



CANADA'S

Women

- the home
- at work
- children
- equality
- peace

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*This pamphlet was prepared by
the National Women's Committee
of the*
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA
24 Cecil St., Toronto 2B, Ont.

PUBLISHED BY
PROGRESS BOOKS, 44 STAFFORD ST.,
TORONTO 3, ONT.

APRIL 1963



Foreword

THIS PAMPHLET has been prepared by the Women's Committee of the Communist Party of Canada. They have asked me to write a preface, and I am very glad to do so, because I happen to have seen with my own eyes evidence of the great changes which have transformed the lives of millions of women since I was a child.

In the last years of the nineteenth century I was familiar with the condition of working women and children in a factory town of the north of England. They had the barest minimum of house-room, clothing, sanitation and food. Those conditions have passed away for English families, but many are still unsure of their jobs, uncomfortable in their homes, and at a great disadvantage with regard to the education of their children.

In 1933 I saw the pale and thin children of Leningrad, after the terrible famine.

And in 1959 I saw the rosy children of China and Leningrad, those in China rosy in spite of what would formerly have been famine conditions, and those of Leningrad because famine has been beaten once and for all, and in both countries because it is no longer possible for some to have too much and most to have not enough.

It is now fifty years since I came to Canada. During those years women have taken a vital part in the struggles of workers and farmers across the country. The long battle for women's franchise, not yet completed in Quebec; the fight against conscription during the 1914-18 war; the organizing of the farmers between the two wars; the winning of un-

employment insurance; the unionization of the big industries; the organizing of miners and lumber workers in British Columbia and in northern Ontario; the great improvement in working conditions in the textile industry in Quebec, and in the fishing industry in the Maritimes; all these struggles and changes would have been slower and more painful if the women had not played their part.

These changes have been brought about by the action of people like ourselves. And they have happened in an amazingly short space of time.

Canadian women have still a long way to go before they can rest assured of enough for their families. But the history of the years since I was a young woman shows that it is in our power to move fast. There is every reason to feel encouraged, to examine cheerfully our own problems, and to get to work to win those essentials for a full and happy life.

All depends on the great question facing us all, the question of life or death—of world peace. Everyone now is aware of this and many are actively demonstrating their will to live. Women are playing a leading role in these activities, and they are looking to us all to join them.

Margaret Fairley



Planning for life

WE ARE preparing this pamphlet during the first weeks of 1963. What will happen in the coming year?

All over the world ordinary people like ourselves are making plans. Young people are applying for jobs and are looking forward to getting married. Mothers and fathers are planning the education of their children. Architects and engineers and town-planners are designing houses and bridges and communities. All kinds of workers are carrying out these plans. It is clear that the basic human need to live and to create a better life goes on with energy and hope, regardless of the other side of the picture.

The other side is the feverish preparations for thermonuclear war, the contradiction of all these hopes.

Our country is enmeshed in this critical policy. The price of our involvement has been the surrender of our economic and political independence to the United States by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. The cost of the arms race and the surrender of our independence can be seen in the distortion and stagnation of our economy, hundreds of thousands of unemployed, dead-end jobs for so many of our young people, unfavorable trade balances, high taxes, higher and higher prices, pinched social services and falling living standards for so many of us.

The struggle between planning for life and planning for death is on, and we are in it with all our strength. It is against this background that we offer

this small pamphlet on the problems of Canadian women. All our hopes for ourselves and our children depend on our ability to keep peace in the world, to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve disarmament.



Work

OUR DAYS are mostly workdays — at home, in the factory, farm, office, hospital, school.

Our work, for the most part, produces something needed by ourselves and others; it is useful work, building the life of the people.

If we all stopped work there would be, very soon, a shortage of food and clothing, houses and furniture, books and medicines.

