

Richard Stites 1860-1930
- M.J. Kon

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3 late works seem to cover not only the topic of women and Russia, more or less ending with the early 1930s, though the actual conferences were just held in 1977, but seem somehow to sound as if they were written by the same person or group of persons that studied under the same "direction". Thus, the most comprehensive and the one that seems to have the absolutely biggest bibliography of direct Russian works, Richard Stites' The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930 (Princeton University Press, N.Jersey) 1978, sounds like Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus' Women in Russia (Stanford U. Press, 1977), and, indeed, the third item, again by Stites, from Russian History III, 2 (1976), pp 174-193 -- see below -- and 4th, not from this country at all -- number 110 NLR July/Aug 1978, which in turn is a translation from the French on "Kollantai and the History of Women's Oppression" by Jacqueline Heinen, are again on Kollantai, on Zhenotdel, and all saying that it was so great and even if some elements sound not exactly WIMish nevertheless, 50 years back, etc. etc. etc. it was pioneering. No doubt it was, but why in the heck stop there? And by there I mean 1928-30. At that rate, you simply add up, all over again, to making no integral relationship between what was and what is, not to mention any attempt at looking at what will be, and by "will be" I do not mean 2000 but tomorrow.

What I refer to above by Stites -- "Zhenotdel: Bolshevism and Russian Women, 1917-1930" -- is a 20 page article, was expanded into a 464 page book, but the 20 pages actually contains all the facts. Moreover, that, too, has a background, i.e. it does not start with Zhenotdel but the "prehistory" -- Krupskaya's pamphlet "The Woman Worker", written in Siberia and published in 1900, then follows 1906, when Kollantai, then a Menshevik, began to organize working women in St. Petersburg, and which supposedly had as one of its aims, to be against the Russian Suffragist Movement which sprung up in 1905 and was bourgeois. It reached its height in 1908. They all based themselves on Bebel and, whether it was Krupskaya, Zetkin, or Kollantai the thesis was the same except that Kollantai was more independent and would appear also at feminist conferences. Actually, the Bolsheviks really didn't do anything until 1913, and again it was because, from below, there was much activity and the Bolsheviks invariably came in after. It isn't Stites that emphasizes the before and after but the facts speak for themselves. For example, the paper that finally appeared, The Working Woman, edited by Krupskaya, Anessa Armand and Anna Elizaveta (Lenin's sister), was quickly squashed by Tsarism. But again the food pogroms, women workers and soldiers wives had been on strike and in many activities throughout the war especially in 1915, 1916.

Krupskaya's 1900

all 4 books
Krupskaya's 1900

SO HOW IN THE HELL CAN YOU DISMISS NOTHING SHORT OF THE FEBRUARY 1917 REVOLUTION AS "THE FAMOUS EPISODE IN PETROGRAD ON MARCH (Feb. 23)..." (p. 175) and even then, it appear not as a revolution that overthrew Tsarism but as a confluence of 2 developments...high prices...and celebration of International Women's Day."

It is true there is a lot of interest in facts and "personalities" and a good deal of independence in relation to Kollantai anyway, and we finally do get down to Zhenotdel, but tell me why 22 pages is expanded to 464 pages and still not one single (line unless you call "the famous episode" a line) on Feb. 1917.

Richard Stites
Jan 20, 1978
in the book

14349

pp 289-292 expanded
female episode Feb 1917

THE WLM IN RUSSIA, continued -- by STITES

In the book he does have, first, a little more than just an episode as an episode, on the Feb. 1917, though it's not as good as LT in the Russian Revolution it is again important for new facts (pp. 289-292): p. 290: "The Bolshevik Women's movement has no claim to revolutionary laurels on the occasion (Feb. 1917) for the simple reason that it has ceased to exist. The Rabotnitsa group had been arrested in (1914) and Women's Day was observed in the 2 succeeding years only by proclamations and flash meetings. An employee of the Petrograd Pipe Factory, Malaniya Savchenko recalls how her group of workers and a few medical students distributed the 1915 Women's Day Proclamation...."

"On Jan. 9, 1917, the Petrograd women were out in commemoration of Bloody Sunday. A month later, the Petilov strike added the necessary spark to the tinder. The largely female staff of the Vasilevsky Island trolley car park... sent a woman to a neighboring encampment of the 180th Infantry Regiment to ask whether they would shoot at them or not. The answer was no and on the 23rd the trolley car workers joined the demonstration."

