

Opportunism and Feminism: Brief Story of a Counterrevolutionary *Marriage*

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.”

Luke 16:13

“In these revolutionary times, feminist ideologies are favored by all bourgeois parties and powers in order to prevent the women of the working people from rallying around the banner of communism to attack capitalism and its state. The feminist views, that made the bourgeoisie scream blue murder before, are valued today as the building blocks of the wall against which the ‘red tide of Bolshevism’ is to break. . . Feminism is intended to plant and root the superstitions of bourgeois democracy among the broadest masses of women. The suddenly flared love for women’s rights is revealed by daylight to be hatred of the rights of the revolutionary proletariat, as a result of the fear of its struggle for freedom.”

Clara Zetkin

The feminism that was coming has been among us for a long time. It has won the dubious honor, or rather *privilege*, of becoming part of the *common sense* of the imperialist system and distinctive insignia of its ruling class. Today, among the bourgeois fractions that participate in the *establishment*, only the production of surplus value enjoys a greater prestige than the *gender perspective* with which the capitalists of both sexes—and all their motley courtiers, buffoons and apologists—strive to reform, that is, reinforce and shore up, the decadent world that they have built in their image and likeness. For our part, we are proud to remain outside the *transversal* consensus of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Fighting their platitudes, however popular they may be and the good press they may have, even among the *Marxist* media, is an essential requirement for those who want to make room for the revolutionary communist conception of the world and return it to the place it should occupy: that of the vanguard of the social process.

In any case, as the eloquent quote by Clara Zetkin that we have placed at the head of our article¹ demonstrates, feminism has spent at least a century looking for a place under the black sun of imperialism. It found it... and found it again, in fact, by having spent an even longer time trying to combat revolutionary Marxism. From among the feminist ranks it has been repeated with great frequency and insulting cynicism that between the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat—Marxism—and the reactionary ideology of the bourgeois women’s movement—feminism—there has been a “quarrelsome” or “unhappy marriage,” a “curious courtship,” “marriages and divorces,” etc. But, if we continue in the field of these *familiar* metaphors, we will have to say that the true *toxic relationship*—whose consequences the proletariat has suffered—is the anti-proletarian *bacchanalia* in which, historically, **revisionist opportunism and feminism** have been disorderly intertwined.

However, between these and the revolutionary labor movement there has always existed the most absolute antagonism. Because of that, the true relationship between Marxism and feminism is a fight literally to the death between two ideologies as much destined to face each other in civil war as the two classes that each of them represents. We will try to demonstrate, with some historical brushstrokes, the irrefutability of the thesis that we have put forward in this brief introduction.

I. The *woman question*: restoring the Marxist analysis

The definitive closure of the October Cycle (1917-1989) has created completely unprecedented conditions for the revolutionary proletariat: the magnitude of its defeat has been such that, surely for the first time since it

¹ Zetkin, C. (1921). *Einleitung zur russischen Ausgabe der Richtlinien zur internationalen kommunistische Frauenbewegung* [Introduction to the Russian edition of the Guidelines of the International Communist Women’s Movement]; in *Die Kommunistische Internationale. Zeitschrift des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* #16, pp. 664-671. Editor’s Note: translation our own.

possessed its particular conception of the world, “class analysis has fallen into disuse” overwhelmed by an “absolute dominance of bourgeois thought”²... even among the advanced sectors of the salaried class!

As far as the *woman question* is concerned—which, as was recognized even a few decades ago, “has never been the ‘feminist question’”³—, this process of theoretical liquidation has been especially flagrant. **Both the Marxist approach and vocabulary have disappeared from the proscenium of the debate of the vanguard**, it being reduced almost exclusively to a pathetic dispute, irrelevant in the great class struggle, due to the *nuances*, the *adjectives* or the *taglines* that are added—it would be worth saying: for the *crumbs* that come off it—to the ideology of the ruling class. Evoking contemporary popular imagination, the scene resembles the one in which two rats fight over a churro... while financial capital has the absolute monopoly on churro shops. We leave it to the reader to choose the background music. Not in vain, in the particular case we are dealing with, the notion of *feminism* has become the umpteenth *empty signifier* that everyone wants to *customize* to suit their unique *identity*. It is known: “the personal is political”... and politics can be *personalized*, like everything else, to the taste of the consumer. This is how a thousand formulas have been proposed, invented and manufactured, each one more bizarre, to collect every infinitesimal particularity that exists in the supposed “big family” of women: *enlightened, liberal, existentialist, radical, institutional, materialist, equality, difference, workerist, theoretical, political, cultural, socialist, black, class, decolonial, proletarian, anti-racist, anarcho, Marxist, Islamic, trans, queer, lesbian, eco feminism*... Whoever is not a feminist is, in a literal sense, *because they do not want to: it takes a real volitional effort not to be dragged by the strong tide*. It is also known: *going against the tide is a principle of Marxism-Leninism*.

In any case, this very diverse—and even more amusing—range of adjectives, only comparable to the plurality of *brands* offered by the imperialist consumption of commodities, has allowed the construction of the myth that this phenomenal appearance is irreducible, which would force us to enunciate it in the plural: there would be nothing but an elusive bundle of *feminisms*. But, as it happens in modern capitalism, fully installed in its monopolistic stage, the diversity offered by the market is only apparent, and behind the multiplicity of colorful labels, one per *brand*, the same *manufacturers* usually hide; in the case of feminism, its inexhaustible list of epithets—longer than that of the royal titles of the most braggart of pharaohs—is only the artificial plumage that, although it flaunts, hides a much more vulgar and flightless little animal: the **bourgeois women’s movement**. Let us see, then, what is the nature of this movement.

II. Capitalism and women *in motion*

To do this, we will first have to ask ourselves, with historical materialism, what are the economic and social conditions that allow the existence of masses—in this case, women—in motion. In *Capital*, Marx dissects the violent historical process (the “so-called primitive accumulation”) that allows the emergence of the capitalist mode of production. For our purposes, it will suffice to quote the following passage:

“In fact, the events that transformed the small peasants into wage-labourers, and their means of subsistence and of labour into material elements of capital, created, at the same time, a home market for capital. Formerly, the peasant family produced means of subsistence and raw materials, which they

² *El escenario actual y el combate contra el revisionismo [The Current Scenario and the Fight Against Revisionism]*; in *La Forja* #35, October 2006, p. 3. The comrades of the Revolutionary Communist Party (Spanish State) described with absolute clarity this climate of **ideological prostration** that corrodes the vanguard: “**Bourgeois ideology sets the pace, indicates the keys to be used after having popularized them and having managed to remove from the battlefield the keys they have vilified and that are, because of that, politically incorrect, that is, the Marxist ones.** Most of revolutionary organizations **strive to disseminate supposedly alternative and original discourses without straying, not for an instant, from the style guide of dominant thought, without making the effort to stop and think about the real discourse that they disseminate.** Some, absentmindedly realizing it, as if it were an extrasensory perception, sometimes insert, with a shoehorn, Marxist concepts, phrases, manners in a loose, isolated way, believing with this that they maintain their connection with the origin from which they probably come, but from which their slow and continuous decades-long divorce has made them incapable of recognizing when they jumped off the train of the revolution to go back in reverse, until they were engulfed by the variegated muddy puddle of revisionism, a bourgeois outpost within the proletarian ranks.” *Ibidem*. *Editor’s Note*: bold and translation our own.

³ Hartmann, H. *Un matrimonio mal avenido: hacia una unión más progresiva entre marxismo y feminismo [A Quarrelsome Marriage: Towards a More Progressive Union Between Marxism and Feminism]*; in *Zona Abierta* #24, 1980. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own. Naturally, this “recognition” was verbalized as a feminist indictment against Marxism.

themselves for the most part consumed. These raw materials and means of subsistence have now become commodities; the large-scale farmer sells them, he finds his market in the manufactures. . . only the destruction of rural domestic industry can give the home market of a country that extension and stability which the capitalist mode of production requires.”⁴

Lenin offers a good overview of the **historical significance of large industry**, *typical* form of capitalist production, for the new proletariat that is pulled out of the natural, *patriarchal* economy:

“Large-scale machine industry, which concentrates masses of workers who often come from various parts of the country, absolutely refuses to tolerate survivals of patriarchalism and personal dependence, and is marked by a truly ‘contemptuous attitude to the past.’ . . . In particular, speaking of the transformation brought about by the factory in the conditions of life of the population, it must be stated that the drawing of women and juveniles into production is, at bottom, progressive. It is indisputable that the capitalist factory places these categories of the working population in particularly hard conditions, . . . but endeavours completely to ban the work of women and juveniles in industry, or to maintain the patriarchal manner of life that ruled out such work, would be reactionary and utopian. By destroying the patriarchal isolation of these categories of the population who formerly never emerged from the narrow circle of domestic, family relationships, by drawing them into direct participation in social production, large-scale machine industry stimulates their development and increases their independence, in other words, creates conditions of life that are incomparably superior to the patriarchal immobility of pre-capitalist relations.”⁵

Naturally, the profound repercussions that the historical appearance of the national market and—later—large capitalist industry had, also found their echo in the bourgeoisie. In families of this class, although women were not thrown into the Moloch of capitalist machinery, the domestic economy was equally emptied of content, which forced married and single women to find a new task that would provide them with sustenance, supplement the family income or simply give some meaning to their new socially parasitic existence.⁶

“The women of the bourgeoisie met, from the very first, with stiff resistance from men. A stubborn battle was waged between the professional men, attached to their ‘cosy little jobs’, and the women who were novices in the matter of earning their daily bread. **This struggle gave rise to ‘feminism’ — the attempt of bourgeois women to stand together and pit their common strength against the enemy, against men.** As they entered the labour arena these women proudly referred to themselves as the ‘vanguard of the women’s movement’. They forgot that in this matter of winning economic independence they were, as in other fields, travelling in the footsteps of their younger sisters and reaping the fruits of the efforts of their blistered hands.”⁷

⁴ Marx, K. (1990). *Capital Volume 1* (pp. 910-911). Penguin Classics. For her part, Kollontai summarized this central thesis of Marxism simply in the series of lectures she gave at the Sverdlov Communist University (1921): “With the establishment of large-scale production, the household shrinks beyond recognition, one by one its branches of labor disappear, which until recently, in the days of our mothers’ youths and the heyday of our grandmothers’ lives, constituted an integral part of home economics. Would a worker’s wife spend hours herself knitting stockings, making soap, sewing dresses and underwear for family members, when all these consumer goods are in abundance on the market? . . . Home economics are dying out. The work of a woman for a family becomes superfluous. Neither the national economy itself, nor her family members need it.” *Причины женского вопроса [Origins of the Woman Question]*; in Kollontai, A. (1922). *Положение женщины в эволюции хозяйства [The Position of Women in the Evolution of the Economy]* (p. 107). Gosizdat. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

⁵ *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*; in Lenin, V.I. (1977). *Collected Works* (vol. 3, pp. 546-547). Progress Publishers. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own.

⁶ Evans, R.J. (1974). *The Feminists: Women’s Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920* (pp. 23-26). Routledge Library Editions.

⁷ From “*The Social Basis of the Woman Question*”; in Kollontai, A. (1978). *Selected Writings* (p. 62). Lawrence Hill and Company. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own. Just before, Kollontai described the economic circumstances that we have already noted: “The woman question assumed importance for woman of the bourgeois classes approximately in the middle of the nineteenth century — a considerable time after the proletarian women had arrived in the labour arena. Under the impact

Thus, in summary, we can say along with the *Manifesto* that “[t]he bourgeoisie . . . has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations . . . and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment.’”⁸ The immobility of feudal society came to be replaced by this “[c]onstant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation [which] distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned,”⁹ including the absolute patriarchal subjugation of women to the domestic economy.

