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Choi Chatterjee completed her dissertation entitled “Celebrating Women: The International Women’s Day in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910-1939” at Indiana University, Bloomington, working under the direction of Dr. Alex Rabinowitch and Dr. David Ransel. She is currently teaching in the History Department at California State University, Los Angeles. Her interests include cultural history and gender history. After completing her present book, she hopes to undertake a project analyzing the travel literature on Russia and see how gender, class, and ethnicity have shaped writers’ perceptions of the empire.

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The decade of the 1930s is a notoriously difficult period for the historian to approach with an “objective” perspective. On the one hand, the observer has to constantly grapple with the moral caveats inherent in dealing with Stalinism; on the other, Soviet culture in the 1930s was in a profound state of flux. This sociopolitical fluidity makes it difficult to trace enduring cultural myths that span the continuum of Stalinist ideology.¹ The Stalinist revolution had a decisive impact, not only on the material status of Soviet women, but on the state discourse reserved for them. During the 1930s the narrative structures and symbolic imagery used to represent Soviet women in the public sphere underwent important modifications. Perhaps the most prominent feature in the process of reimagining public female identity was the creation of Soviet heroines. Heroines were feted and lavishly promoted by the media in a language peculiarly overladen with Stalinist hyperbole. The process of heroicization, to coin a cumbersome noun, lay at the epicenter of the Stalinist discourse about women and served as a legitimizing myth in a society of uncertain social values and cultural forms.²

In this essay I will argue that the transformation of the Russian woman from a symbol of backwardness to a symbol of modernity in Soviet propaganda served as a means of justifying Stalinist policies in the 1930s. Second, I will show that, in the process of this symbolic restructuring, the Soviet discourse relating to modernity, industrialization and collectivization, and the welfare state was gendered both in spirit and tone. Third, while the propaganda associated with heroines educated the female reader into the mores and morals of becoming modern, to the male reader it offered telling clues about the nature of new Soviet gender relations. Finally, I will address the limitations inherent in the discourse of Soviet modernity.

While the symbolic revamping of the image of women carried implications of a modern society constructed on the basis of gender equality, the heroines’ overt dependence on the state and the abject gratitude that they publicly expressed toward Stalin, the father figure, reinforced premodern notions of personal and political subordination, rather than the autonomy of a modern citizen.³ Although the Soviet system advocated systematic modernization as a desirable goal, its repressive policies constituted in themselves the biggest obstacle to the evolution of a civil society, a fundamental component of modernity. Or as John Gray, a political theorist, has phrased it, “there is an inherent paradox in totalitarianism in that it deploys modern ideology in the service of an anti-modernist project.”⁴

The process of modernization and the experience of modernity are problematized terms and have a complicated genealogy. Beginning with the leaders of the Romantic Movement, other nineteenth-century intellectuals such as Marx, Nietzsche, Durkheim, and Weber were deeply ambiguous in their characterization of the successes and failures of the modern age. More recently, following the Second World

War, modernization theories enjoyed an unprecedented popularity in positing a universal experience of modernity, but this once again waned due to the poststructuralist and postmodernist critiques leveled against them in the last two decades.

If it is possible to lay aside the value judgments about modernity and identify the key ingredients of modernization, they include the transformation of societies by the industrial revolution, the primacy of secular/scientific knowledge, and the growth of a bureaucratic-welfare state that engages in rational planning.⁵ Some scholars, such as Habermas, see the evolution of civil society and its attendant public sphere as distinct from that of the state as one of the main characteristics of modernity.⁶ According to Habermas, the public sphere came into existence at the same time that the state became the locus of depersonalized authority, and it was marked by free communication and a spirit of criticism that helped the transition from absolutist monarchies to parliamentary regimes.⁷

The Soviet Union fulfilled several of the conditions of modernization while at the same time creating institutions and conditions that were unique. By the 1930s it was well on its way to becoming an industrialized nation under the disciplinary impetus of a bureaucratic-welfare state. At the same time, however, the state, far from being an impersonal locus of power, was almost medieval in the staged performance of authority, presented endlessly before an audience and embodied in the public persona of Stalin and a few other key figures, both male and female. Marxist theorists had claimed that the liberal distinction between public realm, meaning the state, and private, referring to trade, commerce, and individualism, would collapse with the dawn of socialism.⁸ In reality, in Stalinist Russia, a new public sphere was created.

