hand over to the profiteers, many workers and their wives have been "getting up in the world." With their little houses, furniture and drapes, television sets and automobiles, they begin to act like the petty-bourgeoisie, and make corresponding ideological adjustments. They turn to the bourgeoisie for hints on how to live, dress, talk, raise their children in progressive schools, and otherwise act as solid citizens. They begin to accumulate bits and pieces of property as a means of "security" for themselves and their children. The children themselves are regarded as forms of property and economic security. The family clutch is tightened.

This strengthening of the individual family is accompanied by a revival of religious mysticism and conservatism. Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, a Methodist minister, preaching to an overflow congregation, stated:

"Religion seems to have become the vogue in America. Church attendance is up. Church membership is growing faster than our population. Church finances are flourishing. Church assemblies get good publicity." (N.Y. Times, Sept. 27)

Instead of the struggles of "Left and Right," Sockman points out, there is a revived preoccupation with "Above and Below."

Although 14 years is only a fragment of time historically, it represents a long period in human terms. A whole generation of youth are produced who know little or nothing of class struggle. They are steeped in and conditioned by each individual family to further the interests of each individual family. Although increasingly disillusioned by the frustrations and misery of their own parental homes, they go forth at maturity to build their own "happy homes" as they are taught to do through popular bourgeois songs, myths and stories. In the "rose-covered cottage for two," this ideal family will be composed of "a boy for me and a girl for you."

But where are these happy homes and families? The constantly mounting divorce statistics do not bear witness to a solid achievement. On the contrary, tens of thousands of homes are disrupted when the marriages end up in the divorce courts. Other hundreds of thousands of homes are held together through economic necessity -- or the newly developing realization that a change of partners, homes or children brings no improvement. Individual resignation alternates with individual revolt. According to the slick bourgeois magazines, America is full of nothing but happy homes. The truth is American family life is a raging sea of frustrations, bitterness and misery.

The workers sense that the family institution is being undermined and destroyed before their very eyes. But, torn by fears of wars, depression, fascism, without a working class social arena, the tendency remains to try to shore it up, prop it up, and cling to it as a drowning man clings to a straw. Thus, the individuals in a family clutch at each other in the search for economic and emotional security. What they get is just the opposite, a fearful insecurity and chronic anxiety, as the rise in mental and psychological disorders testifies.

People survey the ruins of the family in complete bewilderment. How did it happen? Who is to blame? A new myth is added to the original hoax. It is the "fault" of the husband, or the wife, or the child. The psychological theory of individual guilt, a derivative of the church's "mea culpa" is substituted in place of the real guilt -- the guilt of the capitalist social system. It is only in a rational society that this reproductive group will find a genuine arena to remain together in, and in which they can express their love and tenderness for one another.

Does the abolition of the capitalist institution of the home and family mean the abolition of homes as such? Not at all. People have been living in homes since the cave days. In primitive socialism, people lived in homes, and these homes were guaranteed to them at birth.

In modern society, a couple squander their entire lifetimes, sweat and toil, suffer and strain, to "build a home." And if it doesn't fall into disrepair, or if it isn't taken away through non-payment of the mortgage, by the time they are old and weary, that is what they end up with -- a place to live in. This, is, indeed, a frightful sacrifice of time and life. Under socialism,

a home, and a beautiful one at that, will be guaranteed as a birth-right. Nor will people be chained and riveted to any single home. As they move about for work or play, there will always be another beautiful home or hotel awaiting them somewhere else. There will be plenty of fine homes and hotels for the workers of the coming socialist society.

Thus, we must begin to explain to the workers that the breakup of the capitalist institutions of marriage and the home is part and parcel of the social crisis today, which we define as the death agony of capitalism. We must explain that outworn capitalist institutions will not survive the death of the system itself, just as a withered arm does not survive the death of the body to which it is attached. And we must allay their fears that they have anything to lose by explaining that they have everything to gain. Above all, we must not fall into the trap of believing that there is anything valid or useful left in this capitalist system and its institutions. If we don't say clearly what is, who will ?

October 18, 1954

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THE FETISH OF COSMETICS

By Jack Bustelo

Is the use of cosmetics worth the attention of a Marxist? At first sight, it might seem we should say no. What difference does a question, seemingly so remote from the class struggle, really make? After all, the great problems of unemployment, fascism, war, and the struggle for power reduce everything else to subordinate importance. And surely, in the list of subordinate questions that Marxists do feel constrained to consider, cosmetics comes at least close to the bottom. Yet among readers of the Militant recently, a minor article, aimed at no more than showing how the "recession" had affected the cosmetics business and what the hucksters intended to do about it, evoked the kind of response that only an important issue deserves. How are we to explain this?

A possible answer is that I displayed prejudice against women in writing about the cosmetics purveyors and their "public relations" department and that this display of prejudice in the Militant naturally aroused indignation. (An example: "Maybe you, Jack, want to laugh and ridicule my using popular cosmetics to overcome some of these difficulties of working for a living. Laugh if you want. . . " -- F.J. in the Militant.) I must admit that the accusation is not easy for me to answer. First, the evidence that I was guilty of prejudice is not submitted. How then can I decide rationally who is at fault, myself or the critics, or whether an element of misunderstanding is involved? Moreover, in the absence of explanation as to what my prejudice consisted of, I am given no opportunity for self-correction.

The absence of a specific indication as to the prejudice leads me to suspect that only feeling is involved on the side of my critics, a feeling that perhaps does not correspond with the real facts. In this predicament I may be excused perhaps for referring to what Hegel had to say about judgments that are not made explicit: "Since the man of common sense appeals to his feeling, to an oracle within his breast, he is done with any one who does not agree. He has just to explain that he has no more to say to any one who does not find and feel the same as himself. In other words, he tramples the roots of humanity underfoot. For the nature of humanity is to impel men to agree with one another, and its very existence lies simply in the explicit realization of a community of conscious life. What is anti-human, the condition of mere animals, consists in keeping within the sphere of feeling pure and simple, and in being able to communicate only by way of feeling-states."

Whether we agree or disagree that I am consciously or unconsciously prejudiced for or against women, the key issues of the dispute over cosmetics still remain and have to be considered on their own merits. A discussion of these issues I think will prove fruitful no matter what nuances of differences over them we may finally end up with.

"Cosmetics Are a Grim Necessity"

In her letter to the Militant, Helen Baker of Seattle says: "Far from being a luxury (and they are taxed as such), cosmetics are

a grim necessity for the older or not physically blessed woman worker." Leaving aside the relation between cosmetics and the older or not physically blessed woman worker, which I will consider later, I agree completely with Comrade Baker's conclusion that "cosmetics are a grim necessity." They are a grim necessity in the current decades of capitalism, particularly in the United States. Just how grim it is we will see presently, but let us start with the necessity.

This was well expressed by Antoinette Konikow, one of the pioneer American Trotskyists, in a letter in the June 9, 1945, Militant called to my attention by Gustie Dante of Boston. The letter, which seems aimed at partially correcting an article by Grace Carlson in the April 21, 1945, Militant is worth quoting in full:

"Your article on 'The Right to Be Beautiful,' in which you discuss the use of cosmetics and beauty aids, awoke a few thoughts that I should like to share with your readers. I have lived for almost three-quarters of a century and in my youth we never used cosmetics. In fact, the use of them was considered indecent. And still we had beauty and romance. How do you explain the present situation? It seems to me that woman's entry into industry has a great deal to do with it.

"While rich ladies use cosmetics to cover up their pale faces acquired during Society's winter whirl of endless nights of drinking and dancing, women who work in factories and shops have pale and tired faces because of physical exhaustion due to overwork, bad air, hurried lunches and their whole life of rush and worry.

"The working woman uses cosmetics, not only for her own satisfaction -- to have a nice appearance or to attract possible romance -- but she has to look well and attractive to keep her job. I think that if women would lead a healthy and normal life, their faces would look different. They would acquire the rosy cheeks that we had in our youth and the bright eyes and the red lips.

"To me cosmetics are an expression of our unhealthy life under capitalism. It is not an important issue but it is just as well to understand that changes in women's work affect even the most minute forms of their life. This doesn't mean that I condemn cosmetics. I think that we shall have to use them for quite a while yet!"

Despite its shortness, this letter says a great deal. Note especially the last paragraph: "To me cosmetics are an expression of our unhealthy life under capitalism." It is quite clear that just as Antoinette could recall that in her youth beauty existed without cosmetics so she could visualize a time in the future when beauty would again exist without cosmetics. Her attitude was revolutionary. At the same time, so far as a woman has to use cosmetics "to keep her job" or for "her own satisfaction," Antoinette didn't condemn cosmetics. This necessity, she recognized, is forced on us by the times and we have to bow to it "for quite a while yet."

But Do Cosmetics Bestow Beauty?

The necessity of using cosmetics will be granted, I think, by almost everyone. We also have to use money. But then a most important question arises. Do our norms of beauty include either money or cosmetics?

Comrade Jeanne Morgan of Los Angeles starts I think from the same grounds as I do when she says, "Our use of cosmetics is far from an indulgence -- it is basically an economic necessity. . . ." However, she then draws the following conclusion: ". . . and from this has become an esthetic necessity."

