

Proposal for the Creation of a Wedding Factory

Mujeres Libres

March 1937

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Essays about sexual issues were generally more subdued in *Mujeres Libres*; “free love” did not appear in its pages at all. The journal did nevertheless contain a few articles explicitly critical of marriage, especially the so-called *casamientos a la libertaria* — the practice of replacing church- or state-sanctioned weddings with those performed by unions or revolutionary organizations. A number of *Mujeres Libres*’ writers found this a practice ripe for ridicule. *Mujeres Libres* no. 7, for example, printed a “Proposal for the creation of a marriage factory”, gently poking fun at the practice of union organizations’ formalizing marriages.¹ As secretary of the Building and Wood-Trades Union in Barcelona, Sara Berenguer Guillén often drew up such documents. But her most intriguing memory was of a couple who returned, some months after their “marriage,” to request a divorce. She replied that, as they were not legally married, they needed no divorce; they could simply part company and go on with their lives. But the couple refused, and in the end, Sara drew up a document of divorce, which was duly witnessed by members of the union.²

Comrade Revolution has made us aware of his great affliction. People continue to marry... Comrade Revolution thought that people’s morals and spirit had improved somewhat, but he realizes that the spirit and morals of people are not susceptible to improvement. People are continuing to marry... In the face of this inescapable reality, we attempt to alleviate some of its inevitable consequences. People continue loving the modes of their oppression. At the least, let us see if we can lighten the chains...

Location

The wedding factory will be located far from every urban nucleus. It is not good that tragedies take place in the public eye, because they will demoralize the people. Besides, the difficulties of access to the factory will force the stupid ones to think [about what they’re doing].

Materials for construction

Should be of such kind that dampen noise. What goes on inside is not anyone’s business, and it’s always better not to hear the statements of those who come to complain about how theirs have gone wrong.

Subdivisions

A waiting room, divided into two-person cubicles by partial partitions. Isolation is essential in case of epidemic. One room for ceremonies and an exit ramp.

Speed is important so that people shouldn’t have time to change their minds...

¹ See also “Ante que te cases, mira lo que haces,” *Mujeres Libres*, no. 7 .

² Sara Guillén, interview, Montady, April 29, 1988; see also Antonina Rodrigo, “Nuestras mujeres en la Guerra civil,” *Vindicacion feminista*, no. 3 (September 1, 1976): 37.

Material

Of two kinds: (a) necessary and (b) voluntary

(a) A cold shower; a committee convinced of the importance of its mission; a seal that says: "Enter, if you dare"; a stamp pad of red or red and black for the seal.

(b) A stake.

Library

One copy of the Laws of Common Sense.

Related institutions

A shop for rivets, collars, rings, and chains. An allegorical tricolor of Freedom.

Functioning of the factory

It is quick. Individuals wait, by pairs, in the two-person cubicles.

Later they will pass into the ceremonial room. They can do nothing, absolutely nothing, without the proper stamp. [An official] stamps a small piece of paper, their cheeks, and their underwear.

Then, with a very hollow voice, the Committee reads them the Laws of Common Sense, which can be reduced to three:

1. When there were priests, the priest deceived you; when there were judges, the judge deceived you; now we are deceiving you ourselves, since you came here.
2. He who cannot go on without a guarantee of property and fidelity deserves the most vile oppressions upon his heart (danger of asphyxiation).
3. The act of passing through the factory gives evidence of idiocy, and predisposes to two or three afflictions per day. We know what we are doing!

The ceremony is free. Those who go have already suffered enough misfortune. Afterwards, rings and chains are put on them, they are made to kiss the tricolor picture of libertarian communism, and they are thrown down the ramp. In order to avoid disturbances to the normal functioning of the factory, it is a good idea to place the following poster at the exit:

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“Appendix C.” in *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*.

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