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# MINKA GOVEKAR: The Value of Housework

**Author:** Minka Govekar

**Title:** The Value of Housework

**Originally published:** As a radio lecture entitled “Vrednotenje gospodinjskega dela,” 1935.

**Language:** Slovenian

## About the author

**Minka Govekar** (1874, Trebnje–1950, Ljubljana) was a teacher, writer, translator, journalist, and one of the leading figures of the women’s movement in Ljubljana and more broadly the Slovenian lands in the first half of the twentieth century. She was a strong proponent of the equal position of women in society and argued for this within the frameworks of the family and the nation. Her feminist political thought was therefore more on the conservative side of the political spectrum. It will become clear from this contribution that the focus on what she called “the housework question” was one of the key elements in her political thought.

Govekar was born in 1874 into the family of a medical doctor and a housewife. After gaining a formal education at the teacher training college in Ljubljana, she worked as a teacher until she got married in 1897. Her husband was the writer

Fran Govekar (1871–1949), whom she had met while still in school, and with whom she remained in contact during his medical studies in Vienna. This situation positively impacted her informal education, as he sent her journals, books, and various publications from Vienna, including the journals *Arbeiter Zeitung* and *Dokumente der Frauen*. Even though she stopped working as a teacher after getting married and having three children, she continued to work in several different spheres, primarily as a journalist, activist, and a translator. She published in various newspapers and journals, including *Slovanski svet* (Slavic World), *Edinost* (Unity), *Slovenski narod* (The Slovenian Nation), as well as a variety of women's journals of the time, including *Slovenka* (The Slovenian Woman, 1897–1902), *Ženski svijet/Jugoslavenska žena* (Women's World/Yugoslav Woman, 1917–1920), and *Ženski svet* (Women's World, 1923–1941). In the broader Yugoslav sphere, she contributed to the journal *Glasnik jugoslovenskog ženskog saveza* (Herald of the Yugoslav National Council of Women, 1935–1940), but did not publish in the central feminist Yugoslav journal *Ženski pokret* (Women's Movement, 1920–1938).<sup>1</sup> She published under her own name, but she also used pseudonyms, among them Josip Trdina, Minka Kastelčeva, M. K., and Mila (Milena) Dobova. She also authored several books, edited several journals and volumes, and translated over forty plays and novels from Russian, Polish, German, and Serbo-Croatian into Slovenian.<sup>2</sup>

Govekar took an active and leading part in Slovenian and Yugoslav women's organizations. Her activism should be primarily interpreted in the context of two organizations. One of them, the Slovenian General Women's Society (*Slovensko splošno žensko društvo*, SSŽD), Govekar co-founded and was its secretary for twenty-seven years. Founded in 1901, the SSŽD was the central Slovenian women's organization until the Second World War, and it demanded women's passive and active suffrage rights, equal pay for equal work, social support for children

1 *Glasnik jugoslovenskog ženskog saveza* was the official journal of the *Jugoslovanska ženska zveza* (see below), affiliated with the International Council of Women. *Ženski pokret*, on the other hand, was the official journal of the *Alijansa ženskih pokreta* (Alliance of Women's Movements), affiliated with the International Alliance of Women. For edited volumes on two of the mentioned periodicals, *Slovenka* and *Ženski pokret*, see Marta Verginella, *Slovenka: prvi ženski časopis (1897–1902)* (Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2017). Jelena Milinković and Žarka Svirčev, eds., *Ženski pokret (1920–1938): Zbornik radova* (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2021).

