



REVISITING ENGELS HISTORY, GENDER & CLASS

Marnie Holborow

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Friedrich Engels, as is well known, was Marx's lifelong friend, collaborator, and comrade. Engels' father was a wealthy cotton manufacturer from Barmen (now Wuppertal) in Germany, and in 1842 he sent Engels to work in the family-owned cotton-threads factory in Salford, Manchester. On his way over, he met Marx in Cologne, where Marx was writing for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx was breaking with the idealism of the Young Hegelians and developing a historical materialist analysis of society and how it could be changed. A year later, Engels wrote his first economic work, entitled *Outline of a Critique of Political Economy*, which appeared in Marx's newspaper.

In Manchester, Engels saw with his own eyes the plight of English workers; at twenty-four years old, he published his first major work: *The Condition of the Working Class in England: From Personal Observations and Authentic Sources*. Describing the gigantic process of concentration brought about by industrial capitalism, Engels described the growing proletariat bringing into its ranks small producers, the peasantry, and other social strata. He was one of the first to see the working class as not only subjected to poverty but irresistibly driven forward to seek its emancipation.

Engels, a very sociable character, mixed with workers, early Chartists, and socialists. He was in a relationship with Mary Burns, a factory worker from Ireland, and got to see working-class life from the

inside.<sup>1</sup> Women and children were being drawn in huge numbers into the mills and factories, and Engels recounted how this was breaking up old ways of family life.

After Marx's death in 1883, Engels used Marx's notes on the US anthropologist Louis Henry Morgan as the basis for perhaps his most famous book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

The importance of the book is that it marked the first Marxist attempt to bring together history, gender, and class. Engels provided a historical materialist explanation of women's oppression whose political conclusion was that capitalism was a gendered and exploitative system, and that tackling oppression meant taking on capitalism.

## Gender and history

It is not the case that men have always dominated in society. For most of human history, going back 130,000 years, societies were egalitarian and based on cooperation. This is what Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, set out to illustrate. Well before there was material available on early societies, Engels used Morgan's stages of human society to identify the emergence of classes, states, and women's oppression.<sup>2</sup> Early societies which depended on food gathering, and later agriculture, were clan- and group-based. In these early societies, lands were held in common and tools

and utensils were owned directly by those who used them. Engels described these societies as ‘essentially collective’, ‘communistic communities’.<sup>3</sup> Social superstructures, separate to the social group, did not exist, and the equal participation of all adults, male and female, was taken for granted.<sup>4</sup> Marriages in these societies were much looser and coexisted with polygamy and the taking of other partners.<sup>5</sup> In these foraging societies, a sexual division of labour existed but it did not lead to higher position for men.

Later studies have shown that consanguinity (marriage between people who are closely related) and lineages were not as decisive in social organisation as Engels thought. Also, later research discovered that horticultural societies did not practice ‘mother right’, as Engels claimed; rather, they were either matrilineal (based on kinship with the mother) or matrilocal (whereby, in marriage, the husband goes to live with the wife’s community).<sup>6</sup>

Most modern studies, as Chris Harman details, have upheld the essential core of Engels’ account: that hunting-gathering societies were based on loose-knit groups with equal power between men and women and no class division.<sup>7</sup> US anthropologist and Marxist Eleanor Burke Leacock, in her book *Myths of Male Dominance* on the Montagnais-Naskapi indigenous peoples of North America, also shows that in these societies there was no systematic oppression of women and that clan mothers had considerable economic and political power. The material means of existence depended on equal inputs from both sexes, leading to a principle of autonomy of relations between men and women (incidentally, a source of moral outrage to the Jesuits who arrived on their shores in the 17th century).<sup>8</sup>

Engels’ thesis was that development of the forces of production led to the development of classes, private property, and women’s systematic oppression. The increase in productivity in agriculture—mainly a male sphere—led to the creation of a surplus, which was appropriated as wealth, and which gave men new economic power over women. This became the basis of a society divided into classes and of women’s subordination within it—which Engels recognised as ‘the historic defeat of the female sex’.<sup>9</sup> Australian anthropologist Gordon Childe explains how this came about. Towards the end of the Neolithic era, and with the development of more intensive agriculture, it was difficult for women in the later stages of pregnancy or after childbirth to do heavy plough work. This

increased the existing sexual division of labour with the social consequence of the subordination of women.<sup>10</sup>