"If there was plan and reason to all this, it certainly did not issue from the Bolshevik organization (rd -- he then shows how the Bolsheviks were actually trying to discourage this, and then says: "Shklyamnikov reports that the organization could not even produce a Women's Day Proclamation because the press was not working. ... (The meshra or ka ... filled the gap with a flysheet, addressed to women and opposed to the war. The women of the Vyborg textile concerns, with little guidance from Social Democrats of either persuasion, themselves celebrated Women's Day... and the cry went up: 'To the Nevsky!'"

"According to Trotsky, women then played a key role in the relations between worker and soldier who faced each other on the turbulent streets. They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, seize, almost command, but down your bayonets -- John us." (III, Vol. I, p. 199) rd -- Stites also mentions Yelena P. Sorokin Letters from a Russian Diary, p. 3 and Sukhanov's Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 14 and several Russian works, of especially the 1958 publication by Naya Igumnova on Russian Women in the Year of the Civil War.

Women - white, reds
Sisters, Sweetest
Franklin
with pos 1 WD
Feb 23 (Mon 8) (NOT regular meeting)
Women, despite... to advise...
would not be in strike -
Women, young, textile co. - "To the Nevsky"
A man, woman not all
Then was descended up: Down
few army bread
Down with Tsar
The rev. does not choose women: with oligarchs
P105 the police, it read: by for
She is looks for this 7" (under shoe)
14350

WOMEN IN RUSSIA, Edited by Atkinson, et al.

Part 1, "The Historical Heritage" has both the article by Glickman on the factory workers and the one by Meyer "Marxism and the Women's Movement" pp 85-114, which I want to summarize here. First, Meyer begins with Marx and Engels, regarding Fourier, and he calls special attention to p. 26, line 2 to the fact that Mx was paraphrasing rather than actually translating Fourier on the Q of the famous sentence about the role of women being what Fourier supposedly said, "a cause" of progress, which Mx translated as "a measure" or indicator of progress.

He also knows there is a difference between Mx and Engels, not showing any knowledge of Ethnological Notebooks, but in relationship to Fourier. He also calls attention to the fact that from the first, there seems to be a difference in the concept of what was the 1st division of labor, having mentioned sexual in the German ideology, but difference between country and city in the Poverty of Philosophy. In the city it actually had to do with slavery, exploitation being power to dispose of the labor of others - and of course that is throughout all of his works, especially Vol. III.

He also calls attention to the fact that Engels surely paid more attention to kinship in primitive society as against production and class structure that came much later, and so far as Engels is concerned, the Q of reproduction i.e., sexual was definitely his both in the early and later works. And in fact for the later (Origin), he once again quotes Engels on matriarchy and first class antagonism being between man and woman.

Meyer then traces the development in the 2nd Int. and because of the backwardness of the Lassalleans, it was not actual until 1907 when the 2nd Int made it obligatory for all sections to be for legal and political equality for women. He makes several references to Charrie Guettel, esp on p. 96. (And incidentally, he calls attention to the fact that Firestone lists Bebel as a "precursor of Mx and Engels") He gives Bebel credit for having anticipated, by 100 years, Phyllis Chesler's Woman and Madness.

Meyer is altogether wrong in his interpretation that Mx and E did nothing to practice the Q of equality for women, and indeed he is so on that that he evidently knows nothing at all, either about the Paris C. or the 1st Int. or the correspondence with Kugelmann. So much for scholarship!

On p. 102, he is really fantastic in relationship to giving Margaret Fuller credit for "participating" in the 1848 revolution. Evidently on a level higher than the German women or any of the Europeans.

Part 2 is on "Sex Roles and Social Change" in which I find only 1 article, "Russian Rural Women" by Ethel Dunn.

Part 3 on "Women, Society, and Politics", I likewise did not find valuable, because though it has facts on Russia now, there is no thought or analysis or contradictions brought out between what is in theoretical parts of Marx and what is in Russian society today.

N.I.R # 110, July/August 1978 contains a translation ^{from the French of} ~~of the French of~~ Jacqueline Hainen, "Kollontai and the History of Women's Oppression". The 2 new things in it are (1) of the unpublished writings of Kollontai, and the fact that she definitely relates her leadership in the Workers' Opposition ^{to} the end to any role in the Women Q. However, the WQ was hardly ever mentioned in the Workers' C. platform and this was not due to any censorship, but the fact that she, herself, did not deviate philosophically from any orthodox position on women and therefore, it did not enter at all in the WQ platform.

