

Chapter 1 : Talk:Alexandra Kollontai - Wikipedia

Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai (Russian: *Александровна Коллонтай*; *Domontovich*, *Domontovich*; 31 March [O.S. 19 March] - 9 March) was a Russian Marxist revolutionary, first as a member of the Mensheviks, then from on as a Bolshevik (later Communist).

International Socialist Congress, Copenhagen Behind them is Rosa Luxemburg Her parents forbade the relationship and sent Alexandra on a tour of Western Europe in the hope that she would forget Vladimir, but the pair remained committed to one another despite it all and married in She devoted her time to reading radical populist and Marxist political literature and writing fiction. Stasova began to use Kollontai as a courier, transporting parcels of illegal writings to unknown individuals, which were delivered upon utterance of a password. I was detached, [from Vladimir], because of the revolutionary upsettings rooted in Russia". She then paid a visit to England, where she met members of the British Labour Party. At the time of the split in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party between the Mensheviks under Julius Martov and the Bolsheviks under Vladimir Lenin in , Kollontai did not side with either faction at first, and "offered her services to both factions". The couple appeared quite oddly assorted: Their romantic relationship came to an end in July , but evolved thereafter into a long-lasting friendship as they wound up sharing many of the same general political views. Kollontai was strongly opposed to the war and very outspoken against it, and in June she broke with the Mensheviks and officially joined the Bolsheviks, "those who most consistently fought social-patriotism". After leaving Germany Kollontai traveled to Denmark, only to discover that the Danish social democrats also supported the war. The next place where Kollontai tried to speak and write against the war was Sweden. In Sweden the government imprisoned her for her activities. After her release Kollontai traveled to Norway, where she at last found a socialist community that was receptive to her ideas. Kollontai stayed primarily in Norway until , traveling twice to United States to speak about war and politics [20] and to renew her relationship with her son Mikhail, for whom she had arranged in to avoid conscription by going to the United States to work on Russian orders from U. During the revolutionary period, at the age of 45, she married the 28-year-old revolutionary sailor Pavel Dybenko , while keeping her surname from her first marriage. It was eventually closed in But even outside the ranks of our party, I will live, work and fight for the Communist party. During late April , she may have been involved in abortive peace negotiations with Hans Thomsen , her German counterpart in Stockholm. Political retreat and attitude toward Stalinism[edit] Being sent abroad in a sort of de facto exile for over twenty years, Kollontai gave up "her fight for reform and for women, retreating into relative obscurity" [34] and bowing to the new political climate. She discarded her feminist concerns and "offered no objection to the patriarchal legislation of and the constitution of , which deprived Soviet women of many of the gains they had achieved after the February and October Revolutions ". What can I do about this? For my part, I have put my principles aside in a corner of my conscience and I pursue as best I can the policies they dictate to me". On asking the publisher to make the changes requested, Kollontai apologized with obvious embarrassment, inviting repeatedly to debit her all expenses and writing twice that, under current circumstances, it was not absolutely possible "to do otherwise". This generally accepted truth is not disputed even by our enemies. The Soviet woman is a full and equal citizen of her country. In opening up to women access to every sphere of creative activity, our state has simultaneously ensured all the conditions necessary for her to fulfil her natural obligation that of being a mother bringing up her children and mistress of her home. And, it has been noted, at the time she "was safe in her sumptuous Stockholm residence". It might not have been pure chance if both her only son [1] and her musician half-nephew [m] whom she had much supported at the beginning of his career also came unscathed through the persecution of the Stalinist regime, to the establishment of which she had however significantly contributed. A spate of books and pamphlets by and about Kollontai were subsequently published, including full-length biographies by historians Cathy Porter, Beatrice Farnsworth, and Barbara Evans Clements. A female Soviet diplomat in the s with unconventional views on sexuality, probably inspired by Kollontai, had

been played by Greta Garbo in the movie Ninotchka. As an unwavering Marxist, Kollontai opposed the ideology of liberal feminism, which she saw as bourgeois. However, this does not mean that she advocated casual sexual encounters; indeed, she believed that due to the inequality between men and women that persisted under socialism, such encounters would lead to women being exploited, and being left to raise children alone. Instead she believed that true socialism could not be achieved without a radical change in attitudes to sexuality, so that it might be freed from the oppressive norms that she saw as a continuation of bourgeois ideas about property. A common myth describes her as a proponent of the "glass of water" theory of sexuality. She viewed marriage and traditional families as legacies of the oppressive, property-rights-based, egoist past. Under Communism, both men and women would work for, and be supported by, society, not their families. Similarly, their children would be wards of, and reared basically by society. Kollontai admonished men and women to discard their nostalgia for traditional family life.

Chapter 2 : Alexandra Kollontai - Women in European History

Alexandra Kollontai Biography Image Gallery Intro to Alexandra Kollontai. Works: International Socialist Conferences of Women Workers Introduction to "The Social Basis of the Women's Question".