You would think that in this busy world there would never be less than plenty for everyone, that in return for our daily work we would all have what we need for a good life. Yet we know that, in spite of all the hard work, only some people have enough: enough space at home for comfort and privacy, enough training and education, enough health services, enough security for the future. Even if everyone worked longer hours there would still be some people with every luxury, some with enough, and many more with less than enough.

It is the profits made out of our work that make it possible for some (non-workers) to have so much.

Our country has been built by hard work in a very short time. From France and Scotland, from England and Ireland, from the United States, from all parts of Europe, from China and Japan, workers, men and women, have come to transform the country from a wilderness to an advanced industrial land.

Mrs. Robert Barr, who came to the Chateaugay district from Scotland in 1827, tells us how she helped the men clear the land. "We spent the winter in enlarging our clearance and were eager about it.

At the sound of every tree that fell, we would give a youp, and I would start it, so glad was I that a bit more opening in the woods was made. I went out and helped, brushing the tops of the trees, so that the men would have room to work. It was very lonesome, and so difficult to get provisions in, having to walk sometimes through two feet of snow on the river to Reeve's to buy what we wanted. I have often walked there myself." Mrs. Barr had a baby to care for, as well as a husband and neighbouring helpers to feed on a steady diet of potatoes and cornmeal.

Seventy-five years later many families from Britain and from Europe came to settle in the West. An English family, on their way to start farming in Saskatchewan, came to a settlement of recent immigrants from Europe. The story is told in *Gully Farm* by Mary Hiemstra, one of the English children. "According to the stories we had heard these women were also used to hard work. They toiled in the fields from daylight to dark; hoeing potatoes, weeding, and cultivating gardens, ploughing the fields, and if a horse got sick they were said to help pull the plough. . . . 'Such wonderful people' Mother said as we drove away. 'I wish we could have found land near them.' "

Everywhere the women worked as hard as the men, and all received the same reward — a living — just as most married women do today.

We are no longer pioneers. Canada is an industrial country, with advanced technology, many universities, and a high reputation for agriculture, medicine, engineering and scientific research. In most of these fields women are actively participating. And the network of schools, libraries and

hospitals across the land is manned overwhelmingly by women.

Why then are there not more women in responsible positions? Why are there not more women high school principals, heads of medical schools, architects, members of parliament, members of legislatures and city councils, leaders in the trade unions and in farm organizations?

There are several reasons. The most powerful is the habit of mind of the ruling class to keep things as they are. Deep-going change of any kind is suspect. Women as employees, and low-paid employees at that, is one thing: women in positions of authority is something else. High-salaried professional people as a group are also a strongly conservative force in our society. Public bodies too are reluctant to give women authority, political parties are extremely slow to nominate women candidates. This has nothing to do with ability. It is a fear of opening doors to basic changes. Society as a whole still favours the old order.

Women themselves are a part of this conservative force. They are slow to accept public responsibility. But this passivity is encouraged by all means in the hands of editors, advertisers, public speakers, even teachers and the clergy. You have only to take a look at women's pages in the daily papers to realize this.

Wages

IT STANDS to reason that if wages were higher we should have more to spend. When wages rise workers come a little closer to getting full value

for their work. But they will never get full value until the whole population shares in the profits. When that day comes the profits will go into education, housing, hospitals, drugs, entertainment, public transportation, and so on.

Of course it is no good waiting for that day to dawn without doing anything. Many trade unions are fighting for higher wages, for a bigger share in all that the workers produce with their brains and muscles.

Women's wages are usually, as you well know, less than men's. Why is this? The federal government has adopted the principle of equal pay for equal work in the civil service. Eight out of ten provinces have laws which say that women must receive the same wages as men for equal work. Why then are they actually paid less?

Women now make up 28.7% of the total labour force, as compared with 18.5% twenty years ago. This growth is an important achievement in women's long struggle for equality. But by paying this 28.7% of their workers less, employers can of course keep down their wage-bill directly, and indirectly they can keep down the wage-bill of the other 71.3%.

