Left of Desire

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Alexandra Kollontai in the Ukraine as
People's Commissar for Propaganda, 1919

1

Post Soviet societies, most notably the new Russian Federation, have become object lessons in the barbarity of capitalism, the "free" market and neoliberal economics. Not only is this stark reality not acknowledged but it is also mystified by ready alibis that explain away or suture over the raw reality of capitalist exploitation in which the very few are profiting at the expense of the vast majority. "Russia today," according to *The Economist*, "is a land of unpaid wages, unpaid taxes, strikes, subsistence, dubious privatization, clapped-out industry, crime, corruption, pollution, poverty. It is a land of excess vodka and early death" ("A Survey of Russia" 4). Russia's economy has been so severely gutted by the neo-liberal, free market reforms that it is "smaller now than that of the Netherlands" ("Bleak and Bloody Russia" 15).

The deterioration of the situation of women under the free market in Russia has been especially devastating. While women made up 48 percent of the labor force in the Soviet Union, following privatization and market reforms, women now constitute 70 percent of the unemployed. As some researchers have observed, "From its very beginning the new wave of unemployment was disproportionately affecting women. Since the first months of Russian independence, the frequently quoted 70:30 female:male ratio among the unemployed has been one of the few apparently stable factors in an ever-changing landscape."[1] In some areas, however, the unemployment figures are now as high as 90 per cent (Munoz and Woods 9). Women have been "doubly disadvantaged" by privatization and the move to market-oriented and profit-making enterprises: "firstly, because they are perceived as unattractive and costly employees by the new labour market; and secondly, because they are the most acutely affected by the loss of the social wage" (Bridger, et al. 68). Thus, along with the loss of their jobs and livelihood, women especially have been adversely affected by the loss of the extended network of social benefits, including housing, health care, child care and social welfare supports. As a result, "poverty in the new Russia predominantly has a female face" (74). What minimal benefits still exist are seriously inadequate: child benefits (that is, child support payments from the state) are, according to Bridger, Kay and Pinnick, 60-70 percent of the minimum wage, which obviously is well below the level of subsistence. The situation of many women now is subsistence survival. As one jobless Russian women describes her situation:

> I left school with a distinction, went to a top-class institute and this is what happens! I've been on six-month courses, I even did English for six months-technical translation, I've been to lots of institutes, and look at me! It's incredibly upsetting. And it's a catastrophe for the country, a catastrophe. (Bridger, et al. 161)

This "catastrophic sense of life" is repeatedly articulated in a series of interviews conducted with St. Petersburg families by a Finnish-Russian research project (directed by Jussi Simpura). Responding to the "shock economics" during the so-called radical reforms of 1993-94--which included high unemployment, price liberalization, inflation, severe cutbacks in state financing of social services, including education and health care, the privatization of housing and industrial enterprises and lead to a serious fall in the living standards--one "32-year-old woman, housewife" said: "Sometimes I become hysterical, because I have nothing to feed my children the next day. So I ask my husband: how shall we live? Go, I don't know where, and do something" (Eremicheva 153-5).

For the majority of Russians, this catastrophic situation has continued to deteriorate. While unemployment was "5.5% in 1993" it increased to "9.5%" in 1997, but "many economists put the true figure much higher," and the amount of wages in arrears rose to 26 per cent of the GDP ("A Survey of Russia" 5). Although the number of people living below subsistence levels has dropped from a high of 35 per cent in 1994, poverty remains widespread. In 1997 "22% of Russians, or 32m people, [were] living below the official poverty line" set at "394,000 roubles--$70--a month. . . . And after five years of economic

reform, life expectancy has dropped from 74 years in 1992 to 72 for women and from 62 years to 58 for men. That places Russia roughly on a par with Kenya" (5).

The dominant rhetoric of neo-liberal reformers--in Russia and the West--that privatization and the "free market" would liberate women from their "double burden" and improve people's living standards by providing greater access to consumer products and services has proven to be a painful fantasy. In actuality, fewer and fewer people have the resources to consume anything more than the basics, and increasingly many lack the resources even for the most basic needs. In a 1994 survey conducted by the All-Russia Centre for Public Opinion Research, "59 per cent of respondents said they spent almost their entire income on food; 19 per cent spent two-thirds; and 15 per cent approximately half" (Bridger, et al. 58).

We cannot hope to understand the reality of women in the former Soviet Union and the catastrophic changes that have occurred in their lives without critique-ally reexamining the role of capitalism and its relation to gender and sexuality. This is a particularly difficult issue to raise not only for feminists in the West but also for many in Russia as well. It is now a dogma passed on as a "new" reality that socialism is a failed experiment that has little to teach us about emancipation. I leave aside here the fact that, under the influence of neoliberal theories, the very project of emancipation itself is now under attack by such revisionist ideologues as Ernesto Laclau and others who, following Foucault's lead, have now convinced themselves that the project of human emancipation was yet another misguided "Enlightenment" project and should be abandoned in favor of the free market, which is rewritten as an unrestrained plurality of differences and nondetermination (Laclau, "Beyond Emancipation"). The question for the neoliberal thinkers who have eagerly embraced cybertechnologies in the West is no longer the emancipation of humans but emancipation from the human (see for example, Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women,* and Halberstam and Livingston, ed. *Posthuman Bodies*).

The assumption that socialism has failed is part of a bourgeois will to ignorance in relation to both capitalism and socialism. There is no question that the distortions of socialism in the former Soviet Union negatively affected many women who were subjected to problems of gender discrimination and inequality--marked most clearly by the notion of women's "double burden"--but at the same time socialism (even in its proto-forms) significantly provides for the needs of women and children. Few feminists have engaged in a sustained discussion as to why socialism, particularly in the Soviet Union, has been so contradictory in its treatment of women. In the Soviet Union, for example, not only did women benefit substantially from the extensive network of social services-from housing to medical and child care and "old-age" pensions--they also had considerable access to higher education, professional training and non-traditional jobs (including doctors, engineers, research scientists), and yet, at the same time, they experienced gender differentiation in wages with women, as a whole, earning less than men. In short, there has not been sufficient analysis of the specific historical, economic and political conditions that have made it difficult for socialism to fulfill its commitment to women, and how these problems can be avoided in the future. Instead the shortcomings of Soviet socialism have become a handy excuse to avoid a sustained

critique of the relations of gender, sexuality and capitalism east and west. Indeed this lack has been more of a convenient alibi for feminists to dismiss socialism and embrace various forms of free market and neoliberal economics.