March 19] This article uses material from the Wikipedia article Alexandra Kollontai , that was deleted or is being discussed for deletion, which is released under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3. Her father, General Mikhail Alekseevich Domontovich, descended from a Ukrainian Cossack family that traced its ancestry back to the 13th century. He entertained liberal political views, favoring a constitutional monarchy like that of the United Kingdom , and in the s had written a study of the Bulgarian war of independence which was confiscated by the Tsarist censors, presumably for showing insufficient Russian nationalist zeal. There was order in everything: She spoke French with her mother and sisters, English with her nanny, Finnish with the peasants at a family estate inherited from her maternal grandfather in Kuusa in Muolaa , Grand Duchy of Finland , and was a student of German. Her mother bitterly scoffed at the notion: You, who never picked up a needle! You, who go marching through the house like a princess and never help the servants with their work! You, who are just like your father, going around dreaming and leaving your books on every chair and table in the house! She devoted her time to reading radical populist and Marxist political literature and writing fiction. Stasova began to use Kollontai as a courier, transporting parcels of illegal writings to unknown individuals, which were delivered upon utterance of a password. I was detached, from Vladimir , because of the revolutionary upsettings rooted in Russia". She then paid a visit to England, where she met members of the British Labour Party. She returned to Russia in , at which time she met Vladimir Ilych Ulyanov, a. She was a witness of the popular rising in known as Bloody Sunday , at Saint Petersburg in front of the Winter Palace. She went into exile, to Germany, in [13] after publishing "Finland and Socialism", which called on the Finnish people to rise up against oppression within the Russian Empire. Kollontai was strongly opposed to the war and very outspoken against it. After leaving Germany Kollontai traveled to Denmark , only to discover that the Danish social democrats also supported the war. The next place Kollontai tried to speak and write against the war was Sweden. In Sweden the government imprisoned her for her activities. After her release Kollontai traveled to Norway, where she at last found a socialist community that was receptive to her ideas. Kollontai stayed primarily in Norway until , only traveling internationally to speak about war and politics. Kollontai also married Pavel Dybenko in She later served as Ambassador to Mexico 27 and Sweden When she was in Stockholm , the Winter War between Russia and Finland broke out; it has been said that it was largely due to her influence that Sweden remained neutral. During late April , she may have been involved in abortive peace negotiations with Hans Thomsen , her German counterpart in Stockholm. Social ideas Kollontai is known for her advocacy of free love. However, this does not mean that she advocated casual sexual encounters; indeed, she believed that due to the inequality between men and women that persisted under socialism, such encounters would lead to women being exploited, and being left to raise children alone. Instead she believed that true socialism could not be achieved without a radical change in attitudes to sexuality, so that it might be freed from the oppressive norms that she saw as a continuation of bourgeois ideas about property. A common myth describes her as a proponent of the "glass of water" theory of sexuality. She viewed marriage and traditional families as legacies of the oppressive, property-rights-based, egoist past. Under Communism, both men and women would work for, and be supported by, society, not their families. Similarly, their children would be wards of, and reared basically by society. Kollontai admonished men and women to discard their nostalgia for traditional family life. A female Soviet diplomat in the s with unconventional views on sexuality, probably inspired by Kollontai, was played by Greta Garbo in the movie Ninotchka The resurgence of radicalism in the s and the growth of the feminist movement in the s spurred a new interest in the life and writings of Alexandra Kollontai in Britain and America. A spate of books and pamphlets were subsequently published by and about Kollontai, including full-length biographies by historians Cathy Porter [28] and Barbara Evans Clements. In this delicate situation, came a delegation from Russia to sell a large quantity of timber. The Norwegians offered a very low price; when she noted that the

negotiation was at a standstill, she said: Everybody thought she had been kidnapped by the counterrevolutionaries. When she reappeared, her comrades urged Lenin to gather a soviet to condemn her behavior. Lenin did so, and many people, whom she thought friends, said horrible things about her. At last, Lenin spoke – Lenin always spoke very quickly, but in this case he spoke slowly, giving weight to every word: For her, being married with someone with whom she had a briefly passionate encounter was really a punishment; [30] however, soon after the meeting, when she was still in tears, Lenin said to her:

Alexandra Kollontai observed the "trusting expectant faces, the fateful signal of the troops stationed around the Palace, the pools of blood on the snow, the bellowing of the gendarmes, the dead, the wounded, the children shot."