What is amazing about Hainen is that after she wanted to make the 20 p article different in the sense of we have a lot to learn, she nevertheless ends up by the fact that we don't really: "Nevertheless, fifty years ago, Kollontai was among those who went furthest in understanding the problems related to women's liberation."

The new ss a series of lectures that Kollontai gave at the Sverdlov University between April and June (1921) on the eve of the 3rd Congress of the CI on "Women's labor in the evolution of the Economy". She did call into question both the family and traditional sexuality, and it was published in 1929 in Russia. On p. 47, Kollontai not only questions the ~~theory of patriarchy as advanced by Engels, but showed the way in which the specific oppression of women takes root in primitive society.~~ Kollontai regarding the ~~of the rel. of oppression with the emergence of the family and private property,~~ when they attribute the final loss of women's rights to the forms of marriage; it is not the marriage form but above all women's economic role that brought them to a position of dependence in the nomadic tribes of herdsmen."

p. 30, p. 55 calls attention to the fact that women did not have the right to vote until after WWII in France, and not until 1970 in Switzerland, and even then in Switzerland only in national elections.

Ita. 36, p. 36, you will not believe, is from Ernest Mandel's 1970: "The ultimate source of bureaucratization lies in the social division of labor - that is to say, in the workers' lack of knowledge, skills, initiative, culture and social activity".

I think she's a ~~Trotskyist~~ Trotskyist.

On Jacqueline Heinen's "Kollontai and the History of Women's Oppression",
translated from the French in NLR:

RD notes that it has some unpublished writings of Kollontai -- I believe
that ~~it~~ ^{includes} the series of lectures at Sverdlov Univ. in 1921 on "Women's
Labor in the Evolution of the Economy", in which ^(she) she gets in comments
on the question of the family and against traditional concepts of
sexuality (it was published in 1923). AK also questions the one-sided
theory of Engels and shows how woman's oppression takes root within
primitive society. RD includes a good quote from AK here.

RD comments that "she" (I believe the "she" is Heinen, not AK) relates her
leadership in Workers' Opposition as signifying the end to any role in
the woman question. RD then comments that ^{the} woman ^{was} ~~is~~ not even mention^{ed} in
Workers' Opposition by AK (and not because of any censorship but because she
did not deviate philosophically from the orthodox position on woman.) Never-
theless JH ends with statement that AK ^{50 years ago} has ~~gone~~ gone further than any other
women (Marxists, I presume).

in/
CN RD Summation of works on "Women and Russia":

- Stites 20 page article has all the facts he later expanded into a 464 p. book, except the irritating reference to Fe. 1917 as "famous episode" is expanded in the book. He begins with pre-history of Zhenotdal or its "background": in 1900 publication of Krupskaya's pamphlet on "The Woman Worker"; in (as Menshevik) Kollontai's work/in 1906 organizing women workers in St. Petersburg (vs. work of the bourgeois Russian suffragists of 1905); the height of this work comes in 1908.
- All based themselves on Ebel; Kolontai's "difference" was that she was more independent and did attend bourgeois mtgs. too.
- Facts demonstrate that Bolshevik's activity always came after the activity from below. Nothing definite organized by B^{olsheviks} until 1913. The Working Woman paper edited by Krupskaya, Armand, Lenin's sister; quickly ended by Tsar. Working women and soldiers' wives continued many activities through war, esp. 1915, 1916. Robotnitsa group had been arrested 1914. IWD observed only by proclamations and "flash meetings." RD quotes several paras. of description of actual Feb. events, noting that LT's is best.

time is space
of mind
of soul

Smith p. "to be able to transcend our age (as an age) a & to
transcend the bare events & age. He
shifts ... because, in history ...
at the end ...

in order, with the light & ...
Decision T.P. His consumption
& His new destiny
illuminate " ...

14354

1914
MICROBISM

1914
MICROBISM
feminist
Bach
one is
feminist
Mata

Agnes
Smalley
Ting Ling
"Woman who
came home"

Atkinsca-edited Women in Russia has Meyer's article "Marxism and the Women's Movement."

- Meyer begins with Marx and Engels and points out difference between Fourier and Marx: Fourier said woman "a cause" of progress; Marx said "a measure".
- Meyer recognized difference between Marx and Engels also, from beginning on question of what was first division of labor. (RD has 2 paras. on this.)
- Meyer traces development of WQ in Second Int., showing backwardness of Lassalleans.
- His error revealed in interpretation that Mx and Engels did not practice equality for women.
- Another error in relationship to giving Margaret Fuller credit for "participatin" in 1848 revolution, evidently on a level higher than the German women or any of the Europeans: