CHAPTER 3

Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952): Communism as the Only Way Toward Women's Liberation

Natalia Novikova and Kristen Ghodsee

Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai, a leading Marxist theorist on the woman question, a revolutionary and a writer, kept diaries for her whole life. "I experienced not one, but many lives, so separate periods of my life were so different from each other," she wrote in her late years. "It was not an easy life, it had everything—achievements, and huge work, recognition, popularity among the masses, persecution, hatred, prisons, failures and misunderstanding of my main idea in the women's issue, many painful breaks with friends, discrepancies with them, but also many years of friendly, consonant work in the party."[1] Vladimir Mikhailovich Kollontai, in the book devoted to his famous grandmother, remarked that much has been written about her, some of it honest and reliable alongside many fabrications and fantasies.[2] Her grandson urges us to read Kollontai's texts; they provide the key to her ideas and philosophy. But Vladimir Kollontai also admonishes us to be critical about the sources of information available to us about her life, since the distortions grow both from honest historiographic error as well as willful political distortions of her legacy. In the Appendix, we reflect on the archival sources and writings by and about

N. Novikova (✉)
Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University, Yaroslavl, Russia
e-mail: ntlnvkv@mail.ru

K. Ghodsee
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

F. de Haan (ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13127-1_3

Alexandra Kollontai. Here we will provide a short overview of her life and work. Knowing it cannot do justice to the latter's richness and complexity, we hope that our chapter will inspire readers to consult more in-depth sources.

Formative Years (1872–1898)

Throughout her life, Alexandra Kollontai nurtured warm memories of her father's home and remembered her parents with gratitude for giving her the opportunity to choose her own path in life. She was the only child of Mikhail Domontovich (1830–1902), a Ukrainian nobleman who was proud of his long pedigree going back to the famous prince Dovmont of Pskov (circa 1266–1299), canonized by the Orthodox Church. He had made a successful career in the military and by the time of his marriage held a high position in the General Staff of the tsarist army. In 1875, he was promoted to the rank of Major General. The young officer first met his future wife in the St. Petersburg opera sometime in the mid-1850s; however, the difference in social status became an obstacle to their relationship. Alexandra Masalina (1838–1901), Kollontai's mother, was the daughter of an adventurous and successful tradesman from Finland. A peasant's son, he had made a fortune on timber supplies in St. Petersburg and, having married a girl—half Russian, half French—built a homestead in Finland not far from Lake Vuoksa. This estate named Kuuzankhovi, or shortened Kuuza (now Klimovo in Leningradskaya oblast'), occupies a significant place in Kollontai's childhood memories. As she put it, "grandfather Masalin was a proud man and he did not allow frivolous Guards officers to court his beautiful daughters. He worried that Russian nobles would look down on the daughters of an ordinary peasant. Therefore, he found another husband for my mother."[3]

Alexandra Masalina's first husband was Konstantin Mravinsky, a Polish military engineer, with whom she had three children: Aleksandr (1859–1918), Adel (1863–1942) and Evgeniya (1864–1914). Kollontai's parents met again many years later at a public ball, and this time they decided not to part. Alexandra Masalina applied for a divorce on the ground of her husband's adultery. Kollontai, being proud of her mother and looking at her as a role model, depicted a strong-willed and daring woman devoted to passionate love and able to resist public opinion. Her determination to break up with Mravinsky, an "act of great courage," helped Kollontai to emphasize the idea that a woman of independent thinking and free choice could make her life meaningful and happy.[4] The divorce was obtained relatively soon owing to useful contacts Mikhail Domontovich had in the Holy Synod. Shortly thereafter, Mikhail and Alexandra got married, and on April 1, 1872, young Alexandra was born in St. Petersburg.

The big family usually spent the winters in St. Petersburg, "according to the status of the father."[5] The older daughters, Adel and Evgeniya, lived with their mother while Aleksandr, Kollontai's stepbrother, spent part of his time in his father's home. Young Alexandra, or Shurochka as she was called at home,

developed the closest relations with her eight years older sister, Evgeniya. The latter possessed a unique vocal talent and had a successful career as an opera singer in the Mariinsky Theater under the stage name Evgeniya Mravina. Interestingly, Kollontai's nephew Evgenii Mravinsky, Aleksandr's son, also became a distinguished and internationally recognized musician, a conductor of the Leningrad orchestra. As she discusses in her memoirs, Kollontai always appreciated her family for the strong ties that bound them together and for the warm and loving atmosphere. She tried to maintain close relations with the members of her family who survived the revolutionary years following 1917 and remained a reliable source of support for them.

Shurochka Domontovich received an excellent and broad education at home. Her parents made sure that their children were under the guidance of the best teachers and attached great importance to teaching them music and languages. As a result, already at the age of seven, Shurochka could speak fluently French, German and English as well as Finnish, Italian and Bulgarian. She also could understand Ukrainian. She especially loved reading and spent a lot of time in the family libraries in the St. Petersburg house and on her grandfather's estate, Kuuza. Kollontai reflects in her memoirs that her mother and nanny-governess were strict and very demanding and that as a young girl, with a keen and active nature, she disliked the rules and opposed those she found unfair. Her sisters used to complain that the parents tended to forgive Shurochka her misdemeanors because she was her father's favorite. Kollontai summarized in her autobiography, written in 1926:

> I was the youngest, the most spoiled, and the most coddled member of the family. This, perhaps, was the root cause of the protest against everything around me that very early burgeoned within me. Too much was done for me in order to make me happy. I had no freedom of maneuver either in the children's games I played or in the desires that I wanted to express. At the same time, *I wanted to be free*.[6]

The liberal-democratic atmosphere of her family life helped to form Alexandra Kollontai's personality and ideals. She emphasized the importance of the two-year period in Bulgaria where the family moved after the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878. Her father, Major General Domontovich, was appointed the governor of Tarnovo; later, he became the Executive Secretary of the Russian governor in Bulgaria and settled in Sofia. While there, he and his wife were involved in the political circles of Bulgarian national liberals such as Dragan Tsankov and Petko Karavelov. Mikhail Domontovich took an active part in preparing the constitution of Bulgaria, one of the most progressive such documents of the time. His wife, Alexandra Domontovich, organized a group of Bulgarian women to open schools for girls, and the first female gymnasium was opened in Sofia on her initiative.[7] The family members remembered these years as the happiest in their life. In Sofia, Shurochka met Zoya Shadurskaia (1873–1939), who became Kollontai's dearest friend for the rest of their

lives.[8] Mikhail Domontovich's liberal views and open support of Bulgarian national politics caused his urgent return to St. Petersburg where his political loyalty was called into question. After that, he continued in the state service, but no longer held any important political positions.

At the age of sixteen, Shurochka Domontovich sat exams successfully at a boy's high school and got a leaving certificate. In the late 1880s, she led the quite active life of a "young society woman," and appeared in balls, theaters and at receptions. She was ranked high in St. Petersburg's brides' market. For instance, Major General Fedor Rerberg, then a young guard officer, left the following in his memoirs: "Shurochka Domontovich was beautiful, a very pretty and interesting young lady, and a very rich bride. It was considered a happy chance to be introduced to her."[9] Nevertheless, she was not attracted by the marriage offers and preferred to continue her education with a view of becoming a writer. Shurochka's stubborn and passionate nature revealed itself when she decided to marry her second cousin Vladimir Kollontai. They met in 1891 in Tbilisi when General Domontovich brought his daughter with him on a working visit. Vladimir Lyudvigovich Kollontai (1867–1917) was the son of a Polish protester exiled to the Caucasus. Shurochka's parents ardently opposed her choice because Vladimir was a relative, a penniless student and the son of a political exile. However, in 1893, Alexandra and Vladimir Kollontai got married, and their son Mikhail (Misha) was born in 1894.

Alexandra Kollontai's autobiography reveals the reasons why she preferred the revolutionary path to the stable and prosperous life of a married woman, and why she ultimately came to believe that communism was the only way to achieve women's emancipation. As a turning point, she describes the trip with her husband to one of the largest textile factories in Russia—the Krengholm (Kreenholm) manufactory near Narva (now in Estonia) in March 1896. She was horrified by the terrifying working conditions, and conversations with female workers led her to the idea that only groundbreaking changes could bring them freedom and happiness.[10] She retained in her memory a particularly painful experience of visiting the barracks where the workers lived. As she put it,

> the rooms were filled with wooden bunks, and rags were piled on top of them. Rarely, there was a thin mattress on any bunk. [The workers] slept side by side - married and single. The air in the barracks was heavy, saturated with *makhorka* [cheap tobacco] and human fumes. The windows were firmly plastered over, so that not the slightest breath of fresh air could penetrate here. On the floor among the bunks, little children played, lay and slept, or fought and cried under the supervision of a six-year-old nanny. I noticed a little boy of the same age as my son, who was lying very still. When I bent down to examine what was wrong with him, I was convinced with horror that the child was dead. A little deceased was among living, playing children …[11]

That was the day when she stated: "I understood deeply to the bottom of my heart that we cannot continue to live as we have lived until now, when such terrible living conditions and inhuman order exist around us."[12]

A new circle of friends, formed after her marriage, also played a decisive role in Kollontai's transformation. In particular, she writes about the importance of the tutor Maria Ivanovna Strakhova, a public education activist, who Kollontai regularly visited in the 1890s. It was Strakhova who involved her in volunteer work in the private library of Nikolay Rubakin, where Kollontai met and became close with Elena Dmitrievna Stasova (1873–1966), a social democrat and revolutionary, later a Bolshevik, and one of the key figures of Vladimir Lenin's *Soyuz Borby za Osvobozhdeniye Rabochego Klassa* (Union of Struggle for the Liberation of the Working Class), the core of the future Bolshevik party.[13] Stasova brought Kollontai into the group of illegal social democrats; the contact with Stasova contributed greatly to Kollontai's ideological growth and self-determination at that time. As she put it: "more and more my sympathies, my interests turned to the revolutionary working class of Russia. I read voraciously. I zealously studied all social questions, attended lectures, and worked in semi-legal societies for the enlightenment of the people."[14]

Kollontai's diaries, letters and memoirs show that after her marriage and the birth of her son, she did not abandon her dream of becoming a writer. Moreover, she believed that she could earn her own living as an author and that it would be her way to retain dignity and personal freedom. She attempted to publish her first literary work and sent the manuscript to Vladimir Korolenko, a well-known and influential writer who was the editor of the popular journal *Russkoe bogatstvo* (Russian Wealth). It is remarkable that Kollontai put at the center of her debut story the idea of the possibility for a woman to manage her own life—an idea that represented an important aspect of the woman question.

As she wrote in her autobiography, "it was a boldly conceived story, something that inflicts a mortal blow to old prejudices and puts an end to the double morality—one for men and another for women."[15] Having received a negative response, Kollontai experienced acute disappointment and a breakdown. However, friends advised her to write an article for a popular magazine on the impact of the environment on a child's development—a topic that was in demand then. She prepared a text based on ideas of the authoritative Russian publicist Nikolay Dobrolubov (1836–1861), and it was published in the Marxist periodical *Obrazovanie* (Education) in 1898.[16] This success inspired Kollontai to further study social issues, and she decided to enter Zurich University to attend the seminar of the German economist Professor Heinrich Herkner (1863–1932).[17]

Kollontai's aspiration to go beyond family routine and devote her life to the struggle for social justice led to a final break with her husband in 1899. As she wrote later, "we parted not because we fell out of love, but because I felt burdened and bound by the circumstances from which marriage with Kollontai did not save me … I continued to love my husband passionately and, leaving him, suffered, and my soul hurt. I did not leave Kollontai for another person.