The fact that women are usually paid less than men has nothing to do with the quality of their work. It has nothing to do with their ability to learn skills. It is because so far employers have been able to get away with it, just as in the old days they got away with the 12-hour day and the use of child-labour. They will tell you that women are best suited for certain kinds of work, that they are not equal in point of stamina or dexterity with men. So they will claim they are within the law in the lower wage-rate for women. Women are not able

to learn the necessary skills for the better paid jobs, say the employers; women can only do simple things; they are frail; they stay home for trivial reasons. This talk is all an excuse for paying low wages to women, and unfortunately women are so anxious to earn a little extra for the family that they accept this lower pay. Employers are exploiting the women's anxiety for the family welfare. For this is the main reason why so many married women seek employment outside their homes.

The Department of Labour at Ottawa, in its booklet *Women at Work*, puts its finger on a big obstacle women face when it draws attention to the fact that there are seldom adequate services available to enable married women to remain at work outside the home (pp. 42-3). The pamphlet does not point out that the laws about equal pay for equal work are very easily evaded through lack of definition, or laxity of inspection. It is very easy for an employer to say that such and such work is not equal to such and such.

One instance, out of many, of evasion of Ontario's equal pay law occurs in a plant of the Canadian General Electric Company at Peterborough. In one cutting department some of the work done by women differs from that done by men only by the size (not weight) of the pieces cut. Yet for women the base rate is \$1.77 an hour, while for men it is \$2.05 an hour.

Many organizations have demanded that the law for equal pay for equal work be strictly implemented and that the law itself be re-framed so that no employer can evade it. As it is, it is easy for an employer to find loopholes of escape, such as the claim that some "factor other than sex" has fixed the wage rate.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the International Labour Organization have both come out clearly against the all-too-common practice of determining wages according to sex. In Canada the Business and Professional Women's Association, the Y.W.C.A., the National Council of Women, the Congress of Canadian Women, the Canadian Labor Congress, Catholic Women's Leagues, and the National Federation of University Women have all made statements to the same purpose.

Only the united action of men and women in their unions will put an end to this unequal pay scandal. Unfortunately the organization of women workers is proceeding all too slowly, and too often there is a lack of attention on the part of the trade unions to this question which is vital to the interests of all workers, men and women alike.

Prices

WHY DOES everything cost so much?

Big business interests and their governments have other ways besides wages of preventing the working people from getting the full reward for their work: high prices and taxes.

Why does bread go up a cent a loaf? The paper says it is because the farmer is getting more for his wheat. This is just a trick to divide townspeople from country people, and to conceal the profits made by the bakers and by the big chain stores. The real reason is that the monopolies know you need bread and calculate that they can grow richer at your expense.

According to news reports Loblaw's made a profit of over eleven million dollars in the year ending June 2, 1962; Dominion Stores made a record profit in the preceding year of over seven and a half million dollars. It is bitter to realize why we must choose the cheaper brands and the less expensive cuts of meat.

Women are beginning to organize to roll back prices. Local groups could get together and prepare their budget and food-cost statements and draw up petitions to the government and letters to the papers.

Now is the time for action; the cost of living is at an all-time high.



Sales tax

ABOUT six cents out of every dollar we spend goes in sales tax. Part of the 11% federal tax at the manufacturers' level is passed on to the consumer. And the provincial sales tax in eight provinces paid directly by the consumer varies from 3% in Ontario and New Brunswick to 5% in Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. These taxes raise the price of almost everything we buy, except food and some children's clothing.

The sales tax is supposed to be fair because it taxes things which everyone must buy. How ridiculous! Do you suppose that the woman who buys

her clothes at a smart up-town store buys fewer, or hesitates in choosing between a mink stole and an evening gown, or even between a suit and a coat just because of the sales tax? Obviously not. But most women are faced with endless choices between this and that because they have not got the money for both. Every rise in prices and every new tax (concealed or otherwise) confronts most women with these choices. And the result is that most women can buy fewer goods; hence an increase in unemployment. And, do you know, by the way, that business people discuss solemnly and callously whether one, or two, or five, or ten percent is the healthiest figure of unemployed workers?