2 This paragraph is mainly based on an excellent text by Mateja Jeraj, "Minka Govekar. Duša splošnega ženskega društva," in *Splošno žensko društvo 1901–1945. Od dobrih deklet do feministk*, ed. Nataša Budna Kodrič and Aleksandra Serše (Ljubljana: Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2003). See also "Govekar, Minka (1874–1950)," *Slovenska biografija* (Ljubljana: SAZU, ZRC SAZU, 2013). Vesna Leskošek, "Minka Govekar (1874–1950)," in *Pozabljena polovica: portreti žensk 19. in 20. stoletja na Slovenskem*, ed. Alenka Šelih et al. (Ljubljana: Tuma, SAZU, 2007), 134–38. Irena Selišnik, "Samocenzura, družinske interpretacije in vpliv uradne pripovedi na avtobiografije žensk," *Primerjalna književnost* 46, no. 1 (2023): 151–67.

born out of wedlock, etc.<sup>3</sup> Govekar herself published articles arguing for the importance of women's right to vote already in 1911.<sup>4</sup> The second organization was the National Council of Women (*Narodna ženska zveza*, NŽZ). Founded in 1919 and affiliated with the International Council of Women (ICW), the NŽZ was the first nationwide union of a significant number of women's organizations across the country. In 1929, the organization was renamed the Yugoslav Council of Women (*Jugoslovanska ženska zveza*, JŽZ). Subsequently, in 1933–34, it decentralized into regional sections; the section gathering all Slovenian women's associations was the *Dravska* Section. Govekar became the JŽZ *Dravska* Section's president from its founding until 1938.<sup>5</sup>

As a leading figure in both of these organizations (as examples will show further below), Govekar particularly pursued social justice, as in her campaign for the first women's hospital in Ljubljana in the 1920s.<sup>6</sup> In the 1930s, within the JŽZ *Dravska* Section, she closely collaborated with the Marxist feminist Angela Vode, at the time vice-president of the Ljubljana *Ženski pokret* organization (also a member of the *Dravska* Section), and through it made many antifascist, feminist, communist, and politically subversive actions possible. Her activism also crossed national borders. Through the JŽZ, Govekar took part in the work of one of the major international women's organizations of the time, the International Council of Women, and was one of the Yugoslav delegates at the 1930 ICW Vienna Congress and at the 1936 ICW Dubrovnik Congress. As she described in a 1935 interview in *Žena in dom* (Woman and the Home), she was happiest when women travelled abroad on their own ("v svet," lit. "in the world"): "We felt the best when there were no men around and we could chat and laugh as we pleased."<sup>7</sup>

According to Govekar, she became interested in feminist issues by reading socialist literature, which is particularly interesting given that her own published texts could hardly be described as socialist. In Govekar's own words, her feminism developed by reading works such as August Bebel's *Die Frau und der*

3 Leskošek, "Minka Govekar," 135. See also Kodrič and Serše, ed., *Splošno žensko društvo*, especially 35–44.

4 Minka Govekar, "Ženske in volilna pravica," *Slovenska gospodinja* 7, no. 5 (1911), 65–67.

5 Jeraj, "Minka Govekar," 152. The JŽZ *Dravska* Section, the most active in the country, had around twenty organizations. For more about the NŽZ/JŽZ and the *Dravska* Section, see Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918–1941* (Beograd: Narodna knjiga: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1978), 163–78, 266–81. Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak, "Yugoslav Women's Movement and 'The Happiness to the World,'" *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 31, no. 4 (2020): 722–44. Isidora Grubački and Irena Selišnik, "The National Women's Alliance in Interwar Yugoslavia. Between the Feminist Reform and Institutional Social Politics," *Women's History Review* 32, no. 2 (2023): 242–60.

6 Leskošek, "Minka Govekar," 135.

7 Ivo Peruzzi, "Minka Govekarjeva: ob 60. letnici rojstva," *Žena in dom* 6, no. 1 (1935), 16–17.

*Sozialismus*, the work of Baltic-German writer Laura Marholm, as well as those of the pioneering Russian female mathematician Sofya Kovalevskaya, the German socialist feminist Lily Braun, and the socialist Adelheid Popp.<sup>8</sup> Govekar's dedication to women's rights and equality was a constant throughout her career. In 1935, she summarized it as: "Equal qualifications, equal duties, as well as equal rights and pay! This was and still is our program!"<sup>9</sup>

However, her publications about women's rights and the improvement of women's position in society were consistently discussed within the framework of national politics and that of the Slovenian nation. This is most visible through her edited volume *Slovenska žena* (The Slovenian Woman, 1926), in which the most important Slovenian women (writers, actors, etc.) were presented. As argued below and showed in the source, one of the central concepts of her feminist political thought was housework, and this is the sphere in which she was active the most, which is also visible from her publications. Before the war, she published the books *Dobra kuharica* (A Good Cook, 1903) and *Dobra gospodinja* (A Good Housewife, 1908), and edited the journal *Slovenska gospodinja* (The Slovenian Housewife, 1905–1914). The topic of housework remained the most common topic in her radio lectures from the mid-1930s and in the magazine *Ženski svet*, where she edited the column "Naš dom" (Our Home) from 1933.

