

FEMINISM AS AN ALIENATED REFLECTION OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION



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The entire history of the revolutionary workers' movement is punctuated by countless women fighters, most of them anonymous; from Flora Tristan and the Union Ouvrière, to Marx's daughters, Eleanor, Jenny and Laura; to Louise Michel and the 'Pétroleuses' of the Paris Commune, Lucy Parsons, anarcho-communist with the I.W.W. and one of the first anti-intersectionalists, Rosa Luxemburg and the Berlin Commune, Alexandra Kollontai in the Bolshevik Party, Sylvia Pankhurst of the English Communist Left (Workers' Deadnought), Mika Etchebéhère of the POUM and the many unknown ones of the Spanish Civil War... But all of them fought above all in the name of **social revolution** and human emancipation. It is, then, a factual critique of the feminist and segregationist ideology that seeks to dilute and destroy the only force that the proletariat has as an exploited and revolutionary class: **its political and organizational union**. The concept of "feminism" first appeared in an ironic pamphlet by Alexandre Dumas junior, but it was not until the 1960s and the creation of the M.L.F. (Mouvement de Libération des Femmes) that a specific, cross-class and predominantly "bourgeois and petty-bourgeois" movement developed.

This movement, of all kinds, was fueled by the accelerated decomposition of post-May '68 "leftism" (Maoism, Trotskyism, anarchism, autonomism, etc.), which for many was an ideological escape route to post-modern normalization or to new, more spectacular adventures. It was this same period of **defeat** that led to the opportunistic appearance in the ideological field of feminism in all its forms, but always in the name of equality and freedom. Feminism is thus inseparable from the democratic struggle for equal rights, which also corroborates its bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nature. Although there are no precise statistics on the social composition of the feminist movements, it is interesting to note that, as far as the frequentation of family planning and the professions of the main spokespersons of the feminist movements are concerned, it is the upper classes with a high level of cultural capital that are most strongly represented.

"As early as 1971, MFL activists, aware of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois social

*composition of the movement and convinced that the priority objective was to win women of modest origin to their cause, created neighborhood groups for this purpose. In these groups, the exchange of personal experiences was to be combined with the desire to understand the specific problems of other, more disadvantaged women."*¹

But these attempts failed, and even today, "wokism" (the anti-discrimination movement) is found mainly in university faculties rather than in factories or vocational training. Of course, these movements are many and varied. However, they are a convincing case of a new bourgeois political and cultural hegemony, as Gramsci would have defined it. "*Gramsci's conception of hegemony also refers to his philosophical interpretation of Marxism as a subjective theory of reality. (...) Hegemony is thus born in the framework of a social-historical evolution that proceeds from the bottom up.*" Christian Riechers.²

It is in this framework and following Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*) that the whole novo-language characteristic of the different waves of modern feminism will be defined or redefined: "male domination", "patriarchy", "femicide", "LGBTQIF", "sorority", "feminist-nationalist", "sexism", "intersectionality", "queer", "wokism", "gender".... Not to mention the buffoonery of inclusive writing! As we have seen, this discriminatory and "politically correct" language is built around the formal and democratic claim of "equal rights", which only serves to camouflage real and structural inequalities. Marx had already extensively criticized this citizen ideology of human rights and its bourgeois essence, especially in his 1843 work "On the Jewish Question".

Obviously, this criticism also applies to the emblematic claim of the "right to abortion". Like all bourgeois rights, it is nothing more than the **temporary** crystallization of a relation of forces in the very logic of the value system that is valorized. The current fashionable cry of "I have rights" assumes that these rights are not only legally defined, but also "just" and acquired once and for all in the logic of reformist gradualism. There would be no turning back. The rule of law is the absolute guarantor of these rights, and any transgression would only be the work of hidden and reactionary forces. But this is not so, and in the chaotic development of capitalist civilization, many rights, like the contradictory interests they reflect, can change, evolve and/or devolve. Moreover, in this society based on the exchange of equivalents, it is worth remembering that there are no rights without duties; these are the two constitutional faces of the juridical reality of capitalism.