Engel’s historical materialist analysis of gender roles and the source of women’s oppression represented a huge step forward. *The Origins* presented women’s oppression as a problem of history, rather than of biology, which, as one writer on Engels noted, makes it something for historical materialism to analyse and revolutionary politics to solve.<sup>11</sup>

### **The monogamous family**

Engels lists the stages of the family which correspond historically to different modes of subsistence: the consanguine family, with marriages separated through generations, not blood ties; the punaluan family, (from *punalua* in Hawaiian, meaning intimate companion) with a broader family structure, in which only the female line is recognised; and the pairing family, with an ever-extending exclusion of blood relatives from the bond of marriage. These kinship and marriage categories, as Leacock point out, are not satisfactory as they tend to fuse biological and social forces. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the existing, surviving hunter-gatherer societies upon which anthropologists relied for their information faithfully replicated earlier societies of the same type. What can be said, though, is that the move to patrilineality—a process stretching over thousands of years—would encourage the emergence of men as the key figures controlling society’s resources.

Engels identifies the institution of monogamous marriage, which stabilised in the class and slave societies of the ancient world, as the social expression of private property. ‘The transition to full private property is gradually accomplished, parallel with the transition of the pairing marriage into monogamy.’<sup>12</sup>

In capitalism, the monogamous family comes to predominate. Because this arrangement finally fully separates human reproduction from social production, women become socially marginalised. Engels explains:

In the old communistic household, which comprised many couples and their children, the task entrusted to the women of managing the household was as much a public, a socially necessary industry, as the

procuring of the food by the men. With the patriarchal family, and still more with the single monogamous family, a change came. Household management lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became a *private service*. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production.<sup>13</sup>

### ‘Money relation’

Engels insists in *The Origin* that the family is not one undifferentiated unit. It has different functions according to class, and relations between the sexes also differ across social classes, a point made very strongly in *The Origin*.

In capitalism, the monogamous family specifically serves the interests of capital. It is based on the supremacy of the man, and has the express purpose of producing children of undisputed paternity. The family becomes the legal vehicle for passing on property and capital to family members and, by the same token, for preventing wealth redistribution. The family for the possessing classes, as Marx and Engels noted in *The Communist Manifesto*, when all sentimentality is stripped away, is ‘a mere money relation’.<sup>14</sup>

But Marx and Engels also recognised that wealth and privilege do not exclude oppression within the family. They stress the stultifying environment of the bourgeois family and its harbouring of the ‘latent slavery’ of women.<sup>15</sup> *The Origin*, too, describes the family as ‘founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife’, and modern society as ‘a mass composed of these individual families as its molecules’.<sup>16</sup> Husbands can have sexual freedom, but for women it is considered a crime. Engels sees the supremacy of the man in bourgeois marriages as an extension of his economic supremacy.<sup>17</sup>

It is also interesting to note that, despite his insistence on the material context, Engels brings out very strongly the ideological construction of the family in capitalism. The monogamous family, modelled on the bourgeois family, is presented in capitalism as a ‘natural’ unit of society and the ideal that everyone is expected to conform to.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels pour scorn on bourgeois moral principles about their supposed respect for parent-child ties. They point out that these same preachy capitalists were forcing very young working-class children away from their homes into the hellholes of the factories.<sup>18</sup>

### Social murder

In effect, the working-class family experienced capitalism very differently from the family of the propertied classes. In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, quoting from doctors’ testimonies to the Factories Inquiry Commission in the mid 1840’s, Engels describes how children as young as six were working in the factories and mills with terrible effects on their physical development, a process he described as social murder.<sup>19</sup> Mass recruitment of all able-bodied adults into industry left the care of children to chance. When the parents both spent twelve or thirteen hours a day in the mill, babies and children were put out to nurses, for a small sum of money, received terrible treatment, and like ‘wild weeds’, left to fend for themselves.<sup>20</sup>

Female and child labour in industry upended people’s lives, but it also challenged existing ideas about the ‘naturalness’ of the nuclear family.