Homes

IT IS GOOD to work, and women do right to demand freedom to take up whatever work they choose. But the society in which we live, while glad of the lower paid services of women, does not make it easy for them to work outside their homes after they have children, and discourages many from careers they would like to follow.

Housework too is good—up to a point. That point is reached when the family is well fed, comfortably housed and dressed, and when the home is tidy and clean enough for neighbours and family to enjoy coming in after a day's work. But for many women it is difficult to maintain this standard.

There is wide variation in housing conditions between town and country, between one district

and another in our towns and cities. There are many streets where kitchen and bathroom are shared by two or more families, and even outdoor toilets are not unknown in our big cities. The housing on many Indian reserves is scandalous. The need to improve their living conditions is one of the many reasons why married women seek employment outside the home.

Then the question arises, who is to care for the children? When wages are low, when prices go up, when a sales tax is imposed, and when various levels of government close their eyes to these conditions lest our much-boasted-of free enterprise be interfered with, then should not some level of government at least show concern for the children by providing nurseries for the little ones and cost-price school dinners for the older children? These two measures would transform the lives of thousands of women, lifting the burden of anxiety and making it possible for many families to live comparatively comfortably. Here again, if women, reinforced by their men, raised their voices, they would eventually be heard.

Not only would the provision of nurseries and school dinners benefit the mother, by enabling her to add to the family income by outside work, but it would greatly benefit the children.

It is significant, and encouraging, that all four Workshops at the September 1962 CBC-sponsored Conference on The Real World of Woman urged the provision of more nurseries and day-care centres for working mothers.

Children's hospitals report the large number of accidents in the homes. Over-crowding and over-strain are responsible for many of these accidents

under existing conditions. Fires every winter take their toll of human lives. Low-rental housing, affording adequate space for each family, would do much to help prevent these accidents.

Every now and again a survey shows that a large percentage of children are undernourished. Of course some few parents may be directly responsible for this, but many more cannot be held responsible because they are at work and cannot supervise either the child's breakfast or his mid-day meal.

In some respects we have all come to accept the fact that children are not our possessions to be treated as we think fit. They must all go to school; they must be medically examined; they must have their teeth examined; they must not be ill-treated. But we still cling to the idea that what goes into their bodies in the way of food, so long as it does not violate the Pure Foods Act, is entirely the responsibility of the parents. Is this sensible? Would not school dinners served at cost price be the logical next step in admitting that the country as a whole is concerned about the well-being of the children?

Legislation to increase family allowances is long overdue, with the cost of living going up, sales taxes being imposed, and wages not keeping in step.

Government concern for the health of our families is slowly showing its reluctant face. Pressure and more pressure is needed to speed the process up. We need, and need urgently, not next year but this year, a national health insurance plan, including drugs and dentistry, as well as other medical services. As things are it is no wonder that many are afraid to go to a doctor and cannot afford to have a prescription filled. We hear too of some

immigrant families returning to Europe where they had been used to government-sponsored health care, because they cannot deal with the cost of health in this country.

Our children and grand-children will, we hope, live in a socialist Canada. Working together for the common good will have taken the place of working for someone else's profits. No one will make money out of their work, and they themselves will neither exploit others nor be themselves exploited.

We can help the children now to prepare for that happy day by teaching them to work and play with others, to find common interests and common goals. Nursery schools in every community would be a great step in this direction, stressing as they do habits of sharing and playing with a group.



Education

DISCUSSION on all aspects of education is going on throughout the country. Conditions vary from province to province, and from district to district within the province. The cost of education is met in different ways; students have varying opportunities; teachers have different training; text-books vary in quality; school buildings and equipment are unequal.

But it is clear that in all provinces there is need for more technical schools, more scholarships, more opportunities for higher education, in the arts, sciences and technology, especially for the rural youth.