This sphere was neither autonomous like the Habermasian model, nor was it marked by the critical-rational discourse of bourgeois property owners. Although this particular public sphere was an emanation of the state rather than of civil society, it was characterized by popular participation.⁹ The price of admission to this realm was the exposure to a body of hyperbolic and extravagant phrases known as propaganda that was loosely based on certain elements of Marxist ideology. Participation in meetings, demonstrations, public holidays, and the act of reading newspapers and journals, watching plays and sports events, listening to the radio, joining civil associations—all these activities entailed an engagement in the public sphere for both the representatives of the state and the citizens. In the interplay of languages and discursive practices, new identities were created. While some historians have argued that people resisted the totalitarian discourse of Stalinism, others have claimed that private individuals either learned to ‘speak Bolshevik’ or used elements from official discourse to fashion their self-identity.¹⁰ In this essay I am going to eschew the attempt to try and understand how people understood, ap-

propriated, or resisted official discourse; instead, I will read the artifacts of Soviet discourse to understand the messages being communicated to women and analyze their narrative strategies.

Feminist scholars have claimed that the public sphere of Western civil society was explicitly gendered male and that the subordination of women to men was a principle feature of both liberalism and modern civil society.¹¹ In the Soviet Union the continuing prominence of the *zhenskii vopros*, (woman question), a nineteenth-century formulation, was a distinguishing feature, especially when one contrasts it to the policies adopted toward women in the 1930s in Italy and Germany. Although the wildly exaggerated Soviet rhetoric about having solved the women question did not directly translate into improved living standards or the diminution of misogynistic attitudes, in the world of public utterances, the Soviets were loath to utter sentiments that could be construed as antiwomen. Soviet propaganda, therefore, became a means of self-censorship, much like the category of “political correctness” in the United States today.

The rhetoric about women in the Soviet Union served primarily as a means of legitimation for the regime. As I will show, Soviet identity was created against an imagined European identity, both liberal and fascist. Soviet accomplishments were repeatedly contrasted with the deficiencies, shortcomings, and limitations of the more “advanced” countries of Western Europe. In this dialogue, the New Soviet Woman served as the embodiment of Soviet belief in gender equality and state welfare policies. Although the Soviet Union did not create a truly efficient system of childcare, or communal institutions that would take over the domestic tasks that women traditionally performed, it was a goal that the Soviet Union publicly adhered to. The idea of a welfare state responsive to women’s needs as working mothers was a novel political innovation, especially compared to the Western countries which often considered welfare policies a temporary and charitable gesture toward distressed citizens or, more commonly, intended welfare measures to strengthen the patriarchal family and keep women out of the wage-labor market.¹² In the Soviet Union, the labor shortage obviated this necessity, and women were exhorted to become both model workers and mothers. Although Soviet women lacked the power to force the state to meet its self-proclaimed obligations, Soviet propaganda provided citizens a yardstick against which they could measure the various deficiencies of the system. Therefore, in an inchoate way, propaganda could serve as a means of empowerment for the masses by providing a permissible vocabulary of complaint and criticism.

Third, the model of the New Soviet Woman also served as a justification for the creative and innovative nature of the Stalinist revolution. Under Stalin, or so state propaganda claimed, the material conditions had changed so dramatically that Soviet superwomen were to be found in every corner of the nation—in collective farms,

in the military, in educational circles, in institutions of higher learning, in factories, in the sports arena, even down in the tunnels of the Moscow subway system. In the 1930s the morally ambiguous and rather complex heroine models of the preceding decade, such as Dasha Chumalova, the heroine of Gladkov's novel, *Cement*, were replaced by Stalinist heroines, identifiable models of modernity and proof of the innate superiority of Stalinism to all other social, economic, and political models.¹³

Stalinism did not fulfill the ideals of the October Revolution in that gender parity remained an abstract dream throughout the life of the Soviet Union. The boundaries between the public and the private spheres of existence were not erased, as the ideal of communal living was abandoned, and the state failed to institute the welfare utopia it promised. But Stalinism did complete one part of the Bolshevik gender project: it managed to semiotically reencode the category of "woman" in Soviet public discourse. Officially, Soviet women were never reviled as politically immature or backward; instead, they continued to embody in the abstract the virtues and achievements of the Soviet system.

Stalinist Revolution and Woman

In Soviet literature, the First Five-Year Plan did not merely industrialize a peasant nation, but also modernized a female population that hitherto was perceived as backward and uncultured.¹⁴ The gendered dimensions of industrialization were figured in the reimagining of the Soviet woman as a liberated, reconstructed persona who symbolized and simultaneously served as a yardstick for Soviet progress. Marxist theories had claimed that women's participation in the public sphere would lead to their liberation. Stalin's industrial revolution had dragged Soviet women into the public sphere, thereby completing the first step. All that remained was the further education and further acculturation of the New Soviet Woman. Education, especially technical education, *udarnichestvo* (shock work), and later *stakhanovism*, held the key to future upward mobility.

The inception of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928 created a huge labor shortage in the country. For the first time in Soviet history, women were recruited into heavy industry in significant numbers, even though factory conditions were appalling.¹⁵ Women made some modest gains in the agricultural sector, which barely compensated for the extensive dislocation and trauma caused by collectivization.¹⁶ Women were encouraged to enroll in technical schools and colleges.¹⁷ The state also started spending precious resources on the construction of day-care centers, kindergartens, and medical facilities.¹⁸ Needless to say these facilities were inadequate in number, and the quality of childcare left much to be desired.¹⁹ But the fact remains that compared to the 1920s, the new facilities represented a numerical increase. Finally, it

was in the decade of the 1930s that we witness the unprecedented upward mobility of women in the discrete fields of aviation, defense, agriculture, industry, arts, and sports.

Statistically, this cohort of Soviet heroines was not significant, but the publicity that surrounded them fostered the creation of a heroine myth that reveals certain social values and prescribed gender relations promoted by the Stalinist state.²⁰ From this pool of upwardly mobile women, a few were selected as heroines and celebrated in the media. The narrative about Soviet heroines, although it was rarely based on material reality, was an important element in Stalinist discourse, as it served as a gendered justification of the modernity of the regime and upheld the Stalinist monopoly of socialist miracles. The heroines were memorable chiefly as repositories of state-mandated values, and their testimonies fleshed out the bare bones of Stalinist historiography.

For my sources I have selected from the life histories of Soviet heroines, as written by journalists and narrated by themselves on public occasions, and from published compendiums of short biographies of women, a genre that became especially popular in the 1930s.²¹ The lives of real heroines had an eerie resemblance to the lives of fictional heroines, a testament to the ubiquitous power of the tropes of socialist realism.²² The conventions governing this highly politicized body of literature were fairly simple and included a straightforward narrative style, the transformation of consciousness through the retelling of one's life history, and the moral theme of personal redemption through identification with the goals of the Stalinist state. The protagonists were often middling level heroines, extraordinary for their times but not necessarily national celebrities like Maria Demchenko, the stakhanovka, Polina Osipenko, the aviator, or Pasha Angelina, the tractor driver. Nor were they the tried and true old female Bolshevik party activists. Rather, they were underprivileged women from poor families, who had achieved a measure of success under the Stalinist system and were in turn promoted by the state as the privileged recipients of Stalinist policies. But in structure and content the stories of the lesser heroines were similar to those of the national celebrities and this testimonial literature served a political purpose.

International Woman's Day

Women, who were for the most part subordinate in Soviet public discourse, became the center of attention around International Women's Day, the eighth of March.²³ The Stalinist period was no exception to this rule, and despite the greater prominence of female imagery in Soviet rhetoric and visual propaganda throughout the thirties, Women's Day celebrations continued to be the central showcase for So-

viet women and their miraculous feats. Central Committee propaganda journals such as the *Sputnik agitatora* published biographical sketches of Soviet heroines in order to provide local agitators with concrete examples and detailed information for their Women's Day speeches.²⁴ Regional and local party organizations were instructed "to shower special attention and honors on women heroines" on Women's Day.²⁵ In the early part of the 1930s trade unions were instructed to spotlight *udarnitsy*, (woman shock workers), women directors of factories, and women engineers as examples and single them out for bonuses, promotions, and labor awards at Women's Day celebrations.²⁶ From 1935, the media and trade union attention shifted to women *stakhanovites*.²⁷ Trade unions were ordered to arrange exhibitions of the production results of the shock-work brigades and hold rallies where exemplary women workers were féted and held up for public approbation.²⁸ Women and their achievements were glorified in song, verse, and drama. Journals and newspapers, both local and national, printed commemorative holiday issues, featuring the accomplishments of Soviet women.

In keeping with the growing *kul'turnost'* (sophistication) of the Soviet population in the 1930s, Women's Day festivities took on an élan that was strangely reminiscent of the prerevolutionary leisure pursuits of the aristocracy. All this was consonant with the state-sponsored gaiety in Stalinist Russia that took its cue from Stalin's infamous statement, "life has become better, comrades, more joyous."²⁹ During the 1930s, especially from 1935 onward, massive celebrations, carnivals, and public amusements punctuated the depredations wreaked by terror.³⁰ In 1935, the *Trekhgornaia* Factory in Moscow threw a lavish Woman's Day party at the factory theater. *Udarnitsy* arrived at the ball garbed in fancy dress costumes of parachutists, nurses, skiers, snipers, aviators, and representatives of other male-dominated professions. Members of a Red Army cavalry unit that patronized the civilian defense unit of the factory were invited to the party to escort the women on the dance floor.³¹ Lesser institutions treated women to traditional Russian feasts, dancing, and hortatory speeches reminding them of the benefits that Stalin and the Soviet state had showered on them. The Women's Day celebrations were often suffused with the apprehension of terror that ranged around but were nonetheless festive occasions.³²

In 1936 a reception was held at the Great Columned Hall in the House of the Soviets in honor of the celebrated heroines of the Fatherland. Over seven hundred notable women, most of whom had been awarded Soviet decorations, were invited to the gala. These included women directors of state enterprises, *stakhanovites*, artists, doctors, scientists, parachutists, singers, and actresses. Women graced the occasion "clad in elegant evening gowns adorned with corsages of snowdrops, violets, and mimosa. After the concert and the supper, one could hear sounds of the orchestra and the evening dance began. Confetti rained, and paper streamers and balloons wafted

through the evening air.”³³ Factories and collective farms across the nation arranged commemorative evenings for their outstanding women workers and rewarded them with cash bonuses and other gifts. Movie theaters displayed placards and slogans commemorating Women’s Day, and *udarnitsy* were allowed to buy tickets at a discount and without standing in line.³⁴

In contrast to this untrammelled gaiety, the ritualistic and political nature of the holiday was marked in the 1930s by a meeting at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow at which the upper echelons of the Communist party were well represented. Exemplary Soviet women were invited each year to speak at these meetings. Women pilots, *kolkhoz* directors transport workers, *stakhanovites* in industry, scientific personnel, and of course famous female Bolsheviks such as N. K. Krupskaya, A. Artiukhina, M. I. Ulianova, K. Nikolaeva, and E. Stasova represented the broad spectrum of women’s achievements in the Soviet Union. Women delegates were invited from abroad to participate in these meetings. Their presence was intended to mark the internationalism of Soviet ideology, and their speeches about the suffering women in capitalist countries provided a dramatic *mise en scène* for the supposedly joyous and glorious life of Soviet women.³⁵

At these ceremonial events, Soviet heroines—women who had penetrated the bastions of male primacy and excelled in positions hitherto considered unsuitable for them—were asked to address the august audience and recount their life histories.³⁶ Naturally, the heroines speak in an edited voice, and the similarity between the state discourse and the narratives of self is quite remarkable, but nonetheless these accounts reveal a depth of knowledge about the construction of a “public” female identity in Stalinist Russia. Unfortunately, they tell us next to nothing about private identities of this period.

Soviet Heroines in the Public Sphere

In public discourse, the crux of the female identity in the 1930s was formed by the heroine’s attachment to work.³⁷ The mystical attachment to norm fulfillment that many of the heroines exhibited was in part the material realization of the Marxist prophecy of unalienated labor. Free from exploitation, our heroines toiled in factories, farms, railway yards, and combat units. Apparently, they worked for the greater glory of Stalin and for the good of the country. If this dedication to one’s work was a state-approved theme, at a more subtle level we find that exemplary labor output was the means to upward social mobility and to material wealth.³⁸ In the heroines’ stories it was claimed that professional success gave women financial independence, a certain level of prestige in society, and helped in the renegotiation of power relationships within the family.³⁹

As my first example I have selected a chairwoman of a kolkhoz of the Shakhovskii district in Moscow province, Smirnova.⁴⁰ Smirnova was invited to speak at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow at a Women's Day celebration in 1936. The guest list for the function read like a Soviet Who's Who, and included Khrushchev, Bulganin, Stasova, and Ulianova to name only a few of the VIPs present. Stalin himself graced the event midway through the meeting along with Molotov, Kaganovich, and Ordzhonikidze, giving the occasion an extra cachet.⁴¹ Smirnova was no pastoral maiden sporting on the sylvan green, a character so dear to fiction writers in the 1930s, but a redoubtable matron, forty years old, palpably aware of her self worth, and quite overcome at the miraculous nature of her achievements.

In her account of her life, Smirnova stressed her incredulity that she, a farmworker, was addressing the heads of the Soviet state. As she said, this rarely happened anywhere in the world, and it was especially surprising in Russia where the village woman was a notorious symbol of oppression and martyrdom. Describing herself, Smirnova said, "Look at me, a kolkhoznitsa. . . . I have come to this hall and am speaking with the bosses, the administrators of Moscow." From her account it appeared that Smirnova was a simple peasant woman, but collectivization had opened new opportunities for her. She worked hard, proved herself, and was appointed chairwoman of a kolkhoz. As she said, "Before I was nothing and now I am a heroine of labor and I was awarded the Red Banner of Labor."⁴² In contrast to her previous insignificance, the recognition of her services by the state gave her life a measure of meaning. Smirnova's identity, therefore, was deeply intertwined with her occupation, her skills, and her power in the kolkhoz.⁴³

Creation of female identity was closely tied to the chronology of the revolution.⁴⁴ The Soviet press in the 1930s was replete with Cinderella stories of women born to poor peasant families who, in the wake of collectivization, rose to responsible positions within the kolkhozes. Even the noted film director, Sergei Eisenstein, developed this theme in his film *Staroe i novoe*⁴⁵ (Old and New). These Soviet heroines, unlike the mass of the Russian baby (women), who were violently opposed to collectivization, realized that the kolkhoz would free them from their miserable dependence on their husbands and fathers.⁴⁶ From the very inception of the campaign, they worked energetically to convince the *temnye* (uncultured) and backward women in the village to join the collectivized farms, even when most of their exhortations fell on deaf ears. Later, some of these heroines recollected how they were cursed, taunted, and treated as apostles of Antichrist by the village women. Often they became the subjects of vile rumors in their communities. Contrary to expectations, most of these collaborators were neither party nor Komsomol activists, but local women with ambition and foresight, whose alliance with the party worked to their mutual benefit.⁴⁷

This basic theme of the lone heroine pitted against a foolish and improvident village formed the master narrative for the biographies of Soviet heroines. Their stories were constructed around the temporal antiphonies of prerevolutionary oppression and postrevolutionary liberation. But more often than not, the crucial moment in women's lives was not the October Revolution, but the Stalinist revolution. Propaganda in the 1930s strove to rewrite the chronology of the Revolution, and the years of the First Five-Year Plan figured as the decisive date in the liberation of Soviet women.⁴⁸ The story of Matrena Doroshenko, a poor peasant woman from the Northern Caucasus, offers a good illustration of the Stalinist version of women's history. The October Revolution did not make any substantial change in her situation, and she continued to suffer physical abuse at the hands of her husband and his cruel family. But during collectivization, she sided with the party even though her husband's family was part of the kulak counteroffensive. She testified against her brother-in-law, Iosif Doroshenko, recounting his affiliation with the Whites in the Civil War, and denounced the kulaks who had gained control of their collective farm. Martena suffered murderous reprisals: her home was burnt down; she was physically attacked and hospitalized for a couple of weeks. But the state rewarded her for her collaboration, and she was appointed to the administrative board of the kolkhoz, Krasnyi Donbass.⁴⁹ The moral of the story was fairly obvious: devotion to the family was a waste of emotion, but devotion to state interests could bring rich dividends. Such stories served to sanitize the horrifyingly brutal record of collectivization by associating terror and violence with class enemies exclusively while reserving the modern means of persuasion—reason and legal testimony—for party activists.

Although these “exemplary” women were demarcated sharply from the rest of the *temnye baby*, this was a temporary hiatus, and the device of disjuncture was used exclusively in the period of collectivization. In the later 1930s, the reverse was true, and the notion of sisterhood formed a crucial element in female identity. Sisterhood served a variety of functions in the Soviet Union, and in the press we find repeated instances of women turning to one another for support, sustenance, friendship, and help.⁵⁰ At a time when the purges were literally tearing the country apart and atomizing Soviet society into a collection of suspicious strangers, it was important for the media to stress the theme of socialist *gemeinschaft* in order to offset the effects of terror. Soviet society was described in familial metaphors, and ties between citizens were represented as bonds of kinship.⁵¹

During the 1930s, International Women's Day stories about the heroines emphasized the fact that they were not lone pioneers, but belonged to a nucleus of caring and like-minded women. Thus, the ten young women skiers from an electric factory, who skied the 1400 kilometers from Moscow to Tiumen in 1935, referred to their close and friendly relations with each other. The skiers helped each other

on the way, especially when one of them showed signs of tiring. They also spoke eloquently about the warmth and hospitality that they received on their journey from various kolkhoz workers, railroad workers, and Red Army soldiers.⁵² In a similar manner, the women's miner brigade in the eighteenth shaft of the Moscow metro was enthusiastic about the harmony that prevailed in their labor group. Not only did the miners work together, they shared common interests in the arts and theater. On occasion they even joined forces in their quest to reform uncouth and lazy male comrades.⁵³

Women workers, at the L. M. Kaganovich ball-bearing factory in Moscow, took the kinship metaphor one step further. According to the leader of the group, their unit literally functioned as a surrogate family for one of their co-workers who had a baby boy. No one referred to Masha Krokhotkina's husband, but her female co-workers in essence adopted her baby, showered her with gifts and advice on child rearing, relieved her from the night shift, and helped take care of the infant so the mother would not be overwhelmed by the double shift.⁵⁴

Sisterhood could, in many instances, stretch across international boundaries, and although the Stalinist state had abandoned the principles of proletarian internationalism, gender ties had the ability to surmount hostile relations between nations. A gripping saga published in 1937 recounted the story of the Soviet patriot Praskov'ia Efimova and her bravery during her incarceration in prison in a foreign land. Efimova was shipwrecked along with her four-year-old son on the coast of Japan in 1936, captured as a Soviet spy, and subsequently tortured by the Japanese authorities. It was reported that some poor Japanese women, however, sympathized with her plight and kept her alive by throwing food to her surreptitiously through the prison bars.⁵⁵

If the female sense of self was created in relation to other women, at the same time it was articulated in sharp contradistinction to that of the archetypal Russian male.⁵⁶ There were two elements in this portrayal of the antagonistic relationship with men. In the first instance, men, especially family members, were invariably portrayed in the literature as a brake on women's cultural and professional development and as a reactionary presence that stultified their personal growth.⁵⁷ This marked a decisive change from earlier Bolshevik propaganda where women were often characterized as a drag on the class consciousness of proletarian men and an apolitical counter-revolutionary force.⁵⁸ In the second instance, heroines like Smirnova apparently displayed great satisfaction at the reversal of power relationships within the family, which was invariably predicated on the greater earning power of the women vis-a-vis their husbands.

In story after story we find references to husbands who try to prevent women from achieving their personal ambitions, or male co-workers who refuse to accept

a female overseer, or even casual passersby who display traditionally misogynistic attitudes.⁵⁹ Ollennikova, a stakhanovite worker and the first female railroad controller in her section, recalled at the 1936 Women's Day conference in Moscow that she faced a lot of hostility at the workplace. Men flouted her authority and her orders. Once a machinist came up to her and said that he wanted to meet the controller and when she identified herself, he replied: "What kind of a controller are you, I can hear a woman's voice, get me the controller."⁶⁰ But finally, with the help of the party and through her own perseverance, her authority was recognized by her male co-workers. Flight Navigator Marina Raskova, a lecturer at the Zhukov Air Force Academy, recalled how her husband tried his best to prevent her from becoming a pilot. Naturally, she paid no attention to his entreaties and went on to have a spectacularly successful career both in the air force and as a heroine of the Soviet Union.⁶¹ Similarly, Agafi'a Durniasheva, a stakhanovite worker at the Trekhgornaia factory, a teacher at a technical school, a party worker, and the mother of six, revealed that she was hindered in her career at every step by her husband. In her interview she stated that she earned more than her husband, and the fact that she was a party member while he was not, had created problems in her marital relationship. Initially, when she had wanted to go to a trade school in order to upgrade her skills, her husband had sought to dissuade her, citing their large number children as the main deterrent. She ignored this advice, completed the apprenticeship courses, joined the party, and was rewarded with a spacious apartment for her large family.⁶²

In her Women's Day address, Smirnova's feelings of superiority toward her husband were an important part of her perception of self. She exhibited a certain contempt for her husband and the men on the kolkhoz. She said that during the years of collectivization the men ran away and left them in the lurch, and when they returned, the women didn't really need them.⁶³ This was perhaps the most disingenuous explanation on record of the forced deportation of millions of peasants, one that reduced the tragedy of collectivization to the farce of coy gender conflict. Smirnova was obviously pleased with the transformation of her status from subordination to one of relative super-ordination. Savoring the irony of role reversal in her family, she said, "I am the chairman of the kolkhoz. . . . and all the men submit to my authority (laughter in the audience). I am the chairman of the kolkhoz while my husband is a simple worker. I give him orders and point out all his shortcomings. I converse with him like he is just another worker, not my husband—. Before when my husband went to the skhod [village assembly] and later I asked him about the proceedings, he would reply that it was none of my business. Now I come and tell him all that we decided and he listens to me, now he is humble. I am decorated, and he is not."⁶⁴ Smirnova's recital contained the new prescriptive mores for gender and marital interaction. But one wonders if she had internalized them, or whether

she was merely quoting from an approved script.

Soviet Heroines in the Private Sphere

The discourse on motherhood and maternalism constituted an important element in women's public identity in the 1930s. There was a substantial difference in the Stalinist construction of motherhood and maternalism. Here I use the term motherhood to refer to the act of reproduction, while maternalism denotes parenting and the idealized relationship of the mother and child that was often enforced by the state and society. For example, in postrevolutionary America although women were denied political rights, they were nonetheless exhorted to raise good republican children. Similarly, women in nineteenth-century Western Europe were supposed to seek fulfillment through reproduction and discharge civic obligations by transmitting to children appropriate social and moral values. In Russia, however, there was little historical precedent for limiting women's functions to child rearing, and the nineteenth-century western notions of women fulfilling their destiny exclusively through child raising and domesticity were fairly uncommon.⁶⁵ While the Russian aristocracy routinely trusted the care of children to servants, peasant women and factory women could not afford the luxury of personally raising their children. These children were, for the most part, abandoned to the supervision of older children and/or old women, unfit to work in the fields.⁶⁶ Despite their declared animosity toward bourgeois culture, the Bolsheviks, following the October Revolution, tried to inculcate typically bourgeois notions of child rearing in its citizenry.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, magazines for women such as *Rabotnitsa*, *Krest'ianka*, and *Obshchestvennitsa* carried simple articles explaining modern methods of child rearing and information on obstetrics. In Red Corners in factories, doctors and nurses held seminars on infant care, personal hygiene and the importance of regular cleaning of living quarters. The organization *Okhrana Materinstvo i Mladenchestvo* (Section for Maternity Protection) printed popular tracts on hygiene, nutritional information on children's diets, and articles on pre- and postnatal care.⁶⁷ Parents were encouraged to pay attention to children's homework, inculcate good reading habits, and take an interest in their social development. In Women's Day speeches in the 1930s, party leaders stressed the responsibilities of parents to their offspring and exhorted them to supervise their children's development. However, at the same time it was repeatedly emphasized that maternal functions were only supposed to consume a fraction of women's time, the rest of which was to be spent in socialist labor and community-oriented activity.⁶⁸

The discourse on motherhood, too, was created along statist lines. By reproducing, Soviet women fulfilled the prime obligation of good citizens. Mothers of

large families exemplified civic virtue and social conscience. Unlike the Victorian construction of maternalism, which exhorted woman to fulfill their feminine and therefore essentially biological destiny by reproduction—within the holy bonds of matrimony—in the Soviet Union, motherhood became a public act. When a Soviet woman had a child she fulfilled an important national function, she ensured the reproduction of a future generation of socialists who would work for the Fatherland and protect the Motherland from the aggression of fascists and capitalists. It was an investment in the future on a par with investment in heavy industry. As Stalin said, “The Soviet woman has the same rights as the man, but that does not free her from a great and honorable duty which nature has given her: she is a mother, she gives life. This is certainly not a private affair, but one of great social importance.”⁶⁹

Soviet discourse on motherhood was not self-contained; instead it was created in reference to both the “decadent” bourgeois West and the infinitely more demonized fascist order. While the nationalization of women’s reproductive and productive capacities was part of a pan-European phenomenon, Soviet propaganda strove to distinguish the modernity of its pronatalist policies from the retrograde nature of those pursued in the West.⁷⁰ Of the various images used to contrast the youthfulness, vigor, and vitality of the young Soviet Union with the degenerate and effete West, birth rates ranked among the most popular.

Popular articles extolling motherhood cited comparative mortality and fertility figures that contrasted the Soviet Union favorably with the West. In this instance, Soviet propaganda merely echoed the demographic anxiety expressed in countries such as France, Spain, Scandinavia, Italy, and Germany. It was claimed that while mortality rates were declining and birth rates were rising in the Soviet Union, in France, England, Italy, and Germany, birth rates were dropping precipitously.⁷¹ Soviet propaganda maintained that the fascists in Germany were practicing a most sinister and ingenious form of class war using eugenics. Fascists were closing nursing homes across Germany demanding that the “natural” process of giving birth be carried out within the domestic space. But this romantic Nazi yearning for premodern German society, where women would be restored to their “natural” functions, concealed a form of class oppression. The Soviets alleged that by closing down nursing homes, and by denying working mothers access to doctors and medical pre- and postnatal care, the fascists were trying to control the growth of the proletarian population in Germany.⁷²

In the Soviet Union, by contrast, state propaganda claimed that because biological reproduction was both a social act and a civic obligation, the health and welfare of pregnant women were public and state concerns. If motherhood was celebrated as a public duty and as an act of patriotism in Stalinist Russia, the image of a caring and paternalistic state order was given equal visibility in the media. Thus, Maria

Il' nichna, mother of ten children, in an interview for Women's Day in 1936, highlighted the fact that three of her children went to a nursery, one to kindergarten, and the older one attended school.⁷³ Moreover, having given birth, women were not asked to sit at home and take care of their children. There was a constant tension implicit in the construction of maternalism. On the one hand, Soviet women were being taught to become modern mothers, to replace age-old Russian practices of child rearing with modern and scientific advice on nutritious diets, daily hygiene, appropriate clothing, and stimulating intellectual surroundings. But at the same time, women were not perceived purely as caregivers, nor was reproduction their only function. Soviet children were citizens in their own right, and the Stalinist state promised to provide adequate medical care, nurseries, kindergartens, and childcare services. Inflated and often spurious facts and figures on social service organizations accompanied the rhetoric extolling motherhood.⁷⁴