Only the large-scale industry of our time has again thrown open to [women] —and only to the proletarian [women] at that—the avenue to social production; but in such a way that, if [a woman] fulfils her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and if she wishes to take part in public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfil her family duties.<sup>21</sup>

‘Her family duties’ grates with us today, but the main point Engels is making is that at the heart of the privatised family in capitalism are deep contradictions which give rise to real tensions for people between paid and unpaid work.

Engels also describes how, during waves of male unemployment, women became the main wage earners for the family, with the man left at home. This became ‘a world turned upside down’ for accepted gender roles. He draws broader social and political conclusions from this. He writes, ‘If the reign of the husband as inevitably brought about by the factory system is inhuman, the pristine rule of the husband over the wife must have been inhuman too.’ Equally, he insists, a reversal of the position of sexes in this instance can only have happened because the sexes have been placed in a false position from the beginning.<sup>22</sup> Engels is questioning existing gender stereotypes and reimagining new ways of thinking about gender.

### **Disappearance of the working-class family?**

Engels believed that the changes instituted by the factory system were so great that the working-class family would disappear, which obviously did not happen. From this, Engels is criticised for seeing things in a too economic way and thus believing that women entering paid work would lead to their liberation.<sup>23</sup>

These accusations overlook how much attention Engels paid to ideological matters, as we have seen. His having made wrong predictions about what would happen to the working-class family does not invalidate his fundamental point: that developments in production uproot and transform the systems of the family and social reproduction.

Women and children working in factories, amid rapid and chaotic urbanisation, overturned traditional family life. Engels thought that the working-class family would disappear, and because the working class was propertyless, that there would no longer be any material basis for it. As things turned out, the disruption to working-class family life was only a temporary phenomenon.

Engels was right to see that the mass entry of women into paid work challenged bourgeois family norms, and as accounts of the time show, this did change women’s consciousness. One historian describes the ‘comradeship and social action ... self-respect, self-reliance and courage’, that factory life involved, compared to the ‘cribbed, cabined and confined’ atmosphere of the home.<sup>24</sup> On this basis, notwithstanding the awful conditions which

mill and factory workers had to endure, Engels held that entering ‘public industry’ represented ‘the first condition’ for women’s liberation, and that it had a social significance that went beyond formal legal equality rights.<sup>25</sup>

What Engels did not foresee was the role that the working-class family would continue to play in capitalism. As industrialisation developed, a longer-living, more skilled and productive labour force became a priority, and the bourgeoisie reinstituted the patriarchal model of the family for the working class. By the turn of the century, amid the material gains of British imperialism, capital was able to establish the model of the male-earner family. From the point of view of the working class, the demand for a family wage—a higher wage for men which would allow women to stay at home—seemed an improvement on women and children working themselves to death in factories.

Capital and labour thus both drew on the family in different ways and with different interests, as Jane Humphries highlights in her studies of protective legislation in the late nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> However, the male-earner family model was rarely the norm for most workers, because most women still needed to supplement the household wage through paid work.

Nevertheless, the male-breadwinner family model came at a very heavy cost for women. It reinforced notions about the cult of ‘true womanhood’ and a woman’s place in the home; it demeaned domestic labour and normalised sexist ideas about ‘women’s work’. The political conservatism at the top of the British labour movement at the turn of the nineteenth century went along with these backward ideas. This was also the case in Ireland, later in the 1930s, when the Labour Party, and initially the ICTU, supported legislation prohibiting the employment of women in industry, when women’s health and safety was not even an issue. As Helena Molony of the Irish Women Workers Union (IWWU) rightly said at the time: ‘It was terrible to find such reactionary opinions expressed ... by responsible leaders of labour in support of a capitalist minister in setting up a barrier against one set of citizens’.<sup>27</sup> These concessions to the ruling ideology ended up bolstering gender divisions within the working class.