Wow! This first foray that we have made into the field already goes to show that the fundamental premise of feminist ideology is only sustained, among the vanguard, due to a lack of opposition, that is, by the mere non-appearance of the majority of those who claim to be on the camp of the communist proletariat. As the true Marxists we have cited have taught us, **feminism is, strictly speaking, a post-patriarchal historical phenomenon**, even though its female adherents—and *male allies*—believe they are fighting against that ghostly *system of oppression* that, they say, is the *patriarchy*. Ironically, contradicting this feminist platitude, women—like the rest of the masses transformed by the historical emergence of the capitalist mode of production—are only set in motion where patriarchal relations have already lost all economic foundations and their political and ideological remains, more or less vigorous, are inevitably called to disappear.¹⁰ For, as Zetkin reminds us, “the woman question is present only within those classes of society which are themselves products of the capitalist mode of production,” although “it assumes a different form depending on the class position of these strata.”¹¹ In other words: **feminism is the reactionary ideology that tries to integrate the women’s mass movement, a strictly capitalist product, into bourgeois society.**¹² And this bourgeois women’s movement is the mediation between women and the state (another of its transmission belts), that is, part of the normal self-regulating course of capitalism: **another expression of the masses-state dialectic**, once it is established as the political logic of the imperialist countries.

It then seems evident that, by recovering the forgotten Marxist category of the *bourgeois women’s movement*, as simple as it is faithful to reality, the elusive fractal figure of *the feminisms* suddenly becomes perfectly intelligible. This movement convenes and brings together, mainly but not exclusively, the different interests of the female half of each fraction of the bourgeois class, interests that are not always identical but not always antagonistic to each other. The truly Byzantine debates feminists get entangled in trying to define their unsustainable ideology, from this classist perspective, matter little. It limits itself to transpose into the heads of *men*—female and male—the erratic march of the bourgeois women’s movement.

of the monstrous successes of capitalism, the middle classes of the population were hit by waves of need. The economic changes had rendered the financial situation of the petty and middle bourgeoisie unstable, and the bourgeois women were faced with a dilemma of menacing proportions; either accept poverty, or achieve the right to work. Wives and daughters of these social groups began to knock at the doors of the universities, the art salons, the editorial houses, the offices, flooding to the professions that were open to them. The desire of bourgeois women to gain access to science and the higher benefits of culture was not the result of a sudden, maturing need but stemmed from that same question of ‘daily bread’.” *Ibidem*, pp. 61-62.

⁸ Marx, K. and Engels, F. (2007). *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (p. 11). International Publishers. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹⁰ “The legal inequality of the two partners **bequeathed to us from earlier social conditions** is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of the woman.” Engels, F. (2010). *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (p. 135). Penguin Classics. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own. As is evident in the conditions of developed capitalism, this legal inequality has disappeared without taking with it the social oppression of women.

¹¹ *Nur mit der proletarischen Frau wird der Sozialismus siegen!* [*Only With the Proletarian Woman Will Socialism Triumph!*]; in Zetkin, C. (1957). *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften* [*Selected Speeches and Writings*] (vol. 1, p. 98). Dietz Verlag. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

¹² This statement cannot surprise any Marxist, since they should know that bourgeois society is characterized precisely by setting the masses in motion and, at the same time, *organizing them*. Like Marx and Engels said in *The Holy Family*: “But nobody before Critical Criticism spoke of ‘organization of the mass’ as of a question only now to be solved. It was proved, on the contrary, that *bourgeois* society, the dissolution of the old *feudal* society, is that organization.” See *En la encrucijada de la historia: la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria y el sujeto revolucionario* [*At the Crossroads of History: The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Revolutionary Subject*]; in *Línea Proletaria* #0, December 2016, p. 64.

III. A bit of history

Having placed the economic foundations of the woman question on record, we can turn our gaze to its *political* contours. It can be stated quite accurately that feminism¹³ was born, practically speaking, in 1848. In that year, around 300 people—men and women—gathered at the Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. The *Declaration of Sentiments* that emanated from that convention gave the starting signal for a true *social movement* that “opened a new period” to the extent that “its words reveal to us that **we are no longer in the presence of isolated women in their vindication**” (unlike the voices of both sexes who, from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution, had been preaching in the desert), “but they were political leaders who had hard-learned lessons and training in political struggle.”¹⁴ This circumstance, the collective political aggregation around shared claims, is fundamental: if the material content of *feminism* is this **bourgeois women’s movement**, those of us who do not participate in feminist mythology—a mythology that, like nationalist discourses, needs to base its exclusivism on some foundational epic or ancestral heroine—cannot see *feminism* in any place where something, *anything*, is said “in favor” of women.¹⁵ It would simply be a gratuitous and anachronistic license. In the North American case, this first feminism, truly *liberal* due to the ideological and political coordinates from which it starts—individualism, natural law, Protestantism, etc.—, typical of the degree of development of capitalism in its pre-monopoly era, is essentially a *split* from the movement for the abolition of slavery (an analogous split, by the way, to the one that gave rise to the *second wave* of feminism at the end of the 60s after its friction with the black and student movements). Logical, on the other hand, to the extent that the abolitionism of slavery and feminism share an economic foundation: capitalist industrialization. Unlike slavery or feudalism, capitalist production needs and *creates free* individuals in the double sense that Marx gives it in *Capital*: without restraints or relations of personal dependence... but also without means of production or control over their conditions of existence.

Apart from this, history sometimes gives us coincidences, which are never quite such, that are really symbolic. The aforementioned *Declaration of Sentiments* of Seneca Falls, which represents the baptism of feminism, is approved on July 19, 1848.¹⁶ But barely a month before, on June 22, the *old continent* seemed to be torn apart in “the tremendous insurrection in which the first great battle was joined between the two classes that split modern society.”¹⁷ From then on, the future of human civilization rested in the hands of the proletariat as a new rising class. Feminism arrived late to history... or *just in time* to take on the young proletariat. The only thing that allowed *suffragism* to play any role in the struggle for the extension of liberal-democratic rights¹⁸ was that, as is well known,

¹³ As we have said, properly speaking, *feminism* is the name of the bourgeois ideology of the bourgeois women’s movement. Be that as it may, as long as this conceptual difference already mentioned is kept in mind, it seems legitimate to use from now on the colloquial metonymy that allows us to write *feminism* meaning *bourgeois women’s movement*. The agility of the text, as well as our patient reader, will appreciate it.

¹⁴ Beltrán et al. (2008) *Feminismos. Debates teóricos contemporáneos* [*Feminisms. Contemporary Theoretical Debates*] (p. 45). Alianza Editorial. *Editor’s Note*: bold and translation our own.

¹⁵ Such generality, unscientific from head to toe, has allowed the ideologues of the bourgeoisie to concoct eccentricities such as, for example, *feminist theology*, that sensible stupidity that... sincerely believes that it finds *empowering* arguments in the maternal virtues of the zoophilic or concupiscent (may the devotee choose) *Virgin Mary*! The necessary inaccuracies that this cheerful use of the concept of *feminism* entails are, in any case, the price to pay for conscious **class politics**: the bourgeoisie has been trying for decades to convert all discourse related to women into *feminism*, mainly so that the female proletarians forget—and never again learn—that the labor movement was a pioneer in the independent and radical defense of their rights and in the fight for a world where women are emancipated from social relations and institutions that oppress them particularly. The bourgeoisie knows that if it manages to make the communist leaders of the revolutionary proletariat (such as Zetkin, Kollontai, Armand, Krupskaya or even Rosa Luxemburg) mere *feminists*, mere *gender activists*, it will have achieved an important ideological victory: erase from history any memory that women, like men, were one day faced with death based on their class... and, incidentally, promote among female wage earners an exclusive and excluding concern for their *girl stuff*, a narrowness that, of course, none of the aforementioned communist women suffered, fully participating in the struggles of the proletariat on each and every one of the fronts of the class struggle, including, naturally, that of women. Is it possible to doubt how functional feminism is for the bourgeoisie?

¹⁶ *El sufragismo* [*Suffragism*]; in Amorós, C. (2007). *Teoría feminista: de la ilustración a la globalización* [*Feminist Theory: From the Enlightenment to Globalization*] (vol. 1, p. 258). Minerva Ediciones. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

¹⁷ Marx, K. (1976). *The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850* (p. 56). International Publishers.

¹⁸ And we say liberal-democratic because revolutionary plebeian democracy, while it was in force, for example, in revolutionary France, offered the women of the people a true democratic participation in the *res publica*—through

the proletariat would still need a few decades to recover from its explosive Parisian summer solstice of 1848 and to become, later, a stable **politically independent class**, a milestone that corresponds to nineteenth-century social democracy, in those good times when it still represented the *general* interests of the salaried class...

III.1 The German example

As we saw earlier with Kollontai, **proletarian women had begun to participate in social production long before bourgeois women even thought about being more than “the parasites of the parasites of the social body,”** as Rosa Luxemburg described the idle women of the ruling classes. It was for a good reason that she considered, in her defense of general women’s suffrage, that the demands of the bourgeois women’s movement were “a whim” from which “the farcical character of the suffrage movement”¹⁹ was derived, which she considered ““old ladies’ nonsense.”²⁰ That is why German Social Democracy, the vanguard of the world proletariat during the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, was so zealous in **preserving the political independence of proletarian women from their bourgeois older sisters**. In fact, this fight for class independence was exemplarily led by Clara Zetkin, both through the women’s newspaper *Die Gleichheit (Equality)* and, in general, in her political and propaganda activity. For the German, the proletarian women’s movement, as soon as it had matured, had “become aware of its full, unbridgeable contradiction with bourgeois feminism,”²¹ since

“The German proletarian women’s movement has long been past the time of the feminist harmony [of interests of the female gender] nonsense. Any lucid organization of proletarian women is conscious that **such an association would make it guilty of betraying its principles**. Because the bourgeois feminists strive only for reforms in favor of the female sex within the framework of bourgeois society through a **struggle of one sex against another**, in opposition to the men of their own class, they do not touch on the existence of this society itself. Proletarian women, on the other hand, strive for the abolition of bourgeois society in favor of the whole proletariat through a struggle of one class against another, in close community of ideas and arms with the men of their class—who fully recognize their equality. . . Bourgeois feminism is nothing more than a reformist movement, the proletarian women’s movement is revolutionary and must be revolutionary.”²²

sections, base assemblies and popular societies—despite not enjoying *formal* electoral rights. This revolutionary democracy was naturally outside the mental horizon of the fine bourgeois fine ladies.

¹⁹ The three quotes in this paragraph are found respectively in *Women’s Suffrage and Class Struggle* and *The Proletarian Woman*. Both compiled in Aubet, M.J. (1983). *El pensamiento de Rosa Luxemburgo [The Thought of Rosa Luxemburg]* (p. 284 and 288). Ediciones del Serbal. The compiler, a feminist intellectual, must be recognized for her intellectual rigor. When presenting some of the few texts that the Polish revolutionary dedicated to the woman question, she points out that “we must begin by admitting that Rosa Luxemburg was never a feminist in the modern sense of the term” because “it is evident that the feminist struggle is not indebted to her work at all, and it can be asserted that it exists ‘despite’ Rosa Luxemburg.” *Ibidem*, p. 278. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own. Such is the panorama of the omnipotent *historical revisionism*—which wants to make (and, in the eyes of both the general public and a large part of the vanguard, *has made*) simple *feminists* out of historical communist female leaders—that we almost felt the desire to travel back in time to thank this bourgeois intellectual, simply, for stating the obvious. This sentimental effluvium dissipates when we turn the page, when the author, commenting that Luxemburg—like all true Marxists—had a “conception of the revolution as an ‘all-encompassing’ process, that is, capable of ending all existing oppression,” calls this point of view “utopian.” Can’t make a silk purse out of a pig’s ear!