All right, but an esthetic necessity to what class in what kind of society? If we were to continue the train of thought indicated by Antoinette Konikow we would have to say that it is an esthetic necessity in capitalist society, one that is imposed on us insofar as we can't escape that society. Knowing this, however, we no longer consider it beautiful. We have a different norm as class-conscious workers just as our norm of morality is different from that of the capitalists.

But Comrade Morgan puts cosmetics in a supra-historical category: "Cosmetics are ancient, and have been used for many reasons, good and bad. They will probably be used even under socialism, by both men and women, for the pleasure of personal adornment."

Let's put it in a somewhat different way: It's human nature to use cosmetics for the pleasure of adornment. People have always wanted this pleasure and always will. You can't change human nature.

If we were to agree to this, what happens to the grounds we started out with in common, that our "use of cosmetics is far from an indulgence -- it is basically an economic necessity. . . ."? Isn't it obvious that to take the view that cosmetics bestow beauty is to make a concession to bourgeois ideology?

The Language of Cosmetics

Up to now we have talked about cosmetics without permitting them to speak for themselves; yet there are few sectors of the commodity world gifted with more eloquent tongues. Let us pause in our discussion long enough to hear a word from them; and taking a hint from Comrade Morgan let us turn the floor over to a cosmetic used -- not by the socialist man of the future -- but by the capitalist and proletarian men of the present.

When my electric razor breaks down, I go back to the old safety razor. Afterward I splash on a cosmetic that stings at first but seems to help take away the raw feeling you get from scraping a razor across your hide. I bought it because it says "50% alcohol" on the label and legend has it that alcohol reduced the chances of infection from using a razor. On the back of the label is a short message in which Mennen Skin Bracer tells about itself. It is demagogically silent about the risk and annoyance of shaving. It doesn't say a single word about the economic necessity that compels me to go through the daily ritual in order to keep a job. Instead, it proclaims:

"A delightful after-shave lotion. Cooling, refreshing, mildly astringent. A pleasant easy-to-use deodorant. Use Skin Bracer any time of the day or night -- it peps you up. And the intriguing aroma wows the ladies!"

That last sentence is intriguing isn't it? If it were really true, think how simplified some of life's problems could become for our hard-working proletarian. When he comes home unstrung from the terrific pace of eight hours on the belt line and goes to the bathroom to pep himself up with Mennen Skin Bracer, he suddenly sees the way out. No more drab, endless perspective of a life-time of poverty and toil. He shaves with a new sparkle in his eyes, puts on the intriguing aroma, goes to the right part of town, astutely sidles around an heiress until he gets her down wind, "wows" her and from then on lives the life of Riley. Why even Bustelo might use a dash of the intriguing stuff and wow the women who think he is prejudiced against their sex. Isn't it sheer sorcery what magic has been captured and sealed in a bottle of Mennen Skin Bracer?

Now surely the public relations department of the Mennen Company wouldn't put something on millions of bottles that no man would possibly believe. But what is it that the men users of the cosmetic are induced to believe? Obviously that there is a thing that can help smooth out their relations with women. And that means, doesn't it, that there is something basically wrong on a wide scale in the relations between men and women? What is it? And what is its cause?

Lest we jump to a too hasty generalization from insufficient cases, let's try another cosmetic. In September, Max Factor ran an advertisement in the newspapers for a "color-fast" lipstick. "to make men go mad over you. . ." says the ad, "wear 'SEE RED.'" This lipstick "is a rich, true shade. . . a hot-tempered red that can make you maddeningly pretty. Looks fiery-bright for hours and hours, too -- amazing 'stay-on lustre' won't fade or blot away. Come in for 'See Red' today. But careful. . . don't start anything you can't finish!" The accompanying illustration shows two men forehead to forehead, pushing their noses against each other like two stars seeing red at the Marigold wrestling matches and a girl, her lips highly colored, looking sidelong at them with a kind of pyromaniac pleasure.

Again we note the demagogic silence about the economic necessity of wearing lipstick. Nothing is even said about the lipstick making you look young. The emphasis is not at all on how lipstick helps you get and hold a job. The emphasis is on how "to make men go mad over you. . ."

Again we ask what sorcery it is that has captured and sealed this magic power in a few inches of colored grease. And we have to say that the sorcery is in the fact that a thing can be endowed with the capacity to smooth out women's relations with men. We are forced to add to our conclusions that from the side of women something must be basically wrong on a wide scale with their relations with the opposite sex.