## Family and state

Engels argues that states come into existence in response to the division of societies into classes. Class societies in Ancient Greece required 'an institution of public force' which could keep people enslaved and in check.<sup>28</sup> States were instruments of the exploiting classes. They appeared to stand above social conflict and yet they provided a legal and armed apparatus on behalf of the exploiting class.<sup>29</sup> Engels links the family to the state, the 'central link' for imposing legal property rights.<sup>30</sup> In this, *The Origin* reveals both the family and the state as social instruments for the ruling class, both superstructures which arise from the economic base of society.

In our societies, today, states have been compelled to play a much larger role in regulating families and overseeing other aspects of social reproduction than in Engels' time. We are only too familiar in Ireland with the role, repressive to women, that the state has played in cementing the traditional family. Shamefully, the Irish Constitution still declares the family endowed with 'inalienable and imprescriptible' rights and that women, first and foremost, must perform their 'duties in the home'.<sup>31</sup> But in other countries too, states reinforce the social role of families, albeit less explicitly, through taxation, property and inheritance laws, and welfare payments which are filtered through the family.

From another perspective, the state under neoliberal capitalism has come to rely even more on the privatised reproduction in the family. In refusing to provide comprehensive, publicly- funded

care services, the state effectively pushes families to become safety nets for the ravages of market capitalism.

## Production and reproduction

There has been much debate around what Engels wrote about the relationship of production (of commodities) and reproduction (of people). In the preface to the first edition of *The Origin*, Engels wrote:

According to the materialist conception the determining factor in history is in the final instance the production and reproduction of the immediate essentials of life. This is again of a twofold character: on the one side the production of the means of existence and on the other the propagation of the species. The social organisation under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production, by the stage of development of labour on the one hand and the family on the other.<sup>32</sup>

Engels asserts here the basic historical materialist premise that 'humans must be in a position to live to make history' and that this depends on their having the

wherewithal to subsist and be able to reproduce themselves. These were not two different stages but a combined reality in early societies, with both processes vital to survival. Just after the above passage, Engels goes on to say that as the production of the means of subsistence develops, so it increasingly predominates over the production of life. Certainly what emerges overall from *The Origin* is that changes in family structures were determined by the changing nature of production, not that they were parallel developments.

Socialist feminists in the 1970s interpreted Engels' statement to mean that there were two systems: the mode of production on the one hand, and social reproduction on the other, capitalism and patriarchy, constituting a dual system. They criticised Engels for not giving sufficient weight to reproduction, and for making gender secondary to the main contradiction between capital and labour. Heather Brown expresses a view commonly held about Engels, when she says that he was 'crudely materialist', 'unilinear', and 'technologically deterministic'.<sup>33</sup>

One might have thought that a work such as *The Origin*, by theorising the family and sexual relations, on its own marked a powerful challenge to charges of economic reductionism. Be that as it may, arguing that women's oppression arises from a socially distinct, relatively autonomous patriarchal power existing alongside the economic system is an arbitrary assertion, which Lise Vogel judges, rightly, as representing 'a mysterious co-existence of disjunct explanations of social development'.<sup>34</sup> Certainly, it goes very much



against what Engels was arguing, not because he was economically reductionist, but because Engels sees society as a totality.

‘Two modes’ is problematic. The mode of production in any society, for Marx, had two aspects, the forces and the relations of production, with the forces of production exerting influence on the relations, and whose interaction resulted in social transformations and revolutions. The nature of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism in a dual-systems theory is not clear, mainly because patriarchy, however understood, is not a mode of (re)production in the same sense. Patriarchy is sometimes understood as an ideology, sometimes as a gender-oppressive norm whose origins are unclear.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, if patriarchy-capitalism is the dualism of social relations, it is difficult to see how other forms of oppression—racism or colonialism, for example—fit in. The mode of production affects all social relations, including those of gender. Men do not have a more powerful position which, independent of social determinants, they have had the foresight to use to shape society in a patriarchal direction. Rather, as Marxist feminist Martha Gimenez puts it: ‘Men like women are social beings whose characteristics reflect the social formation within which they emerge as social agents’.<sup>36</sup> Paul Blackledge stresses the political importance of understanding society as a totality: that struggles against women’s oppression in capitalism are also related together with other struggles within and against capitalism, not on different tracks.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that more recently, social reproduction theorists, while not adhering to the dual-systems approach, also seek to rebalance what they see in Marxism as an overemphasis on production and the economic to ‘recentre’ social reproduction and gender. Tithi Bhattacharya, for example, stresses the ‘intensely economic’ nature of household work and judges it to be ‘co-constitutive’ with social production of the capitalist system, a formula that is also used by Nancy Fraser and others.<sup>38</sup> These writers mainly engage with Marx and make little mention of Engels, despite his account of the impact of large-scale industry on gender relations within the household, and of the relations between the family and society.<sup>39</sup>

Engels comes under fire from all quarters. Lise Vogel blames Engels for giving credence to the dual-systems theory, but her objection to Engels may also be connected to the fact that she, like many others, saw China, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Albania in the 1970-80s as ‘actually existing socialist’ regimes. Clearly women were oppressed in these societies. Therefore, it follows that something more than socialist society and what Engels argued for is needed to free women from oppression. Vogel argues, based on her experience in the US, that what was needed was a broad women’s movement for the fight for gender equality in these ‘socialist’ countries, though just how such a movement would negotiate the repressive regimes of these countries she does not make clear.

There is no doubt that the introduction of policies in Russia in the 1930s which glorified motherhood, or in China in the 1970s which imposed the oppressive one-child policy, both often announced under vast portraits of Marx and Engels, would put anyone off. But the lack of liberation for women in the ‘socialist countries’ was not an indication of the failure of socialism but was due to the reinstatement of, in the case of Russia, and insufficient changes to, in the case of China, capital accumulation. This left women’s social position still subordinated to the needs of the economy. The problem was not that these socialist countries slavishly followed Engels’ formulations, rather that they didn’t follow them enough.

## Engels today

Engels’ writings on gender oppression, it seems to me, are particularly valuable today. Firstly, Engels’ recognition of the social significance of women joining the ranks of wage earners resonates again in our age as women join the workforce in historically high numbers. We have seen this very clearly in Ireland, where the numbers of women in the workforce have jumped by more than a fifth in the last thirty years. Across the Global North women make up nearly half of the people in paid employment. This expanding female workforce, including migrant workers, in sectors such as health, retail, education, and hospitality make up what

Brazilian sociologist Ricardo Atunes calls the ‘new service proletariat’. As we saw during the pandemic, women disproportionately constitute the ranks of essential workers. Low paid, often part-time, with few labour rights, on ‘if-and-when’ contracts, sometimes paid on piece rates, these women workers have been the protagonists of recent social and labour struggles around the world—the front-line labour activists in an expanding and increasingly female working class.<sup>40</sup> Women workers of all skin colours today could be compared to the impressive social force that unskilled workers represented in Britain and in Ireland in the early twentieth century as they fought for their rights.

Secondly, the transformations Engels beheld in the working-class family, while extreme in British nineteenth century capitalism, remain the rule rather than the exception. The overlap of all social relations in capitalism means that social reproduction systems, including the family, are also subject to change. Such changes as Engels saw disrupt the old order of things. Households in Western economies, over the last half century, have altered considerably in composition and size, in large part to increased numbers of women working. Ireland’s changes to families and households are striking. Despite the conservative legacy of the Catholic Church, today only 36 per cent of households are traditional families, a trend that mirrors, only to a slightly less degree, the wider trend across European countries.<sup>41</sup> One of the biggest changes is the growth of households with only one adult. Nearly a tenth of children worldwide live in single-parent households, but this is much higher in countries of the Global North. Rainbow families—same-sex couples, with or without children—have increased in number. These changes, despite right-wing narratives to the contrary, make the idea of one fixed traditional family type seem absurd. The patriarchal, heteronormative nuclear family no longer predominates, as evidenced by the diversity of families today. It may persist as an ideological remnant, which carries benefits for capital in the projection of social stability, but there is no doubt that, in countries of the Global North at least, it continues to decline.