Editor’s Note: For the present English version, excerpts of Rosa Luxemburg’s *Women’s Suffrage and Class Struggle* and *The Proletarian Woman* were translated from Luxemburg, R. (2022). *Gesammelte Werke [Collected Works]* (vol. 3, p. 162 and 411). Dietz Berlin.

²⁰ See Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

²¹ Zetkin, C. (1894). *Reinliche Scheidung [A Clean Break]*. *Die Gleichheit*, year 4, #8, p. 7. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

²² *Ibidem*.

Zetkin had reasons to insist on this principle of class delimitation. At the beginning of the following year (1895), *Vorwärts*—the central organ of the SPD—published a petition on behalf of “German women of all parties and all classes” to Emperor Wilhelm II written by the feminists Minna Cauer, Lily Braun (once a social democrat) and an SPD affiliate, Adele Gerhard. *Vorwärts* printed the submissive feminist petition (which *begged* for some moderate political rights, such as freedom of assembly for women) accompanied by a statement of support, encouraging their male readers to support it and their female readers to sign it. Zetkin, who also reprinted it in the pages of *Die Gleichheit*, openly contradicted this display of opportunism. She, on the contrary, followed it with a warning that read: “We strongly discourage any class conscious member of the proletariat from supporting this petition in any way.”²³

If we bring up this case, which might seem like a simple anecdote, it is because it condenses enough significant elements to dwell on it. In her protest (which she managed to get published in *Vorwärts* as well), Zetkin argued as follows:

“Let’s suppose that bourgeois democrats had initiated a petition of the same or similar purpose than the present women’s petition, of the same character. The Social-Democratic press would have critiqued the petition, but would by no means have stood behind comrades, class conscious workers, appearing tied to bourgeois elements by any degree. **Why change our principled stance on the politics of the bourgeois world just because it so happens that one act of such politics comes from women who demand reform not for the so-called ‘whole,’ but for the female sex? If we want to give up our principled posture, we are also giving up our stance that the women’s question should be comprehended and promoted only in connection with the general social question.**”²⁴

Vorwärts’ response to this incisive paragraph, which was published in footnotes as a gloss by the editors of the newspaper, would accompany the definition of *opportunism* well in any dictionary:

“Unfortunately, women are in a completely different position in the state than men, they have no rights at all and, as far as middle-class women are concerned, are completely untrained in politics, so every step towards independence is progress.”²⁵

Ah, *in the meantime*, the favorite lamentation of those who don’t want to get anywhere! *Progress* measured on a political and not a historical scale, as opportunism always does! Clara Zetkin was perfectly conscious that such a concession to the bourgeois women’s movement was objectively linked to the constant struggle between the two wings of the German party, which is why, in a lengthy letter to Engels on this matter, she stated that vigilance against the feminist influence in the labor movement was all the more necessary “since already within the SPD, the tendency towards opportunism and reformism is rather great and grows with the expansion of the Party.”²⁶ Definitively, this *affaire* (or, to reuse the *heteronormative* metaphors used by feminism: *marriage*) surely constitutes the **first notable example of the idyll between opportunism and feminism**. As has been seen, **it is the reformist tendencies within the proletarian party that allow a certain approximation to the exclusivist claims of feminism.**²⁷

²³ We based the entire previous paragraph on the description in Frenchia, C.; Gaido, D. (2016). *El marxismo y la liberación de las mujeres trabajadoras, de la Internacional de Mujeres Socialistas a la Revolución Rusa [Marxism and the Liberation of Working Women, From the Socialist International Women to the Russian Revolution]* (p. 34). Ariadna Ediciones.

²⁴ Zetkin, C. (1895). *Die frauenrechtlerische Petition, das Vereins- und Versammlungsrecht des weiblichen Geschlechts betreffend [The Women’s Rights Petition, Concerning the Right of Association and Assembly of the Female Sex]*; *Vorwärts, Berliner Volksblatt*, year 12, #20, p. 9. *Editor’s Note*: translation and bold our own.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ See Zetkin, C. (1984). *Selected Writings* (p. 188). International Publishers.

²⁷ Naturally, although for obvious reasons we are focusing on the miseries of opportunism, neither side in this idyll can be considered *passive*. The most radical German feminists of the time also tried to create organizations to *reform* women

The revolutionary left, represented here by Zetkin²⁸, had to fight against both the opportunist right and feminism to the extent that the latter wanted to meddle in the affairs of working women, dissolve their *class perspective* and introduce their poisoned *gender perspective*. This is how it's described by a competent bourgeois historian who, it is worth noting, considered himself—in 1977!—“sympathetic to . . . the present-day feminist movement”²⁹:

“Zetkin further gained the trust and confidence of the SPD by **ruthlessly crushing all feminist tendencies within the women’s organisation**. The chief representative of the feminist viewpoint, Lily Braun (1865-1916), was hounded out of the socialist women’s movement. Zetkin’s task was made easier by the fact that **feminism in the Social Democratic party was closely associated with revisionism**, a doctrine of outspoken reformism based on a rejection of some of the key tenets of Marxism.”³⁰

Not surprisingly, this Lily Braun, perhaps the first “class feminist” in history, was a fervent Bernsteinian of noble origins who “was a far more outspoken critic of the SPD than was Eduard Bernstein,” “attacked the dogmatism of its ideologists, . . . the elitism and vanguardism of its [Marxist] leaders,” etc.³¹; for his part, Bernstein himself “sought the alliance of the bourgeois women’s movement,”³² like the good liberal that he was. Engels, in his critique of the Erfurt program, defined opportunism as the “forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present.”³³ It is difficult to imagine a more precise definition. In fact, it also serves to explain the *divorces* between feminism and opportunism: for example, Belgian Social Democracy, unlike the German one, renounced the demand for the female vote so as not to jeopardize its alliance with the liberals for the sake of expanding male suffrage. Rosa Luxemburg protested against this tacticism of the Belgian Social Democrats and “connected this opportunism with the revisionist polemic in which Bernstein advocated for such alliances.”³⁴ Truly, a *curious courtship*: opportunism is so ductile and unprincipled (*the movement is everything*, said the neo-Kantian Bernstein) that, while compromising with feminism in one country, it may not be interested in making deals with it in another.³⁵ Matters of class collaboration: when it comes to transactions, you sell yourself to the highest bidder.

workers, “[b]ut their intention in doing so was either to win over working women from their allegiance to socialism, or to win over the socialists themselves from their belief in revolution and commit them instead to a policy of moderate reformism. They were attempting to extend feminism across the class divide. They criticised socialist women such as Clara Zetkin for preaching ‘class hatred’. What they wanted instead was class cooperation.” Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²⁸ It should be noted that, informed of the controversy, old Engels enthusiastically applauded Zetkin’s position.

²⁹ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

³¹ Braun, L. (1987). *Selected Writings on Feminism and Socialism* (p. XI). Indiana University Press.

³² Frencia, C.; Gaido, D., *op. cit.*, p. 49.

³³ Marx, K.; Engels, F. (1990). *Collected Works* (vol. 27, p. 227). Lawrence & Wishart.

³⁴ Frencia, C.; Gaido, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51.

³⁵ The roots of this *proletarian anti-feminism*, as some historians have quite mistakenly called it (in any case, we would have to speak of *artisan anti-feminism*, and we would not be completely rigorous), lie in the reactionary attachment—in an economic-historical sense, not *moral*—of manufacturing workers to the old conditions of their workshops and patriarchal families. In fact, during the 19th century, it was the representatives of this old residual artisan sector—usually reconverted into well-paid skilled workers, the backbone of the labor aristocracy—who opposed women’s work in all its forms, the organization of female wage earners and, in general, for women to leave the home. From the IWA, Marx fought against these backward ideas, stressing the historically progressive character of the productive work of women and teenagers, a condition, according to him, for a healthy and socially beneficial development of the individual. Lenin follows in the wake of his thought, quite explicitly, in the quote that we have cited in note 5. Bebel, who as a Marxist fought against the Lasallians—who carried this patriarchal-artisan ideology—at the Gotha Congress (1875), always defended the need for equal women’s suffrage. Feminism blatantly lies when it says that Marxism did not concern itself with the emancipation of women, but it needs this demagogic infamy to sell its bourgeois merchandise among women who rebel against their oppression. In any case, the difficulties that existed here or there for the proletarian parties to apply a revolutionary policy on the women’s front are comparable to the reluctance that could exist before any other expression of the revolutionary line. Suffice it to remember the effort Lenin made to overcome the resistance of the Bolshevik Central Committee to his proposal to take power. Revolutionary Marxism has always prevailed through struggle!

Beyond that, Zetkin's *uncompromising* line proved absolutely fair. For her, at first, "it is, above all, about **organizing a small solid nucleus with Marxist positions on homogeneous bases, before addressing the great mass of women.**"³⁶ A policy of concentric construction perfectly suited to the principles of revolutionary Marxism.³⁷ As Mao said, *if we have the correct line we will have everything: Die Gleichheit*, the women's newspaper directed by Zetkin, will go from 4,000 subscribers in 1900 to 124,000 in July 1914, immediately before the war³⁸, and the women's socialist movement whose establishment she had led—both in Germany and internationally—was the vanguard in the fight against social-chauvinism. The International Conference of Socialist Women of 1915, despite the bitter struggle that took place within it and the *pacifist* tendencies expressed by Zetkin, was an essential moral platform for the revolutionary reorganization of the proletariat, which would be sanctioned four years later with the creation of the Communist International.

III. 2. The Russian counterpart

In the case of Russia, we also have a very symbolic historical example of this historical relationship between opportunism and feminism: that of Yekaterina Kuskova.

Kuskova was a radical intellectual of Lenin's generation who, after briefly passing through populism and like many other young members of the *intelligentsia*, converted to Marxism in the first half of the 90s of the nineteenth century. She was the author of the well-known economist *Credo*, a translation into Russian conditions of the revisionist offensive led by Bernstein in Germany. In addition to promoting the narrowly economic struggle of the proletariat and leaving political reforms in the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie, Kuskova was a supporter of the

"change in the party's attitude to other opposition parties. Intolerant Marxism, negative Marxism, primitive Marxism (whose conception of the class division of society is too schematic) will give way to democratic Marxism, and the social position of the party within modern society must undergo a sharp change. The party *will recognise* society."³⁹

This economist *Credo*, which Lenin had to make known in order to combat it (since the opportunists' aversion to frank and open ideological struggle is well-known), also sums up well the content of liberal *Marxism*, of a Marxism *without* class struggle, absolutely folded to the spontaneous development of that abstraction called *society*. Kuskova was only short of accusing the revolutionary Marxists of *totalitarianism*... but Hannah Arendt had not been born yet. Be that as it may, this *openness* towards class collaboration, this fear of the proletariat being an independent and revolutionary class, led Kuskova down the path of other good *liberals* like Struve: she went from Russian Bernsteinianism to co-founding in 1904 what would later become the Constitutional Democratic Party, the *Cadet party* (by its initials in Russian), organization of the timid liberal bourgeoisie. By 1908, at the First All-Russian Women's Congress (whose undoubtedly feminist motto was that "the women's movement should be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but only a movement of all women"⁴⁰), Kuskova, who never abandoned her reformist socialism (although she did leave the Cadet party, because it seemed too conservative to her) defended "a position halfway between socialism and feminism"⁴¹:

³⁶ Heinen, J. (1978). *De la 1^a a la 3^a Internacional: la cuestión de la mujer* [From the First to the Third International: The Woman Question] (p. 50). Fontamara. *Editor's Note*: translation our own.