Gayatri Spivak is especially exemplary of this dilemma, although she is not quite as ready as most to abandon socialism entirely. In an interview in *Socialist Review*, she indicates that she is not so much for socialism as she is not against it: "like you," she says to her interviewer, "I would not like to call myself an antisocialist" (18). She resists "capital (big) `D' development" in favor of "small 'c' capitalist or small 'd' development" (5). In other words, in the "third world" or "Southern" sphere, she supports "indigenous capital"--that is small scale, local, entrepreneurial capitalism: capitalism with a friendly face. She goes on to say that, "unlike many advocates of radical democracy, I'm not so ready to throw Marx away. I do agree that old-style capital-labor Marxism can't be the dominant model" (7). But if we jettison labor, with what kind of Marxism are we left? A Marx, Spivak says who talks about the "nonutilization of capital for capitalism. It's like the difference between starving and dieting" (7). We are talking she says about "restricting" capital, about "social redistribution." But the way Spivak "digests" Marxist analysis--to use her phrase--is no Marxism at all. For she erases the most fundamental thesis of Marxism: capital is the appropriation of surplus labor--it is the "theft," Marx says, of the labor of the workers. Marxism is a revolutionary theory and practice to abolish the exploitation of people's labor--not a model for a more "humane" or "restricted' exploitation that is more generously "redistributed." The "struggle between capitalism and socialism" for Spivak has been reduced, she says, to "the struggle between international capital and local self-management" (8)--but this is simply a struggle over how to manage capitalism--not about transforming capitalism. It is not about abolishing capitalism and ending the exploitation of people's labor. Spivak completely overlooks the fundamental reality of capitalism which is the ever-increasing dispossession of people from owning property and the means of production, turning them into wage laborers

In contrast to Spivak's benign view, the violence and exploitation of capitalism is on ready display in Russia today. The "'New Russian' entrepreneurs," write Nancy Holmstrom and Richard Smith,

> plunged into a hellish free-for-all of 'grabification'--a brutal struggle to steal everything they could get their hands on. They plundered the nation's wealth of natural resources, sold state-owned gold, diamonds, oil, gas, Siberian forests, even plutonium, and unloaded them on the West to amass their private fortunes. And, as we've seen in the money-laundering scandals of late, they also privatized billions of dollars of western aid. (7)

The Economist celebrates this "transfer of property into private hands" as "the biggest in history," but then goes on to report that "about $65 billion may have left the country since 1992," leaving little resources to reinvest in the Russian economy or for taxes--about 40-50 per cent of taxes due were uncollected in 1996 ("Survey of Russia" 11). The privatization of property is concentrated in the hands of a very few new capitalists: the most prominent of the "new tycoons is a group of seven businessmen, almost all

bankers," who claim "to control . . . about half the Russian economy" (5). This is accompanied by the emergence of the vast majority as a "propertyless proletariat dispossessed of the means of production and subsistence and, consequently with nothing to sell but their capacity to labor" (Holmstrom and Smith 2). "Society," under capitalism, as Marx writes in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, "as a whole is splitting up more and more into two great hostile camps, into great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (90). In their study of the "process of primitive accumulation" and concentration of capital in the "gangster capitalism" of the new Russia, Holmstrom and Smith, show how the "emergence of these two great social classes" which is "the indispensable condition for the operation and development of capitalist production" is occurring in "the post-Communist world . . . under the banner of 'market reform'" (3). This process of privatization and dispossession is a brutal process indeed, involving, what one critic calls the "endless collapse of everything essential to a decent existence" (Holmstrom and Smith 6). Specifically it has entailed the destruction of the "social property rights" guaranteed under communism. As Holmstrom and Smith argue,

> under communism, Russian workers certainly did not own the means of production, but they did, and many still do, in a real sense 'own' their jobs. They had long-established rights to housing, state-provided medical care, childcare, and numerous subsidies from the state . . . Divested, 'freed' from control, possession, or ownership of the means of production, the majority of people in the former Soviet Union are forced to come to the market with, in Marx's words, 'nothing to sell but their skins.' (6).

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The ruinous impact of capitalism and the free market on Russia makes the question of the relations of gender, sexuality and capitalism unavoidable. It also opens up a space for a serious reconsideration of the early Soviet and Bolshevik experiments in order to revaluate some of the revolutionary possibilities socialism has raised for the emancipation of women. Of special importance here is the work of Alexandra Kollontai who was an acute critic of capitalism as well as an unrelenting revolutionary theorist and critic on behalf of the development of a true worker's society and the full emancipation of working women. Not only was she a critic of capitalism, but, more important, she had a profound revolutionary understanding of the radical changes that the nascent socialist society would need to make from the beginning if it were not to reproduce the gender inequalities and sexual hypocrisy of capitalism in a new form.

Alexranda Kollontai is, I believe, a touchstone for us today in our efforts to try to understand the relation of women to both capitalism and socialism and to think beyond the historical limits of existing society to envision the fundamentals of an egalitarian, non-exploitative and post-gender future. But to re-read Kollontai today raises questions not only about the revolutionary value of her work but also about the historicity of our own reading. To avoid subsuming her revolutionary insights, we need to read dialectically between the current historical situation as well as the one out of which

Kollontai was writing--turning our critique-al attention not only to the limits in which she worked but also to the limits of our own situation, including the post-Soviet realities as well as the resurgence of anti-socialist ideologies in the neo-liberal marketplace.

