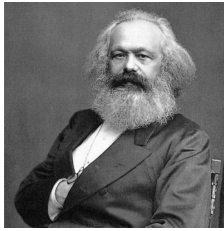


# Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity

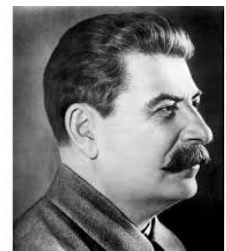


## A Journal of Discussion and Debate



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To see the reasoning behind publication of TMLU, please see the article “Why ‘Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity’” in the first issue on the website below. Though we believe that a Party must have ideological unity, we include progressive articles from groups with varying views. Also, note that unsigned articles, as well as comments before articles, are mine (George Gruenthal).

Note that we reprint many articles without asking for permission. Clearly the authors are in no way responsible for other views in this publication.

Comments, criticisms and articles are welcome. The next issue of TMLU should appear in May 2024. Material should be sent in by the end of April.

**TMLU has been moved to [mltranslations.net](http://mltranslations.net). That web-site has replaced [mltranslations.org](http://mltranslations.org), which I have not been able to access for several years.**

For print copies in the U.S., please send \$3 per copy plus \$2 for mailing cost (of up to 5 copies) by PayPal to: [georgeg0626@hotmail.com](mailto:georgeg0626@hotmail.com)

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## As Israel Continues Its Genocidal Attacks on the Palestinians, Biden Widens the War in the Middle East

Israel has killed over 30,000 civilians in the Gaza strip, the great majority being women and children. Israel has targeted hospitals, shelters, mosques and churches. It even killed over 100 people waiting for aid\* in the besieged territory, which has been prevented by Israel from getting food and medicine on a regular basis, or from allowing the wounded to get medical attention outside of Gaza.

It is US imperialism which has been constantly providing military aid to Israel. It has given some \$300 billion in aid to Israel since the foundation of the Zionist state, of which over 2/3 has been military aid. Currently, Biden is trying to get through a \$95 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, though he is having trouble getting it through the Republican-led House. Of course, all this military “aid,” which is to prevent the further weakening of US imperialism, is also at the expense of money for social services to the benefit of working people in the US, who have seen less money for education, child care, health care, etc.

Biden is also widening the war in the Middle East. Since January of this year, the US has been continually carrying out air strikes against the Houthis in Yemen. The Houthis have been carrying out concrete support to the Palestinians by blocking or attacking ships trying to enter the Red Sea. This has led to a significant decrease in shipping to Eilat, Israel’s only port on the Red Sea†. The US has also bombed Syria and Iraq in an attempt to prevent attacks from Hezbollah on US troops; Hezbollah has also been giving concrete support to the Palestinians, and one attack killed 3 US soldiers in Jordan.

Biden had said: “If you harm an American, we will respond.” But of course, there is an easy way to prevent attacks on US troops in the Middle East: get all US troops out of the Middle East, and stop aiding Israel.



\* <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/3/8/israels-war-on-gaza-live-60000-pregnant-women-face-malnutrition-in-gaza>

† [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024\\_missile\\_strikes\\_in\\_Yemen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_missile_strikes_in_Yemen)

## Preliminary Remarks:

### The Decline of US Imperialism and the Rise of Trump's "Make America Great Again"

Almost all of the left (broadly understood) in the US today is opposed to Trump and his re-election bid (with many of these forces giving some sort of critical support to Biden and the Democratic Party). However, there is very little analysis of what are the reasons for his popularity among certain sections of the US population, especially among the working class and even among some sections of the Black and Latino working class. It is certainly true that Trump is a right-wing populist, or even a fascist, but this does not explain his popularity among these sections. After all, he did receive some 47% of the vote in 2020 (even if some people still believe that the election was "stolen").

One major factor is clearly the decline of US imperialism on the international scale. In terms of Nominal Gross Domestic Product, the US still is the largest economy, but in terms of Purchasing Power Parity, the US is already second to China<sup>3</sup>.

#### Comparing GDP: Nominal v. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) (2022)

*Figures are in trillions of \$*

| Country Name   | Nominal (current US\$) ▼ | PPP (current international \$) |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| United States  | 25.5                     | 25.5                           |
| China          | 18                       | 30.3                           |
| Japan          | 4.2                      | 5.7                            |
| Germany        | 4.1                      | 5.3                            |
| India          | 3.4                      | 11.9                           |
| United Kingdom | 3.1                      | 3.7                            |
| France         | 2.8                      | 3.8                            |

Source: CSIS China Power Project; World Bank • [Get the data](#) • [Download image](#)

Moreover, according to the World Bank, manufacturing is a much greater % of GDP in China (28% in 2023) than in the U.S. (11% in 2021)<sup>4</sup>.