³⁷ As the revolutionary communist that she was, a faithful defender of the doctrinal principles of Marxism, Zetkin herself commented that she was "accused of being too theoretical" (see Frencia, C.; Gaido, D., *op. cit.*, p. 48), and her "educational courses for women were eventually run down precisely because they were thought 'too intellectual'" (Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 193) by the party leadership. What do these reproaches remind us of?

³⁸ Thönnessen, W. (1976). *The Emancipation of Women. The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy (1863-1933)* (p. 118). Pluto Press.

³⁹ *A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats*; in Lenin, V.I. (1977). *Collected Works* (vol. 4, p. 173). Progress Publishers.

⁴⁰ Frencia, C.; Gaido, D. (2018). *Feminismo y movimiento de mujeres socialistas en la revolución rusa* [Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement in the Russian Revolution] (p. 26). Ariadna Ediciones. *Editor's Note*: translation our own.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

“Kuskova’s presence in the worker’s group was highly disliked by the Social Democrats, who accused her of trying to ‘seduce’ working women away from revolutionary politics, given that at the congress Kuskova tended to take a middle ground between the revolutionaries and the bourgeoisie.”⁴²

As Kollontai recalled some years later, “Kuskova, with two or three other followers, tried to make peace between the feminists of the Cadet type and the group of working women.”⁴³ Be that as it may, apart from the individual example of Kuskova—this particular figure who seemed to diachronically unite in a single body the opportunist misery of Bernstein and the “class feminism” of Lily Braun—, the two wings of the Russian labor movement had the same attitude towards local feminism, respectively, as their German counterparts. In their political assessment of the aforementioned All-Russian Women’s Congress—a Congress in which the proletarian delegation ended up staging the antagonism that exists between women of both classes by leaving the hall—the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks differed on the convenience of such class-based *intransigence*. While the Bolsheviks applauded the tactic followed by the workers’ group and considered their political objectives accomplished, the Mensheviks whined about the *missed opportunity*:

“The second article [published after the positive assessment that Kollontai, participant in the workers’ delegation, had made], published under the pseudonym ‘W’ in the same Menshevik newspaper, was much more critical of the intervention of the workers’ group. The author criticized the workers’ group’s strong emphasis on economic issues and its insistence on strict ‘class demarcation,’ which had made it impossible to make ‘even temporary and momentary alliances with the entire congress or its majority.’ **The author blamed the Bolsheviks for this rigidity**, citing the large number of Bolsheviks among the leaders of the workers’ group—although, as we have seen, the most important leader of the workers’ group was Kollontai, who was active in the ranks of Menshevism at the time. But ‘W’ also blamed the inexperience of the workers themselves. **What worried the author was that the intervention of the workers’ group had removed bourgeois or middle-class women from the ranks of Social Democracy, alienated by the ‘Octobrist’ tendencies of the leaders of the Congress. These women were, in the author’s opinion, potential allies; they had expressed their sympathy with the workers through their applause, private conversations and promises to vote with the workers’ group, but these approaches did not prosper due to the militant nature of the women workers’ intervention.** The workers’ group had made it impossible for a coalition of social democratic and liberal elements to develop, which was the axis of Menshevik politics.”⁴⁴

The description is eloquent enough, and no one will doubt its resemblance with the contemporary lamentations of “red” feminism (whether it be called “class,” “Marxist,” “proletarian”... or not called *feminist* at all, out of understandable embarrassment) of any country: the firm defense of communist principles *pushes away* the women who are *potential allies* of the proletariat, women who actively fight in the ranks of the militant bourgeoisie... but only because the poor are *alienated* and the rude *manners* of communism *do not help them* to get out of their correctable *mistake*. There. Can anyone imagine such a **paternalistic** litany referring to men? Hardly. Naturally, the editorial staff of the Menshevik newspaper agreed with this “W,” defending that “Social Democrat

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 37-38.

⁴³ See *Towards a History of the Working Women’s Movement in Russia*; in Kollontai, A. (1978). *Selected Writings* (p. 62). Lawrence Hill and Company.

⁴⁴ Frencia, C.; Gaido, D. (2018). *Feminismo y movimiento de mujeres socialistas en la revolución rusa [Feminism and the Socialist Women’s Movement in the Russian Revolution]* (p. 44). Ariadna Ediciones. Editor’s Note: bold and translation our own.

activists in the working women's movement should go **beyond the 'elemental opposition between "the sated and the hungry,"**⁴⁵ that is, beyond the class *struggle*... to promote *collaboration* among women!

Obviously, this Menshevik position was embedded in the depths of the opportunistic conceptions. The following decade, at a similar feminist congress, organized in April 1917 by the All-Russian League for Women's Equality, the Bolsheviks repeated their tactic: staging their abandonment of the meeting hall, which, as the Bolshevik Inessa Armand later said: "**There are no common interests among women, there can be no general representation of women or a general struggle of women.**"⁴⁶ When the Bolshevik delegation was leaving the congress, continuing Armand's own account, a "representative of the Mensheviks, faithful to her role as auxiliary to the bourgeoisie, defended the need to participate in this congress while foaming at the mouth."⁴⁷ As a Trotskyite separatist feminist acknowledges (we are sorry about the cacophony, but it is true to reality) in relation to the first Conference of Working Women held in Moscow in 1917:

"Faced with **the representation of the Mensheviks, who defended that the women's movement should remain independent and not submit to any political party,** the Bolshevik militants, thanks to the influence that their party had acquired among the masses, had managed to convince the present delegates of the inanity of that position."⁴⁸

Two diametrically opposed conceptions of the Party and the revolution: one, Bolshevik, as a movement organized centrally around the tasks that the march towards communism imposes; another, Menshevik, as the rearguard of the spontaneous and *independent* social movement over which it hopes to exert some influence by patting it on the back. Will anyone dare to say that these two lines are not still in conflict within the vanguard?

III.3. Feminism and imperialism

According to Lenin, the old *opportunism*, the *liberal labor party*, the *bourgeois labor movement*, became **social-chauvinist** with its submission to imperialism when the Great War began in 1914. In the same way, the bourgeois women's movement, until then quite well established in *liberal* coordinates, saw how both its theory and its practice were transformed with the entry of capitalism into its senile imperialist phase. Although it is not possible for us—nor useful in relation to the objectives of the present work—to delve into this coherent transformation, we can at least point out that, from defending the *natural right* of women to be *politically equal* to the male of their class, **feminism came to emphasize with increasing emphasis the usefulness of their particular condition for the stability of bourgeois society, especially through their right to vote:** they could balance masculine excesses with their *feminine morality*, such as alcoholism, prostitution or, why not, wars themselves. Today this folly is called *feminization of politics*. This process led slowly but clearly from the proclamation of the *universality* of liberal citizenship rights to the exaltation of the *particularity* of women and the usefulness of their feminine virtues for imperialism.

But, as we have said elsewhere, "the **bourgeois revolution** is by definition [the] establishment of the conditions for the **development of capitalism.**"⁴⁹ With regard to women's suffrage, main demand of the first feminism⁵⁰, its costly implementation should not be seen so much as a *pending task* of the bourgeois revolution, but rather as the natural consequence of the **deployment and maturing** of capitalism itself. In fact, history has made sure to demonstrate that the *implantation* of the capitalist mode of production has not *needed*, anywhere,

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 99.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 98.

⁴⁸ Heinen, J., *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ *El ciclo político de la revolución burguesa española (1808-1874)* [*The Political Cycle of the Spanish Bourgeois Revolution (1808-1874)*]; in *Línea Proletaria* #3, December 2018, p. 38. *Editor's Note*: bold and translation our own.

⁵⁰ In spite of which, the resolution in Seneca Falls which expressed that "it is the duty of the women of this country to ensure the sacred right to vote" was "the only one that did not achieve unanimity" in the votes... for being too radical for some bourgeois women! (Beltrán et al., *op. cit.*, p. 44).

bourgeois women—nor, of course, the proletariat in general—to have full political rights. **It is the subsequent logical development of capitalism that, at the rate of its conflicts and class struggles, demands the inclusion of growing sectors of the masses into the bourgeois polis through total and integral citizenship.** This is why Zetkin, as the sharp Marxist that she was, pointed out that, unlike for feminists, “[t]he advocacy for women’s suffrage by the socialist parties is not based on ideological or ethical considerations. It is dictated by historical knowledge and above all by an understanding of the class situation, of the practical needs of the struggle of the proletariat”; for “[w]e socialists do not demand women’s suffrage as a natural right that is born with the woman. We demand it as a social right grounded in the revolutionized economic activity.”⁵¹ In fact, the German revolutionary believed that women’s suffrage for bourgeois ladies was not a *starting point* for a further conquest of rights, but the *end point* of the freedom of the new mode of production:

“In limited women’s suffrage we see less the first stage of the political emancipation of the female sex than the final stage of the political emancipation of property.”⁵²

Zetkin, when writing these words in 1907, could not foresee that just a few years later she would certify how imperialism would take “all the forces of the proletariat, all the institutions and weapons that its fighting vanguard created for the liberation struggle, in the service of its own ends.”⁵³ As a matter of fact, not even *general* women’s suffrage could scare the ruling class anymore: after the war (1918), many European countries definitely granted the right to vote to women (the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland), and the United States in 1920. Was it a *feminist* achievement, a right pulled off by its decades of “struggle”? Unfortunately for contemporary feminists, not even that squalid triumph can be considered a genuine *revolutionary* achievement of their political grandmothers... at least not in the sense they would like, given that, in general, **“the enfranchisement of women was seen as a means of staving off a proletarian revolution”**⁵⁴ and it **“also helped stabilise bourgeois constitutionalism in many lands after the collapse of political systems of feudal origin and under the threat of proletarian revolution.”**⁵⁵ Damn! It seems that the quote from Zetkin that heads our article was not mere rhetorical hyperbole or an excess in the heat of agitation. Rather, it constitutes an undeniable historical truth: **the liberal program of early feminism was only satisfied when the bourgeoisie—after sending the proletarians of all countries to the imperialist carnage with the help of social-chauvinists and feminists—was able to use their demands as a factor of corporatist political framing of the masses in the state.** The granting of full citizenship⁵⁶ to women was synonymous with their **nationalization.**⁵⁷ Not in vain, the feminists of the main

⁵¹ *Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht soll die Proletarierin zum klassenbewussten politischen Leben erwecken* [The Struggle for Women’s Suffrage Is Intended to Awaken the Proletariat to Class-Conscious Political Life]; in Zetkin, C. (1957). *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften* [Selected Speeches and Writings] (vol. 1, pp. 349 and 346). Dietz Verlag. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 353

⁵³ *Brief an Heleen Ankersmit* [Letter to Heleen Ankersmit]; in Zetkin, C. (1957). *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften* [Selected Speeches and Writings] (vol. 1, p. 631). Dietz Verlag. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

⁵⁴ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁵⁵ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁵⁶ In fact, Zetkin fell short: Western capital emancipated itself completely from its pre-bourgeois burden through the Great War, entering its imperialist phase, not only by granting the vote to bourgeois women but granting it to all women, and integrating both women’s organizations as well as women workers into the system of chains of the imperialist bourgeois state. **The old fear that the bourgeoisie had of universal suffrage was offset by growing corporatism, which allowed the ruling class to link itself collectively to certain sectors of the population, organizing them not as freely associated individuals nor, of course, as classes, but as particular pressure groups.**

⁵⁷ Another historian friend of feminism comments: “In such processes there was simultaneously a nationalization of women as subject and object of the new concerns of the states. . . In this context, except for isolated pacifist voices, feminist organizations were in the first line of support for the fight in their respective countries. They stopped demanding rights and began to exalt their duties as patriots and to fulfill them even vehemently.” Sisinio, J. (2018). *Historia del feminismo* [History of Feminism] (pp. 120 and 125). Catarata. Celia Amorós, surely one of the most intelligent feminists that the Spanish state has produced, acknowledges: “The collaboration of British feminists in the war cause finally earned them the vote, something like a prize for patriotism.” Amorós, C. (2008). *El feminismo como proyecto filosófico-*

belligerent countries (the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia...) closed ranks in *defense of the imperialist fatherland* and the fight against Bolshevism. The evidence is so abundant that, surely, we will have the opportunity in the future to analyze it systematically. Perhaps we can even talk about the racial theories of the Anglo-Saxon feminists, the German, Italian or English *feminazis* (the reviled cliché contains more truth than is usually believed!), or the female anti-Bolshevik death battalions... All in due time!