A wave of revolutionary unrest and events that had been growing in Russia carried me away."[18] They were divorced officially in 1916 only.[19]

Toward the Revolution (1898–1917)

The following years were marked by diverse activities of Alexandra Kollontai, who grew into a serious researcher and talented activist. Trips to different countries of Europe, a careful study of various social phenomena and established links with influential public figures and leaders of the labor movement contributed to the breadth of her knowledge. Having attended the full course of Prof. Herkner's lectures in Zurich in 1898, Kollontai took advantage of his recommendations and went to England in 1899 to meet with the well-known socialist economists Sydney and Beatrice Webb. She was fascinated by their hospitality; and notably, a conversation with them reinforced her decision to devote her life to the revolutionary workers' movement. In 1901, she went abroad again to form close ties with key figures in the European labor movement, such as Rosa Luxemburg, Paul Lafarge and Laura Lafarge-Marx, Karl Kautsky and Georgy Plekhanov.[20]

On her return to St. Petersburg in 1899, Kollontai joined the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party formed in Minsk a year earlier.[21] In 1903, the party split into two factions, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The former, united around Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (alias Lenin), insisted on revolutionary positions and promoted the development of the party as a centralized and disciplined organization; the latter, under the leadership of Yulii Martov and Georgy Plekhanov, had a moderate, reformist stand and favored a more loose association. Alexandra Kollontai had to associate herself with one of these factions and, strongly influenced by Plekhanov at the time, she joined the Mensheviks. Because of the later ascension of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Kollontai downplayed her previous affiliation with the Mensheviks in her autobiography. As she wrote in her memoirs: "I had friends in both camps. Bolshevism with its uncompromising and revolutionary mood was closer to my liking. But the charm of Plekhanov's personality kept me from breaking with the Mensheviks. Upon returning from abroad in 1903, I did not join any of the party factions, leaving both of them to use me as an agitator, a writer of proclamations and for other current tasks."[22] It seems that, both then and subsequently, what mattered most to her was the opportunity to work for the ideas and ideals to which she was sincerely devoted.

Thus, in the late 1890s, she plunged into underground Party work, spoke at rallies and meetings, helped to distribute illegal literature and, with time, came to be a recognized Marxist agitator. In the meantime, as before, she regarded writing and journalism as her priority, an occupation that could give her a sense of satisfaction, provide her with a living and make her the most useful for the Social Democratic Party. The tsarist censorship did not allow publishing many of her articles on socialist issues, but a series of publications about Finland appeared in several Russian periodicals and in German magazines.[23] Kollontai

chose Finland as her subject of study owing to her close personal links with this part of the Russian Empire due to her Finnish mother; she knew its history and understood its culture. From 1900 to 1903, Kollontai began gathering materials, made several trips to Finland to talk to workers, tradesmen, public officers and wrote letters to her Finnish friends asking them to send statistical data and relevant literature. As a result, Kollontai's first book under the title *Zhizn' finlyandskikh rabochikh. Ekonomicheskoe issledovaniye* (The Life of the Finnish Workers: An Economic Study) was published in 1903, and it appeared to be one of the first scientifically based socio-economic studies of the condition of the working class in Finland.[24] She continued to monitor the changes in Finland and to publish political and economic surveys about this country. As a result, after the formation of the Soviet state, the Bolshevik government repeatedly used Kollontai's experience and expertise on this region.

In the years between 1905 and 1907, at the time of the so-called First Russian Revolution, Kollontai had already become a well-known political writer and acquired the reputation of a passionate spokeswoman. Even political opponents detected the success of her public appearances. In her memoirs, Ariadna Tyrkova (1869–1962), a liberal feminist and one of the leading figures of the newly formed Kadet party, depicted Kollontai with a trace of jealousy:

> She was an adroit public speaker, without her own ideas, but with a great stock of ready Marxist truisms and utterances which she skillfully exploited. Her success was advanced by her attractiveness and elegance. Even her political opponents were pleased looking at this pretty lady, at her statuesque well-dressed figure, at her carefully considered gestures and sweet smile which accompanied her appeals for class hatred.[25]

During this period, Kollontai's activities focused on organizing working women. She stated as her highest ambition the struggle for abolition of the slavery of working women and set herself "the task of winning over women workers in Russia to socialism and, at the same time, of working for the liberation of woman, for her equality of rights."[26] The revolutionary events of 1905 triggered Kollontai's struggle against Russia's liberal feminists and, conversely, led to her efforts to convince the men of the Russian proletariat to include the woman question in its revolutionary struggle. Kollontai's principles were completely in tune with the ideas of Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, whose great influence on defining her notions of women's liberation she openly recognized.[27] Moreover, she spoke about the importance of the German experience, "the cradle of the women's socialist movement,"[28] and wrote later that "Germany is the most characteristic state … while others … just replicate, with some insignificant variations, the path of the German socialist movement and adopt its main type."[29] In September 1906, during a short trip to Finland, Kollontai met Rosa Luxemburg once again and, following her advice, went to Mannheim to take part in the Fourth Conference of German Social Democrat women,[30] and it was at the Congress of the German Social Democratic Party,

where she first met Clara Zetkin. A year later, Kollontai went to Stuttgart as a delegate from Russia to join the First International Socialist Women's Conference and subsequently the Seventh Congress of the Second International, where she gave speeches in support of Zetkin's view that all women should be extended suffrage. Inspired by the atmosphere of the debates and the charisma of the German workers' leaders, Kollontai launched intensive agitation work among women workers in St. Petersburg that led to the formation of the first Working Women's Club in Russia, *Obshestvo vzaimopomoshi rabotniz* (Women Workers' Mutual Aid Society) in the autumn of 1907.[31]

Kollontai had arrived at ideas about the need to unite women workers against "bourgeois feminists" after the latter became active at the outset of the 1905 Russian Revolution, gaining political weight and forming new associations which, they argued, were in the interest of all women. Kollontai attended some of their "ladies' meetings," as she called them irritably, to provoke sharp discussions on class matters. She also published articles advocating Marxist views on the woman question in the manner of Zetkin's ideas and informing her readers of the trends and developments in the international socialist women's movement.[32] When the Russian liberal feminists headed by Anna Shabanova and Anna Filosofova of St. Petersburg's *Russkoe Zhenskoe Vzaimno-Blagotvoritelnoe Obshestvo* (Russian Women's Mutual Philanthropic Society) announced their plan to convene a women's congress to unite all supporters of women's equal rights throughout the country, Kollontai increased her efforts to mobilize women workers. She was determined to draw "a clear line of demarcation between the bourgeois suffragettes and the women's liberation movement of the working class in Russia."[33]

Unlike liberal feminists focused on the idea of individual rights as the source of women's autonomy, Kollontai saw the capitalist economy as the roots of women's oppression and believed "that women's liberation could take place only as the result of the victory of a new social order and a different economic system."[34] In her speech prepared for the 1908 All-Russian Women's Congress, Kollontai argued that:

> woman's world, as well as man's world, is divided into two camps: the first one, following its aims, aspirations and interests, adjoins the bourgeois classes; the other is bound up with the working class, whose aspiration towards emancipation includes the solution of the women's question in its entirety. These classes of women fighting for their emancipation have different aims, interests and means of … struggle … The feminists' aim is to arrange to the best the lives of women (definitely, for the most part women of a particular social class) in the modern world of exploitation, the world of 'groans and tears.' Women workers' aim is to replace the old, antagonistic class society with a new bright temple of labor and solidarity.[35]

Kollontai used clear examples to show the difference in life experiences and needs of bourgeois and proletarian women, such as demands in the sphere of paid work: while the former stood for the right to work, the latter needed

protection from "the heavy cross of wage labor." Therefore, "only by staying in the ranks of her class, only by fighting for all-workers' ideals and interests, can the woman worker defend her female rights and interests," Kollontai maintained, "and then, at the same time as all working classes, in a society transformed on a new economic basis, she will be able to finally celebrate a double, great victory: her liberation as a seller of labor from the chains and slavery of capitalism and her complete emancipation as a person and a human being."[36]

To support her position, Kollontai did her best to bring together a distinct "workers' group" to be present at the Congress and to demonstrate the difference between "ladies" and proletarian women. She managed to unite a group of about 45 women workers who were asked to appear at the Congress sessions with red flowers on their dresses.[37] At the same time, Kollontai was in a hurry to complete her comprehensive overview of the Russian feminist movement, which had burst out since 1905. Her overview was written in a denouncing, critical manner with the aim to fight her political opponents—the Russian liberal feminists. In September 1908, trying to push forward the manuscript publication, she applied to Maksim Gorkii, the famous Russian writer and a highly respected figure in both literary and social democrats' circles, who was the chief editor of *Znaniye* (Knowledge), a progressive publishing house. Kollontai sent him a parcel with the manuscript for approval and a letter, in which she insisted on printing the book before the congress. "It is necessary," she argued, "that social-democrats, taking into account this new feminist initiative, should formulate their attitude toward the women's bourgeois movement and dissociate themselves here, in Russia, from bourgeois feminism."[38] The voluminous book (more than 400 pages) under the title *Sozialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa* (The Social Basis of the Women's Question) appeared in print in December 1908, with the date 1909 on the book cover. It had a profound public resonance and sparked a heated polemics from the side of Russian feminists.[39]

Kollontai made tremendous efforts in preparing for the congress which opened on December 10, 1908, and the workers' group appeared more organized and united than representatives of other women's organizations did. However, she could not deliver her speech at the scheduled time. In September 1908, in the midst of the preparatory work, the police started to pursue her for calling for an armed uprising in a brochure on Finland, published two years earlier,[40] and for campaigning among workers as a member of an illegal party. From now on, to avoid arrest, she was forced to seek refuge with friends among whom the most helpful was Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik (1874–1952), a writer and translator. Kollontai attended the first days of the congress and could not help participating in the panel discussions. Having attracted the police's attention, she had to flee the country on December 14, instructing the worker Varvara Volkova to read her speech at the plenary session the next day.[41] "I managed to cross the frontier into

Germany," Kollontai summed up, "and thus, in December of 1908, began a new period of my life—political emigration."[42]

The years in exile (December 1908–March 1917) turned out to be no less saturated and active. In Germany, Kollontai started to work as a full-time party orator and publicist for the German Social Democratic Party, which also secured her a legal status in the country. She published intensively in Germany, namely in Karl Kautsky's *Die Neue Zeit* (The New Era) and Clara Zetkin's *Die Gleichheit* (Equality), but also in Austria, England, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, France, Poland, the United States and in the legal Russian press. In 1909 and 1910, she made several agitation tours in Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, speaking on various general topics, such as Marx's economic theory, family and marriage issues or surveys of the situation in Russia.[43] In the same period, Kollontai developed a close cooperation with Clara Zetkin on the ground of their common cause, organizing the international working women's movement. Zetkin's letters to Kollontai from 1909 to 1914 abound in details about their complex collaboration, which intensified on the eve of international socialist women conferences.[44] Following Zetkin's recommendations and at times direct instructions, Kollontai delivered speeches at meetings on a variety of topics such as the conditions of Russian women or social insurance and maternal allowances in various European countries. In the spring of 1909, Kollontai and Zetkin together visited London at the invitation of the British Socialist Party to support the Adult Suffrage Society, the main body organizing the adult suffrage campaign in England at this time.[45] There were deep divisions within the British socialist movement regarding women's suffrage, which had been particularly evident at the International Socialist Women's Congress in Stuttgart in 1907 where Zetkin was among the key speakers on that issue. Kollontai ardently supported Zetkin's views. Owing to a successful agitation campaign, "the adultists" succeeded in repeatedly defeating women's suffrage resolutions at British Labor Party conferences.[46]