Alexandra Kollontai by Tom Condit Alexandra Kollontai was a major figure in the Russian socialist movement from the turn of the century through the revolution and civil war. During periods of exile she was also active as a speaker and writer in Germany, Belgium, France, Britain, Scandinavia and the United States. Born into a wealthy family of Ukrainian, Russian and Finnish background, Kollontai was raised in both Russia and Finland, and acquired an early fluency in languages which not only served the revolutionary movement well, but later led to a career in the Soviet diplomatic service. She played a major role in forcing the Russian socialist movement to organize special work among women and in organizing mass movements of working-class women and peasants, and was the author of much of the social legislation of the early Soviet republic. Kollontai began political work in , when she was a new mother, by teaching evening classes for workers in St. Through that activity she was drawn into both public and clandestine work with the Political Red Cross, an organization set up to help political prisoners. In , Kollontai saw the open face of capitalist industry for the first time when she visited a large textile factory where her engineer husband was installing a ventilation system. Later that year, she became active in leafletting and fundraising in support of the mass textile strike which rocked the Petersburg area. For the rest of her political career, Kollontai retained her connections with the women textile workers of St. By , Kollontai was fully committed to Marxism, and left her husband and child to study in Zurich under the Marxist economist Heinrich Herkner. By the time she arrived, Herkner had become a "revisionist" and Kollontai spent much of her time at the university contesting his views. Upon her return to Russia, she wrote a polemic against Edouard Bernstein which was suppressed by the censors. In , she was forced into exile when a warrant for her arrest was issued for advocating the right of Finland to armed revolt against the Tsarist empire; in , she resigned as Commissar of Social Welfare in the Soviet government as a result of her opposition to the delivery of Finland to the white terror under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Kollontai, like many Russian socialists, was neutral in the Bolshevik-Menshevik split of In , she joined the Bolshevik faction and conducted classes on Marxism for it. In , she joined with Leon Trotsky in pressing for a more positive attitude toward the newly-emerged Soviets and in pressing for unity of the party factions. She became treasurer of the St. Petersburg Social Democratic Committee. From through , Kollontai led the campaign which has most clearly established her place in history "to organize the women workers of Russia to fight for their own interests, against employers, against bourgeois feminism, and where necessary as it frequently was against the conservatism and male chauvinism of the socialist organizations. At the end of , after three months spent evading arrest, Kollontai was finally forced to flee into exile. From then until , she remained outside Russia, although many of her works were published there. In early , she taught at a socialist school organized by Maxim Gorky in Italy. In she organized in Germany and Austria against the coming war, and was arrested and imprisoned after it broke out. Released, she moved to Scandinavia and established contact with V. Lenin, then in exile in Switzerland. She was a primary organizer of the Zimmerwald Conference against the war in , and her pamphlet "Who Needs War? In , she undertook a four and one-half month speaking tour of the United States to build support for the left-Zimmerwald position on the war and to try to find a U. In all, she spoke at meetings in four languages. When the February revolution of broke out, Kollontai was in Norway. From the moment of her arrival, she joined Alexander Shlyapnikov and V. Molotov in the fight for a clear policy of no support to the provisional government, against the opposition of Kamenev and Stalin. She was elected a member of the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet to which she had been elected as a delegate from an army unit. At a tumultuous meeting of social democrats on April 4, she was the only speaker other than Lenin to support the demand for "All Power to the Soviets. During this period she joined other women activists in pressing the Bolsheviks and the trade unions for more attention to organizing women workers, and helped lead a citywide laundry workers strike in Petrograd. In October , Kollontai participated in the decision to launch an armed uprising against the government and in the revolt itself. In she

lead a delegation to Sweden, England and France to raise support for the new government. Upon her return, she argued against ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and resigned from the government, feeling that the unity of the Commissariat would be jeopardized by having a member in opposition on such a crucial question. For the rest of , she was active as an agitator and organizer, and played a key role in organizing the First All-Russian Congress of Working and Peasant Women November Throughout , although ill with heart and kidney disease and suffering from typhus, Kollontai kept a grueling schedule of meetings, speeches and writing. Kollontai was re-elected to the All-Russian executive committee of the Soviet in December. In , she was one of the signers of the "Letter of the 22" to the Communist International protesting the banning of factions in Russia. In , Kollontai was appointed as advisor to the Soviet legation in Norway. From then until her retirement for health reasons in , Kollontai was effectively in exile as a diplomat, and her views on the status of women were marginalized and trivialized in the USSR itself. As ambassador to Norway and Sweden, as a trade delegate to Mexico, as a delegate to the League of Nations, and as negotiator of the Finno-Soviet peace treaty of , she served the USSR with what was generally regarded as great finesse. From until her death in , she was an advisor to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Chapter 4 : Alexandra Kollontai Photos, News and Videos, Trivia and Quotes - FamousFix

Alexandra Kollontai. From Women in European History. De'Azia L. Baldwin During Russia's communist revolution changing social structures and the emergence of a new political party brought new calendrierdelascience.comng laws for the Soviet family would push for a complete overhaul of Russian society.

Alexandra Kollontai participated in the Russian Revolution of , and she held important positions in the Soviet government, especially during the Lenin years before Paragraph numbers and subheadings belong to this excerpt, not the original source. Will the family remain in the same form? These questions are troubling many women of the working class and worrying their menfolk as well. Life is changing before our very eyes; old habits and customs are dying out, and the whole life of the proletarian family is developing in a way that is new and unfamiliar and, in the eyes of some, "bizarre". Divorce is no longer a luxury that only the rich can afford; henceforth, a working woman will not have to petition for months or even for years to secure the right to live separately from a husband who beats her and makes her life a misery with his drunkenness and uncouth behaviour. Divorce by mutual agreement now takes no more than a week or two to obtain. Women who are unhappy in their married life welcome this easy divorce. But others, particularly those who are used to looking upon their husband as "breadwinners", are frightened. They have not yet understood that a woman must accustom herself to seek and find support in the collective and in society, and not from the individual man. But there is no need for alarm. It is only our ignorance that leads us to think that the things we are used to can never change. We have only to read how people lived in the past to see that everything is subject to change and that no customs, political organisations or moral principles are fixed and inviolable. There is, therefore, no reason to be frightened of the fact that the family is in the process of change, and that outdated and unnecessary things are being discarded and new relations between men and women developing. All that is old and outdated and derives from the cursed epoch of servitude and domination, of landed proprietors and capitalists, should be swept aside together with the exploiting class itself and the other enemies of the proletariat and the poor. There was a time when the isolated, firmly-knit family, based on a church wedding, was equally necessary to all its members. If there had been no family, who would have fed, clothed and brought up the children? Who would have given them advice? In days gone by, to be an orphan was one of the worst fates imaginable. In the family of old, the husband earns and supports his wife and children. The wife for her part is occupied with housekeeping and with bringing up the children as best she can. But over the last hundred years this customary family structure has been falling apart in all the countries where capitalism is dominant and where the number of factories and other enterprises which employ hired labour is increasing. The customs and moral principles of family life are changing as the general conditions of life change. It is the universal spread of female labour that has contributed most of all to the radical change in family life. Formerly only the man was considered a breadwinner. But Russian women have for the past fifty or sixty years and in other capitalist countries for a somewhat longer period of time been forced to seek paid work outside the family and outside the home. The wages of the "breadwinner" being insufficient for the needs of the family, the woman found herself obliged to look for a wage and to knock at the factory door. What kind of "family life" can there be if the wife and mother is out at work for at least eight hours and, counting the travelling, is away from home for ten hours a day? Her home is neglected; the children grow up without any maternal care, spending most of the time out on the streets, exposed to all the dangers of this environment. The woman who is wife, mother and worker has to expend every ounce of energy to fulfil these roles. She has to work the same hours as her husband in some factory, printing-house or commercial establishment and then on top of that she has to find the time to attend to her household and look after her children. Woman staggers beneath the weight of this triple load. She suffers, her face is always wet with tears. Life has never been easy for woman, but never has her lot been harder and more desperate than that of the millions of working women under the capitalist yoke in this heyday of factory production. The circumstances that held the family together no longer exist. The family is ceasing to be necessary either to its members or to the nation as a whole. The old family structure is now merely a hindrance. What used to make the old family so strong? What is left of this former

type of family? The husband, as we have just seen, has ceased to be the sole breadwinner. The wife who goes to work earns wages. She has learned to earn her own living, to support her children and not infrequently her husband. The family now only serves as the primary economic unit of society and the supporter and educator of young children. Let us examine the matter in more detail, to see whether or not the family is about to be relieved of these tasks as well. And every man, whether peasant or worker, tried to find a wife who had "hands of gold", for he knew that a family could not get along without this "domestic labour". The interests of the whole nation were involved, for the more work the woman and the other members of the family put into making cloth, leather and wool the surplus of which was sold in the neighbouring market, the greater the economic prosperity of the country as a whole. All that was formerly produced in the bosom of the family is now being manufactured on a mass scale in workshops and factories. The machine has superseded the wife. Thus the family economy is gradually being deprived of all the domestic work without which our grandmothers could hardly have imagined a family. What was formerly produced in the family is now produced by the collective labour of working men and women in the factories. It is becoming unproductive. The individual household is dying. It is giving way in our society to collective housekeeping. Instead of the working woman cleaning her flat, the communist society can arrange for men and women whose job it is to go round in the morning cleaning rooms. The wives of the rich have long since been freed from these irritating and tiring domestic duties. Why should working woman continue to be burdened with them? Instead of the working woman having to struggle with the cooking and spend her last free hours in the kitchen preparing dinner and supper, communist society will organise public restaurants and communal kitchens. The working woman will not have to slave over the washtub any longer, or ruin her eyes in darning her stockings and mending her linen; she will simply take these things to the central laundries each week and collect the washed and ironed garments later. That will be another job less to do. Special clothes-mending centres will free the working woman from the hours spent on mending and give her the opportunity to devote her evenings to reading, attending meetings and concerts. Thus the four categories of housework are doomed to extinction with the victory of communism. And the working woman will surely have no cause to regret this. Communism liberates woman from her domestic slavery and makes her life richer and happier. Even before the revolution, the instruction of the child had ceased to be the duty of the parents. Once the children had attained school age the parents could breathe more freely, for they were no longer responsible for the intellectual development of their offspring. Their low wages did not enable them to give the children enough to eat, while lack of free time prevented them from devoting the necessary attention to the education of the rising generation. The family is supposed to bring up the children, but in reality proletarian children grow up on the streets. And when children begin to earn their own money they consider themselves their own masters, and the words and counsels of the parents are no longer law; the authority of the parents weakens, and obedience is at an end. The old family, narrow and petty, where the parents quarrel and are only interested in their own offspring, is not capable of educating the "new person". The playgrounds, gardens, homes and other amenities where the child will spend the greater part of the day under the supervision of qualified educators will, on the other hand, offer an environment in which the child can grow up a conscious communist who recognises the need for solidarity, comradeship, mutual help and loyalty to the collective. Everyone has the right to happiness. Therefore live your life. Do not flee happiness. Do not fear marriage, even though under capitalism marriage was truly a chain of sorrow. Do not be afraid of having children. Society needs more workers and rejoices at the birth of every child. You do not have to worry about the future of your child; your child will know neither hunger nor cold. Society will feed, bring up and educate the child. At the same time, those parents who desire to participate in the education of their children will by no means be prevented from doing so. Communist society will take upon itself all the duties involved in the education of the child, but the joys of parenthood will not be taken away from those who are capable of appreciating them. Such are the plans of communist society and they can hardly be interpreted as the forcible destruction of the family and the forcible separation of child from mother. The state does not need the family, because the domestic economy is no longer profitable: The members of the family do not need the family either, because the task of bringing up the children which was formerly theirs is passing more and more into the hands of the collective. In place of

the old relationship between men and women, a new one is developing: No more domestic bondage for women. No more inequality within the family. No need for women to fear being left without support and with children to bring up. The woman in communist society no longer depends upon her husband but on her work. It is not in her husband but in her capacity for work that she will find support. In place of the individual and egoistic family, a great universal family of workers will develop, in which all the workers, men and women, will above all be comrades.