IV. A purple wingless Phoenix: the second life of feminism

As our attentive reader knows by now, the object of this study is not, in any case, to theoretically refute feminism. Rather, it is about marking some milestones in the **counterrevolutionary relationship that opportunism and feminism have historically woven, that is, the bourgeois workers' movement and the bourgeois women's movement**. It is from this spontaneous and natural relationship, not exempt from *lovers' spats*, that the bastard creature that is "red" feminism emerges under any of its monikers: *socialist, Marxist, proletarian, class*... For now, everything we have pointed out so far (feminism as a *post-patriarchal* and genuinely capitalist product; the absolute antagonism between women of both classes; the nationalist and counterrevolutionary collaboration of feminist women with their respective bourgeoisies...) was self-evident for any Marxist—male or female—surely until the middle of the 20th century. The revolutionary power of the labor movement always prevented, at least where Marxism ruled the roost, attempts to subdue the female proletarians to their bourgeois *older sisters* from reaping any success. As we have seen, Lily Braun in Germany ended up outside the ranks of the SPD thanks to the proletarian line drawn by Clara Zetkin and, in general, to the official partisan repudiation of Bernstein's revisionism; in Russia, the triumph of *Iskraism*—the consecration of the proletariat as an independent political class—caused the liberal pseudo-Marxists *à la* Kuskova to distance themselves from the ranks and positions of Marxism. The first imperialist war gave feminists a bittersweet triumph, as the achievement of women's suffrage caused the old feminism to progressively deflate in the 20s and 30s—although not before giving us some truly embarrassing milestones—, since it had already offered its nationalist tribute to the bourgeoisie during the Great War and immediately after. From then on, the validity of that *era of the proletarian revolution* that is imperialism made feminism a rather irrelevant thing, since another conflict occupied the entire *ring* of history: the two classes of modern society fought, finally, in an open civil war, not leaving much room for half measure qualms or "old ladies' nonsense," to reuse Luxemburg's formula. The situation did not change until almost five decades later, when the crisis of Marxism—caused by the practical exhaustion of the theoretical premises that had allowed it to kickstart the October Cycle—became evident to the whole world.

Again, we think we can say that historical coincidences are rarely such, especially in a *globalized* world like ours. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the highest level ever reached by the class struggle of the communist proletariat, broke out in the summer of 1966; by early 1967, with the *January Storm* and the proclamation of the Shanghai Commune, it had already reached its zenith, and thereafter it could only *decline*, no matter how combatively it did.⁵⁸ The defeat of the GPCR anticipates—despite how much it managed to inspire the revolutionary classes of other countries like Peru—the end of the October Cycle. The crisis in which Marxism had been immersed since the mid-20s deepened, and exploded in the 50s as a result of Stalin's death and the definitive conversion of the Soviet Union into a **social-fascist** power. From then on, the crisis of the International Communist Movement will be practically irreversible; Marxism will be systematically combated as a conception of the world to be liquidated and its hegemony will gradually lose strength; and even the Western labor aristocracy will begin to see its prebends questioned, conquered only under the heat that emanated from the once looming World Proletarian Revolution (WPR).

It was precisely in the summer of 1967 when the rupture which, immediately after, gave rise to a strong rebirth of the bourgeois women's movement took place. This *new* feminism

político [Feminism as a Philosophical-Political Project]; in *Ciudad y ciudadanía. Senderos contemporáneos de la filosofía política*, p. 80. Editorial Trotta. *Editor's Note*: translation of both cited texts our own.

⁵⁸ For a detailed study of the Chinese revolution and of the GPCR in particular, see: *En la encrucijada de la historia: la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria y el sujeto revolucionario* [At the Crossroads of History: The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Revolutionary Subject]; in *Línea Proletaria* #0, December 2016.

“crystallized as a result of the unsatisfactory response given to the feminist demands of the militants in the *Movement*, a name given to two organizations: *SNCC* (*Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee*), an anti-racist group founded by black and white students in 1960, and *SDS* (*Students for a Democratic Society*), founded in the same year by democrats, social democrats and **anti-communists** who favored the analysis of psychological and cultural domination over that of economic exploitation.”⁵⁹

Good company! Pacifist *anti-racists* and **anti-communists** with *Freudian* complexes. Thus, if “[t]he separatism of radical feminists arises, then, from one of the many historical experiences of disappointment with respect to emancipatory political causes that have denied recognition and reciprocity to women,”⁶⁰ it will be fair to say that **modern feminism arises, again, from the disappointment (we would say: *divorce*) with respect to opportunism and anti-communism.** How curious! This modern feminism did not fight opportunism or revisionism, but rather the conception of the world of the revolutionary proletariat: Marxism.

The “new” *social movement*, which followed in the wake of African-American separatism but soon spread to other Western nations, managed to “impose a new type of debate on labor organizations in most advanced capitalist countries.”⁶¹ Such an *imposition*, determined by the absolute weakness in which revolutionary Marxism lay and the endless gullibility of the opportunists and revisionists, took the form of a systematic attack on the caricature that feminists made—with the essential help of revisionism—of the fundamental principles of Marxism. It did not matter. Even better: it will always be easier to knock down a straw man than a real one, no matter how weak. It was the theoretical rationalization of a practical, political process: the ideological liquidation of Marxism was the reflection of the liquidation of the WPR as sheer political horizon even among the vanguard sectors of society.

Although Simone de Beauvoir had broken the ice two decades earlier with her denunciation of “the economic monism of Engels,”⁶² by 1970 the two books by the *founding mothers* of radical feminism had been published: *Sexual Politics*, by Kate Millett, and *The Dialectic of Sex*, by Shulamith Firestone. The first one, misrepresenting Engels at will, asserted that following his work it could be said that “all the mechanisms of human inequality arose out of the foundations of male supremacy and the subjection of women, sexual politics serving historically as the foundation of all other social, political, and economic structures.”⁶³ It was this author who popularized the two fundamental concepts of the feminism of the last half century: *patriarchy* as a “political institution”⁶⁴ and *gender* as the “personality structure in terms of sexual category.”⁶⁵ She limited herself to giving shape to what had already been brought forward by Simone de Beauvoir, and the *gender studies*, well positioned in the capitalist production of ideology, did the rest.⁶⁶ The second one, Firestone, sought to spread the opinion that

⁵⁹ *Lo personal es político: el surgimiento del feminismo radical* [*The Personal Is Political: The Rise of Radical Feminism*]; in Amorós, C. (2010). *Teoría feminista: de la ilustración a la globalización* [*Feminist Theory: From Liberal Feminism to Postmodernity*] (vol. 2, p. 39). Minerva Ediciones. *Editor’s Note*: bold and translation our own.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

⁶¹ Heinen, J., *op. cit.*, p. 9. The author—the aforementioned Trotskyite and separatist feminist—naturally boasts about this *imposition*.

⁶² Beauvoir, S. de. (1956). *The Second Sex* (p. 85). Jonathan Cape.

⁶³ Millett, K. (2000). *Sexual Politics* (p. 121). University of Illinois Press.

⁶⁴ Millett, K., *op. cit.*, p. XIX.

⁶⁵ Millett, K., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ It should be noted, in relation to the category of *patriarchy*, that its unscientific unilateral revision by feminism has not gone unnoticed by some of its ideologues. The anthropologist Gerda Lerner, for example, states: “The problem with the word **patriarchy**, which most feminists use, is that it has a narrow, traditional meaning—not necessarily the one feminists give it. In its narrow meaning, patriarchy refers to the system . . . in which the male head of the household had absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and male family members.” Although the author coyly adds nuance to that definition in a feminist sense, she admits that, from the *strict* point of view (which is the scientific point of view of Marxism, as we have been able to see), patriarchy: “ended in the nineteenth century with the granting of civil rights to women.” Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy* (pp. 238-239). Oxford University Press. On the same page, Lerner echoes other feminist *alternatives* to the problematic concept of *patriarchy*: “**Sex-gender system** is a very useful term, introduced by the anthropologist Gayle Rubin, which has found wide currency among feminists.” In her manual of *feminism for dummies*, which was, at least in Spain, the true *Bible* of youth feminist activism until a few years ago, Nuria Varela says: “Not all feminist theorists use the term patriarchy. Some prefer to use ‘gender-sex system.’ For Celia Amorós, they are synonymous expressions . . .” Varela, N. (2005). *Feminismo para principiantes* [*Feminism for Beginners*] (p. 179).