Debates over women's suffrage erupted again at the next International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1910 that preceded the Seventh International Congress of the Second International. Kollontai took part in both gatherings as a St. Petersburg textile workers' delegate and, at the women's conference, was elected a member of the International Women's Secretariat. In a brochure published in 1918, Kollontai gave an overview of the two women's congresses, 1907 and 1910, in which she fully recognized Zetkin's leading role. "The German party was the first to enter on the path of independent campaigning among women workers," she wrote, "other countries gradually followed. The seeds sown by the first champions of the socialist women's movement, led by Clara Zetkin, gave brilliant seedlings."[47] She also consistently advocated the German delegates' initiative to create an International Women's Secretariat and did her best to be a useful member. Again, she supported Zetkin's idea, writing that

> independent grouping of proletarian women within parties, in the organizational sense, has undoubted advantages. Such an organization [of a party] makes it possible, on the one hand, to focus the party's attention on the special needs and demands of women workers and, on the other hand, facilitates rallying around the party women of the proletarian class who are significantly less conscious in general … Women workers should not create a 'women's secretariat', a commission, a 'bureau' in a party just to separately win political rights and to defend their interests in isolation, but precisely to exert pressure on it *within* the party to force comrades to fight in the interests of the female proletariat.[48]

It is well-known that she remained true to this idea and was able to put it into practice in the young Soviet state, where she was one of the founders of the *Zhenotdel* or Women's Department in 1919.[49]

Kollontai's successful collaboration with the German Social Democrats was jeopardized after the 1912 publication in Russian of her book *Po rabochei Evrope* (Around Workers' Europe). She had worked on the book during her stay in Paris in 1911, where she also helped the Political Emigration Assistance Bureau headed by Georgy Chicherin.[50] Kollontai's intention with the book was to convey her impressions of campaigning around different countries and from meetings with representatives of national proletarian parties, to show the enthusiasm and inspiration she received from communicating with ordinary working people in whom she saw the true creative class. With her characteristic frankness, she wrote that there was "a bias toward opportunism and a growing bureaucratization of the German Social Democratic Party's apparatus," and, observing the pretentiousness and snobbery of the Party leaders, contraposed "a healthy class sense of the lower classes to the bureaucratic conceit and inertness of the upper classes."[51] In her memoirs, Kollontai regretted that her German comrades did not have the opportunity to read the book, but judged it by negative and unfair reviews that emphasized Kollontai's critical assessments and presented them as satire on the German party, as a slanderous pamphlet.[52] At the height of that conflict, some German comrades broke with Kollontai, including Karl Kautsky who refused to further collaborate with her, and, for a time, she found herself isolated in German political circles.

Amidst of active Party work and frequent trips throughout Europe, Kollontai did not sever her ties with Russia. Over the period 1909 to 1913, on behalf of representatives of the Social Democrats' faction in the Third State Duma, she collected materials and drafted a law on the protection and provision of motherhood. It was expected that the Russian Duma would open debates on the law on state insurance of workers. The drafting of this bill served as the impetus for writing a book that Kollontai considered the most important research work in her life. This study, based on massive statistical data and analysis of European welfare legislations, offered a theory of motherhood that questioned and, in the end, undermined traditional perceptions of marriage, family and parenthood. Today it is recognized

as "the most original contribution to twentieth-century thought on reorganization of the social concept and practice of womanhood and, consequently, manhood."[53] Kollontai rejected prevalent ideologies of motherhood: that of an "illness" overdetermining women's personality and that of a woman's unique "service to society," warranted by her natural predispositions. Instead, she posited motherhood as a "social responsibility" *shared* between a woman and society.[54] "One has to look at maternity insurance not as a simple aid caused by temporary unemployment and inseparable from hospital insurance, not as a bonus to mothers for the service they provide to the state," claimed Kollontai, "but as a step forward in the direction of transferring childcare into the hands of the social collective, as one of the measures leading to the liberation of the woman's personality."[55] "Under that condition only," she concluded, "the process of revealing a new morality in communication between a man and a woman would become easier: the growth of comradely feelings between the sexes, with their complete economic independence from each other."[56] Kollontai finished working on the book in 1914, but this volume of more than 600 pages, entitled *Obshestvo i materinstvo* (Society and Motherhood), only came out in print in 1916.[57]

The years between 1912 and 1914 were busy with intensive writing work and public speaking at invitations of the socialist parties of various nations. For example, she traveled to Belgium twice in 1912 at the invitation of the Belgian Socialist Party where she helped the miners of the Belgian coal center in the Borinage area to prepare for a strike. As she noted in her papers, the strike lasted six weeks and she spoke at large meetings nineteen times in twenty-one days.[58] In November 1912, she participated in the Extraordinary Congress of the Second International in Basel, held in response to the Balkan War. Endlessly moving between Belgium, Sweden, Britain, Switzerland and Germany, Kollontai sometimes made her son, Misha, unhappy. He used to come to visit her from St. Petersburg for the holidays, but her busy schedule meant she did not always have time for him. In a 1912 letter to Kollontai, Zoya Shadurskaya wrote: "Misha complained about you when we met, because he did not see you at all."[59] Nonetheless, as Kollontai's letters and diaries show, taking care of her son was an essential part of her life.[60]

The Third International Socialist Women's Conference was scheduled to take place in Vienna in August 1914. Kollontai launched intensive preparations for the gathering and worked on a report on the social security of motherhood. As a member of the International Women's Secretariat, she attempted to participate in an antiwar rally held in May 1914 in Berlin, after which the German police set surveillance on her.[61] With her immigration status in question, the German government threatened her with deportation. The outbreak of World War I made it even more problematic for Kollontai to continue her work as before. Because Russian citizens were now representatives of an enemy state, she was arrested on August 3, 1914, by the German authorities but detained only briefly.[62] In September, following the police's strong recommendations to leave the country, she went to Denmark, then to Sweden

where she was again arrested as a radical socialist and antiwar agitator. She was deported from Sweden in late November 1914 and, after a short stay in Denmark, settled in Norway in February 1915. The events of the first months of the war, especially the Second International collective members' reaction to the war, brought her closer to the Bolsheviks and Lenin, who, in their demands, as she understood them, were closest to the idea of international proletarian solidarity. "My final connection with the Bolsheviks," reported Kollontai later 'was secured from the moment I joined the journal *Kommunist* [The Communist]', issued in the summer of 1915."[63]

Kollontai was not able to attend the International Socialist Women's Conference held in Bern in March 1915 to protest against the war, but she did send her greetings from Norway. The Russian delegation of six, including Inessa Armand[64] and Nadezhda Krupskaia, served as Lenin's "diplomatic envoys," trying to radicalize the conference resolutions. While Clara Zetkin preferred a simple denunciation of the war and focused on the goal of peace, the Russians criticized the belligerent nations' parties for approving war credits and called for revolutionary action.[65] Kollontai in her message to the Bern conference declared support for Lenin's line.[66] However, Zetkin's more moderate resolution entitled "Women of the Working People!" was passed,[67] evoking a reply on the part of the Russian delegates: "We reject it on the grounds that it is incomplete and insufficient, but we do not rule out future cooperation."[68]

In September 1915, Kollontai accepted an invitation from the German division of the Socialist Party of America to make an antiwar agitation and fundraising tour in the United States. She spent about five months there, from October 1915 to February 1916, which she recollected as a period of extremely hard work (she visited more than eighty cities where she spoke 123 times in English, German, French and Russian) and had inspiring meetings with people.[69] She made one more journey to the United States in mid-1916, accompanying her son on his first business trip, when, soon after her arriving in Norway in the beginning of 1917, revolutionary events in Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg[70]) opened a possibility for her to return to Russia.[71]

Work in the Government and Diplomatic Service (1917–1952)

A wave of strikes, women's demonstrations and armed protests in late February 1917 (coinciding with the March 8th celebration of International Women's Day in the West) forced tsar Nikolai II to abdicate on March 2 (March 15, Western calender).[72] From then on, two bodies claimed authority in the country, the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputies. Kollontai greeted the revolutionary upheavals in Russia with an incredible enthusiasm as a unique opportunity to realize the projects of social reconstruction she dreamed about. "I live in a kind of hope of joy, excitement," she wrote in her diary in March 1917, "Still can't

believe [it all happened]."[73] Having returned to Petrograd on March 18, she was elected to the Petrograd Soviet by the Bolsheviks and was voted into its Central Committee. In these days she was one of the Bolsheviks' most skilled popular speakers. Kollontai's success in making public speeches and even converting people from malicious adversaries into supporters of her ideas annoyed political opponents, who used to call her a "Valkyrie of the revolution." "It was dangerous to be recognized in a tram," she wrote later.[74] In July 1917, by order of Aleksandr Kerensky, the head of the Provisional Government, she was arrested and placed in the Vyborg women's prison with a hard labor regime. She spent almost two months there and was "subjected to the most boorish treatment as a spy."[75] At the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, held during her imprisonment, Kollontai was elected a member of the Party's Central Committee, a public recognition of her merits and political potential on the part of Vladimir Lenin and his associates.

After the October Revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power, Kollontai entered the first Soviet Government as *Narodnyi Komissar Obshestvennogo Prizreniya* (People's Commissar of Social Welfare), a post she held from 26 October 1917 until 19 March 1918. Her work embraced various measures such as improving the situation of the war-disabled, introducing the right of self-administration for pupils in girls' schools, reorganizing the former orphanages into government Children's Homes with no distinction to be made between orphaned children and those who still had fathers and mothers, and setting up the first hostels for the needy and street-urchins. In addition, Kollontai convened a committee aimed at elaborating a free public health system for the Soviet Republic. "The most important accomplishment of the People's Commissariat, however," Kollontai wrote in her memoirs, "was the legal foundation of a Central Office for Maternity and Infant Welfare. The draft of the bill relating to this Central Office was signed by me in January of 1918."[76] Another decree that followed changed all maternity hospitals into free Homes for Maternity and Infant Care, setting the groundwork for a comprehensive government system of pre-natal care. With deep regret, she recalled a failed attempt to organize a Pre-Natal Care Palace, a model home with an exhibition room in which courses for mothers would be held and model day nurseries were to be established. This work had to be interrupted as a fire destroyed the "palace," which may have been one of the numerous attacks against Kollontai that accompanied her efforts.[77] Kollontai resigned from her post as the People's Commissar "on the ground of total disagreement with the current policy"[78] of the party. In her speech at the Seventh Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March 1918, she opposed the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty with Germany.[79]

Although she had quit the government and was expelled from the Central Committee, she remained in the ranks of authoritative Bolshevik leaders and led agitation and propaganda campaigns on the fronts of the Civil War in remote areas of the country and in Ukraine and Crimea. However, women's liberation became the main task to which she devoted all her time and energy.