In planning the content of education too, more attention needs to be paid to the rapidly changing character of work which our young people must be prepared for. This means increased emphasis on the encouragement of curiosity, adaptability, the spirit of intelligent questioning. Young people, in short, must be helped to try new paths and to learn new skills. Their training should include learning from other countries and respecting other ways of life. Education must become a quest rather than a routine.

Health of mind

GOING on all the time in our society is a battle for the minds of our children. On the one hand we have the increasing number of opportunities for the children to spend happy and healthy Saturdays and Sundays and holidays. And thousands of parents are taking advantage of these. In many communities swimming pools, skating rinks, museums, parks, concerts, all have improved the picture enormously in the last few years.

But over against this are certain comic books, the degrading advertisements, the base and violent TV shows, and the widespread lowering of standards of behaviour and taste. Parents who are concerned about these things have a hard time

indeed. Every home is thrown on its own to deal with the problem of surrounding corruption, and the tragic conditioning of the children to accept the idea of atomic war. Juvenile delinquency is not the only evil result of the daily diet of violence too often absorbed by the children. There is also the fostering in their minds of such a distorted picture of life, with its acceptance of horror and bloodshed and crime, that they are often caught in the toils before they are able to escape. What can we do to help them?

We can help them to see through the shams and false standards. Children are often amazingly quick to understand when we explain. And we can do something to supply good alternatives.

These good alternatives cannot be supplied entirely by the parents. In some communities no effort is made to provide them, and nowhere are they adequate. School buildings and playgrounds often remain closed out of school hours when they could be used for supervised play and activities. Concerts and plays, if provided for children at all, are expensive and out of reach of most families. Whole districts are without parks and playgrounds. An awakening of public opinion, led by the mothers, is needed to stir authorities into action. It could be done, and the expense would be negligible compared with the huge sums which go out of our pockets into so-called defense.



Dreams for days ahead

IF we look ahead, what are some of our dreams? Houses with rents so reasonable that we can all have comfort and privacy, with kitchen and bathroom for every family. Is that too much to hope for? We could have this tomorrow if the building of houses was carried on first of all for the benefit of working people, the people who with their energy and hard work make the houses, the fittings and furniture, the food and clothes of those who live in them. As it is, to quote an editorial in the Toronto Globe and Mail, November 21, 1962, "While builders are competing fiercely to rent or sell houses and apartments for the middle and upper income groups, very little is being provided for low-income families. Landlords often cram several families into one small house and collect a total rent far beyond the real value of the accommodation." This is 'free enterprise' in the building and real estate world. Do you like it?

Our dream for the future is of useful work for all; useful not for the boss and his profits, but for the community; making the things which make the wheels go smoothly, supplying the services and the recreation and the culture to make our evenings and weekends and holidays happy. In January 1963, 8.3% of the labour force in Canada was unemployed. Many women know what that means to a family, and also what the fear of unemployment means. To the employer it means that it is all the easier to keep wages down and take advantage of the fiction that women are not

capable of equal work with men and can so be paid less.

What else do we dream of? Granted we shall have a home and a job, wouldn't it be good if we could ride comfortably to work on one of the continuous stream of buses going across our cities? In London, England, the number of passengers allowed to stand on buses is strictly limited. In Toronto journeys by bus in the rush hours are exhausting to the crowded and jostled strap-hangers.

And the children—what of them? What care do our local governments take of them when we are at work? They leave it up to the parents, except for a few scattered nurseries. In our dream for the future there will be such nurseries for all the children whose mothers are at work.