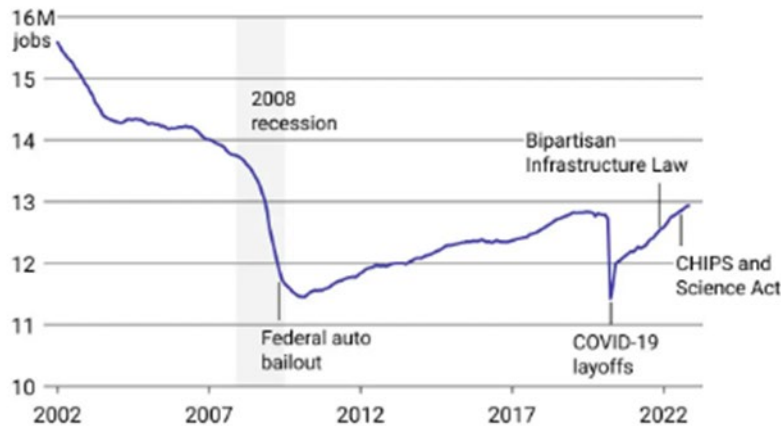
One of Trump's claims was that he wanted to bring manufacturing back to the US, which gained him a certain degree of support among industrial workers, especially in key states such as Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio and Pennsylvania. But while, in the four years that he was in office, 2017-2020, manufacturing jobs did increase slowly, this was at a rate similar to the whole period from about 2009 to 2023 (besides a sharp drop during the Covid period)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://chinapower.csis.org/tracker/china-gdp/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.IND.MANF.ZS?locations=CN>

<sup>5</sup> <https://waupacafoundry.com/blog/whats-behind-the-growing-number-of-manufacturing-jobs-in-the-us>

## US manufacturing employment



Note: Data for October and November 2022 are preliminary.  
Data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Of course, since capital is always invested where profit it highest, the majority of capital will go to the oppressed countries.

More to follow in the next issue.

## Again on the Rip-Off of Medicare by the Pharmaceutical Companies

In the October, 2023, issue of TMLU, I pointed to the outrageous price of \$438 for a 90-day supply of atorvastatin, a medicine to fight high cholesterol. Meanwhile, it turns out other medications charge a way more astronomical price. Janumet, which is used to treat type-2 diabetes, produced by charges \$2,375 for a 3-months' supply. Again, the cost at Bellevue for someone on Medicare is only \$2, which means either Medicare or Bellevue is paying Merck the other \$2,273. way, this money is coming from taxpayers, which means from working people in the U.S.

|                                                       |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bellevue Hospital<br>462 1st Ave., New York, NY 10016 | 212-562-2289               |
| Rx # 10436585                                         | Filled: 12/28/2023         |
| George Gruenthal                                      |                            |
| <b>Janumet 50-1000 MG tablet</b>                      |                            |
| NDC 0006-0577-62 MERCKSHARP                           | Day supply: 90             |
| Qty: 180 tablets                                      | Written: 12/26/2023        |
| 1 refill by 12/25/2024                                | Phone: 844-692-4692        |
| 462 1st Ave., New York, NY 10016                      |                            |
| Coverage: HHC FEE SCALE FX02 (FPL)                    | Price: \$2,375.91          |
|                                                       | Amount covered: \$2,373.91 |
|                                                       | Amount due: \$2.00         |

that  
Merck,  
that  
Either

## **Proposal for U.S. Presidential Election: Vote a Blank Ballot**



In elections in the US, as well as in all capitalist countries, as Marx pointed out: “the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them”<sup>6</sup>.

In earlier years, in some states, it was easier for third-party (that is, neither Democrat nor Republican) candidates that considered themselves “progressive” or even “socialist” to get on the ballot. However, this has been made more difficult. For example, in 2019, a commission under Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo raised the number of votes needed for a party to be guaranteed a line on the state ballot from 50,000 to about 130,000. If a party tried to get on the ballot for president by collecting signatures, the number needed was tripled, from 15,000 to 45,000.

