MOST MODERN - THE NORDIC OR THE SOVIET RUSSIAN MARRIAGE MODEL?

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With its far-reaching aim to promote secularisation and individualisation of marriage and equality between the sexes, the Nordic family laws in the Interwar period is viewed as perhaps the most progressive and modern in Europe at the time. However, the family laws that were passed at the same time (early 20s) in the new, Soviet Russia can in fact be considered being much more radical - modern? - in the above mentioned aspects. This paper deals with the background of the ultra radical Russian family laws of the 20s. To what degree were these laws rooted in the professional groups and political/social movements of Tsarist Russia (pro-reformist lawyers, women's organizations, liberal and socialist parties) that had worked to achieve a modernized family code since the turn of the last century? And to what degree was the legislation the result of Marxist intentions to reshape the society according to classical Marxist theories on family and women's question, such as Engels, Bebel, and Zetkin?

The Soviet marriage legislation and the prerequisites for issuing the marriage laws are being compared to the Nordic marriage model (cf. Melby, Rosenbeck, Carlsson Wetterberg et al. in various recent publications) and its prehistory. In this comparative analysis the underlying question is: "How to explain the similarity in legislation with such evident differences in the historical background?"