Incredibly respected by her fellow activists, it was not a coincidence that Govekar was one of the central figures in the Slovenian women's and feminist movement. In one of the portraits of Govekar, published in the magazine *Ženski svet* on the occasion of Govekar's election as the JŽZ *Dravska* Section president in 1934, Angela Vode characterized her as honest and a "feminist of a right style," emphasizing that: "Govekar is not a president in name only, but in practice—through her actions, personal commitment, and strong sense of duty, which prevents her from abandoning her calling, especially in times like these, when women feel the ground shifting beneath their feet and united willpower is essential to preserve the few rights that we still have."<sup>10</sup>

**MOST IMPORTANT WORKS:** Minka Govekar, *Dobra kuharica* (Ljubljana: L. Schwentner, 1903); Minka Govekar, *Dobra gospodinja* (Ljubljana: L. Schwentner, 1908); Minka Govekar, ed., *Slovenska žena* (Ljubljana: Jugoslave Express Réclame Company, 1926).

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8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Angela Vode, "Jubilej, ki ga ne moremo prezreti," *Ženski svet* 12, no. 10, October 1934, 233–35.

## Context

The translated text is a radio lecture which Minka Govekar gave on Radio Ljubljana in December 1935 and was a part of the series of lectures “Ženska ura” (Women’s Hour) organized by the *Dravska* Section of the JŽZ and held every Sunday at 4 p.m. to enhance the Section’s visibility and outreach. Their use of radio as a medium to reach women should not surprise us, as the ICW—of which JŽZ was a member—had an interest in broadcasting since the mid 1920s, whereas its Standing Committee on Broadcasting was formally established in 1936.<sup>11</sup> Aside from Minka Govekar, other speakers on these radio broadcasts were the feminist activists Angela Vode, Zlata Pirnat, and Minka Krofta, among others. The transcripts of these talks are held in the personal fond of Minka Govekar in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (SI AS 1666), and are a fascinating source for a better understanding of women’s and feminist activism as well as of feminist political thought in Slovenia at the time.

Minka Govekar addressed female listeners of the “Women’s Hour” on May 12, 1935, introducing the relatively recently reorganized JŽZ and particularly the *Dravska* Section with the following words: “As we do not have yet suffrage rights, this [organization] is our female parliament.” She emphasized the importance of the harmony (*sloga*) and unification (*združitev*) of all women—she listed specifically peasant women, working-class women, and bourgeois women—because “only in harmony, unification, and courage lies strength and success.” The *Dravska* Section is where, she further explained, the women of the whole country could discuss needed changes to the laws which would benefit women and children; women’s equal access to all professions; the protection of motherhood, children, and youth; women’s right to education; the questions of the relation between the household and the economy; on the need for various charity tools; the national question; and many others.<sup>12</sup> Around that time, the *Dravska* Section organized many important initiatives, including public demonstrations demanding the right to abortion for all women; against high prices; against the announced discontinuation of the Female Gymnasium in Ljubljana; as well as against the new Finance Law, which intended to solve the issue of teachers’ unemployment by declaring that a woman working as a teacher can be married only to a teacher; as well as demonstrations to demand equal pay for equal work.<sup>13</sup>

11 Kristin Skoog and Alexander Badenoch, “Mediating Women: The International Council of Women and the Rise of (Trans)National Broadcasting,” *Women’s History Review* (2024), pre-print, 1–21.

12 Arhiv Republike Slovenije, SI AS 1761, Box 2/22, Minka Govekar, Uvodne besede k prvi Ženski uri v radiju, May 12, 1935.