## Gender and class

Thirdly, Engels drew attention to the class nature of families, and that is markedly evident today. One area in which this is most apparent, and which affects the experience of oppression, is the question of who does the work in the home. While the double burden of paid and unpaid work bears down heavily on working-class women, for middle- and upper-class women in Western societies there is the option to employ women, often from the Global South, to perform care work in the home. The last twenty years has seen a growing, global labour market for domestic workers. Domestic work and au-pairing now involve huge numbers of people worldwide, which one Scandinavian writer sees as the recreation of a servant class to serve wealthier Western women.<sup>42</sup>

During the pandemic, as well, we have starkly seen what the class divide of homes means. Having space, a garden, multiple rooms, and plenty of appliances made the lockdowns tolerable and catching the virus less likely. Cramped bedsits, small airless flats, pay-as-you-go internet service, and the experience of inadequate and unavailable homes made lockdowns unbearable and made worse already serious social issues such as mental health and domestic violence.

The class divide between women has grown as much as the general wealth gap in society. The advancement of individual women may depend on the exploiting of others, but also political demands around gender rights are influenced by class. The aims of more women in positions of power, in the boardrooms and at the top of global organisations like the EU or the IMF, have done little to change the lives of working-class women. Demands for dual-income families, for greater sharing of housework, certainly challenge gender stereotypes, but the key for most women is to challenge overall the idea of a private sphere of homes and households on whose services capitalism depends.

## Socialisation

Engels’ plea that ‘the care and education of children becomes a public affair, and that society looks after all children alike’ has never been timelier.<sup>43</sup> It is an urgent need as more women are in paid work,



and as, post pandemic, they are having to juggle extra childcare and other care duties in the home while remote working becoming more common. Socialisation of domestic labour and childcare is the necessary condition for the development of free and equal gender relations. The fight in the here and now for these services is vitally important so that all women, not just the few, can be unburdened of the responsibility for this work.

Most women are in paid work and have the expectation, as never before, of living a life of independence on their terms. Women's roles as paid workers has altered how they see the world, and they are no longer going to accept being discriminated against, seen as sexual objects, or automatically being steered into being mothers. They reject gender stereotypes and see gender in more fluid, non-binary terms. They will no longer accept in silence dead-end relationships, sexual harassment, domestic abuse. The new women's strikes and marches across the world have proved as much.

These aspirations constantly come up against the system that has an interest in maintaining private households to meet the needs of capital. Engels laid out how gender oppression was endemic to class society and why social revolution was necessary to remove the material barriers that kept it in place. He also envisaged freedom from the gender straitjackets prescribed by the system. That freedom, he writes at the end of *The Origin*, could be one of 'a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a women's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; and a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other consideration other than real love or to refuse to give themselves to their lover from fear of the economic consequences'.<sup>44</sup> Engels provides us with a historical materialist analysis of gender oppression but also a memorable vision of how things could be different.

## NOTES

1 Engels and Burn's were together for over twenty years until Burn's death in 1863. Both of them politically opposed the bourgeois institution of marriage and never married.

2 Morgan has been accused of being racist, mainly because of the qualities that he attributed to early societies—savagery and barbarism—which certainly politically jar with us today. However, Eleanor Burke Leacock, while not claiming that Morgan was a radical, nevertheless argues that he had a materialist approach and had none of the nineteenth century racism towards early societies. The powerful passage in which he projected his view of the future as 'a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes' is quoted by Engels as the closure to *The Origin*. See Leacock's introduction to Engels's book.

3 Engels, F. *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1972, Lawrence and Wishart, p 233.

4 Ibid, pp 217-20.

5 Ibid, p 107.

6 Leacock, E.B., 'Introduction' in Engels, F., *The Origin*, p 34.

7 Harman, C., 'Engels and the Origin of Human Society', *International Socialism*, Vol 2, No 65, Winter 1994. See the section on primitive communism.

8 See Leacock, E.B., *Myths of Male Domination*, 1981 Monthly Review Press, ch 2.

9 Engels, *The Origin*, p 120.

10 Childe, G., *What Happened in History*, 1973, Pelican Books, p 72.

11 Delmar, R., 'Looking Again at Engel's Origin of the Family', in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds) *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, 1979, Penguin, pp 271-87.