One of the first problems is the way knowledge about Kollontai has been erased from the cultural memory. Aside from a brief revival of interest in the seventies and early eighties, Kollontai is largely forgotten among feminists and socialists alike. As a Marxist revolutionary and Bolshevik, Kollontai struggled for the economic, social and sexual emancipation of women in Europe and Russia during the first decades of the century. She played a leading role in the revolutionary struggles of the time and was considered, along with Trotsky and Lunacharsky, to be among the most dynamic speakers for the Russian Revolution (Kollontai 108). She was also a key participant in the formation of the early Soviet state, becoming the first to head the Department of Social Welfare in the new Soviet Union and later the head of the Women's Department. Kollontai summed up her own life by saying that "women and their fate occupied me all my life and concern for their lot brought me to socialism" (30). She was deeply committed to the class struggle and convinced that the emancipation of women required not only the end of capitalism but also a concerted effort to transform personal relations along with the struggle for social change. As part of this effort, she worked especially hard to make socialism responsive to the needs of women and children and to create a new communist sexual morality for a worker's state--she pioneered in the development of social welfare and collective child care; in the reform of marriage and property laws; in freeing women from the isolated drudgery of the home and collectivization of domestic work, and in articulating a new theory of sexuality for a collective society. But Kollontai was also a prominent critic of the bureaucratization and dominant economic policies of the early Soviet state. This lead, especially under Stalin, to her being largely discredited and her ideas suppressed as she was, in effect, exiled to a series of diplomatic posts from which she was not allowed to return until the last years of her life.

But this is all largely forgotten. If Kollontai is remembered at all, it is likely to be a misrecognition of her as a proponent of the "glass of water theory" of sexuality, which was commonly seen as a defense of promiscuity and "free love"--the idea that sex should be as accessible and easily satisfied as quenching one's thirst by drinking a glass of water. However, Kollontai not only did not originate the "glass of water theory," her anti-bourgeois theories developed a much more complex view that understood sexuality as both a social and historical relation (see Kollontai 13, Clements 231). Nonetheless, charges of sexual extremism, including the "glass of water theory," have been widely attributed to Kollontai--both in the West and in the Soviet Union (most recently by Francine du Plessix Gray in her *Soviet Women* 94)--as a way of ideologically distorting and undermining her transformative understanding of human interpersonal relations and social change.

As we approach Kollontai and the issue of a red theory of sexuality today, we have to contend with even more ideological distortions--not the least of which is the attempt to suppress the history of revolutionary workers' movements and class struggle and the efforts to try to reduce Marxism to an accommodationist postmarxism. We read Kollontai

at a time when the socialist emancipation of women has been largely discredited, in East and West alike, and when many (former) socialist feminists, particularly in the West, have embraced, as I have already suggested, poststructuralist politics and neo-liberal economics. It is also a time when theories of sexuality are dominated by discourses of desire, and the separation of sexuality from class has become a commonplace truism, making the autonomy of desire one of the deepest bourgeois "Truths." As a result, sexual liberation--that is, the unrestrained play of desire and consuming of sensuality--is now widely seen as the marker of human freedom.

Such positions are completely antithetical to the revolutionary class-consciousness and profoundly materialist understanding that Kollontai brought to her work on sexuality. Throughout her political writings, public speeches and fiction as well as in her political work, Kollontai consistently held to historical materialist principles and a revolutionary commitment to the emancipation of women and the workers' struggle, and especially a radical reunderstanding of bourgeois notions of sexuality and love.

The core principle around which her work is developed is first, a rigorous materialist analysis of the historically varied forms of love and sexuality and their class basis. Second an unwavering commitment to the role and importance of the workers' collective in building the new society and in shaping interpersonal relations. Third, the firm conviction that effective social change involves the dialectical interrelation of ideological struggle and economic change. In "Sexual Relations and Class Struggle," Kollontai criticizes the:

> idea that proletarian sexual morality is no more than 'superstructure,' and that there is no place for any change in this sphere until the economic base of society has been changed. As if the ideology of a certain class is formed only when the breakdown in the socio-economic relationships, guaranteeing the dominance of that class, has been completed! All the experience of history teaches us that a social group works out its ideology, and consequently its sexual morality, in the process of its struggle with hostile social forces. (249)

Kollontai argued, in other words, for the necessity of carrying out ideological struggle over the structure of gender and sexual relations *simultaneously* with the social and economic struggles. This is, I think, one of the most crucial lessons Kollontai can teach us. What is at stake here is the dialectical relation between base and superstructure in the most specific ways. In working out its "ideology, and consequently its sexual morality, in the process of its struggle with hostile social forces," the social group is not only struggling to change consciousness it is also working out its priorities for social change. In this dialectical relation, the ideological struggle helps shape the priorities to develop (or under-develop) the socio-economic structures necessary to support new social relations and the new revolutionary consciousness.

Kollontai was quite aware of this dynamic--as she made clear in her last public speech in 1926 "On Marriage and Everyday Life " (300-11). The ideological struggle at the time

between a resurgence of petty-bourgeois notions of an entrenched, patriarchal family as opposed to the "new lifestyles" of the proletariat was a result, Kollontai argued, of the "class contradictions" still existing in the new society. The emancipation of women, she contended, required a political commitment of economic resources to provide for the welfare of women (many of whom were unemployed and still involved in domestic labor) in order to free them from financial dependency on individual men and patriarchal property relations and to enable them to become full and productive members of the labor force. Thus she argued repeatedly for a "worker's state" that "aims to support every mother, married or unmarried, while she is suckling her child, and to establish maternity homes, day nurseries and other such facilities in every city and village, in order to give women the opportunity to combine work in society with maternity" (257). In short, the "socialist approach," for Kollontai meant a profound social and material commitment to women so that "every woman has the right to desire and strive to be free from anxieties when bringing up her child, and to be free from the fear that some day she and the child will find themselves in need and without any means of sustenance" (308-309).

There was important political and ideological support among the more radical Bolsheviks for this understanding of the "socialist approach" to the situation of women. The Communist Party program in 1919 declared that it was "not confining itself to formal equality of women, the party strives to liberate them from the material burdens of obsolete household work by replacing it by communal houses, public eating places, central laundries, nurseries, etc." (quoted in Munoz and Woods 5). But these goals were largely overwhelmed by the social and economic circumstances of the time--including the devastation of a world war with its massive destruction of the economy, the social infrastructure, and the population, followed by revolution and civil war--as well as by the resurgence of reactionary ideologies and economic and political practices that increasingly came to the fore with the New Economic Program (NEP) and the rise of bureaucratic centralism. The high rates of unemployment in these years, as well as the political conflicts over how to allocate scarce resources meant that women's economic needs were considerably short changed. As Trotsky explained in 1923,

> The workers' state must become wealthier in order that it may be possible seriously to tackle the public education of children and the releasing of the family from the burden of the kitchen and laundry. Socialisation of family housekeeping and public education of children are unthinkable without a marked improvement in our economics as a whole. We need more socialist economic forms. Only under such conditions can we free the family from the functions and cares that now oppress and disintegrate it. ("From the Old Family to the New" 26)