13 Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*. See also Mateja Jeraj, “Slovenska ženska društva med obema vojnama: (1918–1941),” *Arhivi: Glasilo Arhivskega društva in arhivov Slovenije* 23, no. 2 (2000): 53–61.

The question of women's work was, of course, an important topic not only for the *Dravska* Section, but for most women activists in Yugoslavia particularly after the economic crisis, as a women's right to work in public service was under attack. Alojzija Štebi, the leader of the national feminist organization *Alijansa ženskih pokreta* (the Alliance of Women's Movements), had, at least since 1930, been writing in the organization's journal *Ženski pokret* about professional women and the feminist movement.<sup>14</sup> In February 1931, Štebi warned about the "offensive against professional women" (*ofanziva protivu žena u pozivu*), arguing for the absolute necessity of women's right to work outside of the home, in contrast to the other path of forbidding women to receive an education and find work, which would lead to women's complete subordination to their husbands.<sup>15</sup> In 1934, a whole issue of *Ženski pokret* was dedicated to this important issue, following up on a meeting held in Belgrade on February 10, 1934, where organized women reacted to the proposed state budget for 1934–35, according to which many married women would remain without their jobs.<sup>16</sup> On this issue, moreover, the JŽZ issued a resolution it had adopted, demanding that no difference in employment should be made on the basis of sex, but only on the basis of qualifications and abilities.<sup>17</sup>

Govekar supported the abovementioned demonstrations and policies as the president of the *Dravska* Section. Work was one of the central topics she addressed, yet she did it through a focus on housework and domestic life. This was the case with her radio speeches, including the one on the value of housework, translated below.<sup>18</sup> Interpreting this radio speech in the context of Minka Govekar's earlier publications, it becomes clear that besides women's education, equal pay for equal work, and equal professional opportunities,<sup>19</sup> housework has, since the early twentieth century, been one of the central concepts of her feminist political thought.<sup>20</sup> Govekar wrote about housework already in her 1908 book *Dobra gospodinja* (A Good Housewife), where the central point of her argument was that

14 See, for example, Alojzija Štebi, "Žene u pozivu i feministički pokret," *Ženski pokret* 11, no. 1–2 (1930), 1. Alojzija Štebi, "Žene u pozivima i njihove organizacije," *Ženski pokret* 11, no. 17–18 (1930), 1–2.

15 Alojzija Štebi, "Ofanziva protivu žena u pozivu," *Ženski pokret* 12, no. 3–4 (1931), 1.

16 See the whole issue, and especially: "Za pravo na rad," *Ženski pokret* 15, no. 1–2 (1934), 3.

17 "Da li je to socijalna pravda?," *Ženski pokret* 15, no. 1–2 (1934), 9–11.

18 She commonly gave advice on subjects including the necessity of keeping order in the house; the importance of ventilating houses; or the need for women to bathe their children and to help them do their homework. See, for instance, her radio lectures: SI AS 1666, Box 2/100, Minka Govekar, "Red in snaga," radio lecture, May 18, 1933; SI AS 1666, Box 2/103, Minka Govekar, "Higijena stanovanja," radio lecture, October 18, 1933; etc.

19 Peruzzi, "Minka Govekarjeva," 16–17.

20 See also the article about ideological views of women's housework in the nineteenth century: Andrej Studen, "Dobra meščanska gospodinja. Ideološki pogledi na žensko delo v dobi meščanstva," *Žensko delo: delo žensk v zgodovinski perspektivi*, ed. Mojca Šorn, Nina Vodopivec, and Žarko Lazarević (Ljubljana: Založba INZ, 2015).

women had to prepare for their work as mothers and housewives, because this kind of knowledge did not come naturally to women. As she highlighted, “only an enlightened woman can become truly her husband’s equal.”<sup>21</sup> At the time, she framed her argument for women’s right to education by putting an emphasis on women’s contribution to the nation through their biological and cultural reproductive labor. As she argued, “The most important, the most distinguished class is that of the mothers and the housewives, and only a nation of good mothers and great housewives can advance in their education and in their well-being.” Young women of the day, she thought, should find time to read useful books and periodicals, and she noted that the same was true for peasant women.<sup>22</sup>