12 Engels, *The Origin*, p 125.

13 Ibid, p 137.

14 Marx, K. and Engels, F., 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in *Selected Works, Vol 1*, 1977, Progress Publishers, p 111.

15 Marx, K. and Engels, F., *The German Ideology*, 1974, Lawrence and Wishart, p 44.

16 Engels, *The Origin*, p 137.

17 Ibid, p 145.

18 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, pp 123-4.

19 Engels, F., *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1982, Granada Publishing, p 126.

20 Ibid, p 171.

21 Engels, *The Origin*, p 137.

22 Ibid, p 174.

23 Evans, M., 'Materialism and Morality' in J. Sayers, M. Evans, and N. Redclift, *Engels Revisited: Feminist Essays*, 1987, Tavistock Publications, pp 81-97.

24 Pinchbeck, I., *Women Workers and the Industrial revolution 1750-1850*, 1981, Virago Press, p 308.

25 Engels, *The Origin*, p 137.

26 For a discussion of this issue, see Humphries, J., 'Class Struggle and the persistence of the working-class family', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol 1, (1977), pp 241-58. She lays emphasis on both the material conditions of the working class and familial relationships and the opportunist use of sexist ideology around the family wage.

27 Horgan, G., 'Changing women's Lives in Ireland', *International Socialism*, Vol 2, No 91, Summer 2001.

28 Engels, *The Origin*, p 229.

29 Ibid, p 228.

30 Ibid, p 235.

31 Although they have been the subject of a citizens' assembly and will, hopefully, be removed.

32 Preface to the first edition of *The Origin*, p 71.

33 Brown, H. *Marx on Gender and the Family: A critical study*, 2012, Haymarket Books, pp 174-75. She believes that Engels was different to Marx, who she considers more dialectical and humanist.

34 Vogel, L., *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory*, 2013, Haymarket Books, pp 28-9. For a discussion of dual-systems theories see Blackledge, P., 'Frederick Engels, Social Reproduction, and the Problem of a Unitary Theory of Women's Oppression', *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol 44, No 3 (July 2018), pp 296-9.

35 Ibid, p 296.

36 Gimenez, M., *Marx, Women and Capitalist Social Reproduction: Marxist Feminist Essays*, 2019, Haymarket Books, p 347.

37 Blackledge, P., 'Frederick Engels, Social

Reproduction, and the Problem of a Unitary Theory of Women's Oppression', *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol 44, No 3 (July 2018), pp 297-321.

38 Bhattacharya, T., 'Liberating Women from "Political Economy": Margaret Benston's Marxism and a Social-Reproduction Approach to Gender Oppression', *Monthly Review*, Vol 71, No 8. Fraser, N., 'Crisis of Care? On the social reproductive contradictions of contemporary capitalism', in T. Bhattacharya (ed) *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping class, recentring oppression*, 2017, Pluto.

39 For a convincing Marxist critique of social reproduction theory highlighting that, counter to claims to the contrary, Marx and Engels provide a powerful framework for the analysis of gender in capitalism today and the relationship of family to industry, see Cammack, P., 'Marx on Social Reproduction', *Historical Materialism*, Vol 25, p 4.

40 Atunes, R., 'The New Service Proletariat', *Monthly Review*, Vol 69, No 11.

41 *Law Society Gazette Ireland*, 21 Feb 2020, available online from: <https://www.lawsociety.ie/gazette/top-stories/european-commission-survey-shows-36-of-irish-households-are-traditional-families/#>

42 European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions, *Domestic workers in Europe Getting Organised!*, available online from: [www.effat.org](http://www.effat.org), p 3. See also Näre, L., 'Paid Migrant Labour in a Changing Europe: Gender Equality and Citizenship' in B. Gullikstad, G. Korsnes Kristensen, and P. Ringrose (eds) *Paid Migrant Domestic Labour in a Changing Europe: Questions of Gender Equality and Citizenship*, 2016, Palgrave Macmillan, pp 31-53.

43 Engels, *The Origin*, p 139.

44 Ibid, p 145.