If there is no “progressive” third party candidate in a state in this election, which is likely to be between war-maker Biden and pro-fascist Trump, one way to show one’s opposition to this “choice” is to submit a ballot with no choice for president. This is possible in New York, where the ballot scanners will note that no presidential candidate has been chosen and ask whether the voter wants to submit the ballot as is.

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<sup>6</sup> Paraphrased by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*.

This makes more sense than simply not voting. If, for example, 2% of voters cast a blank vote for president, this will most likely be noted by the bourgeois media as a protest against the existing candidates, while if an additional 2% simply do not vote, this will simply be considered as voter apathy. This has already happened in certain state Democratic primaries. For example, in Washington state, 9.5% voted Uncommitted, as did 6.0% in Alabama, and 18.9% in Minnesota. New York state is holding primary elections on April 2, with early voting in the end of March.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, no election, even of a real Marxist-Leninist, will lead to socialism. Only a working-class revolution, led by a genuine communist party, can do that. However, elections can be a first step in breaking the workers away from the two main parties of capital, the Demagogues and the Repugnant Men (Democrats and Republicans), and leading them in the direction of class independence.



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2024/mar/12/presidential-primary-elections-results-live>

<https://www.rfi.fr/fr/am%C3%A9riques/20240225-le-riz-am%C3%A9ricain-tr%C3%A8s-contamin%C3%A9-en-ha%C3%A0fti-est-pollu%C3%A9-aux-m%C3%A9taux-lourds>

## U.S. rice, widely consumed in Haiti, is polluted with heavy metals, study finds

Most of the rice Haitians eat is polluted. That's the conclusion of a study conducted by the University of Michigan, released last week. The rice is imported from the United States. It is a staple food for Haitians. These U.S. researchers are sounding the alarm.

Published February 25, 2024



A rice and grain seller in Port-au-Prince on February 19, 2019. © IVAN ALVARADO / REUTERS

By: [RFI Follows](#)

In 2020, a Haitian ate an average of 85 kg of rice compared to 12 kg for an American. Consumption began to explode in the mid-1980s under the influence of Washington, which found a good way to sell its production. Currently, nearly 90% of the rice consumed in Haiti comes from the United States, in particular, because it is cheap in a country where 40% of the population does not have enough to eat.

However, this rice is contaminated with heavy metals, this [study from the University of Michigan](#) reveals. Traces of cadmium and arsenic, heavy metals, have been detected at levels sometimes higher than the permitted standards. Not only is the U.S. rice polluted, but it is twice as polluted as that produced in Haiti, twice as polluted. Almost all imported rice samples exceeded the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's recommendations for child consumption.

### Increased risk of cancers

*"The flood of U.S. rice into Haiti is not only economically violent for Haitian peasants who are struggling to sell their local product, but it is also violent for the long-term health of Haitian consumers," the study said.*

## Short articles:

### **Congestion Pricing to be Implemented this June**

After a long announcement period, “congestion pricing” will begin in June. Under this new rule, most motorists will be charged \$15 to drive into Manhattan below 60th St. during the day (less at night).

Thus is supposed to be a way to reduce congestion, and pollution, in downtown Manhattan, with the money going to improved mass transit. However, in reality it is just another tax on working people from outside New York City, neighboring states and the outer boroughs. If the intention was to reduce congestion, the MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) could improve transportation to attract more passengers. This could be done relatively cheaply by adding new bus lines, taking people from the “transit deserts” to the existing subway stations. Right now, almost all the subway lines are meant to take people to work in the midtown and downtown business districts.

Although the public was invited to comment on “congestion pricing” earlier, the only public forums for open discussion were in late February and early March, when almost everything, including the amount of the toll, has already been decided. Someone once commented on what bourgeois “democracy” is: “We have the right to *say* what we want, but they have the right to *do* what they want.”

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### **The Majority of People in New York City are Living at or Near the Poverty Line**

According to a report from Columbia University’s Center on Poverty and Social Policy, published in amNY on February 26 of this year The poverty line, established at \$44,000 for a family of four, is meant to be the amount to afford the “minimal basic needs.” But the liberal institutions recognize that double that amount would be a more accurate figure of what would be needed to live decently.

According to the study, poverty in New York City is almost twice the rate for the US as a whole. Furthermore, the child poverty rate has risen from 15% to 25%. This is in the richest city of the richest country in the world, showing the contradictions under capitalism.