She continued to publish on various related issues in the magazine *Ženski svet* during and after the 1920s. In 1923, for instance, she advised women that the best way to tie their husbands permanently to the home was to be “good, pleasant, and humble,” a “diligent homemaker,” and “interested in everything the husband is interested in.”<sup>23</sup> Over the course of the 1930s, she focused her attention even more on the issue. At the 1930 JŽZ meeting in Zagreb, in fact, Govekar spoke about the need for the organization of housewives on an economic basis, arguing that this was the question which could unite women of all classes.<sup>24</sup> This materialized in the organization of the *Zveza gospodinj* (Housewives’ Association) and its journal, *Gospodinja* (The Housewife). In her views on housework, Govekar was particularly inspired by organized Czechoslovak women. Thus, in one of her 1932 texts, she praised a lecture held by Růžena Černá, with the main message that women’s contribution to the national economy was immense and that Yugoslav women should be aware of it.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to Govekar’s ideas on housework from the pre-First World War period, she argued in the 1930s for the professionalization of housework, including making it a paid profession. In her 1933 radio lecture “*Gospodinjstvo–poklic*” (Housework: A Profession), of which only a part is preserved, she argued that the professionalization of housework and the “protection of women’s housework” was vital. Govekar explained that this was a demand of many other women’s organizations internationally.<sup>26</sup> In the 1935 radio lecture entitled “The Value of Housework,” Govekar argued that there were three main roles for women toward the nation and the state (in comparison to the period before the World War,

21 Govekar, *Dobra gospodinja*, 12.

22 Ibid.

23 Minka Govekar, “Kako privežem moža trajno na dom,” *Ženski svet* 1, no. 3 (1923), 64–65.

24 Minka Govekar, “Organizacija gospodinj na gospodarski podlagi,” *Ženski svet* 9, no. 1 (1931), 14–17.

25 Minka Govekar, “Pomen žeskega dela v domačem in narodnem gospodarstvu,” *Ženski svet* 10, no. 3 (1932), 80–83. Černá’s book of advice for the home and household work was published in Slovenian in 1937: Růžena Černá, *1400 nasvetov za dom in gospodinjstvo* (Ljubljana: Žena in dom, 1937).

26 SI AS 1666, Box 2/102, Minka Govekar, “Gospodinjstvo–poklic,” radio lecture, June 6, 1933.



when only the nation was mentioned): those of “wife, mother, and housewife.” Emphasizing the value of women’s housework in terms of saving (in this way contributing to the household income, as the “financial minister” of the home) and care work, she demanded the legal recognition of housework as a profession, as well as practical and theoretical courses in all female schools, which would teach women the details of this work. Calling many ignorant, she argued against their prevailing opinion that housework was easy, and that housework was not work. Her comparison of housekeeping with professions such as tailor or baker makes it evident not only that she really did see it as an actual profession, but also that she understood the complexity of the work which was, as she argued, even more difficult, as it encompassed a fusion of different types of work (“a seamstress, a laundress, a housemaid, and a cook again,” etc.). Her views were not isolated, as a similar discourse was present, for instance, in the case of the Belgrade feminist organization *Ženski pokret* and their member Darinka Lacković, who worked with peasant women and argued for the professionalization of peasant women’s work along the similar lines.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, while arguing for the importance of household labor, her discourse solidified the gendered division of labor in the household, which would, with her suggestions, become institutionalized as well.