Let us try one more, a recent half-page ad. Two drawings: A reclining nude woman discreetly seen from the rear -- a bottle of perfume called "ishah." Sandwiched above and below these eye-pullers are the following sensational words: "THE VERY ESSENCE OF WOMAN. . . HER BEAUTY. . . HER ALLURE. . . ishah. . . discovered by Charles of the Ritz, Bottled, packaged, sealed in France, . . \$10 to \$2.50 (plus tax)."

This is not a new scientific discovery enabling a lonely man to buy the very essence of woman, her beauty, her allure, all bottled, packaged and sealed in France. It is aimed at women. Are you a woman who is not a woman? Has no beauty? No allure? Take heart. All this has been fixed up now. The very essence of woman, her beauty, her allure has now been discovered, captured and sealed in a bottle. Everything that all the different kinds of cosmetics and beauty-aid gadgets offer is now available in a single bottle from \$10 to \$2.50 (plus tax). And it's all marvelously easy, no inconvenience, no plastic surgery, no torture. Just touch a drop or two of the essence behind your ears and WOW!

Long ago in analyzing the strange powers of money, Marx called attention to this projection by which human beings see their relations not as relations but as things which they endow with remarkable powers. Indicating the parallel to certain magic objects in primitive beliefs and religions he called it fetishism. What we have in cosmetics is a fetish, a particular fetish in the general fetishism that exists in the world of commodities. The special power that cosmetics have derives from the fact that in addition to economic relations, sexual relations attach to them. That is the real source of the "beauty" both men and women see in cosmetics.

The Duality of Cosmetics

As we can see by now, the use of cosmetics, although it need not be placed among the unsmiling questions, has a most serious side from the viewpoint of Marxist philosophy. Every student of "Capital" who has really pondered over "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" will know what I mean. But even without going into it that deeply I think it is possible to grasp the essence of the matter through a special case with which most people are familiar.

At a certain age, girls -- sometimes very young ones -- begin trying out lipstick, powder and rouge. In almost every case, this either causes or is associated with a sharpening of relations with their parents. At the same time they often seem to leap ahead of their age group so far as their former boy associates are concerned. If they can get away with it, they go out with youths considerably older than they are. The reason such girls use cosmetics is to facilitate this by appearing older than they are.

What they seek to say is quite obvious. Through the magic of cosmetics they express their wish to cut short their childhood and youth and achieve the most desirable thing in the world -- adulthood. Why they want to be adults can be surmised in the light of how capitalist society treats its youth. Precisely at the age when the sexual drives begin to appear and an intense need is felt for both knowledge and experience, capitalist society denies both to them. Just when the developing human being must set out to establish normal relations with the opposite sex, capitalist society through the family intervenes and attempts to suppress the urge.

The relation with the other sex thus tends to become distorted and the interest that belongs to the relation shifts to a considerable degree to a symbol. The powers and allure of the relation -- some at least -- are likewise transferred to the symbol. Lipstick, for instance, comes to signify adulthood; that is, the adult capacity

and freedom to engage in activities forbidden to children. By smearing her lips the child says, this gives me the power to do what I want. Naturally it's only a wish and an imaginary satisfaction -- or at least that's what most parents imagine it to be or wish to rate it as, and the real power of the drive toward relations with the opposite sex, disguised by the fetish, is not always recognized. The symbol becomes beautiful or ugly, beneficent or malignant. In Antoinette Konikow's youth, for instance, lipstick was "indecent." Today it is a "must."

This interesting alternation in time of the esthetics of cosmetics is accompanied by an even more striking duality in its powers. To a child, as we have noted, cosmetics are a means of hiding and disguising youth, a means of appearing to be at the age when it is socially acceptable to gratify the urge for knowledge and especially experience in sexual relations. Thus the same fetish displays opposite powers at one and the same time -- the power to make old women young and young women old. Mother uses cosmetics to hide her age and bring out her youth by covering up the dark circles under her eyes. Daughter uses them to hide her youth and even touches up her eyes with blue shading to bring out her adult beauty.

Now what shall we say of children who use cosmetics because of the social necessity to look old? Shall they be denied that right? My inclination would be to tell them to go ahead and use cosmetics if they feel like it. At the same time I would be strongly tempted to explain what a fetish is, how it comes to be constructed, what is really behind it and how this particular society we live in denies youth the most elementary right of all -- the right to grow naturally into a normal sexual relationship -- and gives them instead the fetish of cosmetics as an appropriate companion to the fetish of money.