*People in Queens waiting for free meals served by a local non-profit organization.*

**Part 1**

## **Women's Emancipation and Socialism**



Just as the triumph of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the practical confirmation of the validity of Marxism, we can also say that it showed that the emancipation of women is only possible with socialism.

When the Bolsheviks overthrew the power of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, the situation of women in Russia was similar or even worse than in other countries. They were relegated to a secondary plane in all areas of life, subjected to a system of discrimination and oppression. From its earliest days, the nascent government of the workers and peasants brought about profound changes in the economic, political and social life of the country, as well as in the family and domestic spheres, and measures were taken to this end.

Various decrees were passed in this regard, but the legal and emblematic instrument that reflected the Marxist conception of how to overcome the situation in which women found themselves was found in the Soviet Family Code (1918). In it, for the first time in history, the women of a country had a body of laws designed to ensure their complete equality with their fathers and husbands, their offspring born out of wedlock would no longer suffer from poverty and the stigma of illegitimacy, the equality of women and protection of children were its two main characteristics. Marriage and divorce were recognized as a consensual element between husband and wife, the marriage could end when one or both spouses no longer wished it to continue. The wife was no longer obliged to assume her husband's nationality and had the right to keep her own surname. This Code questioned the patriarchal character of family law in capitalist countries; after its adoption, several Western countries gradually introduced elements of gender equality into the law of domestic relations. The Soviet Constitution of 1936 proclaimed gender

equality and, years later, other countries began to include gender equality in their legislation, establishing that women would be guaranteed "equal rights with men in all aspects of economic, governmental, cultural, and socio-political life." The Soviet Union was the first country in the world to recognize the right to abortion.

Soviet labor law gave women rights that in other countries were granted to them only much later. If circumstances dictated the reduction of staff, single mothers with children under one year of age would have preference to keep their jobs and women in general could not be fired more easily than men; paid maternity leave was established with a guarantee of return to previous employment after childbirth; benefits were paid to manual workers eight weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth, and to non-manual workers six weeks before and six weeks after childbirth; the State provided care for infants close to the mothers' places of residence or work; pregnant women were not transferred or sent on work trips without their consent; Overtime was forbidden for manual workers from the fifth month of pregnancy and while breastfeeding. In labor relations, the Soviet Constitution said, women are guaranteed equal rights to employment, equal pay, equal vacation rights, equal social insurance benefits; they were also guaranteed equal educational opportunities; Single mothers, as well as mothers with many children, benefited from state subsidies.

The Soviet Union promoted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which required governments to observe equality in many of the forms required by the Russian Family Code of 1918. This proposal established women's equality in public life as a human rights issue. It was only in 1979 that a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was adopted, it entered into force in September 1981 and was prepared and discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women, established in 1946 by the UN Economic and Social Council.

The process of recognition and implementation of equal rights between men and women took place at the same time as the great transformations in the organization of production were taking place: the liquidation of the property of the big landowners, the handing over of land to the peasants, the control of production and the political management of society by the soviets. the nationalization of large industries. That was the material basis on which the process of women's emancipation was sustained.

Lenin, in his speech to the First All-Russian Congress of Women Workers (November 1918), said that "the law is not the most important thing", but the transformation of the real living conditions of the working class and the people, and that was what the Soviet power did from the moment it was established, through the flourishing period of socialism led by the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in the time of J. Stalin.

In the same speech, Lenin described women workers as the "female section of the proletarian army," thereby placing men and women on an equal footing in the struggle to put an end to capitalism and in the struggle for the construction of socialism, and he warned that "there can be no socialist revolution if the vast majority of working women do not participate to a large extent in it." "In all civilized countries," says Lenin, "even in the most advanced ones, women are in reality only domestic slaves. In no capitalist state, not even in the freest of republics, do women enjoy full equality of rights. One of the first tasks of the Soviet Republic is to abolish all restrictions on women's rights."

Near the end of his speech, Lenin expressed words that resonate as a political orientation that is fully valid today: "The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of the revolution depends on the degree to which women participate in it. The Soviet government is doing everything in its power to enable women to develop independent proletarian socialist activity."