Moral training

EVERY mother wants to have good children; and every child enjoys being good. What does this mean? 'Goodness' brings with it happy relations between people; it means happy work and play with others; it means kindness and consideration, generosity and tolerance. It is not easy for parents to help their children to be 'good'. Even

when teachers and neighbours aim at this 'goodness' too, there is much to discourage it all around us. Too many children learn from one example or another to look down on, even to dislike, children whose parents speak a different language, or have skins of a different colour. Too many children learn to be unfriendly in their play, to admire violence. Too many learn to be afraid of life and of death, and to grow up with no better ambition than to grab what they can get, and with no sense of being themselves able to give something of value to the common life. This last is perhaps what makes the biggest difference between our education and the education in socialist countries. In the future we and our children will know that our talents will not be wasted as they too often are today, and that we are needed by our neighbours and our country, to help build a good life for all.

We need to give free rein to our desire for 'goodness'. We don't have to be shy about expressing it, because everyone has it though it may be covered up.

Peace

WILL these dreams come true? Yes; if we can win peace. Not just a postponement of war, but such a peace that we and our children can live with hearts and minds free to plan a good life for all; good in the sense that our beloved country will flourish free and independent, good in the sense of freedom from want and fear, good in the sense of happy relations between people, and good because there will be vastly more encouragement

to everyone to make something worthwhile out of his ambitions and gifts and opportunities.

The world will experience something quite new when weapons and armies are done away with. We know that we shall have an exciting sense of freedom from fear. At first this may be overwhelming. Then we shall begin to understand what new possibilities are opening up, for us and for all the millions of people who are now so desperately poor because up to now the prosperous nations have been so busy waging war and preparing to wage war. Just think of all the natural resources, all the planning, all the hard work which now goes into these war preparations — all set free to produce the things and the culture which people need. Today—'All for war'; tomorrow—'Everything for the people'.

So what are we waiting for? We are waiting for people to speak up in such numbers that the few who are making careers and fortunes out of war and preparations for war will be forced to pay heed to the angry demonstrations of men and women who have no quarrel with any possible enemy. And meanwhile every candidate for election at all levels of government must be challenged to do all in his or her power to bring about disarmament.

The peace movement is gaining new friends every week. No one wants to die; more and more people understand that neither the government nor the newspapers can be relied upon in deciding who are our friends and who are our enemies. We will decide that for ourselves on the basis of who strives to live in peace with us and who wants us to arm to the teeth with atomic weapons.

The choice is clear: either world peace or a horrible nuclear war.

A few years ago it was considered subversive to speak out for peace. This is no longer so, thanks to the knowledge and understanding which so many have gained, through reading, through talking, and above all through the actions of people all over the world. It can no longer be hidden that the class of people who make a profit out of our bread and milk are the very same ones who made profits out of Batista which they cannot make out of Castro, who make fantastic profits out of the war industries.

There are many peace organizations in Canada. Join with one of them and help create a world without weapons, a world without wars.



The Communist Party of Canada

THESE hopes of ours for a world at peace, for an independent Canada where houses, wages, prices, care of children, will enable us all to live fully and happily, are shared by many. These hopes are the very reason for the existence of the Communist Party. And they are not hopes only. They are the basis of the activity of all the members, who are discussing these problems which concern us all, and who are giving their time and energy to finding out ways to speed up their solution.

The Communist Party of Canada is a party of men and women who are planning and working for the day when no one will grow rich on another's work. They believe that all men and women are collectively entitled to the full fruit of their work, that all are equal in rights and duties, that a just society is one which expects each to work according to his ability and which accords to each all that he needs for a healthy, happy life.

Canada is a rich country. There could be abundance for all. We are rich in natural resources, in minerals and water-power, and also in the wealth already created by hard-working people — roads and bridges, cities and railways, ships and trucks and planes, books and theatres, music and pictures, radio and television. We have the knowledge and skill to bring the best medical service to everyone, and the basic equipment to keep abreast of world research. We could have

the basis of socialism tomorrow if enough people were persuaded that it would be a wonderful thing for everyone to work according to his ability and receive according to his need.



We invite you to join the Communist Party, the party whose aim is socialism. Send your application to join, or your request for further information, to:

COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA

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