When the "right to abortion" is granted, always subject to conditions, it is because at a certain moment of capitalist development, it corresponds to and is compatible with the immanent laws of capitalist development. This reality is not acquired once and for all, nor is it permanent. Therefore, the law can change if the relations of force (and, therefore, also ideology as a material force) of which it is an expression, even if displaced or distorted, have also changed. This is what is happening today, even in some of the most reactionary states in the USA. This does not at all imply that abortion and the law regulating it have become

¹Marie-Christine Grandjon: Radical feminism in France: https://www.persee.fr/doc/raipr_0033-90751975num3411732

²C. Riechers: Gramsci and Italian Marxism in the Face of Contemporary Ideologies, p.227, Éditions Ni patrie ni frontières, 2021. This interesting work offers a consistent critique of Stalinist appropriations of Gramsci's thought and his "philosophy of praxis."

opposed to capitalist logic, quite the contrary, in other circumstances -demographic, economic, religious, etc.- this right allows working women, for example, to remain productive in the factory, without wasting time with childbirth and its medical and social difficulties. Finally, the "right to abortion" does not totally eliminate clandestine abortions for those who are outside the regulations or cannot benefit from this right and its relative medical guarantees.

*"According to a study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the percentage of clandestine abortions in the world increased from 44% to 49% between 1995 and 2008. (...) Clandestine abortions in France remained high for 20 years after the legalization of abortion, until the 1990s, when their number decreased significantly."*³

"Admitting for a moment that "fueros", parliaments, "liberal" laws and other "bataclanes", which in the very modern phase of history already seem empty words not only to the astute Marxist but to the most naive observer, "We will dialectically allow other forces and other parties to fight for them, and we will ceaselessly denounce these objectives and those who make themselves their champions". A. Bordiga: Invariance N° 9, Décembre 1970, p. 17-118.

Subsequently, the "feminist struggle" has tended to acquire specificities and to tend towards uniqueness, sliding towards inter-sectionalism and the infinite multiplication of the victimology of multiple and diverse oppressions (Latina, black, disabled, colonized, fat and every imaginable heterogeneous minority...)⁴ Thus, feminism is intrinsically based on the oppression of women of all classes, and has been so for centuries, regardless of the different modes of production and the different types of society. It thus traces a transhistorical constant in which women are the main, if not the only, subject.

The democratic argument is added, since this self-defined biological category would be a majority in the human population and would therefore have its own majoritarian trajectory, its own project independently of and beyond classes and their struggles. Working women and bourgeois women would no longer be antagonistic or opposed, but as "women" they would be encompassed under another common essence: "sorority" (as a specific bond of solidarity). This category would take precedence over and supplant the proletarian class, a constitutive element of revolutionary Marxism. Feminism is, therefore, a revisionism, a bourgeois and anti-Marxist ideological construction. Nevertheless, some feminist tendencies have tried to mix "gender", "race" and "class", but each time it is a question of altering the totalizing (not to say totalitarian) notion of the working class that they pretend to achieve. This⁵ bastardization allows us to eliminate its anatomical and objective determinations. The human species, in its activity of transformation of nature and therefore of itself, develops its universal, natural and collective essence universal, natural and collective essence that Marx calls the "Gemeinwesen".

³On the web site: <https://avortement.ooreka.fr/comprendre/avortement-clandestin>. We do not wish to enter into the controversy here about whether abortion is progressive or barbaric, which for us is always a failure (psychological, contraceptive, relational, economic, social, etc.). On this issue, we refer you to the interesting brochure published by Négation in 1974: "Abortion and Scarcity" on the website: <http://archivesautonomies.org/IMG/pdf/gauchecomuniste/gauchescommunistes-ap1952/negation/avortement-et-penurie.pdf>

⁴On this important question, we refer the reader to our text: "Communauté humaine V.S. identité individuelle." Our journal Matériaux Critiques N°6 as well as on our website : <https://materiauxcritiques.wixsite.com/monsites/textes>

⁵For a more precise definition of these terms we refer the reader to our text: "Prolétariat V.S. Peuple" in our journal Matériaux Critiques N°1 of October 2020 and on our website: <https://materiauxcritiques.wixsite.com/monsites/textes>

"Since the human being is the true Gemeinwesen of men, they create and produce their being through their activity, the human Gemeinwesen, the social being which is not an abstract power in relation to the particular individual, but the being of each individual, his own activity, his own life, his own enjoyment and his own wealth." Marx.⁶

The alienated and erroneous interpretation of feminism is rooted in the misunderstanding of the capacity of capitalism, especially in its specifically capitalist phase, to subsume and phagocytize (absorb and destroy) the whole of society by appropriating the remains of the old social organizations and structures and making them correspond at all levels (production, distribution, ideologies) to its own purpose: the production of value through abstract labor.⁷ In certain cases, this is the case with the use of the slave-owning social relation as a complement to the bourgeois family, the basis of its social organization (certain "domestic servants" are thus exploited as unwaged domestic slaves). The family is defined above all as a natural and social relation historically determined by the type of society of which it is the basic unit.