Part II

## Women's Emancipation and Socialism



In the previous edition of *En Marcha*, we highlighted a series of changes in the legal order that took place since the first days of the triumph of the Russian Revolution of 1917, which granted and guaranteed rights that women did not have before, even ones that were non-existent in other countries in the world. As a complement, we now publish excerpts from a book published by Aleksandra Kollontai<sup>1</sup> which contains fourteen lectures given at the University of Sverdlov in the spring of 1921. According to the author, the purpose of these lectures was to provide "*a basic idea of the Marxist point of view on the question of women... and to demonstrate the revolution in the living conditions of women in the Workers' Republic.*" We have taken aspects related to the topic of motherhood.

*"Everyone who thinks logically must admit that life has changed a lot, day after day. Over the past four years, for example, in our Workers' Republic we have completely ended the cause of women's disenfranchisement that had lasted for centuries. Our Soviet Government mobilizes women for production and routine life, which is shaped on entirely new principles. Norms of collective behavior, traditions, concepts, and ideas are being born everywhere that are now oriented toward the future communist society.*

*"...Since Russian citizens, regardless of their sex, should provide their productive labor, women's liberation has made rapid progress. However, this process mainly involves the industrial proletariat in the cities, while among the population of the countryside it has passed unnoticed.*

*"...If we want to make it possible for women to collaborate in production, the collectivity must free them from the whole burden of motherhood, because otherwise society exploits the natural role of women. Work and motherhood can be combined with each other when the education of children is no longer a private task of the family, but a social mission of the workers' state. Our Soviet Government has taken upon itself the guidance and education of newborns and children... The mother should be freed primarily from all the burdens of motherhood and should fully*

*enjoy being with her child. In fact, we have not fully achieved that goal. In the construction of these new forms of proletarian life that must liberate women professionally from their active family obligations, we encounter, again and again, the same obstacle: economic hardship. However, we have already carried out very important preliminary work and have developed the correct methods for solving the problem of motherhood. Now we have to decide to continue on the path we have embarked on.*

*"...In our workers' republic we are not satisfied with ensuring motherhood, financially and materially, but we intend to change the conditions of existence and the ways of life of women in such a way that they bring their children into the world in the most favourable conditions and that, in addition, the children receive all the care and attention necessary to guarantee their health and development. That is why our workers' and peasants' state has been trying, since the revolution, to establish a dense network of social institutions for women and newborns throughout the country.*

*"...Of course, in our workers' republic, no one violently snatches children from their mothers, as bourgeois propaganda so complacently asserts when it describes the horror of the "Soviet Government" in furious colours. But we strive to create state institutions that offer all mothers, not just the well-to-do, the possibility for their children to grow up in a normal and healthy environment. While bourgeois women are relinquishing the care of their children to wage-labourers, the aim of the Soviet Government is that all women workers and peasants should be able to go to work in peace, because they know that their child is well cared for in the nursery, the kindergarten or in day-care. These social institutions, which are open to all under the age of sixteen, are the necessary premises for the creation of a new human being. In these places, the children find themselves, day after day, under the technical supervision of pedagogues and doctors and, of course, also under the control of their own mothers, who also have to cooperate normally. Already in early childhood, these children are so influenced by the environment of nurseries and kindergartens that they develop there those properties which are precisely the ones necessary for the development of communism. The children who grow up in these institutions of our workers' republic will be able to live much better in a working community than those who have grown up in the closed sphere of the small selfish family.*

*"...It is the task of the Soviet Republic to see to it that women's labour power is not wasted because of unproductive housework or childcare, but that they take a reasonable part in the production of new social wealth. In addition, society must protect the interests and health of women and young children, because only then will women be able to combine professional life with motherhood. That is why our Soviet Government is striving to create living conditions for women so that a woman with a difficult husband will no longer have to live with him simply because she does not know where to go with her children. We do not want to entrust philanthropists to come to the aid of these women – with their humiliating beneficence – when they are in need. No, the class comrades themselves in the construction of socialism, the workers and peasants, are striving to relieve women from the burden of motherhood. The women who do hard work together with their husbands in the reconstruction of our economy therefore demand, with perfect right in our workers' republic, that the whole community should take responsibility when the time comes when women bring a new member to society."*

<sup>[1]</sup> Aleksandra Kollontai was appointed People's Commissar for Public Assistance when the Russian Revolution triumphed, making her the first woman in the world to hold the rank of Minister of State; the last years of her life were dedicated to the diplomatic work of the former USSR. In March 1942 (on the occasion of her seventieth birthday), the Soviet government awarded her the decoration of Heroine of Labor. She died in Moscow on March 9, 1952, shortly before his eightieth birthday.