"Women, of course, had received all rights but in practice," Kollontai wrote, "they still lived under the old yoke: without authority in family life, enslaved by a thousand menial household chores, bearing the whole burden of maternity, even the material cares, because many women now found life alone as a result of the war and other circumstances."[80]

She was among the organizers of and key speakers at the first Congress of Women Workers and Women Peasants in November 1918 with some 1147 delegates present. Kollontai looked at the congress as the beginning for and foundation of the methodical work in the whole country for the liberation of the women of the working and the peasant classes. "The question now was one of drawing women into the people's kitchens and of educating them to devote their energies to children's homes and day-care centers, the school system, household reforms, and still many other pressing matters," Kollontai's message stood. "The main thrust of all this activity, " she continued, "was to implement, in fact, equal rights for women as a labor unit in the national economy and as a citizen in the political sphere and, of course, with the special proviso: maternity was to be appraised as a social function and therefore protected and provided for by the State."[81]

Following the Congress, in December 1918, the Bolshevik's Central Committee, of which Kollontai was no longer a member, instructed the party organizations to establish local commissions for propaganda and agitation among women. In September 1919, these commissions were transformed into women's departments with the *Zhenskii otdel* (Women's Bureau) of the Central Committee at the top. After the death of the first chief of the Women's Bureau, Inessa Armand, in September 1920, Kollontai headed it until the beginning of 1922. Starting this work, she identified the first and main task of the women's departments as instilling in and explaining to women "that only communism will free them from all those painful and seemingly insoluble problems in the realm of personal life, under the weight of which, giving way to prejudices and outdated traditions, women of the intelligentsia are still suffocating."[82]

For the same reason, she considered it important to restore the work of the International Women's Secretariat. Already at the constituent congress of the Third International (*Comintern*) in March 1919, she proposed a resolution on the involvement of women workers in the international communist movement.[83] However, illness prevented her from preparing and participating in the first International Conference of Communist Women, which took place from July 30 to August 2, 1920, in Moscow, during the Second Congress of the Third International. Severe typhoid fever, complicated by blood poisoning, knocked her out of work for a long time. The conference, in the absence of both Zetkin and Kollontai,[84] decided to form the International Women's Secretariat under the leadership of Clara Zetkin with the aim "to collect the forces of the female proletariat's army and to unite all the work among women."[85] At the next International Conference of Communist Women, in

June 1921, at which Zetkin and Kollontai were present, the latter was elected Deputy Head of the International Women's Secretariat.[86]

These years turned out to be the most prolific for Kollontai in her attempts to convey and promote her notions of women's liberation and a new world of freedom. In her numerous public talks and lectures as well as in her pamphlet *Semya i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo* (The Family and the Communist State), first published in 1918, she described the future society in which traditional family ties, outdated and useless, would be replaced by a new form of gender relations, by "a comradely and cordial union of two free and independent, earning, equal members of a communist society."[87]

Equally important is Kollontai's contribution to elaborating the psychological aspect of female emancipation.[88] She developed the concept of "a new woman" in an essay first published in 1913 and then in the 1918 pamphlet *Novaya moral i rabochii klass* (The New Morality and the Working Class).[89] According to Kollontai, the new woman refused to follow the traditional roles of a lover, a wife and a mother and as such to demonstrate softness, responsiveness, emotionality and the ability to "adapt" and give way. Instead, she wanted to be an independent and free personality, but to be like this, she needed to cultivate new qualities.[90] Anticipating late-twentieth-century discussions of sexuality, Kollontai analyzed the role of sexual relations in constructing the hierarchical order of the traditional family and morality. Her ideals were "a free union based on the harmonious concord of souls and bodies"[91] and a society that "recognizes various forms of marital communication."[92] Kollontai put great emphasis on issues of communist morality and sexuality in her novels and short stories written between 1923 and 1927, asserting that members of the new society would meet high moral standards and would have developed personalities. That is why, according to her, there had to be a revolution in the way of thinking, the feelings and the spirit of the working people.[93]

The Party comrades misinterpreted or neglected her ideas as utopian or misleading. Her thesis on a new morality, once published in 1918, "caused an extraordinarily great flutter."[94] Moreover and importantly, Kollontai's role and position within the Party drastically changed after her participation in the so-called "Workers' Opposition" in 1921–1922. As a convinced democrat, Kollontai believed that the Party should not interfere in economic issues and industry management, and insisted on a greater role for workers' unions. She published the pamphlet *Rabochaya oppoziziya* (The Workers' Opposition), which infuriated Lenin. At the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik party in March 1921, Lenin and his followers criticized severely the members of the Workers' Opposition group for breaking Party unity and a trend to "syndicalism."

Recalling another one of Kollontai's speeches in support of the Worker's Opposition at the Third Congress of the Communist International in the summer of 1921, Marcel Body (1894–1984), the French communist and close friend of Kollontai reported:

> Alexandra Kollontai spoke in German and her beautiful face flushed. The foreign delegates listened with rapt attention to this woman who, in excitement dared to denounce the "arch-bureaucratic character" of the new Soviet state and demanded for the Russian workers, supporters of the regime, "less inhuman conditions of existence" at the same time as the right to own trade union organizations which were not subservient to the party to defend their demands and their interests against the state-boss. Kollontai ended her speech with a call for solidarity from the foreign Communist Parties. Alas! no applause punctuated her speech. I still see her picking up her notes before leaving the gallery. Her eyes weren't on the audience. Her thoughts were elsewhere.[95]

At the next Party congress in 1922, Kollontai and other members of the group were defeated again and her isolation within the Party was fully manifested.[96]

Deeply upset by the troubles in the Party, Kollontai also experienced a personal tragedy. In 1922, she painfully broke up with her common-law husband Pavel Dybenko (1889–1938), son of a Ukrainian peasant who made a military career during the Civil War. They had been together since 1917; however, Kollontai decided to end the relationship when she realized he was having a love affair with a young woman.[97] Under these circumstances, Kollontai found it intolerable to continue working in the Party as before. On November 8, 1921, she asked the Central Committee to dismiss her from her post in the Women's Bureau.[98] Later, in October 1922, she wrote a letter to Joseph Stalin, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, informing him about her decision to also stop working in the International Women's Secretariat because it was impossible for her to communicate with Grigorii Zinoviev, the head of the Comintern, due to his role in suppressing the Workers' Opposition. She also asked Stalin for help to find a new position for her, preferably in a remote region.[99] Stalin responded to her and named her the Soviet trade representative to Norway, thus beginning her career in the diplomatic service and launching an era of cooperation with Stalin.

Her first mission was in Norway from 1923 to 1926, and it was during this time that Marcel Body worked closely with Kollontai in the Soviet legation. In his lengthy obituary of Kollontai in 1952, the French communist explained that "for three years, day after day, I was Alexandra Kollontai's confidant. I was also the witness of her life."[100] In the summer of 1923, Kollontai and Body traveled to Moscow to gather support for their diplomatic work in Norway, and Body recalled a tense meeting: "[Stalin] had given Kollontai a rather reserved reception. She was still an enigma for him. Which way would this former revolutionary, whose prestige in the party and in the country was still great, turn? And was it necessary or not to consider 'organizational measures' against [her]?"[101] During this time, according to Body, Kollontai suffered a smear campaign against her as daily articles appeared to undermine her reputation. She told Body that she personally appealed to Stalin to help preserve her prestige in the Party and that he graciously defended her. She reportedly told Body: "as soon as I saw Stalin, everything ceased as if by magic."[102]

Owing to Kollontai's efforts, economic, trade and cultural relations between the Soviet Union and Norway were established and a treaty signed on February 15, 1924, determined the mutual diplomatic recognition of the two countries. But back in Moscow, the struggle for the succession of Lenin was heating up. Body (perhaps exaggerating his own importance in the course of events) recalls:

> Kollontai and I followed the adventures of this struggle which we had foreseen when we learned that Lenin, stricken with paralysis, would never return to power. Neither she nor I had the slightest intention of intervening. Everything indicated, by the end of 1924, that Stalin would be the master of the situation. He had on his side the higher party organizations and the political police closely linked to his secretariat. Through the *Orgburo* (Organizing office) he dismissed and banished all those who appeared to him hostile, doubtful, [or] even just lukewarm. 'He who is not with me is against me', had become his maxim. Kollontai and I congratulated ourselves on being on the sidelines …[103]

Aside from Stalin's apparently "chivalrous" attitude toward Kollontai,[104] she had no particular loyalty to Stalin's main opponents at the time, Zinoviev and Trotsky. Both men had been ruthless and cruel toward her between 1920 and 1922 when she represented the Workers' Opposition. According to Body, Kollontai did not like Zinoviev, "whom she regarded as a vain man, puffed up with an unexpected power which, in Petrograd, made him commit many excesses."[105] Kollontai was also wary of Trotsky after his behavior during the Civil War. "Trotsky made too many enemies in his tenure as War Commissioner," Body recalls Kollontai telling him in 1924. "He was far too rigorous, not human enough. Those whom he wanted to have shot for more or less serious faults and who owed their salvation only by appealing to Lenin, sometimes to Stalin, are not ready to forgive him."[106]

Kollontai seems to have considered Stalin the better successor to Lenin because of his ability to treat the ordinary working-class party members as equals. Trotsky seemed too aloof from the workers, in the opinions she shared with Body. Although she may have preferred to stay out of the internecine jostling for leadership, at least indirectly Kollontai supported Stalin against his main rival by sending back a series of letters that Lenin had written during the First World War in which he explicitly questioned Trotsky's character and his commitment to the revolution. Body recalls:

> By the start of the winter of 1925, although the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky had continued to escalate, Kollontai's relationship with Stalin had greatly improved. It is true that in the meantime she had done him, perhaps unwittingly, a great service by sending to the Party archives the letters Lenin had addressed to Christiania [Oslo] during the war. These letters were immediately published in *Leninsky Sbornik* and some reproduced in *Pravda*… Stalin, who then brought together all those who, by the prestige attached to their name, could serve him, saw in the sending of these letters a gesture in his favor and

certainly gave orders that Kollontai be left in peace. Besides, she was neither an obstacle nor a danger to him. It was enough for him to know that she was not supporting Trotsky.[107]

On August 9, 1924, she was appointed the USSR Ambassador to Norway, the first woman to serve as an accredited ambassador to a foreign country. In her memoirs, Kollontai says that she made the decision to leave the post in Norway on her own. In 1925, an entry appeared in her diary: "In Norway, my work is becoming less needed … Now I cannot do anything creative and useful here in Norway. The external side remains—representation, receptions, etc. But they consume strength, time clogging up my head. And I realized that if you sit for another year or two in a similar environment, with a similar insight, you begin to dry and wither internally … So, you need to have the courage to throw the knapsack over the shoulders … ".[108]

On her return to Moscow in August 1926, Kollontai learned of her new assignment to Mexico, which according to Cathy Porter, could only have been regarded as a punishment.[109] Given the fact that at that time an acute struggle for power was unfolding in the leadership of the Communist Party, the scale and consequence of which were much more significant than during the Workers' Opposition, Joseph Stalin sought rather not to punish, but to withdraw from the game those who had at least some influence in the party. When Kollontai and Body lived in Moscow in September 1926, before her departure to Mexico, Body reports that Trotsky sent an intermediary to ask Kollontai to join his opposition to Stalin. Although she refused, Stalin may still have viewed her as a potential threat because of her potential influence within the Party[110] (Fig. 3.1).

In late 1926, Kollontai traveled to Mexico as the head of the Soviet diplomatic corps, but in less than a year, she returned to Moscow since her health substantially worsened in Mexico's hot and dry climate. Her contribution to strengthening bilateral ties was acknowledged in 1946, when the Mexican ambassador in Moscow handed her the order of Aguil Aztec with a ribbon. From 1927 to 1930, Kollontai was again the USSR Ambasador to Norway, and, from April 1930 through March 1945, to Sweden. Marcel Body visited Kollontai in 1929 and he found her much discouraged by the political situation in the Soviet Union. Body writes: "Kollontai said to me: 'Apart from half a dozen comrades, I don't know anyone in Moscow anymore. Everything has changed so much. But what can I do? We cannot go against the 'apparatus.' For my part, I put my principles in a corner of my conscience, and I carry out as well as possible the policy that is dictated to me'."[111] In 1930, Stalin finally asked Kollontai to produce a "declaration of loyalty," which she did in the form of two articles which appeared in *Pravda* against what he considered the "right-wing" opposition of Bukharin and his allies.[112]

Kollontai's capitulation to Stalin and her survival of the purges of the 1930s has continued to perplex scholars and biographers. Simon Montefiore proposed that Stalin's conservatism manifested itself in a patronizing

Fig. 3.1 Alexandra Kollontai, 1927 (*Source* https://lccn.loc.gov/2014705259)

and chivalrous attitude toward women,[113] and Roy Medvedev has earlier suggested that Stalin needed Kollontai's considerable diplomatic talents.[114] Beatrice Farnsworth's extensive reading of Kollontai's conversations with Stalin "suggests that Kollontai, struggling to prove that she was no longer an oppositionist, nurtured a dynamic with him, by playing a stereotypically female-gendered role, that helped save her life."[115] Whatever the reason, Kollontai remained in the diplomatic corps throughout the 1930s, far from the center of power.

After the USSR entered the League of Nations in 1934, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs headed by Maksim Litvinov was to select specialists for work in numerous committees and commissions of the League. Kollontai was appointed a member (substitute delegate) of the Soviet delegation in August 1935 as an expert on the women's question since the Sixteenth Assembly of the League included a discussion of the women's equal rights' problem into its agenda (she was already well acquainted with the Swedish feminist leader, Senator and seasoned League of Nations delegate Kerstin Hesselgren).[116] Having arrived in Geneva in early September 1935, Kollontai was assigned to the Legal Committee and to the Committee on social and humanitarian issues. As Litvinov commented, the last was "a ladies' commission consisting of 50 percent of women-delegates. The issue of the opium trade will be considered there. You [Kollontai] will take it."[117]

Meanwhile, Kollontai regarded as more important her work for the Legal Committee of the League of Nations in the three Assemblies from 1935 to 1937. In her debut speech on September 13, 1935, Kollontai referred to the

Equal Nationality Treaty signed in 1933 by nineteen Latin American countries, the so-called Montevideo Treaty. The document affirmed the principle of civil equality for women and led to the repeal of laws discriminating women in a number of countries.[118] Kollontai emphasized that the League should apply this principle in its further work.[119] She also insisted on including in League of Nations resolutions a paragraph pointing to the USSR as a model and example of the equal rights of women. Despite Kollontai's and other feminists' efforts, the principle of women's equality was not adopted at the League's Sixteenth General Assembly. Although the woman question was not included in the 1936 program of the Seventeenth Assembly, Kollontai did her best to convince the meeting of the need to consider this issue at the next session. In September 1937, Kollontai joined the debates in the Legal Committee demanding further real steps toward equality of women. The 1937 Assembly finally approved a plan for a comprehensive and scientific inquiry into the legal status of women throughout the world.[120]

Marcel Body met with Alexandra Kollontai one last time in the summer of 1936 when many of her previous colleagues, friends and lovers were threatened by Stalin's purges. Body recalled that Kollontai seemed resigned to the fact that "that Russia could not pass in a few years from absolutism to freedom" and that "historically, Russia, with its innumerable masses without culture, without discipline, is not ripe for democracy."[121] The horror of the bloodshed took a toll on Kollontai's health. In her 1947 biography, Kollontai's close friend and confidant, the Spanish diplomat Isabel de Palencia (1878–1974), also paints a portrait of Kollontai despairing over the situation in Moscow. Palencia writes: "During those anxious days, my heart ached for Alexandra … I was anxious about her because I knew she must feel that death penalties are so irretrievable that one must hesitate in their application. And there was, for her, the additional agony from the fact that those men had been her friends and comrades …".[122]

One day, Kollontai apparently called Palencia to join her on a drive outside of Stockholm. Once they were out of town Kollontai shared all of her remorse and fear regarding the bloodshed back home. Palencia writes:

> That day I thought she looked ill, not worried. Her features were drawn and pale but her eyes lighted up as she turned to me while the car sped swiftly down the road that led to a forest nearby, one of her favorite haunts. I held out my hand and she clasped it in hers … And her eyes glistening with unshed tears, she opened her heart to me … "Life confronts us with many things that are difficult to understand," she said after a long pause.[123]

Although Kollontai was recalled to Moscow in 1937, and she clearly worried for her own life and for the safety of her son and his family, Stalin spared her in the end. Stalin's attention increasingly turned to the growing threat of Nazi Germany, and Kollontai distinguished herself as a valuable asset to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs from her post in Stockholm

between 1939 and 1945. The members of the diplomatic circles and the aristocratic classes of Stockholm accepted Kollontai despite her politics. At a formal dinner hosted by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign affairs in January 1939, attended by members of the Swedish government and the diplomatic corps, Isabel de Palencia recalled: "The Soviet minister is popular even in this milieu. She is charmingly bright and her knowledge of languages, is, of course, a great help. That night I heard her speak in perfect English, French, German, and Swedish."[124] And whatever Alexandra Kollontai's disagreements with Stalin and his methods, she opposed Hitler and officially had no choice but to support Stalin's foreign policies with regard to the Nazis, including the 1939 non-aggression treaty. Among the most noticeable achievements of Soviet Ambassador Kollontai in Stockholm were successful peace negotiations between USSR and Finland completed in September 1944.[125]

But the intensive work and increased age affected Kollontai's health. In 1942 she suffered two strokes, as a result of which the left side of her body became paralyzed. From this time on, she could move only in a specially designed chair. On March 18, 1945, she returned to Moscow and the Central Committee of the Communist Party accepted Kollontai's request to discharge her from the ambassadorial service on July 16, 1945, because of her illness.[126] The Party guaranteed her medical treatment. The Soviet government highly appreciated her diplomatic achievements and negotiation abilities, and from 1945 until her death on March 9, 1952, she was an advisor to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[127]

Kollontai devoted the last years of her life to systematizing her extensive archive and writing memoirs. In the Soviet Union, she was respected primarily as a woman-ambassador while her feminist heritage was substantially neglected or distorted. In the end, reflecting on the results of her sixty-year activity, she wrote down in her diary "I consider my most valuable contribution what I have given in the field of the struggle for the emancipation of working women and the assertion of their equal rights in all areas of labor, state activity, or science."[128]

Recommended Documents	
Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai	***Iz moey zhizni i raboty. Vospominaniya i dnevniki*** [From my life and work. Recollections and diaries]. Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Sovetskaya Rossiya," 1974 **Description**: This volume in Russian presents autobiographical material reflecting various aspects of Kollontai's life before her transition to diplomatic work. The collection includes memories of childhood, diary entries and journalistic essays
Alexandra Kollontai	***Sozialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa*** [The social basis of the women's question]. St. Petersburg: Znanie, 1909

(continued)

(continued)

Recommended Documents	
	Description: This book in Russian, which was republished in 2013, fully reflects the feminist views of Kollontai. In four chapters of the book, she discusses the struggle for women's economic freedom, the problems of marriage and family, the development of the institution of motherhood and the struggle for women's political rights The document is available in English on Marxists.org

Appendix: Brief Reflections on Archival Sources, Scholarly Biographies and Kollontai Fan Fiction

Alexandra Kollontai has long fascinated scholars and activists around the world. The first biographical writings about Kollontai appeared in 1947 and 1952 in the West, but it took more than a decade before similar biographies appeared in the Soviet Union. In the English-language literature, a second wave of books about the Russian women's movement and about Kollontai's life began appearing in the late 1970s just as women in the West took a growing interest in Marxist feminism. In the contemporary Russian context, she is better remembered for her diplomatic achievements than she is for her women's activism. Our biographical overview of Kollontai's life above relies primarily on Russian sources, including several key texts relating to Kollontai and her life. These include her own papers and memoirs (both published and unpublished), a biography written by her grandson Vladimir Kollontai and scholarly biographies published before and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. We also draw upon biographies and memories of Kollontai written in English and French.

In the first place, Alexandra Kollontai left a very rich literary, journalistic and epistolary legacy in different languages; a full list of her published works would take several pages. She kept diaries all her life and was careful to preserve them, and it is thanks to these that we can get a fairly complete idea of Kollontai's character and way of thinking. Today, Kollontai's personal archive in Russia (fund 134) is held at the *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (RGASPI) (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History) in Moscow, which is part of the *Federal'noe arkhivnoe agentstvo Rossii* (Rosarkhiv) (Federal Archival Agency of Russia).[129] At the end of her life, she also collected her notes on and memoirs of Joseph Stalin in a separate file (which was given to Stalin for review), and which is now held in RGASPI (fund 558).

Her letters and other documents related to her political and diplomatic service can also be found in various European archives. According to Birgitta

Ingemanson, over 600 letters sent from Alexandra Kollontai to her Swedish colleagues and friends are held in six different Swedish archives: Göteborgs Universitetsbibliotek (Göteborg University Library); Kungliga Biblioteket [Royal library] in Stockholm; Lunds Universitetsbibliotek [Lund University Library]; Riksarkivet [National Archives]; Stockhoms Stadsarkiv [City Archives of Stockholm] and Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek [Uppsala University Library].[130] According to Daniella Spenser, the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs contains an entire dossier of Spanish articles and opinions about Kollontai during the time she served as the Soviet ambassador to Mexico [Archivo de Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 41–26-27].[131] In the secret police archives of other European countries, Kollontai may also have dossiers documenting her various activities during her exile from Russia between 1908 and 1917.

Kollontai's most important writings were not reprinted in Russia during her lifetime. Only in 1972, on the centenary of her birth, was a collection of her works—*Izbrannye statyi i rechi* (Selected articles and speeches)—published. In 1974, a collection of autobiographical materials, *Iz moey zhizni i raboty. Vospominaniya i dnevniki* (From my Life and Work), also appeared. After long approvals and delays (preparation of the publication began in the late 1980s), Kollontai's *Diplomaticheskiye dnevniki: 1922–1940* (Diplomatic Diaries: 1922–1940) were published in 2001. These publications as well as a volume that appeared in 1989, *Revoluziya—velikaya myatezhniza. Izbrannye pisma 1901–1952* (Revolution is a Great Rebel: Selected Letters 1901–1952), emphasized Kollontai's role as a revolutionary and a diplomat. In the early 2000s only, after a new wave of interest in women's and gender studies, did scholars investigate her contribution to the theory of Marxist feminism. A collection of Kollontai's works on the women's issue, as well as an autobiographical essay, and a collection of her literary works were published during this decade.[132]

As mentioned above, the first Kollontai biographies written in the Soviet Union appeared in the 1960s. These include Anna Itkina, *Revoluzioner, tribun, diplomat. Ocherk zhizni A.M. Kollontai* (A Revolutionary, Tribune, Diplomat. An Essay about A.M. Kollontai) (1964), Eva Breslav, *A.M. Kollontai* (1974), Zinovii Sheinis, *Put' k vershine. Stranizy zhizni A.M. Kollontai* (Way to the Top. Pages from the Life of A.M. Kollontai) (1984), Mikhail Olesin, *Pervaya v mire. Biograficheskii ocherk ob A.M. Kollontai* (The First in the World. A Biographical Essay about A.M. Kollontai) (1990), and Leonid Mlechin, *Kollontay* (2013). Mikhail Trush (previously published under a pseudonym "Olesin") released a new, expanded edition of Kollontai's biography as *Ot politiki revoluzionnoi borby k pobedam na diplomaticheskom fronte. Zhiznennyi put' Aleksandry Kollontai* (From Revolutionary Struggle to Diplomatic Victories. The Life Path of Alexandra Kollontai) (2017). The memoirs of Alexandra Kollontai's grandson have a special place in the list of books about her as they reveal some new facts about her family life and her personality. Vladimir Kollontai's *Moya chrezvychainaya babushka. Vospominaniya vnuka ob Aleksandre Michailovne Kollontai* (My Extraordinary Grandmother. Memories

of the Grandson of Alexandra Michailovna Kollontai) (2019) was published with the support of the MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) Alumni Association, of which Vladimir Kollontai is a member. In addition to these serious treatments of her life, a popular genre of historical romances has also appeared, such as Emilyi Mindlin, *Ne dom, no mir: povest' ob Aleksandre Kollontai* (Not Home but World: A Story about Alexandra Kollontai) (1978), Arkadii Vaksberg, *Valkiriya revoluzii. Roman ob A.M. Kollontai* (Valkyrie of Revolution. A Novel about A.M. Kollontai) (1997), Leonid Izelev, *Aleksandra Kollontai: Diplomat i kurtizanka* (Alexandra Kollontai: Diplomat and Courtesan) (1997), which are only loosely based on the historical record.

Because Alexandra Kollontai lived a long and busy life as a revolutionary, women's activist, politician and diplomat, she has been the subject of multiple non-Russian biographical treatments using different spellings of her name.[133] In English, there are four key biographies of Alexandra Kollontai. The oldest of these is written by the Spaniard Isabel de Palencia who was Kollontai's fellow diplomat and friend in Sweden during the 1930s: *Alexandra Kollontay: Ambassadress from Russia* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1947). The other three are scholarly biographies by Beatrice Farnsworth, Barbara Evans Clements and Cathy Porter.[134] In addition to these three books, there is an unpublished dissertation about Kollontai's life in Scandinavia from the University of Minnesota in 1971, which was based on research conducted in the Swedish and Norwegian archives,[135] and a 2020 edited collection which includes essays and interviews reflecting on her life and legacy.[136]

In addition to the numerous articles about her, historians Richard Stites, Gail Lapidus, Wendy Goldman and Elizabeth Wood each wrote important English books which discuss Kollontai and her work with the Women's Section (*Zhenotdel*).[137] More recently, Maria Bucur and Lucy Delap have examined the importance of Kollontai's life and work within the context of twentieth century women's movements.[138] In Spanish, the gender scholar Ana de Miguel published a biography in 2001 called *Alejandra Kollontai (1872–1952)*.[139] In Swedish, Gustav Johansson's book, *Alexandra Kollontay Perioden 1872–1917: Revolutionens ambassadör*, was first published in 1945 and reissued in the late 1970s. Finally, in French, a substantive article by Marcel Body, a close comrade and associate of Kollontai's in Sweden, was published after her death in the journal *Preuves* in 1952, and *Alexandra Kollontaï. La Walkyrie de la Révolution* by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse in 2021.

In terms of Kollontai's own writings, some of the key pieces can be found online in English at the Marxist Internet Archive.[140] A smaller selection of her writings are also freely available in Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese.[141] There are also many published collections of her writings in multiple languages. The life and work of Kollontai are experiencing a revival at the current moment, and she has recently inspired various creative endeavors,

including a biographical play,[142] sonic collages,[143] curatorial courses,[144] a podcast[145] and a special Alexandra Kollontai cake.[146]

Notes

1. A.M. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni i raboty. Vospominaniya i dnevniki* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Sovetskaya Rossiya", 1974), 364. Our translation from the Russian unless otherwise noted.
2. V.M. Kollontai, *Moya chrezvychainaya babushka. Vospominaniya vnuka ob Aleksandre Mikhailovne Kollontai* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Aspekt Press", 2019), 6.
3. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 20.
4. Kollontai, 20.
5. Kollontai, *Moya chrezvychainaya babushka,* 10.
6. Alexandra Kollontai, *The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman*, edited, with an afterword, by Iring Fetscher. Translated by Salvator Attanasio. Foreword by Germaine Greer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17. Italics there.
7. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 31. Other sources do not support Kollontai's claim. On the formation of the education system in Bulgaria, see: Krassimira Daskalova, "Developments in Bulgarian Education: from the Ottoman Empire to the Nation-State and beyond, 1800–1940s," *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1–29.
8. Zoya Leonidovna Shadurskaya (1874–1939) was born into a family of a military lawyer. Shadurskaya worked as a journalist and never married, and she lived with Kollontai on and off until Shadurskaya's death in 1939.
9. Fedor Rerberg, *Vsye v proshlom: Vospominaniya. 1868–1910* (Moskva: Kuchkovo Pole, 2018), 206.
10. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 76–81.
11. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 79. And see Maria Kapajeva's art based on this place: https://www.mariakapajeva.com/works/group-photo-2017.
12. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 80.
13. Elena Stasova (1873–1966) was born into the family of the famous lawyer Dmitry Stasov, who participated in major trials of that time and was one of the founders of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and the Russian Musical Society. She carried out revolutionary illegal work in different regions of the Russian Empire and in political emigration, was arrested several times, sent into exile in Siberia. Stasova was in party work until her retirement in 1946. The rest of her life she was engaged in social and literary activities. In 1960 she was awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labor. After her death, she was cremated, the ashes were placed in an urn in the Kremlin wall on Red Square in Moscow. See further Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
14. Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
15. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 73.
16. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Osnovy vospitaniya po vzglyadam Dobrolyubova," *Obrazovaniye*, no. 9 (1898): 11–15; no. 10 (1898): 1–19; no. 11 (1898): 1–16.

17. Heinrich Herkner was a German economist, a recognized expert on Marxism, a representative of revisionism.
18. Cited in: Mikhail Olesin, *Pervaya v mire. Biograficheskii ocherk ob A.M. Kollontai* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatuty, 1990), 19.
19. Vladimir Kollontai rose to the rank of Major General (1913), and participated in the First World War. He secondly married Maria Ignatyevna Skosarevskaya (1888–1986), a daughter of a Major General.
20. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 93–96.
21. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
22. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 96. In her autobiography, she noted that the Russian Revolution in 1905 made her to declare her affiliation with Mensheviks. While Bolsheviks took the hostile position towards the Duma, "with the Mensheviks I espoused the point of view that even a pseudo-Parliament should be utilized as a tribute for our Party and that the elections for the Duma must be used as an assembling point for the working class." (Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17).
23. Alexandra Kollontai, "Die Arbeiterfrage in Finland," *Soziale Praxis. Berlin Leipzig Central blatt fur sozial Politik*, no. 9 (1900): 50; Aleksandra Kollontai, "Promyshlennost i torgovlya Velikogo knyazhestva Finlyandskogo," *Nauchnoe obozreniye*, no. 7 (1901): 8–40; Aleksandra Kollontai, "Zhilisha finlyandskikh rabochikh," *Russkoe bogatstvo*, no. 7 (1902): 126–144; Aleksandra Kollontai, "Zemelnyi vopros v Finlyandii," *Nauchnoe obozreniye*, no. 2 (1902): 45–54; no. 3 (1902): 205–210; no. 4 (1902): 124–136; Aleksandra Kollontai, "Socialism v Finlyandii," *Zarya*, no. 4 (1902): 71–79; Aleksandra Kollontai, "Splavshiki lesa v Finlyandii," *Nauchnoe obozreniye*, no. 9 (1902): 69–78.
24. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Zhizn' finlyandskikh rabochikh. Ekonomicheskoe issledovaniye* (St. Petersburg: T-vo khudozhestvennoi pechati, 1903).
25. Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams, *Na putyakh k svobode* (New York: Izd. Imeni Chekhova, 1952), 401–402.
26. Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
27. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17. See also: Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 43.
28. Aleksandra Kollontai Papers. Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, Moscow (hereinafter abbreviated as RGASPI), 134/1/88/10.
29. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Zhenskoe rabochee dvizhenie," in *Marksistskii feminism. Kollekziya tekstov A.M. Kollontai*, ed. by Valentina Uspenskaya (Tver': Feminist Press, 2003), 101.
30. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 105.
31. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 105, 107.
32. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Dva techeniya (po povodu pervoi mezhdunarodnoi zhenskoi konferenzii v Shtutgarte)," *Obrazovaniye*, no. 16 (October 1907), 46–62. *"Obrazovanie"* [Education] was a popular publication among the educated Russian public in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries.
33. Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.

34. Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
35. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Zhenshina-rabotniza v sovremennom obshestve", in *Trudy Pervogo Vserossiiskogo zhenskogo syezda pri Russkom zhenskom vzaimno-blagotvoritelnom obshestve v Sankt-Peterburge, 10–16 dekabrya 1908 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 792–801. Cited from: *Marksistskii feminism. Kollekziya tekstov A.M. Kollontai*, ed. by Valentina Uspenskaya (Tver: Feminist Press, 2003), 26.
36. Uspenskaya, 26.
37. About the congress see: Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild, *Equality & Revolution. Women's Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905–1917* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 102–145.
38. Maksim Gorkii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Pisma v 24 tomakh. Tom 7* (Moskva: Nauka, 2001), 282–283. At the time, Gorkii lived on Capri Island as a political émigré. His letters reveal that there were significant delays in delivery of correspondence from Russia, which also caused a delay in the publication of the Kollontai's book.
39. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Sozialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa* (St. Petersburg: Znanie, 1909). For feminist reaction on the publication see: Anna Kalmanovich, *Pretenzii k zhenscomu dvizheniyu voobshe i k I-mu Vserssiiskomy zhenskomu s'ezdu v chastnosti. Neskolko slov o knige g-zhi Kollontai 'Socialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa'* (St. Petersburg, 1910); Ekaterina Shchepkina, "Apologiya 'burzhuazok' v knige g-zhi Kollontai 'Socialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa'," *Soyuz zhenshin*, no. 4 (1909): 11–14.
40. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Finlyandiya i socialism: Sbornik statei* (St. Petersburg: Malykh, 1906).
41. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni,* 113–114. Overall subsequent years, Aleksandra Kollontai and Varvara Ivanovna Volkova had been keeping in touch. Their letters are in the State Museum of Modern Russian History in Moscow now.
42. Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
43. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 115–116.
44. Clara Zetkin to Aleksandra Kollontai, 1909–1914, typed transcripts, Clara Zetkin Fund, RGASPI, 528/1/198-245.
45. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 116.
46. Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy. Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 57–59. In Britain in the 1900s the right to vote was based on the ownership of property of a certain value and on the exclusion of all women by virtue of their sex. Suffragists had been campaigning for the removal of the sex disqualification, while "adultists" gave priority to the removal of the property qualifications and opposed equal votes for women as a purely middle-class demand.
47. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Mezhdunarodnye socialisticheskiye soveshchaniya rabotniz," in Aleksandra Kollontai, *Izbrannye statyi i rechi* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1972), 104.
48. Kollontai, *Izbrannye statyi i rechi,* 92–93.
49. On the Zhenotdel (Women's bureau) within the Bolshevik party, see, e.g., Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism,*

Nihilsm, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930 (Princeton University Press, 1990), 329–345.

50. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 116. The Political Emigration Assistance Bureau of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was located in Paris with aims to provide financial assistance to Russian political emigrants and to maintain communication between them.
51. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni,* 121.
52. Kollontai, 121. Even in her late memoirs, Kollontai included her reflective notes about German leaders, such as on August Bebel, "this truly lion figure of the Second International, full of mind and strength, surrounded by a halo of broadest popularity and respect even of political enemies; he had a barely noticeable sense of national exclusivity and even a slight imprint of superiority when he was mentioning all the other parties in the world besides German social democrats." Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni,* 117.
53. Anna Krylova, "Bolshevik Feminism and Gender Agendas of Communism," in *The Cambridge History of Communism,* eds. S. Pons & S. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 430.
54. Krylova, 431.
55. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Obshchestvo i materinstvo. Vveddenie," in *Marksistskii Feminizm,* 136.
56. Kollontai, 139.
57. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Obshestvo i materinstvo* (St.Petersburg: Zhizn i znaniye, 1916).
58. Kollontai, *Izbrannye statyi i rechi,* 417.
59. Cited in: Zinovii Sheinis, *Put k vershine. Stranitzy zhizni A.M. Kollontai* (Moskva: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1984), 40. Misha (Mikhail Vladimirovich Kollontai, 1894–1957) had been living with his mother until she was forced to flee Russia in December 1908. Since then, he was raised in his father's family.
60. Vladimir Kollontai talks in detail about the relationship between Alexandra Kollontai and her son: Kollontai, *Moya chrezvychainaya babushka*, 19–21.
61. The police prevented her attendance at the rally, so her speech was disseminated in paper form under pseudonym Davydova. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 126.
62. Her son Misha, at the time visiting his mother in Berlin, was arrested on 1 August and was released soon owing to Karl Liebknecht's help.
63. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 172.
64. About Inessa Armand see: Natalia Pushkareva, "Armand, Inessa-Elizaveta Fedorovna (1874–1920)," in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 33–36.
65. Masao Nishikawa, *Socialists and International Actions for Peace, 1914–1923* (Berlin: Frank & Timme Verlag, 2010), 37.
66. Kollontai, *Izbrannyye statyi i rechi*, 419.
67. The full text of the resolution is published in: John Riddell, 'Socialist women unite against war', http://socialistworker.org/2015/03/26/socialist-women-unite-against-war; and in *Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner, forewords by Angela Y. Davis and Rosalyn Baxandall (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 130–132.