It is within the bourgeois family that social roles are structured and defined and labor is distributed. These roles and functions are socially assigned, not individually chosen. Thus, for example, in patriarchal rural industry, it was the woman who spun and the man who wove for the needs of the whole family. The family of "primitive" or pre-capitalist societies is therefore not identifiable or even comparable to that of bourgeois society. The contemporary family is a space of biological production and reproduction, where relationships of complementarity and hierarchy are forged and unraveled. The woman in the bourgeois family is thus determined by the extended class relationship of her husband and membership in her own family. It is the syndrome of the "desperate housewives", which makes the woman materially and psychologically dependent on the class relations imported and imposed by the husband or, exceptionally, by the wife, when it is the latter who earns the main **wage**. It is the class habits that determine the whole of the family's way of (over) living, to which all its members, children included, are directly and indirectly subjected.

In any case, it is the social wage relation that ultimately totally subsumes the family organization, incorporating the remnants of patriarchal, tribal, clan or other structures. Since capital must constantly revolutionize itself, it regularly revolutionizes the family (and the ideological image of the family) which constitutes its very basis. That is why capital transforms and destroys the "traditional" family, which tends to adopt other forms (single parent, broken up, reconstituted, "shared", etc.) more in line with the new organization of labor, integration, etc., the gradual transfer of domestic work to wage employment and the accelerated precarization of labor, including apprentices. Thus, today's family is not static, but is in a state of continuous change, as evidenced by the succession of social "issues" that concern it and saturate the integrated spectacle. The fact is that repressive and/or pseudo "liberated" sexual morality is the necessary complement to the immorality and turpitudes of bourgeois practices. The same is true of the hypocritical complementarity between monogamous fidelity as a legal guarantee of the right to inheritance and the institutionalized

⁶Marx: Notes on the work of J. Mill, quoted by Camatte in: Bordiga et la passion du communisme, p.28, Spartacus, 1974.

⁷On the specifically capitalist phase, we refer the interested reader to our text: "The non-decadent petriodization of the C.P.M." in our journal Matériaux Critiques N° 7 as well as on our site: <https://materiauxcritiques.wixsite.com/monsite/e/textes>

deception of prostitution and de facto polygamy for those who can afford it.⁸ In the Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels had already harshly criticized the hypocrisy of the virtuous and "eternal" bourgeois family.

"On what is the bourgeois family of our time based? On capital, on individual profit. The family, in its complete state, exists only for the bourgeoisie; but it finds its complement in the forced non-existence of any family for the proletariat, and in public prostitution. (...) The bourgeois declarations on the family and education, on the sweet ties that bind the child and his parents, become increasingly repugnant as big industry destroys all family ties and transforms children into mere articles of commerce, into mere instruments of labor. (...). In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, women are nothing but instruments of production (...) They do not suspect that it is precisely a question of assigning to women a role other than that of mere instruments of production (...) Our bourgeois, not content with having at their disposal the wives and daughters of their proletarians, not to speak of official prostitution, find a singular pleasure in going each other. Bourgeois marriage is, in reality, the community of married women." K. Marx - F. Engels.⁹

Furthermore, in "Capital", Marx underlines the tendency of capitalist development to enlarge the working class by including more women and children.

"The process of accumulation is thus immanent in the process of capitalist production: it involves the creation of new wage earners, new means of realization and increases in existing capital, either by subjugating capital to sections of the population which had hitherto escaped it, such as women and children, or by subjugating a greater number of workers as a result of the natural increase in population." K. Marx¹⁰

In his seminal work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels continued to reflect on this question and, in particular, to criticize marriage, which in most cases is always, consciously or unconsciously, a forced marriage and/or a marriage of convenience.