Chapter 5 : Alexandra Kollontai - Wikipedia

Alexandra Kollontai was a significant figure in the Bolshevik party during the revolution and probably the most influential female in the new Soviet society. Born Alexandra Domontovich in , the young Kollontai belonged to a family of liberal aristocrats.

Alexandra Kollontai Noblewoman Kollontai had a love affair with the sailor Dybenko, but adored the revolution! Petersburg district of Vesely Village there are two parallel streets: Kollontai Street and Dybenko Street. She was the friend of the famous translator Shchepkina-Kupernik and the second cousin of the salon poet Igor Severyanin, and he was a simple sailor. But at the heart of the happiness of this family there was the rebellion of her mother Alexandra Alexandrovna, who took three children and left her first husband. Little Alexandra was born in love. From a tender child she turned into a pretty girl with cold blue eyes. So, people began to whisper behind her back. And the whisper of those who were shocked by her behavior, became a companion of Alexandra for the rest of her long life. Ivan Dragomirov, a fan of Domontovich since childhood, shot himself because of her. Mademoiselle Domontovich declared that she would marry only for love. A cheerful and modest officer, Vladimir Kollontai, soon became her husband. In their only son Mikhail was born. But the family idyll did not warm Alexandra Mikhailovna for long. Working in a public library, she met with a group of freethinkers. The thirst for justice led Kollontai to the Bolsheviks. She broke up with her husband, who, like Dragomirov, tried to shoot himself because of her, but, thank God, he was still alive. The relatives and nannies looked after her son. So, she became a revolutionary. The proletarians, as enchanted, listened to the passionate speeches of the clear-eyed girl. The opponents of the Bolsheviks hated her. Pavel Dybenko, a simple guy from the peasants of Chernihiv region, was also interested in revolution. The handsome guy with a sonorous voice quickly became a notable figure at anti-government rallies. To tell the truth, he was an anarchist rather than a communist. In he was elected the head of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet. Soon they got married. After that, the careers of both went up: Drunken sailors led by Dybenko lost the battle to the Germans, who did not want peace with the Bolsheviks. Kollontai, with horror for herself, realized that it was much easier to hold a rally than to help the needy people. And she had to help her beloved husband. You know, she did it! Soon, Dybenko was appointed to a much modest position – commander of the rifle corps in Odessa. The luxury-minded, gallant sailor arranged his mansion with chic and invited there his young mistresses. Alexander Mikhailovna was confused. Eventually, during one of the family scandals, Pavel shot himself, but the Order of the Red Banner did not allow the bullet to enter the heart and Dybenko remained alive. However, after this episode the legendary sailor continued to be unfaithful to his wife. As a result, Kollontai divorced her husband. And she asked Stalin to let her go abroad. Meanwhile, Dybenko wrote a lot of love letters to Alexandra. She began to think about returning to Russia. But then Kollontai was informed: Dybenko lived with a beautiful girl. The revolutionary could not forgive him. Kollontai successfully continued her diplomatic work. She died in , a couple of weeks before her eightieth birthday, which she was going to celebrate in the Moscow mansion. Dybenko was shot in A female Soviet diplomat in the s with unconventional views on sexuality, probably inspired by Kollontai, was played by Greta Garbo in the movie Ninotchka The resurgence of radicalism in the s and the growth of the feminist movement in the s spurred a new interest in the life and writings of Kollontai in Britain and America. A spate of books and pamphlets were subsequently published by and about Kollontai, including full-length biographies by historians Cathy Porter and Barbara Evans Clements.

Chapter 6 : Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai () - Find A Grave Memorial

Alexandra Kollontai was a key leader of the Russian Socialist movement, the only woman in the early Soviet government, and one of the most famous women in Russian history. She worked tirelessly all her life as a speaker, writer, and organizer for women's emancipation.