Minka Govekar’s intervention was a part of the broader story of the politics of organized women who, in the interwar period, focused their attention on the issue of housework. As historian Jelena Tešija recently argued, the International Cooperative Women’s Guild in this period “treated household labor as a policy issue worthy of discussion at the international level.”<sup>28</sup> In the “Housewives’ Programme” adopted by the ICWG Committee in 1933 and later used for international advocacy, various aspects of women’s housework were addressed, not excluding the “double burden of housework and industrial or agricultural employment.”<sup>29</sup> The issue of housework was also discussed at the conferences of the ICW, particularly in Vienna in 1930 and in Dubrovnik in 1936. While this remains an important avenue for further research, at this point it is important to note that Slovenian women—led by Minka Govekar—contributed greatly in this regard, proposing that a new household economics committee within the ICW should be established.<sup>30</sup>

27 Cf. Isidora Grubački, “Women Activists’ Relation to Peasant Women’s Work in the 1930s Yugoslavia,” in *Women, Work and Agency: Chapters of an Inclusive History of Labor in the Long Twentieth Century*, ed. Eloisa Betti, Silke Neunsinger, Leda Papastefanaki, Marica Tolomelli, and Susan Zimmermann (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2022), 211–33.

28 Jelena Tešija, “Millions of Working Housewives’: The International Co-Operative Women’s Guild and Household Labour in the Interwar Period,” *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 31, no. 2 (May 4, 2023): 331.

29 Ibid., 334.

30 S.E., “Kongres mednarodne ženske zveze (CIF) v Dubrovniku,” *Ženski svet* 14, no. 11 (1936), 250–54.



## Acknowledgement

This contribution is a result of the research program Political History (P6-0281) and bilateral project Gender and Intellectual History in Serbian and Slovenian Periodical Press in the 20th Century (BI-RS/23-25-012), both funded by the Public Agency for Research and Innovation of the Republic of Slovenia (ARIS).

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## MINKA GOVEKAR

### “The Value of Housework”

As wives, mothers, and housewives, women single-handedly perform three vital tasks for the benefit of the nation and the state. They represent the central axis around which every family revolves, grows, and prospers, while family represents the smallest but most important unit of the national and state formation.... A family is like a small cell in a honeycomb, and all the cells collectively form the kingdom of bees. Similarly, a country consists of millions of families led, governed, and sustained by the care, labor, and love of women as mothers and housewives.

The tasks performed by mothers and housewives are therefore distinctive and essential for the well-being of their families and thus the entire country. And yet, most average men believe that housekeeping is but a minor task that can be accomplished with minimal effort. Naturally, the more skilled the housewife is, the faster she gets the work done—and the less she talks about it, the less recognition she receives.

Every day, we listen to ignorant men counting women's blessings: You can remain carefree and enjoy staying at home, while housework is just something to keep you entertained, while we, the husbands, bring money home to you.

These men are unaware that housewives must divide each day into countless parts. Each craftsman focuses his attention only on the work he performs. A cobbler focuses on the shoes he is making, a tailor on the suit, a joiner on the table, a glazier on the windowpane, a baker on the pastry... All the paths of reason and will are directed toward a single goal: the object in their hands. Hence, they all perform the jobs they have learned and trained for according to precise rules so that they can do them routinely, mechanically, and without much mental effort.

Meanwhile, the housewife's profession is a complex calling, consisting of exceedingly diverse and sometimes diametrically opposing tasks and actions. She is required to adapt instantly to ever-changing situations: a moment ago, she was just a mother, while in the next one, she must turn into a cook; she has not yet prepared the meal but might need to attend to her sick children as a nurse or even a doctor; her boys need help with their homework and the girls with handicrafts. Then, she must become a seamstress, a laundress, a housemaid, and a cook again. For a change, she might also need to dig, plant, and weed the garden, whitewash and paint the kitchen, and take care of hundreds of little things that make the home cozy and comfortable. In the meantime, she is supposed to take care of her appearance, educate herself, and be a pleasant companion, co-worker, and wife to her husband.

She cannot focus completely and entirely on any single task, yet each one demands her entire attention. She is supposed to do everything subtly and silently, and by no means should the husband notice that she might not always be present with all her mind and heart. He could resent it and look elsewhere for company.

That is how multifaceted middle- and lower-class housewives must be. The professional work of every lowliest worker, every maid, is recognized and paid. Only a housewife—who is often a mother, cook, housekeeper, teacher, educator, and handyman all at once—is legally without a profession, earnings, or any means of her own. She is a person without any rights who—without a considerate husband and her own possessions—must beg for every pair of socks, every dress, and every hat.