Lacking the economic means for substantial material reforms in women's condition, the early Soviet state focused its progressive efforts on legislative and political changes, making significant advances on this front. As Lenin quite rightly pointed out, on the second anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution: "In the course of two years of Soviet power in one of the most backward countries of Europe more has been done to emancipate woman, to make her the equal of the 'strong' sex, than has been done during

the past 130 years by all the advanced, enlightened, 'democratic' republics of the world taken together" ("Soviet Power and the Status of Women," *Collected Works,* 30, 122). This progressiveness extended to all issues of sexuality as well, including homosexuality. "Soviet legislation," according to the Director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, Dr. Grigorii Batkis, writing in 1923, "bases itself on the following principle: *It declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as no one's interests are encroached upon*. Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality--Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse (quoted in The 1917 Collective, "Capitalism and Homophobia" 375).

This "government by proclamation," as Gail Lapidus notes, "was the least costly of mechanisms for social change, but it symbolized the commitment of the new regime to new values" (58). And it did indeed lead to considerable changes in the situation of women, lesbigays and others. Many of these legislative changes, Lapidus argues, provided "the juridical foundation for women's economic independence." Some of the more noteworthy legal and political advances included granting full citizenship to women; legislating an end to gender and sexual discrimination and restrictions on women's freedom of movement; establishing the basic principle of equal pay for equal work; substantially changing property relationships and inheritance laws thereby weakening male authority; giving women "equal rights to hold land, to act as heads of households;" mandating revolutionary changes in the family code such as lifting restrictions on divorce, recognizing "unregistered marriages" and legalizing abortion, and in the "Moslem communities of Central Asia," outlawing such common practices against women as "abduction, forced marriage, the payment of *kalym* (bride price), and polygamy" (59-61).

But Lenin was clear that this was not enough:

> Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins. ("A Great Beginning" 429)

However, it was only after Lenin's death with the rapid economic progress of the "Five Year Plans" under Stalin that women were incorporated into the labor force in significant numbers; by 1939 women made up "41.6 percent" of the industrial labor force and "an even higher proportion of manual laborers" (Lapidus 99). It is this economic growth that, as Lapidus put it, made "the desirable objective"--to create "a network of public child-care institutions and communal services"--a "pressing economic need" (98).

But while the economic conditions for the emancipation of women were finally developing, the political and ideological situation had changed substantially by the 1930's. The "all-out struggle" Lenin called for to emancipate women was largely derailed by the defeat of the workers in their efforts to "wield the state power." The Soviet Union became a "deformed worker's state" in which, Trotsky argued, "the bureaucracyshattered the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat" (92) and "defeated the program of Lenin" (94). For, "by freeing the bureaucracy from the control of the proletarian vanguarddemocratic centralism gave place to bureaucratic centralism" (98). In this climate, according to Trotsky, "the growth of the productive forces has been accompanied by an extreme development of all forms of inequality, privilege and advantage, and therewith of bureaucratism" (112). One of the mainstays of both this productive growth and the inequality was a reinscription of forms of the gender division of labor in the Soviet Union--such as the feminization of some industries (e.g. textiles, health care) and the gendered wage inequities--which continued up through Perestroika and contributed to the violent discrimination against women and exclusion from the labor force that we see under market reforms.

Thus, instead of fulfilling the Bolshevik goals of emancipating women from economic inequality, the tyranny of domestic labor and patriarchal family relations, the rise of bureaucratic centralism in the Soviet Union "strengthened not the socialist, but the bourgeois features of the state" and supported a reactionary revival of the family, an inadequacy of social services for workers (day care, public canteens, etc.), the criminalization of homosexuality, and promoted a gender division of labor, including women's "double burden" of full time work both outside the home and within it. This "retreat," Trotsky argued, meant that

> marriage and family laws established by the October revolution, once the object of its legitimate pride, are being made over and mutilated by vast borrowings from the law treasuries of bourgeois countries[it] not only assumes forms of disgusting hypocrisy, but also is going infinitely farther than the iron economic necessity demands. To the objective causes producing this return to such bourgeois forms as the payment of alimony, there is added the social interest of the ruling stratum in the deepening of bourgeois law. The most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by means of 40,000,000 points of support for authority and power" (153)

In other words, the contradictory practices toward women and sexuality in the Soviet Union can be explained in part by the centrality of women's labor for economic growth which accounts for women's unprecedented access to high levels of education and professional work--unavailable to women in the West until recently--and to social services such as child care (however inadequate) to enable their participation. At the same time the domination of an authoritarian bureaucratic centralism as "the planter and protector of inequality" (Trotsky 113) depended in large part on the gender divisions of labor and the reinstatement of the patriarchal, heterosexual family to maintain its power

and privileges. As Wilhelm Reich has argued, about the "compulsory family: the patriarchal family is the structural and ideological breeding ground of all social orders based on the authoritarian principle. . . . [T]he replacement of the patriarchal family by the workers' collective is the core of the revolutionary cultural problem" (186-187).

3

With the abandonment of socialism women's situation has deteriorated substantially. Women have lost what advantages they had under socialism in terms of both employment and social benefits. The already existing gender segregation of a number of occupations has led to the massive unemployment or "redundancy" of women as many of the sectors in which women dominated--from the textile industries to health services--have been drastically cut back or almost completely closed down, leaving women to constitute more than 70 per cent, and in some cases 90 percent, of the unemployed, as I have already indicated. Those women who remain employed in the state financed sectors (health care, education, sciences, government "planning and accounts". . .) after market reforms frequently receive wages "below the level of subsistence" and "half the level of the industrial wage" when they are paid (Bridger, et al. 42-43). The feminization of unemployment and poverty, as women also lose the social benefits--maternity and child benefits, "bread benefits," health care and housing support--on which they have depended, is combined with the revival of semi-feudal patriarchal relations under the "free market" reforms. Those women who do find employment are now subjected to virulent gender discrimination and sexual harassment, referred to as "'sexual aggression' or 'sexual terror'" and considered by many young women, "the main problem facing women entering the labour market" (Bridger, et al. 179). Sexual harassment has now reached a new level of intensity: women, who are often the sole breadwinner for their families, are losing their jobs as a result of this new "sexual terror" if they dare refuse sexual advances.

This "sexual terror" is only one side of the revival of a semi-feudal patriarchalism with market reforms, that is with the return to a system of commodity exchange and private ownership of the means of production. The other side is the pervasive, anti-women's emancipation, "back to home" movement, particularly strong among nationalists, but also popular with businesses and government. The widespread propaganda against women in the workforce has solved several problems: it has been an "easy" way to carry out the necessary reduction of the labor force. Historically, "the capitalist system," Munoz and Woods write, "regards women merely as a convenient source of cheap labour and part of the 'reserve army of labour' to be drawn on when there is a shortage of labour in certain areas of production, and discarded again when the need disappears" (1). The massive unemployment of women with the turn to capitalism in Russia foregrounds this harsh reality which is currently sutured over by the labor shortages in the West. Purging women from the work force also reduces, if not eliminates, costly payments to women for child care and maternity benefits and reinforces gender inequalities, promoting men as the sole breadwinner and authority in the family. As one social observer, Galina Iakusheva, noted, parliamentary candidates in 1990 shared a common logic:

> Make women sit at home with their children for about three years. That will make them financially dependent on their husbands and it will make the husbands more responsible. That way women won't go rushing off to petition for divorce so easily. . . . Centuries of human experience show us that materially dependent women don't leave their husbands, like serfs don't leave the village. (cited in Bridger, et al. 36-37).

The return of capitalism and the private ownership of property to Russia is accompanied by the revival of some of the worst conditions of pre-Soviet capitalism, especially in regards to the situation of women. "In the era of private property and the bourgeois-capitalist economic system," Kollontai wrote more than seventy-five years earlier, "marriage and the family are grounded in (a) material and financial considerations, (b) economic dependence of the female sex on the family breadwinner--the husband--rather than the social collective . . ." (225). She goes on to critique this regressive form of family so useful to capitalism: "the capitalists," she argued,

> are well aware that the old type of family, where the woman is a slave and where the husband is responsible for the well-being of his wife and children, constitutes the best weapon in the struggle to stifle the desire of the working class for freedom and to weaken the revolutionary spirit of the working man and working woman. The worker is weighed down by his family cares and is obliged to compromise with capital. The father and mother are ready to agree to any terms when their children are hungry. (Kollontai, 257)

The irony of the "back to home" movement and all the parliamentary efforts advocating the "male breadwinner" and family wages, is that wages are so low, if they are paid at all, a great many families are barely living at subsistence levels--with little time, energy or opportunity to organize or protest "when their children are hungry." The situation is such that for many the only way of surviving is through a grotesque market in which people, particularly women, buy and sell to each other for a little profit (if possible) whatever commodities they can get hold of by bartering, making them, trying to buy low and trade up, or subsistence farming. As one woman, M. Baskakova, commented in a 1993 interview: "The only thing the whole country is living on is black market trading. You don't register anywhere, you buy here and sell there until they catch you. And this is the only thing that allows people to survive" (Bridger, et al. 148).

4

The socialist principle Kollontai fought for so relentlessly that "every woman has the right to desire and strive to be free from anxieties when bringing up her child, and to be free from the fear that some day she and the child will find themselves in need and without any means of sustenance" (308-309) is completely abandoned in the new capitalist order in which the majority of women are reduced to economic dependence on men or to survival strategies of black market trading and subsistence farming. Under such conditions the rapidly growing "sex and glamour industry" of modeling (which more

often than not is a form of sex work, often involving being trapped into international sexual slavery), pornography, and prostitution look to be a "smart" choice, "the only way for women to make a lot of money" (Bridger, et al. 174-175). Under liberalization and free market commodification, Russian society, has been saturated with an enormous quantity of pornography (particularly between 1990-1992)--what one commentator called a "tidal wave of porn" (Goscilo 165), prostitution has grown into a major racket, and Russian and Ukrainian criminal organizations are involved in the highly profitable international trafficking each year of "thousands of women . . . from Eastern and Central Europe [who] end up working in prostitution in Western Europe, the Middle and Far East and the U.S. ("Trends: Slavic Women Trafficked into Slavery" *2*). One of the many disturbing aspects of this profound sexual commodification of women in Russian capitalism, is the way the sexual ideology (much it imported from the West) of unrestrained sexual consumption as a mark of freedom has left women especially vulnerable. The fashion designer and "image consultant," Elena Evseeva, is especially concerned by the inability of "young women . . . in the new sexual climate in Russia, to differentiate between liberalisation and exploitation" (Bridger, et al. 190).

Kollontai would be quite critical not only of the deteriorating material and social conditions of women since the revival of capitalism in the Russian Federation but especially of the sexual exploitation of women. She would be, I think, relentless in cutting through the ideological masquerade of exploitation as a form of freedom, and equally critical of the way left cultural politics and postmodern theories of sexuality in the West have contributed to this masquerade in large part by their profound neglect of the economic basis of the "emotional and psychological" and the unavoidable class determinations of love and sexuality. "Sexual relations family and marriage," Kollontai argued, "are historical categories, phenomena which develop in accordance with the economic relations that exist at the given level of production" (225) and change under pressure from the economic. "Social and economic changes," according to Kollontai, create conditions "that demand and give rise to a new basis for psychological experience" and "change all our ideas about the role of women in social life and undermine the sexual morality of the bourgeoisie." (246). The current reifications of desire--in the works of Deleuze and Guattari, Kristeva, Gallop, Butler, and de Lauretis, as well as other poststructuralist, feminist and queer theorists (see Ebert; Morton)--generate a concept of desire not only as autonomous from the economic but also as primarily an individual circuit of pleasure, and posit liberation as mainly the unrestrained play of desire and articulation of sexuality.

Kollontai, in contrast, puts forth a complex materialist and collective vision of desire and sexuality. "Love," Kollontai argues, "is a profoundly social emotion. Love is not in the least a 'private' matter concerning only the two loving persons: love possess a uniting element which is valuable to the collective" (278-279). At the core of all Kollontai's thinking on sexuality is her analysis of how "Each historical (and therefore economic) epoch in the development of society has its own ideal of marriage and its own sexual morality. Different economic systems have different moral codes. Not only each stage in the development of society, but each class has its corresponding sexual morality the more firmly established the principles of private property, the stricter the moral code."

Kollontai thus finds that "The ideal of love in marriage only begins to appear when, with the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the family loses its productive functions and remains a consumer unit also serving as a vehicle for the preservation of accumulated capital" (284).

Kollontai makes the important argument that the very development, in capitalist society of a sexualized love "that embraced both the flesh and soul" (283)--as opposed to feudal notions of chaste, chivalrous love--becomes the primary ideological mechanism for securing marital cooperation and stability in the project of accumulating and preserving capital. This is, I think, one of the ideological factors behind the "back to home" movement as Russian society tries to adapt to ruthless logic of private property. In capitalism, Kollontai argues, nearly all sexual relations are, of necessity, economic and property relations. The legal ones, that is marriage, are, as I have already quoted her, all "grounded in (a) material and financial considerations, [and] (b) economic dependence of the female sex on the family breadwinner--the husband--rather than the social collective." (225). The other side of bourgeois marriage in capitalism is prostitution.

Prostitution and pornography have divided contemporary feminists, particularly around the issues of sex workers' rights, identity and self-determination (e.g. Kempadoo and Doezema; Nagle). All too often these debates are isolated from basic economic questions of labor exploitation and become empty claims for the freedom of "choice" and "free expression" of their sexuality, as in Drucilla Cornell's argument that what is needed is to protect women's "imaginary domain" so they have the right to the self-representation of their "sexuate beings" as sex workers and to organize (45-58). At the most such arguments may help alleviate the worst conditions--for example, by enabling sex workers to organize--but they in no way engage the structure of exploitative relations. In contrast, Kollontai cuts straight through these empty debates to go right to the core of exploitative relations, showing the connections between the economic exploitation of sex workers and the commodification of everyday labor relations under capitalism. As she argues in "Prostitution and Ways of Fighting It,"

> the sale of women's labour is closely and inseparably connected with the sale of the female body. This is the horror and hopelessness that results from the exploitation of labour by capital. When a woman's wages are insufficient to keep her alive, the sale of favours seems a possible subsidiary occupation. The hypocritical morality of bourgeois society encourages prostitution by the structure of its exploitative economy, while at the same time mercilessly covering with contempt any girl or woman who is forced to take this path. (263)

The root condition of capitalism is buying and selling people's labor power as a commodity to produce profit, and the commodification and "sale of women's labor" is inseparable from the "sale of the female body." In fact, Kollontai would find the massive expansion of prostitution within the Soviet Union and the international sex trafficking in women and children quite predictable under global capitalism. "The trade in women's flesh," she wrote, "is not surprising when you consider that the whole bourgeois way of

life is based on buying and selling" (264). This is the most significant factor in the exploitation of women in Russia today: the return of people buying and selling other people's labor for profit, long outlawed under socialism, revives the direct exploitation of people, the outright buying and selling of "women's flesh," their bodies and sexual labor. In a *Nightline* special report on " Russian Revolutions: Sex in Russia," Ted Koppel notes that "Since the crash of August, 1998, the ranks of prostitutes in Moscow have swollen from around 15,000 to more than 70,000. That estimate from Moscow's police. Other observers suggest the numbers are actually much higher." A Russian man comments that "Russian prostitution. . . is pure economy. It's . . . just a case of survival," and a Canadian researcher, Robin Montgomery, working with "Russian prostitutes" says that it "comes down to one word: necessity. . . . If you want to put food on the table, if you want to pay for your studies, if you want to buy nice clothes, it comes down to sex work is the most lucrative, it has a future and most romanticized job there is available for women in Russia today. The market is sex." ("Russian Revolutions"). This is compounded by the high degree of illegal trafficking in women for sex work abroad. The Quarterly Bulletin of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Trafficking in Migrants*, not only identifies Russian and Ukrainian crime organizations as the main traffickers of Slavic women into sexual slavery, but lists the prices for which woman are being sold on the black market in Europe. For example, it reports that "In December 1997, the police in Milan, Italy broke up a ring that was acting as an auction house, selling women abducted from the former Soviet Union, in half naked groups, for a little less than US $1,000 per person" ("Trends: Slavic Women Trafficked into Slavery" 2).

But it is not just organized prostitution that involves the buying and selling of women as a sexual commodity. The sale of sexual "favors" as a "subsidiary occupation" to supplement inadequate wages or as a strategy of subsistence survival is increasingly seen as a "smart" choice and has led to "undercover prostitution," which Bridger, Kay and Pinnick describe as "a deliberate decision [by women] to use their beauty and sexuality to 'buy' for themselves the comforts and lifestyle to which their training and professional work simply does not give them ready access. The deal involves finding a rich lover, or better still, a husband from the business world, who will amply provide for them . . ." (174-175). But these are rarely the good deals they seem, instead, in selling themselves, women find that they are "treated just like any other asset. This means they can be dumped when they become 'obsolete' or sold off in the event of financial difficulties, ending up in a more overt form of prostitution"--as in the case of one woman whose businessman lover went bankrupt and "sold her to his friends together with his dacha. For 5,000 dollars" (176).

38. The only way to end prostitution, Kollontai argued, was to struggle against the conditions that compelled women to find prostitution a necessary means of subsistence. In 1921, Kollontai argued that the "workers' revolution in Russia has shattered the basis of capitalism and has struck a blow at the former dependence of women upon men" as well as eliminated the "main sources of prostitution--private property and the policy of strengthening of the family." But she also recognized that "communism was still a long way off" and that in the "transitional period," she insisted, "other factors are still in force. Homelessness, neglect, bad housing conditions, loneliness and low wages for women are

still with us.These and other economic and social conditions lead women to prostitute their bodies" (265). Thus, as Kollontai made very clear, "to struggle against prostitution chiefly means to struggle against these conditions" (266). For as "the first All-Russian Congress of Peasant and Working Woman" stated, "A woman of the Soviet labour republic is a free citizen with equal rights, and cannot and must not be the object of buying and selling" (266).

This is the fundamental difference between capitalism and socialism. Capitalism continues to define freedom as the right of individuals to sell themselves and the right of those with money to buy others--to buy and sell wage labor, but it also entails the buying and selling of people's sexuality even their bodies. Democracy, over the years, has tried to put some constraints on the buying and selling of people under capitalism, applying legal sanctions against some forms--notably slavery. The injunction against slavery is necessary to legitimate the "market". As Marx argues in *Capital* (vol. 1, ch. 6), slavery is made illegal under bourgeois democracy because otherwise it would unmask the (fraudulent) notion of the free exchange of "wages" for "labor power" which is the founding myth of capitalism and its political regime--bourgeois democracy--as a ruling class ideology. The legitimacy of capitalism, the free market and democracy all depend on the narrative that in the free market, the worker and

> the owner of money meet in the market, and enter into relations with each other on a footing of equality as owners of commodities, with the sole difference that one is a buyer, the other a seller; both are therefore equal in the eyes of the law. For this relation to continue, the proprietor of labour-power must always sell it for a limited period only, for if he were to sell it in a lump, once and all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity. He must constantly treat his labour-power as his own property, his own commodity, and he can do this only by placing it at the disposal of the buyer, i.e. handing it over to the buyer for him to consume, for a definite period of time, temporarily. In this way he manages both to alienate [*veraussern*] his labour-power and to avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it. (271)

Marx further clarifies the seemingly "free" relation between labor and capital, in chapter 28 of *Capital*, by stating that this relation is ruled by "the silent compulsion of economic relations [which] sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker" (899). The formal ("legal") injunctions against slavery, however, have not put an end to it--wage labor is a hidden form of slavery (through the exploitation of "surplus labor"), and prostitution and other forms of sexual slavery are an integral part of bourgeois democracy and the free market.

The struggle against prostitution, as Kollontai and the early history of the revolutionary "workers' state" makes clear, needs to be the struggle first against wage labor--against the rule of private property and the buying and selling of people--and

second against the array of social and economic conditions compelling women into prostitution.

The principle of socialism is that, as Kollontai says, "All citizens are equal before the work collective. . . . A woman provides for herself not by marriage but by the part she plays in production and the contribution she makes to the people's wealth" (265). An effective socialist society struggles to fully realize this principle and provide the material basis for the emancipation of women. As we have seen, the distortions of socialism in the Soviet Union have had a very uneven and troubled history and an inadequate realization of women's economic and social emancipation. But abandoning this principle and reinstating the capitalist buying and selling of human labor and sexuality has been catastrophic for the majority of women in the new market economies of the Russian Federation.

Kollontai's unwavering materialist analysis of love and sexuality makes her a revolutionary for our own times. Her work poses a serious challenge to the uncritical erasure--in the theoretical and critical work East and West--of the economic exchange, commodification and capital accumulation involved in sexual relations under late capitalism. Women's economic dependence on husbands may have lessened in the West as more women become wage earners, but it is intensifying in the Russian Federation as women are being forced out of the workforce. Today's dual-income family, whether in the West or East, just as much as the "male breadwinner" family, are units of consumption--and, in the case of the owning class, units of capital accumulation. What has changed is the enormous expansion of the commodification and exploitation of sexuality and bodies for profit--the buying and selling of bodies and the representations of bodies, whether in prostitution, pornography or the mass media. The commodification of pleasure and desire for profit is an inescapable aspect of our lives and our sexuality in capitalism East and West--but it is largely absent from our understandings of sexuality--whether poststructuralist theories, which increasingly define sexuality in the West, or in the "silences" and "ambivalences" of women in the "new sexual climate" in Russia. Instead we find the valorization of transgressive/guilty pleasures and sensuous excesses represented as a liberating force--from the writings of such feminist theorists as Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, and Elizabeth Grosz to the pornographic broadsheets and sex manuals saturating Moscow streets. What we lose sight of is how this fetishization of pleasure and sensuality is itself an effect of capitalist commodifications of pleasures. We need to ask how subversive are theories of sexuality that obscure the economic relations of desire and the class interests embedded in its current forms.

Kollontai takes her materialist analysis even further and critiques the form of sexual subjectivity that emerges out of the class interests and economic relations of capitalism. Briefly, she analyses the "contemporary psyche" as characterized by an "extreme individuality, egoism that has become a cult"; by property relations--"the idea of 'possessing' the married partner"--and by "the belief that the two sexes are unequal, that they are of unequal worth in every way, in every sphere, including the sexual sphere" (242). It only takes a moment's observation to show how strongly these features have

continued in global capitalism and especially how intensely they are being revived in the new market economies, particularly in the Russian Federation.

What is most fundamental in capitalism is the extraordinary way that relations of sexuality, love and desiring are grounded on property relations. The "bourgeoisie," Kollontai argues, "have carefully tended and fostered the ideal of absolute possession of the 'contracted partner's' emotional as well as physical 'I', thus extending the concept of property rights to include the right to the other person's whole spiritual and emotional world" (242). The constant perpetuation of this subjectivity is one of the primary projects of bourgeois ideology--from operas like Carmen to any popular romance novel, from such "hot" Broadway shows as "The Blue Room" with a nude Nicole Kidman to Russian sex novels--in all these forms the measure of love and sexual desiring is the fantasy of possessing the object of desire. This logic of property relations is making strong inroads into changing personal relations under capitalism in Russia. As one Russian woman told Bridger and her colleagues: "Attitudes to women are changing from the traditions of the past. Women today are looked upon as some kind of personal possession. Attitudes are certainly getting worse and worse, men seem to think that anything goes. They think they have the right to take what they want, by force if needs be" (180-81).

"Healthy sexual instinct," Kollontai argues, "has been turned by monstrous social and economic relations into unhealthy carnality. The sexual act has become an aim in itself--just another way of obtaining pleasure, through lust sharpened with excesses and through distorted, harmful titillations of the flesh. Prostitution is the organized expression of this distortion of the sex drive." (286). This may sound rather puritanical to some, for under capitalism East and West, there is an increasing acceptance of anything that will intensify the pleasures of sensuousness--even pain and violence. But Kollontai demonstrates that the pursuit of pleasure as a performance of freedom, is a very specific historical practice of the owning classes and is *not* the basis for egalitarian, sharing relations of mutual sexual pleasure and personal regard among people. The valorization of excessive stimulation, excitation and sensation as ends in themselves, distorts human relations and capabilities and is a direct reflection of the alienating commodification and exploitation of human relations that arises with capitalism. Claudia Broyelle extends this analysis, in her book on *Women's Liberation in China*, when she writes about sexuality under capitalism:

> In a society where the division of labor becomes more accentuated, where the vast majority of people are deliberately deprived of creativity, where work has no other value than its explicit *monetary one*, sexuality becomes *a means of escaping from society through self-centered sexual consumption, rather than the full expression of interpersonal relationships*. (Part 5, p. 2)

Left sexual theories in the West commonly represent sexual excess and transgressive pleasures as subversive of bourgeois morality and thus as emancipatory practices--this is, for example, a frequent postmodern defense of pornography (e.g. see Penley). But this is to fundamentally misrecognize the relations involved and instead to further promote the

bourgeois ideology of individual consumption and personal gratification against the interests and well being of others. The left has embraced an "anti-repressive hypothesis" of sexuality that is no different in its effects and no more anti-bourgeois than the "repressive hypothesis" Foucault describes: "the 'putting into discourse of sex'," Foucault explains, "has been subjected to a mechanism of increasing incitement. The techniques of power exercised over sex have obeyed a principle of dissemination and implantation of polymorphous sexualities" (12).

In fact, the "increasing incitement" and excitation of sex is exactly what capitalism requires for the continuing proliferation of sexual commodification and control of subjectivities. As Reimut Reiche states in his *Sexuality and Class Struggle*, "desublimation" becomes yet another form of repression and control: when "individual sublimation is collectively broken down," the individual is subjected to "the same powers which engineered his desublimation, and they henceforth decide for him how he is to behave when and how he reacts in an openly sexual way, and when and how he curbs or gives free rein to aggressive urges" (135).

In contrast to bourgeois property relations and individual gratification in sexual relations, Kollontai argues that socialist relations of production--which are no longer organized around profit and the exploitation of labor of others--create the conditions for profoundly different interpersonal relations. These conditions make possible what she calls a new "communist morality"--that is, new principles of living for a workers' collective. Thus, according to Kollontai,

> As regards sexual relations, communist morality demands first of all *an end to all relations based on financial or other economic considerations*. The buying and selling of caresses destroys the sense of equality between the sexes, and thus undermines the basis of solidarity without which communist society cannot exist. . . . The stronger the ties between the members of the collective as a whole, the less the need to reinforce marital relations" (emphasis added, 230).

5

The basic principles Kollontai articulates for a "communist morality" still hold, and we daily see the need to struggle for such non-exploitative relations. Kollontai opens up a complex, integrated and materialist understanding of the revolutionary possibility of relationships no longer based in any way on commodification, economic exchange or financial considerations. Instead, she envisions truly free--that is, equal--relations of love and comradeship necessary both for human fulfillment and for sustaining the connections among members in a collective. This is the basis, for Kollontai, of a new class practice, a "proletarian morality" that "replace(s) the all-embracing and exclusive marital love of bourgeois culture," with "three basic principles: 1. Equality in relationships2. Mutual recognition of the rights of the other, of the fact that one does not own the heart and soul of the other (the sense of property, encouraged by bourgeois culture). 3. Comradely sensitivity, the ability to listen and understand the inner workings of the loved person

(bourgeois culture demanded this only from the woman)." (291). Kollontai firmly believes in the emancipatory potential of non-commodified and thus non-possessive relations among free individuals not bound by economic dependency. She believes in the social value of what she calls "love-solidarity" based on comradeship and equality and contends these will "become the lever" in communist society that "competition and self-love were in the bourgeois society" (290).

While Kollontai's own articulation of human relations is heterosexual (she speaks only about relations between the sexes), her views of post-patriarchal, non-exclusive relationships open up the possibility for a radical post-heterosexual society. At the core of Kollontai's "communist morality" is the belief in the development of various degrees and kinds of intimacy--of sexuality, love, comradeship--among individuals connecting them together in a collective. These intimate relations in no way preclude intimacy between members of the same sex, and, in fact, I would argue that a multiple, complex intimacy, across differences of sex and race follows from such an open, non-exclusive, non-singular "morality." Kollontai, in short, shows the way to develop a revolutionary sexual theory in which sexual difference is no longer the basis for the social division of desire because it is no longer the basis for the social division of labor. An egalitarian workers' collective based on communist relations of production--in which, as Marx states in his "Critique of the Gotha Program," the needs of all are met--would abolish the exploitation of differences. Thus while differences--of sexuality, of race--may not "disappear," they would no longer be the basis of inequality, privilege and the exploitation of others--and no longer the basis of divisions of desire and labor. Such radical changes will not occur automatically--they require, as Kollontai makes very clear, unrelenting, all-embracing social and ideological struggle as an integral part of the class struggle to build a new social formation.

Does Kollontai's vision of communist sexuality seem utopian? Only if we accept as inevitable the current neoliberalism and its tyranny of exploitative relations, social divisions of labor and commodified individualism of capitalism. But for Kollontai and other Bolsheviks in the early years of the worker's state, such revolutionary relationships were a very real historical possibility. Their failure is a historical, political and economic problem that we need to carefully analyze--not just erase as obsolete--in order to learn why they failed and how to actualize the full possibilities of free and equal relations of love, sexuality and social collectivity Kollontai articulated. What such an examination would enable us to understand is how profoundly dialectical is the problem: how inseparable are the economic and the ideological; how fully integrated are sex and class, and how sexual freedom depends on the material economic means to meet people's needs.

Kollontai's theory of sexuality shows the way to develop an emancipatory theory, a red theory of sexuality as an understanding of the inseparable dialectical relation of sex and the material relations of production. A red theory of sexuality is a commitment to ending the economic exploitation and commodification of relations, and the social divisions of labor and desire. It is the struggle to build free and equal relations of love, sexuality and comradeship in which desire is neither simply sexual nor exclusive, but

involves a solidarity of multiple connections and interrelations to others as well as to the work and welfare of the collective. Such relations cannot be developed in a social formation dominated by property relations as the signifier of individual freedom. Instead we need to struggle toward *Red Love*: that is, *sexual and comradely solidarity*.

Kollontai (center) with delegates to the
Second International Conference of Women Communists, 1921

Endnote

1 Sue Bridger, Rebecca Kay and Kathryn Pinnick's book, *No More Heroines? Russia, Women and the Market*, is one of the few available sources of extensive data on the recent changes in the situation of women in the Russian Federation. I have therefore drawn quite heavily on its data, interviews and other information, p. 40.

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