“though Marx and Engels grounded their theory in reality, it was only a *partial* reality,”⁶⁷ a “strictly economic”⁶⁸ one. These works forever marked the anti-communist discourse of feminism: **it was a matter of eliminating the universality of Marxism**, reducing it to a simple *economic theory*, capable of explaining the *productive* system well, but not the *reproductive* dimension or the *psychosexual*⁶⁹ sphere. **The first task of anti-communism has always been to try to liquidate Marxist theory as a “comprehensive and harmonious . . . integral world outlook.”**⁷⁰

Marxism, or what was left of it in the West in the form of **reversionism**, was left on the defensive and gleefully set about *revising* itself theoretically to the rhythm of the last word of feminist fashion. Zillah Eisenstein, one of those who took this unfortunate task most seriously, described it like this:

“My discussion uses Marxist class analysis as the thesis, radical feminist patriarchal analysis as the antithesis, and from the two evolves the synthesis of socialist feminism.”⁷¹

Got it! It was so easy. Marxism here, radical feminism there and... problem solved. This eclectic quip is exactly the same as the famous *double negation* of feminism with which that liquidating circle that claimed to be sympathetic to the Line of Reconstitution—a clique now dead and buried—wanted to revise Marxism and save it from its *original sin*, that is, its “unquestionable and great historical limitation of the starting point of Marxism on the

Ediciones B. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own. The creator of the concept, Gayle Rubin, admitted to having manufactured it from a “freely interpretative” “exegesis” of the work of Freud and Levi-Strauss, and motivated by the supposed “need for such a concept [the “sex-gender system”] by discussing the failure of classical Marxism to fully express or conceptualize sex oppression.” Rubin, G. (1975). *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex; in Toward an Anthropology of Women*, pp. 159-160. Monthly Review Press. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own. Those starting limitations of Marxism regarding “the gender question” that obsess liquidationist “red” feminism! Curiously, the author herself criticized her “sex-gender system” a decade after formulating it, because... she was afraid of *naturalizing* sex! It is evident that sex is also one of those *social constructions*, a catch-all category within which everything fits and nothing is explained. The heart of the matter, whether feminists call it *patriarchy*, *sex-gender system*, *mode of reproduction* or any other way, is the intention to theoretically construct a dual, triple or infinitely divided world into systems (since this *deconstructive* operation is virtually endless, it can build an “ableist” system or a “fatphobic” one all the same), in which Marxism can only explain “class oppression,” feminism the oppression of women, and the “racialized” take care of their own non-white things. As we have said, this reactionary dismemberment of reality is the mental reflection of the political separatism of contemporary feminists (and black nationalism, etc.), whose corporativism is theoretically rationalized in all the universities of the world. Celia Amorós, quoting Chantal Mouffe—the well-known *populist* theoretician who has inspired figures of the *stature* of Errejón—confesses: “. . . On the other hand, it is evident that we must abandon the problem of the *privileged revolutionary subject* who, thanks to any characteristic given *a priori*, would have a vocation for universality and the historical mission of liberating society. Once it has been accepted that all antagonism is necessarily specific and limited and that there is no single source of all social antagonisms, it is necessary to admit that the revolutionary socialist subject will be the result of a political construction that articulates all the struggles against all the forms of domination . . .” *Marxismo y feminismo [Marxism and Feminism]*; in Amorós, C. (1985). *Hacia una crítica de la razón patriarcal [Towards a Critique of Patriarchal Reason]* (pp. 309-310). Anthropos. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own. This indigestible slop, in fact, ends up, in addition to being anti-proletarian, being quite *misogynistic* and *racist*. As long as they don’t try to spread it among the proletariat, let anyone who wants to have a taste do it. *Bon appétit!*

⁶⁷ Firestone, S. (1972). *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (pp. 3-4). Bantam Books.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4. This partiality was, of course, the product of “Marx’s bias against women” (p. 5).

⁶⁹ Feminism, like the bourgeoisie, has moved from enlightened-liberal universalism to postmodern pluralism... going through a kind of structuralism that divided social life into independent “systems of oppression” or autonomous “spheres.”

⁷⁰ Lenin, V.I. (1977). *Collected Works* (vol. 19, p. 23). Progress Publishers.

⁷¹ Eisenstein, Z. R. (1979). *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (p.6). Monthly Review Press. Lise Vogel, another classic author of *socialist feminism*, begins her best-known article by declaring a similar and openly eclectic intent: “The women’s movement and the left confront an urgent political task: to develop a theory of women’s oppression and women’s liberation that is simultaneously Marxist and feminist.” *Socialism and Feminism*; in Vogel, L. (1995). *Woman Questions. Essays for a Materialist Feminism* (p. 24). Routledge.

gender question.”⁷² Apart from that *breeze* from the past, out of this impossible “synthesis” is that *socialist feminism* was born, the pioneering first articulated form of all “red” feminism. However, that such a concoction was born in the United States is far from coincidental. There, as in England⁷³, Marxism never managed to take firm root, and *socialism* was always understood—as seen recently with the *old codger* Sanders—as what we would now call *socioliberalism*: a moderate liberalism if we compare it with the doctrines of any *Mancunian* psychopath; a homeopathic socialism if compared with continental European traditions, especially French or German ones. The weakness of North American socialism is evident in the example of the Socialist Party of America (SPA), founded in 1901 and adhered to the Second International, since, “while in Germany the socialist women’s organisation was at least ten times as big as the female suffrage movement, in America the proportions were the reverse”⁷⁴:

“For various reasons, it seems impossible to put a precise figure on the strength of the American socialist women’s movement, but it is unlikely to have been much greater than 15,000 at its height in 1912, and was probably less. The bourgeois suffrage movement was already 75,000 strong in 1910 and its campaigns were far more impressive than any the socialist could mount.”⁷⁵

This, added to “the disorganised and confused nature of the American Socialist Party,”⁷⁶ allowed the issue to be raised in the following terms in the press organs linked to the SPA in 1914:

“The Socialist who is not a Feminist lacks breadth. The Feminist who is not a Socialist is lacking strategy.”⁷⁷

⁷² See *Una aproximación a la brisa liquidacionista del feminismo “rojo”* [An Approach to the Liquidationist Breeze of “Red” Feminism]; in *Línea Proletaria* #1, July 2017, p.66.

⁷³ As one of the contemporary “socialist” feminists who has recently proposed a *feminism for the 99%* comments, in England, the country of the labor aristocracy, “bourgeois feminism was to maintain a degree of dialogue with the workers’ movement which, for its own part, was a little more open to the feminist struggle than elsewhere. Regardless of the reasons, **the English trade-union movement’s moderate views meant Marxist or revolutionary positions only had the support of a small minority, and the rise of socialist ideas was based more than anything else on moral condemnation of the alienation of human relations in capitalist society. Working-class women were therefore particularly subject to the influence of bourgeois feminists . . .**” Arruzza, C. (2013). *Dangerous Liaisons: The Marriages and Divorces of Marxism and Feminism* (p. 29). Merlin Press. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own.

⁷⁴ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 172.

⁷⁷ Waters, M. A. (1972). *Feminism and the Marxist Movement* (p. 18). Pathfinder Press. The phrase, attributed since time immemorial and apocryphally to Rosa Luxemburg in the *anything goes* of the *ones and zeros*, is by Louise W. Kneeland. The author of the aforementioned book (Waters), another Trotskyite-separatist-feminist, records how another American socialist from the SPA defended the use of the concept of *feminism*: “**The term feminism has been foisted upon us. It will do as well as any other word. . . . It means woman’s struggle for freedom.**” *Ibidem*. *Editor’s Note*: bold our own. That’s what we call principles, yessir! Later, Waters offers to dispose of the “misunderstanding” that, according to her, “makes communication difficult” between Marxists and feminists: “For us [Americans] a feminist is any woman who recognizes that women are oppressed as a sex and is willing to carry out an uncompromising struggle to end that oppression. Thus we say the most consistent feminist must be a socialist.” *Ibidem*, p. 32. This subjectivist use of concepts, which tries to pass off as *cultural* issues what is nothing more than a **correlation of class forces**, in which socialism is reformist and, furthermore, is surpassed by a bourgeois women’s movement that *imposes* its language—as the person cited above recognized—, constitutes an idealistic absurdity. Incidentally, it seems that Mariátegui, surely the **only** Marxist of any importance who ever spoke of *proletarian feminism*, used this formula probably influenced by the American environment, a country he visited before establishing his Marxism. If “red” feminism were more skilled, it would use this loose verse from Marxist literature instead of contenting itself, as Western youth Maoism does—infected with political correctness for being an extension of Anglo-Saxon liberalism—, with apocryphal *blog* posts falsely attributed to Indian Maoist Anuradha Ghandy.

In short, as Kollontai lamented regarding similar cases, **“the poison of feminism infected”**⁷⁸ **the labor movement**. With this historical background, the honeymoon between feminism and revisionist opportunism spanned a good part of the 70s and 80s. The bacchanalia continued with some of the most prominent *socialist feminists* openly stating that “the **struggle between man and woman** will have to continue”⁷⁹ and declaring “the strategic necessity for women to organize **separately** so that we are in a position to develop our own skills, make our own decisions, and **struggle against men** and their sexism.”⁸⁰ Summing up: **they call for political separatism, the struggle of the sexes and for a feminist revision of Marxism... in the name of socialism!** It should not be necessary to show that this explicit preaching of the division of the proletariat into *sexual ghettos*, so often denied with hysterical embarrassment by “class” feminists, is absolutely contrary to Marxism. But we live in bad times for obviousness, and even worse for class principles. Let’s see what Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg or Nadezhda Krupskaya, respectively, said about the matter, those *poor alienated* women without *gender consciousness*, prey to the “initial patriarchal bias of Marx’s entire framework”⁸¹:

“. . . the liberation struggle of the proletarian woman cannot be a struggle like that of the bourgeois woman against the man of her class; on the contrary, it is the struggle *with the man* of her class *against the capitalist class*. She need not struggle . . . against the men of her class . . . The proletarian woman struggles against capitalist society hand in hand with the man of her class.”⁸²

“Her political demands [the proletarian woman’s] are deeply rooted in the social abyss that separates the exploited class from the exploiting class, not in the opposition between man and woman, but in the opposition between capital and labor.”⁸³

“The division between men and women has no great importance in the eyes of proletarian women. What unites working women with working men is much stronger than what divides them. . . ‘All for one, one for all!’ This ‘all’ includes all the members of the working class—men and women alike.”⁸⁴

Comparisons are odious... for “Marxist” feminism. Be that as it may, while the proletariat rose unstoppably and Marxism was hegemonic in the advanced media of society, feminism could barely scratch revolutionary communism. Only opportunism flirted, without excessive success, with it. At least during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the bourgeois women’s movement did not need to elaborate any *special* theory about female oppression: it found it sufficient to want to propagate among women the principles that political liberalism upheld relying on the Enlightenment. That is why, as long as it did not cross the class border to win over the female workers, it could be left alone. It was not going to do much damage. In addition, its bourgeois roots were evident enough to make it difficult for it to seduce both the proletarians in particular and the vanguard in general. But, by the 70s, the revolutionary proletariat seemed to have gone into a comatose state, and the tables turned: the new bourgeois women’s movement (composed essentially of young single women, with university studies and linked to intellectual

⁷⁸ *Towards a History of the Working Women’s Movement in Russia*; in Kollontai, A. (1978). *Selected Writings* (p. 51). Lawrence Hill and Company. *Editor’s Note*: bold and italics out own. Kollontai uses this graphic expression to refer to the period of 1905-1906, when, according to her account, “the poison of feminism infected not only the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries but even some active Bolsheviks.”

⁷⁹ Hartmann, H., *op. cit.* *Editor’s Note*: bold our own.

⁸⁰ Young, I. (1981). *Beyond the Unhappy Marriage: A Critique of the Dual Systems Theory*; in *Women & Revolution. A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (p. 63). Black Rose Books.

⁸¹ Weinbaum, B. (1978). *The Curious Courtship of Women’s Liberation and Socialism* (p. 32). South End Press.

⁸² *Nur mit der proletarischen Frau wird der Sozialismus siegen! [Only With the Proletarian Woman Will Socialism Triumph!]*; in Zetkin, C. (1957). *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften [Selected Speeches and Writings]* (vol. 1, p. 100). Dietz Verlag. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

⁸³ *Die Proletarin [The Proletarian Woman]*; in Luxemburg, R. (2022). *Gesammelte Werke [Collected Works]* (p. 411). Dietz Berlin. *Editor’s Note*: translation our own.