**Parte I**

## **La emancipación de la mujer y el socialismo**



Así como el triunfo de la Revolución Rusa de 1917 fue la confirmación práctica de la validez del marxismo, también podemos decir que esta mostró que la emancipación de la mujer solo es posible con el socialismo.

Cuando los bolcheviques derribaron el poder de la burguesía y los terratenientes, la situación de la mujer en Rusia era similar o aún peor de la existente en otros países, se encontraba relegada a un plano secundario en todos los ámbitos de la vida, sometida a un régimen de discriminación y opresión. Desde sus primeros días, el naciente gobierno de los obreros y campesinos provocó profundos cambios en la vida económica, política y social del país, el propósito de alcanzar la igualdad social necesariamente pasaba también por superar las desigualdades entre hombre y mujer, tanto en la organización de la economía, en la participación en los aparatos políticos del Estado, así como en el ámbito familiar y doméstico, y se adoptaron medidas para ello.

Distintos decretos fueron aprobados en este sentido, pero el instrumento legal y emblemático que recogía la concepción marxista sobre cómo superar la situación en la que se hallaba la mujer, se encontraba en el Código Soviético de la Familia (1918). En él, por primera vez en la historia, las mujeres de un país tenían un cuerpo de leyes destinadas a asegurar su completa igualdad ante el padre y el marido, su descendencia nacida fuera del matrimonio dejaría de sufrir la pobreza y el estigma de la ilegitimidad, la igualdad de las mujeres y la protección a la infancia, fueron sus dos principales características. Se reconoció el matrimonio y el divorcio como un elemento consensuado entre marido y mujer, el matrimonio podía terminar cuando uno o ambos cónyuges ya no deseaba que este continúe; la esposa ya no estaba obligada a asumir la nacionalidad de su esposo y tenía el derecho a mantener su propio apellido. Este Código cuestionó el carácter patriarcal del derecho de familia de los países capitalista, luego de su aprobación, varios países occidentales introdujeron, gradualmente, elementos de igualdad de género en el derecho de las relaciones domésticas. La Constitución soviética de 1936, proclamó la igualdad de género y, así mismo, años después, otros países comenzaron a incluir la igualdad de sexos en su legislación, establecía que a las mujeres se les garantizaría «derechos iguales a los hombres en todos los aspectos de la vida económica,

gubernamental, cultural, y sociopolítica». La Unión Soviética fue el primer país en el mundo en reconocer el derecho al aborto.

La legislación laboral soviética otorgó a las mujeres derechos que en otros países les fueron concedidos solo mucho después. Si las circunstancias obligaban, la reducción de personal, las madres solteras con niños menores de un año de edad, tendrían preferencia de mantener el puesto de trabajo y, las mujeres en general, no serían despedidas con mayor facilidad que los hombres; se estableció la pausa de maternidad pagada con garantía de retorno al empleo anterior tras el alumbramiento; se pagaban beneficios a las trabajadoras manuales ocho semanas antes y ocho semanas después del parto, y las trabajadoras no-manuales seis semanas antes y seis semanas después del parto; el Estado proveía cuidados a los infantes cerca de los sitios de residencia o de trabajo de las madres; las mujeres embarazadas no eran transferidas o enviadas en viaje de trabajo sin su consentimiento; el sobretiempo estaba prohibido para trabajadoras manuales a partir del quinto mes de gestación y mientras amamanten. En las relaciones laborales, decía la Constitución soviética, a las mujeres se les garantiza derecho igual al de los hombres al empleo, paga igual, iguales derechos vacacionales, iguales beneficios de seguro social; también se les garantizó las mismas oportunidades educativas; las madres solteras, así como las madres con muchos hijos se beneficiaban de subvenciones estatales.

La Unión Soviética promovió la Convención para la Eliminación de Todas las Formas de Discriminación contra la Mujer, que requería de los gobiernos observar la igualdad en muchas de las formas exigidas por el Código de la Familia ruso de 1918. En esta propuesta se establecía la igualdad de la mujer en la vida pública como una cuestión de derechos humanos. Sólo en 1979 fue aprobada una Convención sobre la Eliminación de Todas las Formas de Discriminación, que entró en vigor en septiembre de 1981 y preparada y discutida por la Comisión de la Condición Jurídica y Social de la Mujer, creada en 1946 por el Consejo Económico y Social de la ONU.