*"(...) marriage is based on the class situation of the contracting parties; in this sense, it is always a marriage of convenience. (...) this marriage of convenience very often turns into the most sordid prostitution, sometimes of both parties, but much more frequently of the woman; if she differs from the ordinary courtesan, it is only because she does not rent her body by parts, like a hireling, but sells it once and for all, like a slave."*¹¹

Subsequently, A. In 1891, Bebel, a leading figure in the German Social Democratic Party, wrote a seminal text entitled "Women in the Past, Present and Future," in which he continued and developed Marx's analyses of the situation of women in capitalist society.

"Women's aspirations to industrial freedom and personal independence have to a certain extent been recognized as 'founded in right' by bourgeois society, just as have been the aspirations of workers to freedom of movement. Behind this reception there was one thing: the interests of the bourgeois class. The bourgeois class needed men and women to bring large-scale production to its maximum intensity. And as mechanization develops, as the system of production becomes more divided into specialties and requires decreasingly technical education, and as competition among

⁸For a developed critique of repressive and alienated sexual morality we refer the interested reader to: Alexandra Kollontai: "Marxism & sexual revolution", Maspero, Paris, 1977 as well as to W. Reich: *L'irruption de la morale sexuelle*, Payot, Paris, 1981.

⁹K. Marx -F. Engels: *Manifeste du Parti Communiste*, p.53-55, éditions Science Marxiste, Paris, 1999.

¹⁰K. Marx: *Un Chapitre inédit du Capital* cité dans F. Engels-K. Marx: *La libération du Parti Communiste*, p.53-55, éditions Science Marxiste, Paris, 1999. Marx: *La libération de la femme*, p.49, Le Fil Rouge, 2021.

¹¹F. Engels: *L'origine de la famille, de la propriété privée et de l'État*, p.69, éditions sociales, Paris, 1962.

manufacturers and the struggle of whole branches of industry against each other - country against country, part of the world against part of the world - increases, the number of women employed by industry will grow."¹²

Thus, the fundamental key to this question lies in the very movement of capital which transforms more women into proletarians. And it is in this capacity that they are in a position both to fight against exploitation and to resolve the secular oppressions that crystallize in their situation. The reactionary nature of feminism as an alienated reflection of its own situation is expressed in the constant tendency of all feminists to ban all speech and action by "men," whatever they may say, because they are always the main enemy. And this goes so far as to label "dissident" women as men and thus silence them forever. As for "pro-feminist" men, the only option left to them is suicide by self-castration! What is more, this is a **sexist segregation**, which creates a true **social apartheid** with an opposite and impermeable development to that of other human beings. The same is true of their demand to organize themselves separately, thus reproducing, in reverse, the segregationist separatism inherent in their subjugation.

"Separation is the alpha and the omega of the spectacle (...) The spectacle is simply the common language of this separation. What unites the spectators is nothing more than an irreversible relationship with the very center that maintains their isolation. The spectacle unites the separated, but it unites them as separated." G. Debord.¹³

Far be it from us to deny or belittle the ancestral servitude of women, or any other oppression. But the crux of the matter lies in how to free ourselves from these tyrannies, in a way that is not alienating and does not reproduce others. The fundamental difference lies in the difference between exploitation determined by class relations and the oppressions derived from them. Exploitation is the foundation of C.P.M. because it is the very process that creates value through unpaid labor. The whole structure and organization of society is a function of this axis and is completely subordinated to it. It is the key to the system and, therefore, also to its negation. Thus, domestic work, for the most part free of charge and historically assigned to women, derives directly from wage labor, of which it is one of the conditions of production and reproduction.

Today, domestic work, such as that involved in "caring" for the elderly at home or in institutions, has become a new market in which new **"market services"** are increasingly reincorporated into the sphere of wage labor, thanks to the development of precarious jobs requiring a low level of qualification (from family helpers to surrogate mothers...). But it is always a question of the capitalist division of labor within and around the reproductive function of the family. Emancipation is not found within the family, but in the field of exploitation; in the very condition of the exploited, be they men, women or children. In this way, we can also consider that the family and its kinship relations are quite overvalued by current feminism in order to make them autonomous with respect to the C.P.M. and thus legitimize a transhistorical and eternal vision of feminine oppression. Maurice Godelier, founder of economic anthropology, says the following in this regard:

¹²A. Bebel : La femme dans le passé, le présent et l'avenir, p.148, ressources Paris-Genève, 1891.

