

Kathleen Gough

TOWARD AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF WOMEN, edited by Rayna R. Reiter, Monthly Review Press, NY 1975

3 articles in this collection deal with Engels: the most serious is "The Origin of the Family" by Kathleen Gough. "Matriarchy: a Vision of Power" by Paula Webster is what contains a reference to a version of this article having included something on Evelyn Reed, even though it may mean that E. Reed was simply a member of the Philadelphia, it's not clear; and the third article, "Engels Revisited" by Karen Sacks, which again is a version of the Karen Sacks article in Women and Culture, except that the W and C predates this by a year and would probably not have been as openly "socialist". Gough's article, which actually appeared in 11/71 in the Journal of Marriage and the Family. It stresses the fact first that, "contrary to the beliefs of some feminists",... in no human society, do men, as a category, have only the role of insemination... The omnipresence of male authority, too, goes contrary to the beliefs of some feminists that in 'matriarchy' women were either completely equal, or had paramount authority over men, either in the home or in society at large." She further stresses, correctly, that "in matrilineal societies, where property, rank, office and group membership are inherited through the female line" the women had more rights, but not total; "the ultimate head of a household, lineage and local group is usually a man." She further calls to attention that even in the Iroquois; Morgan refers to the fact that there was the absence of equality between the sexes... and that women (not men) were publicly whipped as punishment for adultery. War leaders, tribal chiefs, and sachems (heads of the matrilineal lineage) were men." The reference is to Morgan's The League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Neé, Iroquois.

Paula Webster likewise argues against Engels, though softly, but she at least stresses that while Engels criticized Bachofen "Bachofen's mystical causality" she praises him so highly for making a pioneering effort in the evolution of social forms that the criticism is lost in the praise. She also brings out the fact that in the matrilineal society, it wasn't the woman who exercised the power; "A woman's brother exercises the power and authority usually reserved for fathers and husbands in patrilineal society" (p.144) Paula Webster, who evidently previously discussed 8 women who write on anthropology, including Reed, here shows how 2 serious women anthropologists, both defining Marxism had different views, with Leacock holding that "the transformation of their socially necessary labor into private service through the separation of the family from the clan"; and Kathleen Gough

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holding that women were in some ways always 'the second sex', with greater or lesser subordination to men. Obviously, Gough is trying to say that ~~where~~ where it is a question of survival, inequality cannot be blamed as a 'manmade cultural imposition'. Webster then refers both to DeBouvoir and Sulamith Firestone as well as to Elizabeth Gould Davis' The First Sex.

by Sacks

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The third is more or less a defense of Engels than otherwise. Sacks also refers to Gough in the fact that she accepted Gough's criticism of one of her earlier papers where she argued that all pre-capitalist societies excluded women from public labor, and Gough brought to her attention that this was not so in pre-capitalist <sup>(East)</sup> Indian states. The big conclusion of Sacks is that "something analogous to the Iroquois gens as described by Engels, or to the production brigades of China during the Great Leap Forward. What is now private family work must become public work for women to become truly social adults." (p.274).

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