The application of Marxist method has thus forced cosmetics to yield two important results. We find ourselves touching two problems of utmost moment in capitalist society -- the inter-relation of men and women and the inter-relation of youth and adults; that is, the whole problem of the family. In addition, we have discovered that these inter-relations as shaped by capitalist society are bad, for it is from the lack of harmony and freedom in them that the fetish of cosmetics arises. Existence of the fetish, in turn, helps maintain the current form of inter-relations by creating a diversionary channel and an illusory palliative. Thus we have uncovered a vicious cycle. Bad inter-relations feeds the fetish of cosmetics; the fetish of cosmetics feeds bad inter-relations.

Our application of Marxist method has given us even more. If we deny that beauty is inherent in a thing, then it must be found in a human relation; or at least its source must be found in such a relation. Doesn't that mean that the beauty associated with sex is at bottom the beauty not of a thing but of a relation? If we want to understand that beauty we must seek it first in the truth of the relation; that is, through science. Is it really so difficult to see that in the society of the future, the society of socialism where all fetishes are correctly viewed as barbaric, that beauty will be sought in human relationships and that after science has turned its light into the depths that seem so dark to us -- the

depths of the mind -- the great new arts will be developed in those virgin fields?

Intimations of it in the class society that is our heritage may be seen, I believe, in such relationships as Marx and Engels achieved. Whether they were fully aware of it we do not know. But we ourselves touch such forms of beauty, I think, in a one-sided way in the admiration and love we feel for our comrades in the socialist struggle. It is their character that attracts us, not the smoothness of their complexion, the regularity of their features, their age, or the color of their skin. And character, as we all know, is determined in action, that is by the deeds we perform. That is where a revolutionary socialist looks for beauty in people.

"The Corporate Taste"

Antoinette Konikow, let us recall, noted that in her youth girls never used cosmetics. "And still we had beauty and romance." This may sound strange to us of this day and age, particularly if we have come to regard cosmetics as a sign of beauty and romance. What has caused us to adopt this attitude?

We might find hints as to the reason from the theoretical point of view if we carefully searched the Marxist classics. George Plekhanov, in his "Fundamental Problems of Marxism," for instance, notes the following about a previous period:

"In Chesneau's work, Les chefs d'ecole, Paris, 1883, pp. 378-379, we find an extremely acute observation concerning the psychology of the romanticists. The author points out that romanticism made its appearance soon after the days of the revolution and the empire. 'In literature and art there was a crisis similar to that which occurred in morals after the Reign of Terror -- a veritable crisis of the senses. People had been living in a condition of perpetual fear. When their fear was over, they abandoned themselves to the pleasures of life. Their attention was entirely engrossed in external appearances, in outward forms. The blue heaven, the splendour of sunlight, the beauty of women, sumptuous velvets, iridescent silks, the sheen of gold, the sparkle of diamonds -- these were the things that filled them with delight. People lived only with the eyes and had given up thinking.' In many respects this resembles the psychology of the period which we are now (the years immediately after 1905) passing in Russia." (pp. 74-75.)

The period Plekhanov refers to was a period of reaction such as we are living in, the difference being that the reaction we are suffering from is incomparably deeper than the one that afflicted the Russian socialists. Plekhanov's hint might well direct a study on this question, particularly on how the weight of the reaction affects the revolutionary vanguard through such indirect avenues as capitalist norms of beauty. In place of sumptuous velvets, iridescent silks, the sheen of gold, the sparkle of diamonds, we could readily substitute sumptuous ranch houses, iridescent TV screens, the sheen of a new automobile and the sparkle of tile in a modern kitchen. There would be no lack of material!

We would even enjoy a considerable advantage over Chesneau and Plekhanov, for the influence of capitalist norms appears to be far more direct in America than it was in either Russia or France.

For example, take the following ad from the latest issue of Charm magazine (Oct. 1954): A glamorized photograph of a conventional female beauty on a date to see "The Pajama Game" with a conventional male beauty. (Both of them are the long-stemmed Aryan type.) And here is the message: "alive after five. . . thanks to her Remington Electric typewriter. And no wonder -- electricity does the work -- helps today's smart women of letters turn out such truly beautiful work in so little time, with so little effort and so pleasing to the boss." This is accompanied by a picture of the fetish itself -- a brand new electric Remington typewriter, artfully streamlined to make it wind resistant.

The reference to the relationship behind the fetish ("The Pajama Game") is not what makes this a remarkable ad. It is the inference that a typist, stenographer or secretary can leave the office more dead than alive. This and the open admission that the really interested party is the boss. A fetish that permits a speed-up ("so little time") is ballyhooed almost like an after-shave lotion. Compare the "it peps you up" of Mennen Skin Bracer with the "alive after five" of a Remington Rand typewriter. What sorcery there is in the typewriter of a huckster!