⁸⁴ Heinen, J., *op. cit.*, p. 7.

circles, frustrated after passing through youth protest movements and with unsatisfied⁸⁵ claims for social promotion)⁸⁶ went on the offensive and the Marxist proletariat simply seemed to have ceased to exist except in a couple of resilient places, like Peru. Revisionism could, at last, dedicate itself to do *its job* without much opposition: the attempt to *deconstruct*, or rather *destroy*, all the revolutionary principles of Marxism. As the wall fell, capitalist production experienced another wave of women's incorporation into work and the positions of the labor aristocracy continued to be relentlessly laminated. The present context of absolute hegemony of feminism is the result of this historical process, and the bulk of the vanguard, meanwhile, still wallows in its opportunistic quagmire: in their tailing of *the masses*, whoever they are and wherever they go, the revisionists are ready to go to the end point, that is, to the point of falling off the cliff.

V. Epilogue: Marxism and feminism here and now

As we have said, feminism has fully settled in the *common sense* of imperialism. It is already the *normal way* of thinking about the social situation of the female sex. And, by being the norm, it is also the *spontaneous* frame of thought for all classes. *The ruling ideology is the ideology of the ruling class*. This thesis, which is the ABC of Marxism, demonstrates the futility of trying to find a proletarian "class feminism" in the fact that there are working class women who are swept away by the torrent of the feminist movement. Just as, even in the conditions of spontaneous effervescence of the labor movement, its inertial development could only generate bourgeois consciousness, the spontaneity of working women who rebel against what particularly oppresses them cannot go beyond bourgeois ideology.⁸⁷ Paraphrasing Marx, we can say that when the proletariat sees in himself only a

⁸⁵ It is not an anecdotal fact that a good part of the main feminists of the 70s and 80s were, by the end of the century, very well settled, mainly in academic institutions. Some came from there, and many others made a name for themselves as a result of their activism. Others continued to develop their comfortable petty-bourgeois life, like the *multidisciplinary artist* Kate Millett.

⁸⁶ This description is valid to understand the social basis of the resurgence of feminism. To refine the analysis, we can use Engels: "In the industrial world, the specific character of the economic oppression burdening the proletariat is visible in all its sharpness only when all special legal privileges of the capitalist class have been abolished and complete legal equality of both classes established. . . And in the same way, the peculiar character of the supremacy of the husband over the wife in the modern family, the necessity of creating real social equality between them and the way to do it, will only be seen in the clear light of day when both possess legally complete equality of rights. Then it will be plain that the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and that this in turn demands that the characteristic of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society be abolished." Engels, F., *op. cit.*, p. 136-137. With that legal equality basically conquered after decades of the right to vote, the second post-war period revealed that there was a *problem that has no name*, as the feminist Betty Friedan would say. Equal political rights, women with university education and professional possibilities... but, still, social inequality even among women of the *middle classes*, who were still mostly housewives. As Engels brought forward, these absolutely equal rights revealed that a social revolution was needed to really emancipate women. But, given the crisis of Marxism and the very idea of social revolution (which was replaced by chimeras such as the feminist revolution, which not even feminists know what it exactly consists of... and those who had an idea, like Firestone, only came up with a technological dystopia), the recognition of this problem that has no name—which was not a consequence of the lack of rights but of the social organization that derives from the capitalist mode of production, particularly from the family institution—revitalized the narrow feminist struggle. Only now they were not fighting for the *right* to study, the *right* to work outside the home or the *right* to be elected as a political representative, rather, a professional and political presence immediately equal to that of the man was demanded. In fact, the split of the new feminism with respect to the common matrix of *The Movement* was caused, to a large extent, by the refusal to grant 51% of its representation to women, who set themselves up as spokeswomen for the *entire* female population. This fundamental demand is out of the limits of bourgeois democracy (which can only be *formal*), so **instead of guiding the critique of material inequality towards the social revolution... it was channeled into to the corporatist reform of imperialism.**

⁸⁷ "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a 'third' ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in *any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, *to its development along the lines of the Credo programme*; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, . . . and trade-unionism means the ideological

worker, he will not be able to become anything other than a *trade unionist*: a seller of his own labor power who fights for a better price for this transaction; in the same sense, when the proletarian woman sees in herself nothing more than a *woman*, she will be incapable of becoming anything other than a *feminist*: a *gender activist*, caboose and cannon fodder of the struggle of bourgeois women for their share of power in bourgeois society.⁸⁸

The times when, from radical activism, the Line of Reconstitution was accused of being little less than *fascist*, simply for not compromising with feminist ideology, seem very distant now. As has been demonstrated (we do not believe that we can be accused of providing little evidence), **our frontal opposition to feminism is only radical loyalty to communism**. But we were compared, from time to time, with Ciudadanos, at that time the *black beast* of the average leftist, shallow as a puddle. That demagogy ran out quickly, as Ciudadanos abdicated the part of its liberalism that set it against feminism and jumped on the bandwagon, that is, on the patriotic bourgeois consensus.⁸⁹ However, the evident excesses of feminism at the ideological, political and legislative level have also created some opposition among the *outsiders* of bourgeois politics, both in the representatives of certain capitalist factions⁹⁰ and in the marginal *aspirational* representatives of the radicalized labor aristocracy. Feminism, which, in order to frame the bourgeois women's movement in the imperialist states, has had to promote the subversion of the principles of republican egalitarianism—one of the most important achievements of the revolutionary bourgeoisie—, has also created (as we have seen before in relation to the *struggle of the sexes*) a type of sexist discourse incompatible with any political project that claims to be based on the principle of the class struggle. This circumstance, added to the fact that the mass feminist movement that has grown spectacularly in the last five years seems to have peaked and is comfortably channeled by the PSOE and Podemos, has surely promoted a discursive separation between the most workerist revisionism and openly feminist propaganda. Organizations such as the Partido Comunista de los Trabajadores de España (PCTE) or Reconstrucción Comunista (RC), which were “class feminists” until very recently, are pulling away after noticing, among other things, that with that eclectic invention you catch nothing but internal conflicts. Feminism is bound and well bound to the bourgeois state. The PCTE will help us, here, as an example of the extent to which revisionism, even as it senses a *problem* with feminism, participates in its ideological framework and, above all, in its political movement. **The bourgeois labor movement is**

enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is *to combat spontaneity, to divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy.” *What Is To Be Done?*; in Lenin, V.I. (1977). *Collected Works* (vol. 5, pp. 384-385). Progress Publishers. We believe that the length of the quote is justified by its eloquence. It is enough to switch *trade-unionism* with *feminism*, and the whole core of the woman question is clearly explained.

⁸⁸ It is very interesting to see how, defending the need for concrete agitation among the masses of women, Zetkin pointed out: “When I recognize that, I’m not speaking as a woman, but as a party comrade.” Zetkin, C., *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁸⁹ For a brief look at the panorama of this feminist consensus, see, for example, this illustrative report made on the occasion of the last March 8: *La guerra de los feminismos [The War of the Feminisms]* [<https://www.larazon.es/espana/20200308/3l3fqomrc5e5bhwdbrfet3flna.html>]. Surprisingly, Andrea Levy, representative of the Partido Popular, manages to say a few lucid words about the political place of feminism: “In the party we are fully committed to equality and whoever says otherwise is lying, because you only need to see the number of women highly prepared for positions of responsibility, both in governments and in the party itself. Feminism is not an ideological issue, as some want to impose on us. **Feminism is part of the fundamental values of democracy and of any society and is a general and global struggle.**” *Editor’s Note*: translation and bold our own. Summarizing: *feminism* as the corporativist integration of women into bourgeois society; *feminism* **not as a matter of ideological principles, but as a political movement that constitutes, today, a pillar of bourgeois democracy at a global level.** Thank you, Andrea!

⁹⁰ This is the case, in the Spanish state, of VOX. Contrary to the common sense of *progressivism*—which has slogans instead of ideas, taboos instead of arguments, and seems to be more childish by the day instead of growing up—VOX does not oppose feminism because they are a *fascist* party, but for being, in this respect, profoundly **liberal**. All their anti-feminist campaigns are based on one idea: they are against the *collectivization* of women, that is, of the feminists claim to have a monopoly on the *representation* of half the population. **They oppose, de facto, political liberalism to corporativism.** Yes: in this schizophrenic and aimless world, a *proto-fascist* party is dedicated to combating the feminist corporativism that is defended with tooth and nail by *the left*. In any case, the gravitational force of feminism is so powerful that even VOX has been forced to fool around, oddly, with the *empty signifier* of feminism. Its campaign for the last March 8 was “a plea for **true feminism** and against the imposition of the liberticidal postulates of radical feminism.” The news can be found at: https://www.abc.es/espana/abci-lanza-campana-mujer-video-contra-feminismo-radical-202003041903_video.html

incapable of emancipating itself from the bourgeois women's movement... because "red" feminism is opportunism on the women's front!

We assume that after some *Greek* wake-up call and taking advantage of the schism that later gave the chance to the PCTE to *renew* itself, this organization recently made an attempt to clarify its position on the *woman question*⁹¹. Although they end their text with the ambiguous statement that "the subject called upon to join the ranks of the social alliance is not the feminist movement or movements, but women from poor and working backgrounds and their organizations," this generality creates more questions than answers: if there is an autonomous *woman-subject* that must be *integrated into that social alliance*, does it mean that the revolutionary subject is not *universal*, but is made up of *partial* subjects? What are the "organizations" of women *from poor and working backgrounds* called upon to *join* the aforementioned alliance? Regardless of the answers to these questions, which we will try to answer later, the PCTE approach allows us to infer that its ideal for the "current" "movement for the emancipation of women in Spain" (we ask ourselves: which one?) is that the already existing organizations of women from poor and working backgrounds (we wonder: which ones?) would be directed, or at least influenced, by the PCTE. No surprise: revisionism has always represented the revolution as the stretching of spontaneity for the sake of its *intervention* in the *mass fronts* as they are given. Our interpretation, in fact, is explicitly confirmed a bit prior, when the PCTE laments that "[t]he communist presence in the movement is extremely weak, without actually playing a leading role in existing organizations and platforms except on specific occasions and places." In which movement is the communist presence so weak? Undoubtedly, in the bourgeois women's movement. There is none other today. The PCTE acknowledges this by saying that "the movement for the emancipation of women has been immersed in a serious crisis for years." Why? Because:

"The specific role of working women and class approaches are practically non-existent or they find themselves as a small minority within the movement in which positions of petty-bourgeois origin predominate."⁹²

It is there in black and white, although the author is probably not even aware of it: the PCTE believes that its task is to extend the influence of its "communism" in the *actually existing* women's movement, that is, in the **bourgeois women's movement**. It wants to literally **reform** *this* movement. As it believes in class *essence*, it believes that the working women who practically participate in feminism today will suddenly want revolution as soon as the PCTE's presence makes itself noticed. In its political empiricism, revisionism is incapable of even mentally conceiving any movement other than the spontaneous one. But, given a certain cognitive dissonance, it laments that the spontaneous tends naturally towards bourgeois channels. It's necessary to reread *What Is To Be Done?*, friends! The confusion is such that, forcefully, they have bought into feminist segregationism, and they say that "for the seizure of power" we need "the alliance of the oppressed strata. Among those oppressed strata are the women of the working class and of the people [of which classes of the *people*?], called upon to integrate the social alliance that we are building..." Think for a moment about the logically correct but politically reactionary syllogism: you have to *ally* with the *oppressed strata* + the women of the working class and the people are oppressed = you have to ally with the women of the working class and the people. The "Communist Party" of the working class...has to "ally" ...with the working women! How does one ally with oneself? Or is it that the women of the working class and *the people* are *something apart*, and not an integral part of the Party of *their* class? In the end, the working woman does turn out to be a particular *subject* who, together with *other* particular subjects (the men of the working class and the people, we suppose... anyone else?), make up an *alliance*. Fuck! Things get worse, since the PCTE also asserts that working women "must play a leading role in the **general** movement for the emancipation of women" (bold our own).