¹³G. Debord : La société du spectacle, p.27 & 30, Gallimard, Paris, 1992.

*"Kinship, alliance and descent relationships create kinship groups (families, lineages, clans) and maintain them in existence, but they do not create society. It is other social relations that have the capacity to do so, those that establish and legitimize the sovereignty of a set of human groups (clans, castes, orders or classes) over a territory, its inhabitants and its resources. And yet, everywhere it is the politico-religious relations that institute and give effect to this sovereignty, never kinship relations. When kinship relations are transformed, they give rise to another kinship system, but not to a caste or class system."*¹⁴

Feminist ideology is far from being homogeneous and has always been torn by numerous contradictions and oppositions, which today tend to crumble into increasingly distinctive sectarian particularisms. This has been the case with the tense relationship between feminist claims and those of lesbians ("not women?"); between homosexuals who defend their "right" to parenthood against some other feminists who reject "G.P.A.: gestation pour autrui" ("surrogacy")... up to the current surreal dissociation between "sex and gender". Some so-called "radical" feminists criticize sexual and anatomical differentiation as being too naturalistic and universalistic, which would require a dissociation between sex, which has too objective a basis, and gender as a pure "social construct."¹⁵ Sexual oppression and repression would thus be resolved through the invention of a "hermaphroditic" concept.

The feminist struggle, initially through inverted sexism, would in fact have as its goal to neutralize sex, or even abolish it! Thanks to "Science", which has also become feminist, future humanity will be reduced to androgynous androids without any natural traits. Many other controversies divide feminists: for some, "free" prostitution and pornography are emancipatory practices that should at most be regulated, while for others prostitution remains the inevitable product of women's enslavement and sexual repression. Similarly, feminists are at loggerheads over the question of the Islamic veil, which for some "Islam-leftists" is the simple expression of freedom of thought in our countries, while for others, and in other latitudes, this religious sign is nothing more than one of the most visible expressions of the enslavement of women.

According to Tariq Ramadan, before being involved in his own turpitude and in the rape of his co-religionists, there was even an "Islamic feminism".

*"In 2003, Tariq Ramadan had encouraged, through the organization of training seminars on the feminine question in Paris, the autonomization and the emergence of a dynamic of women who are building today a discourse anchored in a renewed understanding of the link they have with their culture, their religion and their femininity. He recommended women to create strong structures inspired by Islamic sources on issues such as gender equality and others."*¹⁶

Muslim feminists are actually arsonist firemen preaching voluntary slavery and self-mutilation. In the separatist logic of feminists, the only revolutionary subject would therefore be women, or even, taking the disjunctive to its logical conclusion, only homosexual relations between women would be discouraged. This would resolve, incidentally, the contradiction/ambiguity present in feminism among heterosexual women, always suspected of compromise and betrayal. Feminism thus joins the other "demands" typical of the

¹⁴Maurice Godelier : Préface à l'édition de 2022 de K. Marx -F. Engels : Sur les sociétés précapitalistes, p.18, éditions sociales, Paris, 2022.

¹⁵Voir l'ouvrage de J. Wajnsztein : "Rapports à la nature, sexe, genre et capitalisme", Acratie, 2014.

¹⁶ On the website: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-histoire-monde-et-cultures-religieuses-2015-4-page-63.htm>

marginalized petty bourgeoisie in search of recognition and individual "liberation". Like new age "therapies", vegan ecology, personal development, colorist relaxation, etc., all these **daily** practices typical of the boobies and other "marginalized" who have the means to do so, only aim to accommodate their narcissistic survival by methods whose mysticism is combined with the self-convincement and self-hypnosis of the Coué method.

The misery of a pseudo-liberation that exists only on a narcissistic basis. At the opposite extreme of this alienated consciousness under capital is the historical response of proletarian women, most of the time anonymous, who, without denying their specific oppressions, make of them a supplementary reason to commit themselves totally to the unitary and not separate struggle of the revolutionary proletariat. The proletariat is the last exploited class of "human prehistory" and, since it has nothing to lose except its multiple chains, it is the only class capable of effectively opposing all the miasmas of class society. Feminism is thus an alienated and inverted reflection of women's oppression. In so doing, it hinders and frustrates the only revolutionary process that offers a solution for all humanity: communism.

Fb, Ms & Mm.

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