68. Cited in: Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930*. 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 285.
69. Olesin, *Pervaya v mire,* 53.
70. St. Petersburg was renamed in August 1914. "Petrograd" sounded more "patriotic" in comparison with the "German-like" "Petersburg".
71. For more about Kollontai's trips to the United States see: Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai. The Lonely Struggle of the Woman Who Defied Lenin* (New York: The Dial Press, 1980), Chapter 10.
72. Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild, "Women's Suffrage and Revolution in the Russian Empire, 1905–1917," *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 1–35.
73. Cited in: I. Dazhina, "V vodovorote novoi Rossii. Pisma A.M. Kollontai V.I. Leninu i N.K. Krupskoi v Shveizariyu," *Novyi mir*, no. 4 (1967): 240.
74. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 257.
75. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
76. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
77. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
78. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
79. *Sedmoi ekstrennyi cyezd RKP(b). Mart 1018 goda. Stenographicheskii otchet* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1962), 88–89.
80. Kollontai, *Autobiography,* https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
81. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
82. Aleksandra Kollontai, "Zadachi otdelov po rabote sredi zhenshin," *Kommunistka*, no. 6 (November 1920): 4.
83. Pervyi congress Kominterna. Mart 1919. eds. E. Korotkii, B. Kun, and O. Pyatnizkii (Moskva: Partiinoe izdatelstvo, 1933), 166.
84. Clara Zetkin did not make it to Moscow. The report on the work of the conference published in 1921 states that Zetkin was unable to attend the conference, because she was distracted by other important party affairs (*Otchet o Pervoi mezhdunarodnoi konferenzii kommunistok* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1921), 17).
85. *Otchet o pervoi mezhdunarodnoi konferenzii kommunistok*. Ed. Polina Vinogradskaya (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1921), 17.
86. Olesin, *Pervaya v mire*, 358. Documents of the International Women's Secretariat, including information on the composition of its staff, are in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), fund 507.
87. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Semya i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Kommunist", 1918), 21.
88. Tatyana Osipovich, "Kommunizm, feminism, osvbozhdenie zhenshin i Aleksandra Kollontai," *Obshestvennye nauki i sovremennost*, no. 1 (1993): 179.
89. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Novaya zhenshina* (Moskva: Novaya zhizn, 1913); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Novaya moral i rabochii klass* (Moskva: Izd. VZIK, 1918).

90. Kollontai, *Novaya moral*, 17–29.
91. Kollontai, *Novaya moral*, 43.
92. Kollontai, *Novaya moral*, 46.
93. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Zhenshina na perelome* (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1923); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Lyubov pchel trudovykh* (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1923); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Svobodnaya lyubov* (Riga: Strok, 1925); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Bolshaya lyubov* (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1927); Aleksandra Kollontai, *V. Malygina* (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1927); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Sestry* (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1927).
94. Kollontai, *Autobiography*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.
95. Marcel Body, "Mémoires: Alexandra Kollontai," *Preuves* 14, 1952: 12–24 (translated from the French by Abby LaForm).
96. Kollontai was among 22 oppositionists signed a letter to the Comintern they applied for support on the eve of the XI Congress of the Bolshevik Party. On Kollontai's role in the workers' opposition see: Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai*, 377–411.
97. Sheinis, *Put k vershine*, 100–101; Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai*, 387, 398, 419–420.
98. Kollontai's application to the Central Committee, RGASPI/17/3/227/4.
99. Kollontai conveys the content of this letter to Stalin in her memoirs (RGASPI/558/11/749). See also: Oleg Mozokhin, "Stalin v zhizni Kollontai," *Rodina*, no. 9 (2014): 97; Olesin, *Pervaya v mire*, 126; Sheinis, *Put k vershine*, 101; Mikhail Trush, *Ot politiki revoluzionnoi borby k pobedam na diplomaticheskom fronte. Zhiznenniy put' Aleksandry Kollontai* (Moskva: Knizhnyi dom "LIBROKOM", 2017), 159, 437.
100. Body, "Mémoires," 13.
101. Body, 14.
102. Body, 14.
103. Body, 16.
104. Beatrice Farnworth, "Conversing with Stalin, Surviving the Terror: The Diaries of Aleksandra Kollontai and the Internal Life of Politics," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 4 (2010): 944–970.
105. Body, "Mémoires," 16.
106. Body, 17.
107. Body, 18. *The Pravda* newspaper was the central printing organ of the Communist Party.
108. Cited in: Trush, *Ot politiki revoluzionnoi borby*, 203.
109. Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai*, 449.
110. Body, "Mémoires," 19.
111. Body, 22.
112. Body, 22.
113. Simon Sebag Motefiore, *Stalin: Court of the Red Tsar* (London: Vintage, 2004), 240.
114. Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 308.
115. Farnsworth, "Conversing with Stalin, Surviving the Terror," 946.
116. Olesin, *Pervaya v mire*, 251. AK "had formed connections in the Swedish women's movement. She was mainly drawn to the [left-feminist] so-called Fogelstad group," of which Hesselgren was a prominent member.

Aleksandra Mikhajlova Kollontaj, www.skbl.se/sv/artikel/AleksandraKollontaj, Svenskt kvinnobiografiskt lexikon (article by Katarina Leppänen), retrieved 24 July 2021. Hesselgren was Chair of the League of Nations' Committee on the Legal Status of Women. On 5 July 1938 *The New York Times* referred to her as "Leader of Women in Sweden." In 1946, Hesselgren nominated Kollontai for the Nobel Peace Prize. https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show.php?id=2283.

117. Olesin, *Pervaya v mire*, 252.
118. For more about debates on equal rights in the League of Nations see: Carol Miller, "'Geneva–the Key to Equality': Inter-war Feminists and the League of Nations," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 218–245.
119. Kollontai spoke twice, first in French, then in English. Olesin, *Pervaya v mire*, 254.
120. Miller, "'Geneva–the Key to Equality,'" 237.
121. Body, "Mémoires," 24.
122. Palencia, *Alexandra Kollontai*: *Ambassadress from Russia* (New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co, 1947), 237–238.
123. Palencia, 237–238.
124. Isabel de Palencia, *I Must Have Liberty* (New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co, 1940), 292.
125. Trush, *Ot politiki revoluzionnoi borby*, 423–424. In March 2017, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke at the opening ceremony of a memorial plaque on the facade of the house where Aleksandra Kollontai lived. Among other merits of Kollontai as a diplomat, he noted her contribution to the important negotiations with Finland for the USSR in 1944, which ended with the latter's withdrawal from the war (Cited in: Kollontai, *Moya chrezvychainaya babushka*, 130). Her "diplomatic efforts to end war and hostilities between the Soviet Union and Finland during the negotiations in 1940–44" were also the reason why Hesselgren nominated Kollontai for the Nobel Peace Prize. https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show.php?id=2283. Kollontai was also nominated in 1947, again in vain. https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show_people.php?id=4972.
126. Mozokhin, "Stalin v zhizni Kollontai," 101.
127. In December 2019, Alexandra Kollontai's grandson Vladimir and his wife Ritta gave a big interview to the online magazine *Istoricheskaya expertiza* (Historical Expertise). Here they mentioned the last years of Kollontai in Moscow, filled with meetings, official correspondence with representatives of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, writing articles for magazines and systematizing and finalizing memoirs (Konstantin Morev, "It is impossible to approach the events of another time with today's standards." Interview with Vladimir and Rita Kollontai, *Istoricheskaya expertiza* (2019), https://istorex.ru/New_page_20).
128. Kollontai, *Iz moey zhizni*, 364.
129. *Address:* 125009, Moscow, ul. Bol'shaia Dmitrovka, 15; Archival Repository no. 2: Profsoiuznaia ul., 82, *Telephone:* +7 495 694-51-12, +7 495 629-97-26;p *Fax:* +7 495 692-90-17; *E-mail*: rgaspi@inbox.ru, *Website:* http://rgaspi.org.
130. Birgitta Ingemanson, "Letters from Aleksandra Kollontaj in Sweden," *Russian Language Journal/Русский язык* 41, no. 140 (Fall 1987): 197–214.

131. Daniella Spenser, *The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
132. Aleksandra Kollontai, *Marksistskii feminism: Kollekziya tekstov A.M. Kollontai* (Tver: Feministpress, 2003); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Letopis moey zhizni: Avtobiograficheskii ocherk* (Moskva: Academia, 2004); Aleksandra Kollontai, *Bolshaya lyubov. Povesti i rasskazy* (St.Petersburg: Izdatelskii dom Azbuka-klassika, 2008).
133. Since Russian is written in the Cyrillic alphabet, works published about Kollontai often contain confusing variations on the spelling of her name. In the Latin alphabet, her first name can be spelled either "Aleksandra" or "Alexandra," although it is more common to use the latter spelling. In terms of her surname, many competing conventions exist regarding the Romanization of Cyrillic letters into the Latin alphabet. The Cyrillic letter "Й" can be transliterated as the Latin letters "J," "I" or "Y," which means that Alexandra Kollontai's last name can be spelled Kollontaj, Kollontai or Kollontay. Articles and books published using the Latin alphabet with therefore use different spellings and this makes online bibliographic searches more difficult.
134. Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979); Beatrice Farnsworth, *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980); and Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai. The Lonely Struggle of the Woman Who Defied Lenin* (New York: The Dial Press, 1980), revised edition: *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014).
135. Kaare Hauge. "Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai: The Scandinavian Period, 1922–1945." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Minnesota, 1971.
136. Michelle Masucci, Maria Lind, and Joanna Warsza (eds.), *Red Love: A Reader on Alexandra Kollontai* (Sternberg Press, 2020).
137. Wendy Goldman, *Women State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Elizabeth Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilsm, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Gail Lapidus, *Women in Soviet society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
138. Maria Bucur, *The Century of Women: How Women Have Transformed the World since 1900* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); Lucy Delap, *Feminisms: A Global History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).
139. Ana de Miguel, *Alejandra Kollontai (1872-1952)* (Ediciones del Orto, 2001).
140. English: https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/index.htm.
141. Spanish (https://www.marxists.org/espanol/kollontai/index.htm), French (https://www.marxists.org/francais/kollontai/index.htm), Italian (https://www.marxists.org/italiano/kollontai/index.htm) and Portuguese (https://www.marxists.org/portugues/kollontai/index.htm).
142. https://www.sternberg-press.com/product/red-love-a-reader-on-alexandra-kollontai-kollontai-a-play-by-agneta-pleijel/.

143. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQh70rHBBI4.
144. https://curatorlab.se/#2018-2017.
145. Ak47.buzzsprout.com.
146. https://antifestival.com/en/tapahtuma/marja-viitahuhta-fi-cakes-for-thought-recipe-book/.