Lest anyone still doubt how directly the American capitalist class is involved in this question of beauty, let me quote the following words from a recently published book, "The Tastemakers," written by one of them, Russell Lynes, Managing Editor of Harper's Magazine:

"There are pressures on our tastes from all sides, pressures that even the most reluctant among us can scarcely ignore. The making of taste in America is, in fact, a major industry. Is there any other place that you can think of where there are so many professionals telling so many nonprofessionals what their taste should be? Is there any country which has as many magazines as we have devoted to telling people how they should decorate their homes, clothe their bodies, and deport themselves in company? And so many newspaper columns full of hints about what is good taste and what is bad taste? In the last century and a quarter the purveying of taste in America has become big business, employing hundreds of thousands of people in editorial and advertising offices, in printing plants, in galleries and museums, in shops and consultants' offices. If the taste industry were to go out of business we would have a major depression, and there would be breadlines of tastemakers as far as the eye could see."

That strikes me as pretty plain speaking about the source of one of the pressures bearing down on us. However, Lynes puts it still more baldly in the very next paragraph:

"This is not, however, a catastrophe we are likely to encounter, because the taste industry has gradually become essential to the operation of our American brand of capitalism. It is in the nature of our economic system not merely to meet demand but to create it. One of the ways that demand is created is by changing people's tastes, or at least inviting them to change, and by making the pressures to give up what seemed good yesterday for what should seem inviting today so strong that they are almost impossible to resist."

How difficult the pressures are to resist we may judge from cases of good revolutionists who succumbed to the prosperity that

has endured since the outbreak of World War II. Some of them did it silently, without seeking to find a political difference as excuse or rationalization. The lure of a ranch house in the suburbs with a picture window as laid out in the lush colors of "Better Homes and Gardens" proved impossible to resist. The overwhelming pressure has a name; it is "bourgeois." The proletarian became "bourgeoisified." In other words, he gave up thinking and became an addict of the opium of commodity fetishism.

Lynes describes the days we live in as the days of "The Corporate Taste." "The corporation has, in fact," he says, "become one of the most powerful and conscientious (does he mean "conscious"?) art patrons of our day, and has established itself not only as a purveyor of tasteful objects but as an arbiter of taste as well." He even dates the beginning of "The Corporate Taste": "It was inevitable that sooner or later business, in its efforts to reestablish itself in the confidence of the public, would embrace culture. And this it began to do in earnest in the early 1940's while the war was on."

The imperialist war thus had its reflection in the development of an imperialist taste in culture in America.

"If we are to understand this influence of the corporation on the taste of our time, there are three ways in which the corporation must be looked at -- as a consumer of the arts, in its role as patron; as a purveyor of the arts, in its role as the manufacturer or dispenser of the objects with which we surround ourselves; and finally as a new kind of society in which taste has a new kind of significance." This Managing Editor of an influential bourgeois magazine obviously knows what it is all about. He even admits that the motive of the corporations in the field of culture "no matter how indirectly expressed, has been profit."

He cites examples of forays in this field by such corporations as Dole Pineapple, Caphart Phonograph-Radio, the Container Corporation of America, Standard Oil of New Jersey, the Pepsi-Cola Company and Corning Glass. And he explains in some detail what the calculations of these patrons of the beautiful are:

"To a great many manufacturers the problem is not how to improve taste but how to keep it fluid so that what looked new and attractive last year will seem old-fashioned this year and downright archaic ten years from now."

"Just as the public relations counselor is concerned with the corporation's psychological warfare, the industrial designer is concerned with the logistics of taste. His function in other words is to fight the corporation's battles on the taste front."

It is a temptation to continue citing Lynes to show how consciously American Big Business goes about fixing and unfixing our ideas of beauty, but one more paragraph will have to suffice:

"It is the men who make and sell refrigerators and rugs, automobiles and baby carriages, furniture and dresses whose sales charts would have a dismal downward inclination to the right unless they managed to redesign their wares in ways that make last year's 'latest word' seem today's drab cliché. An 'old-fashioned' stove with its

oven at a reasonable eye level may be more efficient than a brand-new one that forces the housewife to bend double to see the roast, but the manufacturer will do his best to make her long for a new model because it is more 'up to date' and, euphemistically, 'better designed.' The same is, of course, true of automobiles -- even more true. Ever since 1905 the automobile industry has been second only to the women's fashion industry in its insistence on the glamour of 'this year's model' compared with 'last year's model.' In fact, a man clothes himself in his car in much the same spirit that a woman dresses herself in her clothes, and he is subject to the calculated whims of Detroit just as his wife is subject to the equally calculated whims of Paris."