Few people consider how much, for example, a housewife saves by doing all the household chores herself without a housekeeper's aid, therefore performing all the work that would otherwise need to be paid. She saves the expenses of the housekeeper's monthly salary, food, housing, lighting, cleaning, laundry, insurance, Christmas presents, etc. If we add up all these expenses, plus the housekeeper's salary, the total amounts to at least 700 dinars. On top of all that, a housewife sews, mends, raises the children and helps them with their studies. Of course, housewives usually spend money more prudently, take care of every little thing, and do not break or ruin so many things. These savings can be calculated at a minimum of 300 dinars per month, meaning that a housewife earns at least 1000 dinars per month with her housework. From time to time, it is necessary to express the housewife's work in figures because many husbands claim that housework is not work at all and that wives contribute nothing to the household's prosperity. However, any considerate and just person must recognize that housework performed by the wife

should count as the family's income in the same manner as the husband's wages. The price of housework increases with the number of family members. Consequently, the work of a busy housewife and mother of a large family can often exceed her husband's earnings. How, then, can we even begin to evaluate the work of the many wives employed in a profession, who—usually at night—also take care of all the housework and mothering at home? We must consider and assess all of this so as not to underestimate the wives' earnings—either as housewives, professional workers, or both.

However, even a housewife who takes care of the household, her husband, and children with the help of a housekeeper should not be denied the value of her work. If she knows how to divide up the chores between herself and the housekeeper, keeping a watchful eye to make sure nothing is wasted at home while, as we say, doing wonders for the house from dawn till dusk, she can save a lot of money, meaning that her work is profitable.

Housewives' and mothers' lives are full of self-sacrifice and self-denial, especially in these times of widespread crises. Those housewives who know how to distribute work, income, and expenses fairly and reasonably; make wise and thorough use of food, fuel, warmth, clothing, footwear, time, and their spiritual and physical powers; and practically conjure things out of thin air without abundant resources—such housewives and educators do not work only with their hands and bodies but are also intellectual workers who deserve to have their multifaceted work valued and paid for like any other independent profession.

The legal recognition of housework, demanded by women in all cultured countries and already ensured in some places, would boost women's confidence, will, and energy to stand before the world and their families ever more steadfast and reinvigorated. It would enhance their sense of responsibility.

Like the prudent financial minister of her family, a contemporary wife would claim a reward for herself only once even the smallest life necessities of her husband and children have been covered, as is the case in the homes of all noble women today. I believe that most housewives still put their family first and only then take care of themselves.

This is primarily a question of recognition but nonetheless also of money.

...

Naturally, the world will only consider housework a profession if the wife truly excels in it and deserves this title. Each woman owes this to the community.

Every profession demands serious training, education, and professional skills, and contemporary housework demands it in particular.

Many girls marry without any housework skills. They think that this is something you learn in marriage. How dearly must they pay for their mistakes, inexperience, and belated education!

Neither a primary nor middle nor secondary school certificate can guarantee that a woman will meet the requirements of a good housewife. Therefore, in addition to general and professional education, practical housework skills are necessary and should be acquired by every girl, whether she marries or not. If she will not be doing housework for her husband and children, she will be doing it for herself.

It is high time that all girls' schools, without exception, introduce practical and theoretical instruction during the entire final year of schooling, covering all types of housework. On paper, in the curriculum, such instruction has been approved for a long time, while in reality, it is nowhere to be found. Among other things, we lack a sufficient number of housework skills teachers and, above all, a school to train them.

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Therefore, housework education must also be a priority for the relevant authorities because anyone can see that prosperity only prevails in nations with virtuous housewives. The prosperity of our national economy largely depends on how the issue of housework is solved.

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That is why contemporary women who faithfully and skillfully perform their duties as mothers and housewives are just as valuable as their husbands. There is a reason for the old saying that the wife supports three corners of the house. It is no secret that a good housewife performs chores around the house that her husband could never do. It would thus only be fair and just for the public to recognize this work as a proper profession that should also be legally protected.

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