Bibliography

Archives

International Women's Secretariat. Records. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI) (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History), Moscow.

Kollontai, Alexandra. Papers. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI) (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History), Moscow.

Zetkin, Clara. Fund. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI) (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History), Moscow.

Books and Articles by Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai

Bolshaya lyubov. Moskva: Gosizdat, 1927.

Bolshaya lyubov. Povesti i rasskazy. St. Petersburg: Izdatelskii dom Azbuka-klassika, 2008.

"Die Arbeiterfrage in Finland," *Soziale Praxis. Berlin Leipzig Central blatt fur sozial Politik*, no. 9 (1900): 50.

Diplomaticheskiye dnevniki: 1922–1940. Moskva: Academia, 2001.

Finlyandiya i socialism: Sbornik statei. St. Petersburg: Malykh, 1906.

Iz moey zhizni i raboty. Vospominaniya i dnevniki. Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Sovetskaya Rossiya," 1974.

Izbrannye statyi i rechi. Moskva: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1972.

Letopis moey zhizni: Avtobiograficheskii ocherk. Moskva: Academia, 2004.

Lyubov pchel trudovykh. Moskva: Gosizdat, 1923.

Marksistskii feminism: Kollekziya tekstov A.M. Kollontai. Tver: Feministpress, 2003.

Novaya zhenshina. Moskva: Novaya zhizn, 1913.

Novaya moral i rabochii klass. Moskva: Izd. VZIK, 1918.

Obshestvo i materinstvo. St.Petersburg: Zhizn i znaniye, 1916.

"Osnovy vospitaniya po vzglyadam Dobrolyubova." *Obrazovaniye*, no. 9 (1898): 11–15; no. 10 (1898): 1–19; no. 11 (1898): 1–16.

"Promyshlennost i torgovlya Velikogo knyazhestva Finlyandskogo." *Nauchnoe obozreniye*, no. 7 (1901): 8–40.

Revoluziya – velikaya myatezhniza. Izbrannye pisma, 1901–1952. Moskva: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1989.

Semya i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo. Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Kommunist", 1918.

Sestry. Moskva: Gosizdat, 1927.

"Socialism v Finlyandii." *Zarya*, no. 4 (1902): 71–79.

Sozialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa. St. Petersburg: Znanie, 1909.

"Splavshiki lesa v Finlyandii." *Nauchnoe obozreniye*, no. 9 (1902): 69–78.

Svobodnaya lyubov. Riga: Strok, 1925.

The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman, edited, with an afterword, by Iring Fetscher. Translated by Salvator Attanasio. Foreword by Germaine Greer. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm#17.

V. Malygina. Moskva: Gosizdat, 1927.

"Zemelnyi vopros v Finlyandii." *Nauchnoe obozreniye*, no. 2 (1902): 45–54; no. 3 (1902): 205–210; no. 4 (1902): 124–136.

Zhenshina na perelome. Moskva: Gosizdat, 1923.

"Zhilisha finlyandskikh rabochikh." *Russkoe bogatstvo*, no. 7 (1902): 126–144.

Zhizn' finlyandskikh rabochikh. Ekonomicheskoe issledovaniye. St.Petersburg: T-vo khudozhestvennoi pechati, 1903.

Secondary Sources

Abramova, M.G., A.V. Popova, and S.S. Gorokhova. "Proekt zhenskoi emansipazii Aleksandry Kollontai kak gendernoe 'rasshireniye' marksizma." *Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo oblastnogo universiteta. Seriya: Istoriya i politicheskiye nauki* 2 (2021): 44–54.

Body, Marcel. "Mémoires: Alexandra Kollontai." *Preuves* 14 (1952): 12–24.

Breslav, Eva. *A.M. Kollontai*. Moskva: Izdatelstvo Mysl, 1974.

Bucur, Maria. *The Century of Women: How Women Have Transformed the World since 1900*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Carrère d'Encausse, Hélène. *Alexandra Kollontaï. La Walkyrie de la Révolution*. Paris: Fayard, 2021.

Clements, Barbara Evans. *Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979.

Dazhina, I. "V vodovorote novoi Rossii. Pisma A.M. Kollontai V.I. Leninu i N.K. Krupskoi v Shveizariyu." *Novyi mir*, no. 4 (1967): 235–242.

Delap, Lucy. *Feminisms: A Global History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020.

de Miguel, Ana. *Alejandra Kollontai (1872–1952)*. Ediciones del Orto, 2001.

Dolidovich, Olesya and Katzina Tatyana. "Stanovleniye sistemy sozialnogo obespecheniuya pod rukovodstvom A.M. Kollontai: ot sfery privatnoi v Rossiiskoi Imperii k prostranstvu publichnogo v Sovetskoi Rossii (12 noyabrya 1917 goda–11 marta 1918 goda)." *Zhurnal issledovanii sozialnoi politiki* 9, no. 2 (2011): 255–276.

Farnsworth, Beatrice. *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

Farnworth, Beatrice. "Conversing with Stalin, Surviving the Terror: The Diaries of Aleksandra Kollontai and the Internal Life of Politics." *Slavic Review* 69, no. 4 (2010): 944–970.

Ghodsee, Kristen. "Crashing the Party: The Radical Legacy of a Soviet-era Feminist." *World Policy Journal* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 70–74

Goldman, Wendy. *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Gorkii, Maksim. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Pisma v 24 tomakh. Tom 7*. Moskva: Nauka, 2001.

Govryakov, Igor. "Prinzipy agitazii sredi zhenshin v pervyi god sovetskoi vlasti: neopublikovannye instrukzii A.M. Kollontai." *Istoriya otechestvennykh smi* 1 (2015): 16–22.

Haan, Francisca de, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi, eds. *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2006.

Hauge, Kaare. "Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai: The Scandinavian Period, 1922–1945." PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1971.

Holton, Sandra Stanley. *Feminism and Democracy. Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900–1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Ingemanson, Birgitta. "Letters from Aleksandra Kollontaj in Sweden." Russian Language Journal/Русскиˇи язык 41, no. 140 (Fall 1987): 197–214.

Itkina, Anna. *Revolutsioner, tribun, diplomat. Ocherk zhizni A.M. Kollontai*. Moskva: Politizdat, 1964.

Izelev, Leonid. *Aleksandra Kollontai: Diplomat and Courtesan*. Moskva: Armada, 1997.

Kalmanovich, Anna. *Pretenzii k zhenscomu dvizheniyu voobshe i k I-mu Vserssiiskomy zhenskomu s'ezdu v chastnosti. Neskolko slov o knige g-zhi Kollontai 'Socialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa'*. St. Petersburg, 1910.

Kitai, Satoko. "Eros I revolyuziya: teoriya A.Kollontai." *Novyi filologicheskii vestnik* 2 (2009): 124–131.

Kollontai, Vladimir. *Moya chrezvychainaya babushka. Vospominaniya vnuka ob Aleksandre Mikhailovne Kollontai*. Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Aspekt Press", 2019.

Korotkii, E., Kun, B., Pyatnizkii, O., eds. *Pervyi congress Kominterna. Mart 1919*. Moskva: Partiinoe izdatelstvo, 1933.

Krylova, Anna. "Bolshevik Feminism and Gender Agendas of Communism." In *The Cambridge History of Communism,* eds. S. Pons & S. Smith, 424–448. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Lapidus, Gail. *Women in Soviet society: Equality, Development, and Social Change*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Masucci, Michelle, Lind, Maria and Warsza, Joanna, eds. *Red Love: A Reader on Alexandra Kollontai*. Sternberg Press, 2020.

Medvedev, Roy. *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.

Miller, Carol. "'Geneva—The Key to Equality': Inter-war Feminists and the League of Nations," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 218–245.

Mindlin, Emilyi. *Ne dom, no mir: povest' ob Aleksandre Kollontai*. Moskva: Politizdat, 1978.

Mlechin, Leonid. *Kollontay*. Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 2013.

Motefiore, Simon Sebag. *Stalin: Court of the Red Tsar*. London: Vintage, 2004.

Mozokhin, Oleg. "Stalin v zhizni Kollontai." *Rodina*, no. 9 (2014): 96–102.

Nishikawa, Masaoю. *Socialists and International Actions for Peace, 1914–1923*. Berlin: Frank & Timme Verlag, 2010.

Olesin, Mikhail. *Pervaya v mire. Biograficheskii ocherk ob A.M. Kollontai*. Moskva: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatuty, 1990.

Osipovich, Tatyana. "Kommunizm, feminism, osvbozhdenie zhenshin i Aleksandra Kollontai." *Obshestvennye nauki i sovremennost*, no. 1 (1993): 174–186.

Otchet o Pervoi mezhdunarodnoi konferenzii kommunistok. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1921.

Palencia, Isabel de. *I Must Have Liberty*. New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co, 1940.

Palencia, Isabel de. *Alexandra Kollontai*: *Ambassadress from Russia*. New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co, 1947.

Pervyi congress Kominterna. Mart 1919. Eds. E. Korotkii, B. Kun, O. Pyatnizkii. Moskva: Partiinoe izdatelstvo, 1933.

Porter, Cathy. *Alexandra Kollontai. The Lonely Struggle of the Woman Who Defied Lenin*. New York: The Dial Press, 1980.

Porter, Cathy. *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014.

Pushkarev, A.M. "K istoriographii 'Istorii povsednevnosti' I 'Novogo byta' 1920kh (problema 'novoi polovoi morali v rabotakh A.M. Kollontai)." *Zhenshina v rossiskom obshestve*, no. 1–2 (2005): 55–75.

Rerberg, Fedor. *Vsye v proshlom: Vospominaniya. 1868–1910*. Moskva: Kuchkovo Pole, 2018.

Ruthchild, Rochelle Goldberg. *Equality & Revolution. Women's Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905–1917*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.

Ruthchild, Rochelle Goldberg. "Women's Suffrage and Revolution in the Russian Empire, 1905-1917." *Aspasia. The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History*, no. 1 (2007): 1–35.

Sedmoi ekstrennyi cyezd RKP(b). Mart 1018 goda. Stenographicheskii otchet. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1962.

Shchepkina, Ekaterina. "Apologiya 'burzhuazok' v knige g-zhi Kollontai 'Socialnyye osnovy zhenskogo voprosa'." *Soyuz zhenshin*, no. 4 (1909): 11–14.

Sheinis, Zinovii. *Put k vershine. Stranitzy zhizni A.M. Kollontai*. Moskva: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1984.

Spenser, Daniella. *The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Stites, Richard. *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930*. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Trush, Mikhail. *Ot politiki revoluzionnoi borby k pobedam na diplomaticheskom fronte. Zhiznenniy put' Aleksandry Kollontai*. Moskva: Knizhnyi dom "LIBROKOM", 2017.

Tyrkova-Williams, Ariadna. *Na putyakh k svobode*. New York: Izd. Imeni Chekhova, 1952.

Uspenskaya, Valentina, ed. *Aleksandra Kollontai: Teoriya zhenskoi emansipazii v kontekste rossiiskoi gendernoi politiki*. Tver, 2003.

Uspenskaya, Valentina, ed. *Marksistskii feminism. Kollekziya tekstov A.M. Kollontai*. Tver': Feminist Press, 2003.

Vaksberg, Arkadii. *Valkiriya revoluzii. Roman ob A.M. Kollontai*. Moskva: Olimp, 1997.

Vinogradskaya, Polina, ed. *Otchet o pervoi mezhdunarodnoi konferenzii kommunistok*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1921.

Wood, Elizabeth. *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Yukina, Irina. "Na puti k marksistskomu feminizmu. Deyatelnost Aleksandry Kollontai." Sociology of Science and Technology 5, no. 2 (2014): 81–91.