In the whole history of capitalism, has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American Big Business?

"Art has pervaded all phases of life," Marjorie McGowan declares, criticizing my exposure of the cosmetics peddlers. "Pots, pans, fabrics, furniture, lamps, stoves, landscaping, architecture -- all objects in the environment have become mediums for the creative expression of the artist and the designer." I must admit that there is a grain of truth in what she says. It is "Corporate Art" -- perhaps best exemplified in the singing commercial -- that has pervaded all phases of life in America today.

Should We Accept Battle on this Front?

Marjorie McGowan accepts the "logistics" of the corporation battle on the tastefront as a "revolution in living." I appreciate her frankness and think she does the party a service by stating precisely what her views are on this question, for it is bound to help all of us in clarifying our attitude in this difficult field. But I must add that critical as she is of my exposure of the cosmetic hucksters and profiteers and my subsequent letter in the Militant, she is uncritical in a more important direction. "Socialism, for instance," she says, "will not throw out the morality of bourgeois society in toto and create a new one out of the whole cloth. . . . Rather, socialism will extract the hypocrisy and the mysticism out of bourgeois morality and leave the universal ideals of human brotherhood and make a reality of the Golden Rule."

I will not belabor the point of how far this departs from the view of the authors of the Communist Manifesto who held that the socialist revolution "involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas." I am sure that on thinking it over, Comrade McGowan will agree that she has conceded to bourgeois morality more than is its due. The ideals of human brotherhood are the very antithesis of bourgeois morality -- not the morality they preach on Sunday, naturally, but the morality they practice 365 days of the year -- which puts naked self-interest above all other considerations as we have seen even in the case of cosmetics. The ideals of human brotherhood are incompatible with the norms of any class society.

Marxists have been critical of bourgeois standards or morals and beauty from the beginning. Today in America where the most powerful capitalist class of all time has decided quite consciously to pay some attention to esthetics it is not simply a theoretical duty

to meet them on this field; it is a burning practical necessity. It is part and parcel of the whole ideological offensive we must conduct to maintain our Marxist heritage and build a combat party. We cannot leave this field to the bourgeoisie!

However, it might be objected that this is a hopeless struggle. "We are not going to change the world by revolting against such a side-line issue as this -- and that seems to be what your article would have us to," declares Jeanne Morgan. "If working class women boycotted all cosmetics I doubt very much if it would help build a Labor Party or lessen Jim Crow or halt the war drive." (By this time, I hope, it is unnecessary to explain that I don't advocate "boycotting" cosmetics any more than I advocate boycotting money.)

F.J. likewise is not interested in revolt on this issue: "But for me, I live in the world as it is today, with its standards of beauty and its social customs."

Marjorie McGowan makes the task seem insuperable and even quixotic: "But one look at the radiance of movie stars in their middle forties, achieved solely through a higher standard of living and the alchemy of the modern beauty temples, is enough to convince millions of women that this is something they want too. Who, we may ask, is Jack Bustelo to leave us with the implication that this is something ridiculous?"

(But doesn't the struggle against Jim Crow involve breaking down the Nazi-like racial standard of beauty in Hollywood? Is that ridiculous?)

On this question I think E. Patrick of Los Angeles was dead right when she pointed in the Militant to the working-class women for leadership in this battle as well as on other fronts of the struggle for socialism. Referring to women's "present adherence to bourgeois society" as indicated "by their devotion to the standards of beauty of the ruling class," she is of the opinion that "working class women, like the working class generally, are abandoning these bourgeois standards." This may be stated too strongly but it is certainly correct insofar as the whole direction of development tends in that direction. We can confidently expect women of the revolutionary socialist movement to transcend bourgeois standards and give leadership as Marxists on this important ideological front.

And we may be sure that they will find allies among the petty-bourgeois women -- yes, even among the movie stars made radiant by the alchemy of Hollywood. Does that sound far-fetched? Let us listen to an expert on the question, Gloria Swanson, who, born March 27, 1899, still looks radiant at the age of 55.

Her testimony at the same time offers us an opportunity to check some of our conclusions about cosmetics with the virtual rigor of a laboratory control, since she isn't even faintly aware of our discussion; and, in addition, approaches the whole question not from the basis of beauty but of morality.

The Necessity to Lie

In an article in the Sept. 26 issue of "This Week," she discusses the question, "Should a Woman Lie About Her Age?"

"I can work up a full head of steam about the entire subject, which I feel is a tip-off on a sad state of affairs existing these days," the noted actress says. "I mean simply this: Nearly every woman in America develops a strong consciousness of age when the 30th milestone looms on the horizon." From then on nearly every woman begins to lie about her age.

Gloria Swanson very correctly expresses her indignation at those men who "stand snickering on the sidelines." But lying about her age is not the fault of the women. "A woman, you see, would never stoop to lying about her age if the men of America didn't put such a premium on youth. We are without doubt the most age-conscious country in the world and the male has set the pace. The masculine point of view makes a woman feel that age is some sort of contagious disease or a dirty word." (Miss Swanson's emphasis.)

Then she strikes hard: "Our shallow men go gaga about screen stars who only yesterday -- in some cases quite literally -- played hopscotch on the corner after school. They crane their necks to ogle the Bikini-clad saplings on the beaches and dig each other in the ribs as they nod in the direction of the new office girl, overdressed, overbearing and under 20."

And so the older women try to keep up by snipping off the years. Is this moral? Here Gloria Swanson adopts a viewpoint that a Marxist must agree corresponds with proletarian morality: "I am convinced that a woman is justified in fibbing if her livelihood and happiness, as well as those of her family, are at stake. But only then."

Where a competent woman might be denied a job because of her age, this defender of women's rights does "not hesitate one moment" to advise: "Give the prospective employer any age you can reasonably get away with. If he's so foolish as to set an arbitrary limit, ignoring experience and proved ability, he deserves to be lied to. Besides, you must look out for yourself and your family."

It is perfectly evident that Gloria Swanson's approach on this point parallels that of a Marxist -- if economic necessity compels you to lie about your age of course you lie. (The form of the lie, whether a phony employment record or use of cosmetics is not important here.)

But does this economic necessity hold as an absolute? Shall we convert it into an esthetic necessity? No, says Gloria Swanson. "This reasoning, I believe, is perfectly sound when self-protection is genuinely and seriously involved. But in all other circumstances, I can see no real point in camouflage."

Her grounds for this reasoning, deserve the attention of all of us:

"First, because deception about age only serves to abet this silly glorification of youth.

"And second, whom are you kidding, anyway?"

That in my book rates as a principled stand on this question, showing that to some degree at least, Gloria Swanson has seen through some powerful fetishes.

Then she indicates that not all men fall in the category of "shallow." ". . . sociological studies have shown that there's a high degree of marital happiness when men (the more intelligent ones!) consider other qualities more important than age and marry women older than themselves." We would say this was an indication not so much of intelligence as of freedom from certain fetishes cultivated today under capitalism. This freedom from fetishism is sometimes accidental and in any case not in one-to-one ratio to intelligence.

To illustrate her point, Gloria Swanson tells about a girl who lied about her age and married a man who thought she was much younger. When he found out, he was hurt and angry. "Not because she was older than he thought (he, too, had some brains) but because she had lied to him. And if she held the truth lightly in one case, he thought, what was her character like in others."

This man, who sought character in his mate, was however intelligent enough to understand why she had lied and he had sufficient character himself "to forgive her."

In Gloria Swanson's opinion any man to whom a few years makes any difference "isn't worth marrying in the first place." She advises an older woman considering marriage with a younger man to tell him her age. "Let him know the facts. If it bothers him, let him go his merry way, chasing the young, clinging things who don't have the fascination of an older woman."

Finally, Gloria Swanson indicates what her norm is. "The Europeans have the right idea about these things. Over there, a woman isn't really interesting to a man until she is in her 40's. The European male seeks more than a youthful figure and candy-box face. He wants some imagination, some sense, some of the essential fineness of mind and spirit that maturity brings to a woman.

"But over here it's different and it bothers the girls no end."

Thus from this former Hollywood star we learn that if economic necessity demands it, of course we lie about such things as our age and looks. But from any other viewpoint the camouflage is pointless and even vicious. After all, what really counts is character. Since the current American standard is seriously wrong, we must seek a better one. Gloria Swanson finds it in Europe, whereas a Marxist looks to the working class, but both can agree that there are many women today and at least some men who have reached the conclusion that things are not right.

Well, Gloria Swanson's article could stand some sharpening and modification from a Marxist point of view -- she leaves out, for instance, the class struggle and its influence, and she under-rates the maturity of some youth, overlooks their need for camouflage, and misses the special problems they face -- but her article indicates that she for one thinks something might be done about the false standards "over here."

Is it really so daring to venture the opinion that there are other American women, especially in the working class, who will agree with her on that and begin doing something about breaking down the capitalist standards of beauty? Why shouldn't the Marxists stand in the forefront of such a development, offering it leadership and theoretical clarification, especially on the secret of the fetish of cosmetics that deludes both men and women?

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