⁹¹ *El carácter de clase de la lucha por la emancipación de la mujer en el capitalismo. La situación en España* [The Class Character of the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women in Capitalism. The Situation in Spain]; in *Revista Comunista Internacional*, #8, March of 2018. All subsequent citations, until otherwise indicated, are from the digital version of the text. Due to its format, it is impossible for us to indicate the corresponding page. The article can be found at: <https://www.iccr.gr/es/news/El-caracter-de-clase-de-la-lucha-por-la-emancipacion-de-la-mujer-en-el-capitalismo.-La-situacion-en-Espana/>

⁹² Below: "State organizations are transmission belts of some political parties, as in the case of Fundación Mujer with respect to the PSOE or the Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres, recovered by the PCE throughout 2013 without a considerable organizational reality." We leave it to readers to compare this complaint with the one by the Mensheviks we quoted before, which lamented the *partisanship* of the women's movement and wanted it to be nice, free and *independent*.

The circle has come to a close: **the bourgeois women's movement, which apparently is fighting for "the emancipation of women,"⁹³ must come to be led by working women, who will forge alliances with bourgeois women, now dethroned from the helm of the general women's movement** (yes, that general women's movement that, according to the historical communists that we have cited above, *cannot exist...* except due of the absolute defeat of the proletariat). **But since you can only ally with someone you recognize as a counterpart, as an equal, that is, as a class, the social alliance proposed by the PCTE is, then, a call for Menshevik class collaboration... at least among women!** So many words to say so little!

Again, we can't make a silk purse out of a pig's ear. The PCTE is, here, entirely consistent with its *general* conception of that "revolutionary process" for which it lacks a strategy. But reviewing their conceptions regarding the woman question illustrates well the dependence of revisionism on bourgeois *political* thought, which cannot get out of the masses-state dialectic: *the secret is in the masses*; specifically, in the **organization and direction of its spontaneous, given, movement**. And although the PCTE tries to break, at least in its *theoretical* propaganda, with feminism, it is absolutely incapable: the text we have analyzed lectures us on the non-existence of *patriarchy*, but at the same time it enlightens us about "patriarchal ideology" of capitalism.⁹⁴ In fact, in a recent political report from their central committee, they said that "gender must be abolished,"⁹⁵ an openly *radical feminist* thesis. What a curious way of *not sharing* and *not using* "a series of analytical and political categories that our Party does not share and does not use."⁹⁶

The PCTE, like the rest of revisionism, is incapable of proposing a true proletarian alternative to the bourgeois women's movement, to feminism, because it is incapable of even imagining it. It has a Menshevik conception of the Party and the revolution. Therefore, the mere idea of **a proletarian women's movement, organized from Marxism and against the bourgeois women's movement, as a movement that has split from the spontaneous flow of society and integral part of the Communist Party as organized revolution**, will seem like a

⁹³ This assertion reveals a certain historical ignorance about the notions of *oppression* and *emancipation*. **The bourgeois women's movement could effectively fight (in the 19th century!) against the political oppression suffered by the female gender to the extent that its legal inequality with respect to the male and its dependence on him was a truly patriarchal echo of a former mode of production**. But developed capitalism **emancipates** all individuals *politically* while **oppressing** them *socially*. That is why communism always opposed the concept of *social revolution* to the limited bourgeois *political revolution*. Obviously contemporary feminism, totally imperialist, does not fight for any kind of emancipation. It simply can't. Conceding that is compromising with the most reactionary feminist propaganda, which sets itself up as the general representative of women of all classes. The only **subject** that can fight for the only pending *emancipation*, the full emancipation of society from the automatism of capitalist production, is the revolutionary proletariat.

⁹⁴ Not even their superstructural mechanicism saves them from error. If there is no such thing as a patriarchal *structure*, how can its reflections exist *superstructurally* other than as a residue from another era? It is much more correct to speak, as the Revolutionary Communist Party (Spanish State) does, of "the macho culture that permeates this society in all its spheres." *El feminismo que viene [The Coming Feminism]*; in *La Forja* #34, April 2006, p. 65. *Editor's Note*: translation our own. *Macho culture* that is the prejudiced ideological reflection of the bourgeois social relations that assure women a subordinate position in social production due to their domestic slavery. The PCTE, which *goes no further*, seems to have chosen the adjective "*patriarchal*" out of mere theoretical opportunism. It knows that its members were educated, in this regard, by the Feminist Commission that existed until the Eleventh Extraordinary Congress... and perhaps it has decided to grant a tiny crumb to its feminist-leaning youth.

⁹⁵ *Informe Político aprobado por el X Pleno del Comité Central – 18 y 19 de julio 2020 [Political Report Approved by the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee – July 18 and 19, 2020]*, p. 30. Any slogan about *abolishing* gender (or *performing* it, it doesn't matter) starts from considering, as the PCTE does, that the "concept of gender as a social construct, one of the main elaborations of feminist theory . . . is analytically useful." (p. 29). *Editor's Note*: translation our own. The report can be consulted at: <https://www.pcte.es/comunicados-centrales/informe-politico-aprobado-por-el-x-pleno-del-comite-central-18-y-19-de-julio-2020/>

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28. Note that, in the case of RC, and despite all the discursive paraphernalia of its youtuber-leader through Frente Obrero, in number 11 of *De Acero*, their magazine (we dare not call it theoretical), they say that: "We can only accept class feminism if it is Marxist feminism" (p. 44). *Editor's Note*: translation our own. It is in this same issue where they still denied the existence of the Spanish nation, which they now extol, so we cannot guarantee that in the future they will not turn 180 degrees and implicitly insult themselves as *postmodernists*. In fact... they have done something like that in the latest book by Roberto Vaquero! Despite disowning the word feminism... they continue to buy, like the PCTE, into the concept of *patriarchy* and *gender*! This schizophrenia has something in common with that of VOX: as *outsiders* and "politically incorrect" they need to make noise against the platitudes of the dominant feminist discourse; as *insiders* of the dominant ideology, they cannot move outside of their frameworks of thought.

“leftist” chimera. In order to even conceive of such an horizon, one would have to start by upholding the communist worldview, recognizing its present critical state and drawing up a political plan to reconstitute it ideologically and politically, that is, so that first the vanguard itself and then the masses of men and women of the planet feel once again challenged by the objective—worth achieving at *any price*—of a society without social classes. But this would imply understanding the *historical content* of the new vanguard-Party dialectic demanded by the relaunch of the WPR, namely: **that neither the masses organized in the bourgeois way in the trade unions nor the masses organized in the bourgeois way by feminism are going to resolve, facilitate or push us towards the tasks that the communist proletariat needs to undertake if it wants to return to being an independent revolutionary class that shapes the world in its image and likeness.** If the vanguard does not draw the path of the revolution, we can be sure that no one else will.

* * *

We have said that the defeat of the GPCR, in some way, anticipated the end of the entire Cycle. But it also inspired revolutionaries like the Peruvian communists, who by the 1980s had reconstituted their Party and launched the People’s War in their country. This last example of heroic consequence, even if it did not succeed, leaves us an eloquent example of the true relationship that exists between Marxism and feminism, an antagonism between whose poles there is no room for half measures.

María Elena Moyano was a poor, left-wing black woman, feminist and leader of the bourgeois women’s movement and, for some time, deputy mayor of a Lima district for the opportunist Peruvian Izquierda Unida. Today she would be celebrated by petty-bourgeois activism as the *epitome of intersectionality* if her figure were better known. The South American Angela Davis, you could say. But she is already honored, instead, by the entire Hispanic bourgeoisie. Moyano, who because of her counterrevolutionary positions made open propaganda against the People’s War led by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), thought that “revolution is neither death nor imposition nor submission nor fanaticism”⁹⁷ and, naturally, she attributed these *totalitarian* evils to the communists. We assume that she also wanted to *feminize* politics and put an end to that typically *masculine death drive*. Due to her active reactionary role, as a transmission belt between the Peruvian state and the masses—especially women—, an annihilation commando, entirely made up of communist women, executed her in 1992. In strict application of the revolutionary **red terror**—which, of course, did not distinguish between the *black* of her skin nor the *purple* of her ideology, to which any revisionist would have *politically correct* qualms—, her lifeless body was radically *deconstructed* in the middle of the street by action of five kilos of explosives, outside the house where she stopped breathing. Four days after her burial, her grave too was dynamited by the PCP.⁹⁸ **This is the true epitome of the**

⁹⁷ *A los partidos políticos que se sienten comprometidos con nuestro pueblo [To the Political Parties that Feel Committed to Our People]*; in Moyano, M.E. (1993). *Perú, en busca de una esperanza [Peru, In Search of Hope]* (p. 42). Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales. This brief compilation of writings—published, not by coincidence, by the government of Spain—is really illustrative to verify how the opportunist discourse, with its rattle about the “democracy from below” that “demands” one or another reform from the government in turn, does not have to change one iota to practically organize *against* the revolution. From the struggle for reforms within the capitalist state to its armed defense (Moyano promoted the paramilitary neighborhood *rondas* to confront the PCP) there is a single step: concretely, the decisive step that the communist proletariat must take from the political phase of the revolution to the military phase. In fact, Moyano does not hide this *social-fascist* tendency: “In this country, the only force that can somehow defeat the Shinning Path is the left. Because in the face of the proposals of the right, with which the people did not identify, the only alternative was the left.” *Ibidem*, p. 36. The *left* as the last bourgeois containment wall against the insurgent proletariat; the left as the last *democratic* force that can mobilize the masses against the revolution. A few years after Moyano wrote those lines, Fujimori discarded this failed *democratic* path to fight against the PCP, and *dictatorially* led the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

⁹⁸ A bourgeois commentator, who says she criticizes the PCP for “its thirst for slaughter, its totalitarian ideals,” recounts the symbolic episode—representative of **a confrontation that begins with ideology and with the decision to dare**, and that the bourgeoisie would like to hide under the rug—visibly surprised and overwhelmed: “But Moyano and her still anonymous attacker could only be surprised by their similarities. Both dark-skinned, both women, both poor. They lived in the same culture, shared history. However, experience made them bitter enemies. This scene, the one that shows Moyano in the moment when her attacker breaks through the fence of women who protected her in the fatal ‘pollada,’ cannot be summed up simply by saying that the *senderista* was crazy, or had been tricked or deceived by a man. **Nor does modern feminism have room for it.** She drew the gun and fired at Moyano’s raw flesh. In fact, the profile of this *senderista* is an

ideological and political antagonism between Marxism and feminism, that is, between the revolutionary workers' movement and the bourgeois women's movement: the *civil war* between the two classes that has produced the modern mode of production.

**Down with feminism! Long live the revolutionary emancipation of women!
For the ideological and political reconstitution of communism!**

Committee for Reconstitution (Spanish State)

December 2020

alter ego, the negative of a photograph of the ideal woman imagined by current feminists: independent, determined, perhaps with a double role in life—mother by day, subversive by night. . . **But, at the same time, feminists cannot ignore or reject the existence of these women, committed to a cause that they consider satisfies their desires for a more just world, which includes equality for all.**" Kirk, R. (1993). *Grabado en piedra. Las mujeres de sendero luminoso* [Set in Stone. *The Women of the Shinning Path*] (pp. 10-11). Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. *Editor's Note*: translation and bold our own.