The discrepancy in the day of her birth, which is said to be between March 19 and April 1 due to the fact that after the Russian Revolution adjustments were made to their calendar. She was born in the Russian capitol of Saint Petersburg to a family of Russian nobility. Her father, Michael Domontovich, was a general and member of Ukrainian gentry. Her mother, also named Alexandra, came from a family of peasants; her father however, was able to obtain a small fortune from exporting wood. The two would not marry until years after their first meeting, and would do so under controversial circumstances. Her mother was still legally married to her first husband, Mravinskii, at the time she became pregnant with young Kollontai. Due to this, Michael, her father, would have to adopt her after her birth. Showing an independent nature, the new wife refused to be a burden to her husband and went on to build a profitable business out of their family home [2]. She was, however, special in that she was the first baby from the marriage of her parents to survive infancy. Due to this Alexandra was heavily nurtured. She was doted on and protected and watched over with what was deemed unconditional love and affection. Because of fear of social influences on their child and the desire to have her presence constantly in the home, Shura was home schooled. During her childhood days, Alexandra was never denied much. Despite this initial affection and being granted every wish, Alexandra seemed to have always been a rebel at heart. However, when in the presence of these women and their peers, Kollontai had become like her father, developing a growing distaste for what she saw as mundane, insignificant chatter of the women of her class [4]. Her father, too, was often away or irremovably wrapped up in his writings. She often spent time listening to the tales and discussion of her father and his associates on political issues and uproars. Young Shura was given as many material possessions as she could hope. Despite this she watched with empathy as other children her age struggled with their families to satisfy daily needs [5]. And, while both her parents were strong willed intellectuals, they had held from two different backgrounds, giving Alexandra a wide spectrum to develop her mind with. She became focused on education and change. Always an advocate for freedom, her belief that woman should have equality in all facets of life could be seen in her choice of marriage. Rather than be married off by the arrangement of her family and a suitor, Kollontai chose instead to be married in to a cousin, Vladimir Kollontai, whom she had always adored. To this union one son was born, Michael. The marriage to Vladimir was short lived due to differences not only in economic background but, educational interest as well [6]. Alexandra Kollontai filed for divorce, to the agreement of her husband who too felt trapped and unhappy in the marriage. This was done in an effort to give her more physical and mental liberation and control. As a student she would often indulge in the many political readings available. After being encouraged by her teacher, she quickly became a supporter of the new political force forming around her. Taking up the plight of the working class after a visit to Narva, a textile factory, she became more and more intrigued by the socialist theories of Marxism. Kollontai began working small jobs for the radical Social Democrats and was further encouraged by her associates within the Party to join them, which she conceded to doing. In , a little after she had joined the movement, Kollontai was a witness to Bloody Sunday , at which point she had already become a known member of the Communist movement because of her speeches and writings. With her involvement in the Communist Party Kollontai could see that even from a Marxist view equality was needed and required for all functioning members of society. As she recognized it, this would include women. During this time in Russia the role of women outside of the home was changing, especially in the working class where the number of women laborers was greatly increasing. The work of women, including prostitution, and women themselves were beginning to be seen as of equal value and importance to that of man. Because of this Kollontai is considered to be one of the first and rare supports of the feminist movement within the Communist Party, an issue that would remain closer to her heart than any other. Her support of the Russian Communist movement, feminism, and the working-class revolution caused the reigning government

to view Kollontai as an outlaw. Furthermore, she worked with efforts to improve the connection between Finnish and Russian Social-Democratic Parties in order to further their plight against the Tsar. At some point during the revolution, most notably at a convention in the year of , the Russian Social Democratic Party was split into two opposing views, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks were led under the direction of V. The Mensheviks were led by A. Bogdanov, believing that boycotts and protest of Russian government were needed to bring them peacefully into the new form of government [10]. Kollontai originally joined sides with the latter of the two groups. Beginning in Alexandra Kollontai would organize several strikes and lectures to support and bring awareness to the plights of women and the working class revolution. Sometime during this period she reports that she had found a new love interest, which did not work out due to his inability to view her as intellectual and not just female. In spite of the let down in her failed relationship, Kollontai left Germany, where she had taken up residence upon her return to Europe, in August when the Party platforms were just beginning to emerge and but heads, and moved to Sweden in an effort to fight against the World War. Upon her return to Germany Kollontai became close friends and accomplice to an old Party acquaintance of hers, Vladimir Lenin. Kollontai became more aware of the Bolshevik socialist aspirations. One issue of top priority to Lenin, as Alexandra would learn, was how the idea of war would affect workers. This knowledge, coupled with her fierce determination to change the way society and the revolution were going led her to join the Bolshevik party. Career One of the most important things that Alexandra had a hand in was the fight for higher working wages. She became a part of the Central Committee in the party. Because of her intense involvement, Alexandra was arrested on the terms of spy and treason. Kollontai was counted as being among the first Social-Democrats to be arrested due to anti-war propaganda. This cabinet position made Kollontai the first woman in Russia to hold a government office. With her work in the changing revolution as a Communist cabinet member Alexandra continued to push the issues that burdened women and children and, her advice and recommendations were sought to shape all matters pertaining to women as dealt with by the Party. Kollontai challenged the roles of gender in daily function, often referring to the feminist ideals she held dear to heart. She asserted that feminism was not the notion of complete power or separation from men. Kollontai believed in the idea of woman as a completed self, socially independent and equal to men in all regards. Many of the policies established concerning women would serve as guidelines in other communist revolutions, such as the one in Canada [13]. However, due to the strength and persistence of her ideals Kollontai would later resign from this post because of conflict with male members of the party. In October of she was appointed by the Soviet as the first woman ambassador to Norway. In this post Kollontai worked toward bettering trade between Russia and Norway. Her efforts led to the signing of a trade agreement in Moscow in Kollontai held the position of ambassador for three years. This was an important step in history because as a woman she was not only the first to hold some of the most prominent positions, but was also to have a greater impact on legislation that had ever before. Death and Legacy Alexandra Kollontai died on March 9, From an early age she had refused to settle for what society had to offer her. She encouraged women to take charge of not only their rights and knowledge but, that of their children as well. It was her hope and objective to bring revolution and liberty not just on an individual level, but also through the emancipation of the family unit as an entity, essential to social welfare. She left behind a legacy of hard work and support of the working class. One of the things she is most remembered for is her influence on the feminist movement of her time. She sympathized with the working class and the struggles they faced day to day. Kollontai fought against the stereotypes and traditional roles of women during her time in order to further the progression of society. She worked closely within the Communist Party of Russia, changing the role women played in the Party and becoming a leader and motivator through her writings and speeches. She played a vital role in the shaping of Communist policies and bringing about social awareness. Her experiences and achievements, as a woman, Social-Democratic revolutionary, and feminist, were trail blazing and many of her ideals are remembered among the most influential staples of Communist programming. Longmans, Green and Co. New York, New York: Aleksandra Kollontai socialism feminism and the Bolshevik revolution. Sexual relations and the class struggle love and the new morality. The Falling Wall Press. Studies in soviet thought. Retrieved from " <http://> This page was last modified on 2 June , at This

page has been accessed , times.

Chapter 7 : Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography by Cathy Porter

Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai (Russian: Алекса́ндра Миха́йловна Коллонта́й; born 19 March 1879 [O.S. March 19] - 9 March 1932) was a Russian Communist revolutionary, first as a member of the Mensheviks, then from on as a Bolshevik.

She is one of many underappreciated female revolutionaries who contributed practically and theoretically to the early 20th century socialist and feminist movement whose life and writings deserve to be more widely read, discussed and debated. Cathy Porter, in her biography *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography*, recently republished by Haymarket Books, will hopefully make her life more widely known and appreciated. For those who want to learn more about her life, this biography is must-read. Alexandra Kollontai in Alexandra Mikhailovna Domontovich was born in to wealthy and conservative parents. Known as a shy but defiant child, she was impacted profoundly by the disparity between her upbringing and what she witnessed around her. At age 20, she snuck away from her family during a vacation in Berlin, and this is where she first discovered the Communist Manifesto. She developed an early thirst for reading and history and began devouring political literature wherever she could find it. It was here that Kollontai witnessed first-hand the deplorable factory conditions that produced subsequent strike waves in the s, including a strike in Petrograd of female textile workers that inspired her deeply. She joined other women at the St. Petersburg Mobile Museum of Teaching Aids, an underground grouping of radicals and revolutionaries who sought to use the gathering space for discussion circles, classes for factory workers and fundraising for strike support. Under the guise of botany classes, they smuggled revolutionary literature alongside the botanical specimens and expanded slide shows into discussions of the latest socialist periodicals. Books Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai: From these classes, a direct relationship between revolutionaries and factory women was established. Factory strikes increased dramatically in the s and put revolutionaries, organizing secretly, into more open contact with militant workers, many of them women. And from this period onward, Kollontai remained a committed and organized revolutionary for the rest of her life. In , a strike wave movement swept Russia and women workers entered the realm of class struggle alongside men in mass numbers. In the revolutionary years of and , the woman worker also became aware of the world around her. If we wanted to give a record of how women participated in that movement, to list of the instances of their active protest and struggle, to give full justice of the self-sacrifice of the proletarian women and their loyalty to the ideals of socialism, we would have to describe the events of the revolution scene by scene. Her writings specific to the relationship between sexual oppression and class are what she is most known for, although they were only one of many contributions she made to the Marxist movement of the time. But the feminist movement of the time, led by upper-class women who focused primarily on philanthropy and suffrage for propertied women, proved insufficient to meet the growing demands of working-class and peasant women who shared little in common with these women. In this context, Kollontai fought two battles: The world of women is divided, just as is the world of men, into two camps; one is in its ideas, aims and interests close to the bourgeoisie, the other to the proletariat, whose aspirations for freedom incorporate the complete solution of the woman question. These initiatives were often met with hostility within the socialist movement, among those who feared that independent organizing among women inherently threatened working-class unity. In the context of bourgeois feminism posing a real threat to the existing class struggle, this is understandable. The response was overwhelming, with hundreds of women attending meetings, lectures, countryside retreats and cultural events. This provided an important model of what type of separate political work among women workers was possible. Kollontai wrote *The Social Basis of the Woman Question* as a polemic to be published and distributed beforehand, hoping to use the book and the delegation of female workers and peasants to argue for Marxist positions within a national forum. She spent the next nine years in exile in Germany. In Germany, at the time of the outbreak of the war, Kollontai witnessed the devastating vote taken by the German Social Democratic Party, or SPD of which she became a member , in support of the war. Shock, outrage and confusion swept the revolutionary movement around this question internationally. The vote for war by the German SPD marked a turning point in the revolutionary*