El proceso de reconocimiento y ejecución de la igualdad de derechos entre hombres y mujeres se produjo al mismo tiempo que se realizaban las grandes transformaciones en la organización de la producción: la liquidación de la propiedad de los grandes terratenientes, la entrega de tierra a los campesinos, el control de la producción y del manejo político de la sociedad desde los soviets, la nacionalización de las grandes industrias. Esa era la base material en la que se sostenía el proceso de emancipación de la mujer.

Lenin, en su discurso ante el Primer Congreso de Obreras de Toda Rusia (noviembre de 1918), decía que «la ley no es lo más importante», sino la transformación de las condiciones reales de vida de la clase obrera y el pueblo, y eso era lo que hacía el poder soviético desde que se instauró, hasta el período floreciente del socialismo dirigido por el Partido Comunista (bolchevique) en la época de J. Stalin.

En ese mismo discurso, Lenin califica a las obreras como el «sector femenino del ejército proletario», con lo que pone en igualdad de responsabilidades a hombres y mujeres en la lucha por poner fin al capitalismo y en la lucha por la construcción del socialismo, y advierte que «no puede haber revolución socialista si la inmensa mayoría de las mujeres trabajadoras no participan en gran medida en ella». «En todos los países civilizados —dice Lenin—, incluso en los más avanzados, las mujeres no son en realidad más que esclavas domésticas. En ningún Estado capitalista, ni siquiera en la más libre de las repúblicas, la mujer goza de plena igualdad de derechos. Una de las primeras tareas de la República Soviética es liquidar todas las restricciones de los derechos de la mujer.»

Cerca de finalizar el discurso, Lenin expresa unas palabras que resuenan como una orientación política de plena vigencia en la actualidad: «La experiencia de todos los movimientos de liberación ha demostrado que el éxito de la revolución depende del grado en que participen en ella las mujeres. El poder soviético hace todo cuanto puede para que la mujer desarrolle una actividad socialista proletaria independiente.»

Parte II

## La emancipación de la mujer y el socialismo



En la edición anterior de En Marcha destacamos una serie de cambios que, en el orden jurídico, se produjeron desde los primeros días del triunfo de la Revolución Rusa de 1917, que otorgaron y garantizaron derechos que la mujer no los tenía antes, inclusive eran inexistentes en otros países en el mundo. A manera de complemento, ahora publicamos extractos de un libro publicado por Aleksandra Kollontai<sup>[1]</sup>, que contiene catorce conferencias dictadas en la Universidad de Sverdlov en la primavera de 1921. Según la misma autora, el propósito de esas conferencias era proporcionar «una idea básica del punto de vista marxista sobre el problema de la mujer... y demostrar la revolución en las condiciones de vida de la mujer en la República de los Trabajadores.» Hemos tomado aspectos relacionados con el tema de la maternidad.

«Toda persona que piense con lógica, debe admitir que la vida ha cambiado mucho, día tras día. Durante los últimos cuatro años, por ejemplo, hemos acabado completamente en nuestra República de trabajadores con la causa de la falta de derechos de la mujer que duraba durante siglos. Nuestro Gobierno soviético moviliza a las mujeres para la producción y la vida rutinaria para lo cual se configura según principios totalmente nuevos. Nacen por todas partes normas de comportamiento colectivo, tradiciones, conceptos, ideas que hoy se orientan hacia la futura sociedad comunista.

[...] Desde que los ciudadanos rusos, sin consideración a su sexo, deben prestar su trabajo productivo, la liberación de la mujer ha realizado rápidos progresos. Sin embargo, este proceso abarca principalmente al proletariado industrial de las ciudades, mientras que, entre la población del campo, ha pasado sin que apenas se le note...

[...] Si queremos hacer posible a las mujeres que colaboren en la producción, la colectividad debe liberarlas de toda la carga de la maternidad, porque, de otra manera, la sociedad explota la función natural de las mujeres. El trabajo y la maternidad se pueden combinar entre sí cuando la educación de los niños no sea ya una tarea privada de la familia, sino una misión social del Estado de trabajadores. Nuestro Gobierno soviético se ha atribuido la orientación y educación de los recién nacidos y de los niños... La madre debe ser liberada principalmente de todas las cargas de la maternidad y debe disfrutar totalmente al estar junto a su hijo. De hecho, no hemos conseguido

*totalmente ese objetivo. En la construcción de estas nuevas formas de vida proletaria que deben liberar a las mujeres profesionalmente de obligaciones activas de sus obligaciones familiares, nos encontramos, una y otra vez, con el mismo obstáculo: la penuria económica. Sin embargo, hemos realizado ya los trabajos preliminares muy importantes y hemos desarrollado los métodos correctos para la solución del problema de la maternidad. Ahora tenemos que decidarnos a continuar por el camino emprendido.*

*[...] en nuestra República de trabajadores no nos damos por satisfechos con asegurar, financiera y materialmente la maternidad, sino que pretendemos cambiar de tal manera las condiciones de existencia y las formas de vida de las mujeres que éstas traigan al mundo a sus hijos en las condiciones más favorables y que, además, los niños reciban todos los cuidados y atenciones necesarios para garantizar su salud y desarrollo. Por eso, nuestro Estado de obreros y campesinos intenta, desde la revolución, establecer una tupida red de instituciones sociales para la mujer y los recién nacidos en todo el país.*

*[...] Como es natural, en nuestra República de trabajadores nadie arrebatara violentamente los hijos a las madres, como lo afirma muy complacidamente la propaganda burguesa, cuando describe con rabiosos colores el horror del «Gobierno soviético». Pero nos esforzamos por crear instituciones estatales que ofrezcan a todas las madres, no solo a las pudientes, la posibilidad de que sus hijos crezcan en un ambiente normal y saludable. Mientras las mujeres burguesas abandonan la asistencia a sus hijos a auxiliares asalariados, el objetivo del Gobierno soviético es que todas las obreras y campesinas puedan acudir a su trabajo con tranquilidad, porque saben que su hijo se halla bien atendido en la sala de lactantes, en el jardín de la infancia o en el hogar del día. Estas instituciones sociales, que están abiertas a todos los menores de dieciséis años, son las premisas necesarias para la creación de un nuevo ser humano. En esos sitios se encuentran los niños, día tras día, bajo la vigilancia técnica de pedagogos y médicos y, claro está, también bajo el control de su misma madre, pues éstas también deben colaborar normalmente. Ya en la primera infancia, quedan tan influenciados estos niños por el ambiente de los hogares de lactantes y de los jardines de la infancia, que se desarrollan en ellos aquellas propiedades que son precisamente las necesarias para el desenvolvimiento del comunismo. Los niños que van creciendo en esas instituciones de nuestra República de trabajadores, podrán vivir después mucho mejor en una colectividad laboral que los que se han criado en la esfera cerrada de la pequeña familia egoísta.*

*[...] Es tarea de la República soviética, cuidar de que la fuerza de trabajo de la mujer no se desaproveche a causa de las tareas domésticas improductivas o de la atención a los hijos, sino que intervenga razonablemente en la producción de nuevas riquezas sociales. Además, la sociedad debe proteger los intereses y la salud de la mujer y de los niños pequeños porque solo así podrá compaginar la mujer la vida profesional con la maternidad. Por eso se esfuerza nuestro Gobierno soviético en crear condiciones de vida para las mujeres tales que una mujer con un marido difícil no tenga que seguir viviendo con él, sencillamente porque no sabe dónde meterse con sus hijos. No queremos confiar a los filántropos que vayan en ayuda de esas mujeres -con su humillante beneficencia- cuando se hallen en necesidad. No, los propios compañeros de clase en la construcción del socialismo, los obreros y los campesinos, se esfuerzan por aliviar a la mujer la carga de la maternidad. Las mujeres que realizan duros trabajos junto a su marido en la reconstrucción de nuestra economía, exigen por eso, con perfecto derecho de nuestra República de trabajadores, que toda la colectividad se haga cargo de la responsabilidad cuando llega el momento en que las mujeres ofrecen un nuevo miembro a la sociedad.»*

<sup>[1]</sup> Aleksandra Kollontai fue nombrada Comisaria del Pueblo para la Asistencia Pública cuando triunfó la Revolución Rusa, lo que le da la condición de haber sido la primera mujer en el mundo con el rango de ministra de Estado; los últimos años de su vida estuvo dedicada a la labor diplomática de la ex URSS. En marzo de 1942 (con ocasión de sus setenta años), el gobierno soviético le concedió la condecoración de Heroína del Trabajo. Murió en Moscú el 9 de marzo de 1952, poco antes de cumplir los ochenta años.