movement, raising far-reaching questions around the nature of imperialism, internationalism, socialism and what type of revolutionary organization could be built. They began a written correspondence over the nature of the war and how Russian revolutionaries should respond. Lenin, who shared her opposition to the war, requested she write an agitational pamphlet that could be translated and distributed internationally. They hoped such a pamphlet, accompanied by an international speaking tour, could garner support for a Zimmerwald Peace Conference in place of the collapsed Second International. This pamphlet, *Who Needs the War*, was translated into several languages and distributed to troops. It earned her international recognition and an invitation by the American Socialist Party to tour. In addition to traveling throughout Europe, Kollontai toured the U. She described Debs as "bold as a lion, his eyes blazing I was happy to be treated with such warmth by such a great and generous heart. She would become a leading orator for the Bolshevik Party in the years ahead, often dispatched to the front lines to agitate for revolution among soldiers. A journalist for a Swedish socialist paper wrote after hearing Kollontai: Slender and dressed in all black, her eyes blazed with revolutionary ardor as she summoned up all her inspiration, her indefatigable energy and her infinite passion. She re-joined the Bolsheviks and was elected to its central committee, its first woman. She was also the first woman voted into the Soviet Executive by revolutionary soldiers. Much has been written about the revolution and the role women played. Kollontai was elected as the Commissar of Social Welfare and went to work immediately to address the direct requests made by women. The new revolutionary government immediately issued decrees, including the abolition of titles and distinctions based on class and sex, the legal sanctioning of secular marriage and the recognition in law the rights of all children. The Social Welfare Department began work organizing tours of the countryside in the lead-up to the conference. For example, when women began arriving for the conference, there was not enough food to feed or homes to house them. While planning for a day conference for 80 delegates, the organizers were astonished when more than 80 delegates showed up, many with children, representing 80, women from factories, trade unions and various political parties! Calls for maternity protection, shorter working days, equal pay and the liberalization of marriage and divorce were widely supported. The resolutions passed were then turned into law. Kollontai and her partner were one of the first couples to register their relationship under the new marriage laws in celebration of this victory. Independent organizing among women had a new mandate, and the establishment of the Zhenotdel provided much needed resources for this organizing. Soon every province in European Russia had its Zhenotdel, and the delegate in the red head scarf became a popular figure, visiting women in their homes, adopting orphaned children to live with her, and picking up a rifle when necessary to fight at the front. Kollontai believed this was necessary, but most of her collaborators disagreed. Most believed that the establishment of the Zhenotdel, within the revolutionary government led by the Bolsheviks, was sufficient. This debate would continue, although remain unresolved for the remainder of her time in the Bolsheviks, and become one of many political disagreements that led to her leaving the government by She was impatient with the resources devoted to the Zhenotdel in particular. She told a friend, "What can you do? How can you fight the apparatus? How can you defend yourself against attack? These were largely written in response to letters she received from young workers who were trying to make sense of the new possibilities the revolution provided socially and how it related to their personal relationships. Through this writing, Kollontai unbelievably still held out revolutionary hope that revolutionaries today can learn a lot from. As Porter concludes in her introduction: At the end of her life, we see both the bewildered pessimist, facing the collapse of all of her beliefs, and the incorrigible optimist, convinced that there was an alternative to capitalism As austerity throws millions now into poverty, and women face a disproportionate burden of the cuts, her vision of a better social system and the collective struggle against injustice remains true and powerful to this day, and I had a sense it was time to rediscover her.

Chapter 8 : Category:Alexandra Kollontai - Wikimedia Commons

Alexandra Kollontai was a major figure in the Russian socialist movement from the turn of the century through the revolution and civil war. During periods of exile she was also active as a speaker and writer in Germany, Belgium, France, Britain, Scandinavia and the United States. Born into a wealthy.

I am not sure of the place of accent in Domontovich. These do not need to go in to the Kollontai article. The feminists answer our criticisms by saying: Cannot the women of the two social camps, for the sake of their common political aspirations, surmount the barriers of class antagonism that divide them? Surely they are capable of waging a common struggle against the hostile forces that surround them? Division between bourgeois and proletarian is inevitable as far as other questions are concerned, but in the case of this particular question, the feminists imagine, the women of the various social classes have no differences. Is this really the case? Is there a complete identity of political aspirations, or does antagonism hinder the creation of an indivisible, above-class army of women in this instance as in all others? We have to answer this question before we can outline the tactics that proletarian women will employ in winning political rights for their sex. The feminists declare themselves to be on the side of social reform, and some of them even say they are in favour of socialism "in the far distant future, of course" but they are not intending to struggle in the ranks of the working class for the realisation of these aims. However good the intentions of individual groups of feminists towards the proletariat, whenever the question of class struggle has been posed they have left the battlefield in a fright. They find that they do not wish to interfere in alien causes, and prefer to retire to their bourgeois liberalism which is so comfortably familiar. Different aims and understandings of how political rights are to be used create an unbridgeable gulf between bourgeois and proletarian women. This does not contradict the fact that the immediate tasks of the two groups of women coincide to a certain degree, for the representatives of all classes which have received access to political power strive above all to achieve a review of the civil code, which in every country, to a greater or lesser extent, discriminates against women. Women press for legal changes that create more favourable conditions of labour for themselves; they stand together against the regulations legalising prostitution etc. However, the coincidence of these immediate tasks is of a purely formal nature. For class interest determines that the attitude of the two groups to these reforms is sharply contradictory. Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai. The part you removed does not state Kollontai was or was not a feminist whatever it may mean, but it just reports she "has Should any other reliable sources state differently, you might add their statements to the article citing authors, but you are not allowed to substitute your own opinion, i. As regards its contents, in spite of appearances they do not prove Kollontai was not a feminist, if I may express my humble opinion. In her text she either targets "feminists" or "bourgeois feminists": Indeed, she is only attacking liberal feminists sometimes disparagingly termed bourgeois. So, if feminism "is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: Apart from my personal opinions, however, the fact remains that she has generally been regarded as a leading Marxist feminist. I agree the section should be removed.

Chapter 9 : Alexandra Kollontai (Author of Love of Worker Bees)

Alexandra Kollontai, inspired by Marxist ideals, became a member of the revolutionary government and led a campaign to help women working in the appalling textile factories.