During the 1930s there was a remarkable expansion in state social services, but they were grossly inadequate in number and the quality of service they offered left much to be desired. Strangely enough, the popular press openly acknowledged some of these limitations.⁷⁵ The volunteer movement of the Wives of Industrialists and Engineering-Technical Personnel (*obshchestvennitsy*), organized by Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the commissar for heavy industry, was intended to utilize the services of this privileged cohort to compensate for shortcomings in state-funded social services.⁷⁶ A large number of articles in the women's press focused on the limitations of Soviet childcare services, dining halls, housing, medical organizations, and instructed *obshchestvennitsy* on how to supplement these services through voluntarism and community action.⁷⁷

The argument was circular: because the state provided such extensive services, as well as social circumstances conducive to promoting motherhood, there was no compelling need for Soviet women to limit the size of their families. At the same time, due to the availability of social services, there was no reason why women should spend all their time on childcare. As Agaf'ia Karpovna explained when asked how she managed to be a mother of five, a teacher, a worker and a social activist, she replied that it was all a matter of time management.⁷⁸ A Women's Day film clip from 1937, showed women moving effortlessly from mothering at home, to working in the factory, to socializing in clubs with their children. The film clip presented a brief vignette of a female professor at a military engineering school, who was also a mother and a skilled seamstress.⁷⁹ Notions of efficient ordering of time evoked images of modernity. The multiple roles that Soviet women were expected to play in both the public and the private sphere became not a burden or the double shift, but as a testimonial both to the Bolshevik "can do" spirit, and to the innate superiority of Soviet women over their international counterparts. Although in private the

double shift was often overwhelming, in public discourse the progressive efficiency of Soviet women was used to valorize the Soviet state.⁸⁰

Abortion, naturally, represented a threat to images of joyous fecundity, and the arguments against abortion were constructed along essentially the same lines that sought to promote motherhood. It is instructive to remember that the infamous abortion decree of 27 June 1936 carried several supplementary conditions in addition to the restrictions on abortion. These included the rendering of material assistance to pregnant women, growth in the number of childcare centers and children consultation clinics for children, increase in alimony to wives with large families, and strict punishment of defaulters on alimony payments.⁸¹ Once again, the abortion decree was used to contrast the limitations of the October Revolution with the achievements of the Stalinist revolution. It was argued that abortion had been reluctantly allowed in the 1920s because of the material poverty of the country and the desperate plight of its citizens.⁸² But in the 1930s, because of the better living conditions and the social services provided by the state, there was no need to deny women their natural right to the joys of motherhood.

The abortion decree, however, unleashed a storm of protest from women across the nation.⁸³ Although public acrimony was soon stifled, the number of illegal abortions in the cities of Leningrad and Moscow rose dramatically in 1937 and 1938.⁸⁴ The Sovnarkom (Soviet of National Commissariats) sought to deflect blame for the growing number of illegal abortions by claiming that the methods used by the procurator's office to weed out illegal abortion centers were inadequate and that insufficient punishment was meted out to doctors and old women who performed abortions.⁸⁵ Also, Narkomzdrav (People's Commissariat of Health), Narkomzem (People's Commissariat of Health), and Narkompros (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment) were criticized for the lack of material help rendered to pregnant women, terrible conditions at nursing homes, shortages of trained medical personnel, slow construction of day-care centers, and limited popularization of information on child care and the perils of abortion.⁸⁶ During these years, the strictures of Sovnarkom (Soviet of National Commissariats) notwithstanding, a modest propaganda campaign was waged that celebrated motherhood and warned against the evil repercussions of abortions. Articles, purportedly written by doctors, warned that abortions invariably led to barrenness, loss of health and vigor in women, premature aging, hemorrhaging, and internal bleeding.⁸⁷ Soviet propaganda stressed the fact that women who resorted to back-alley abortions were reverting to the mores of a presocialist and premodern peasant Russia. As these were performed principally by old women lacking scientific skill and knowledge, it was inconceivable that the modern Soviet women would patronize such butchers. In 1938, the paternalistic provisions of the 1936 abortion decree were further elaborated. The Central Committee decrees

published on Women's Day of that year declared that the constant concern of the party for Soviet mothers and children was reflected in increased state funding for the construction of nursing homes and day-care centers.⁸⁸

In stark contrast to the nurturing role of the party, males, especially husbands and boyfriends, were cast in the role of the evil seducers who urged girlfriends and wives to have abortions in order to escape the consequences of their irresponsible sexual behavior.⁸⁹ An article in *Molodaia gvardiia*, analyzing letters written by women in response to the abortion decree, concluded that in most instances it was men who were guilty of forcing women to have abortions.⁹⁰ While women's agency in motherhood was stressed, abortion was represented as an infringement on women's free will and modernity. During this period, in consonance with the other clauses of the abortion decree, there was a statewide crackdown on errant husbands who refused to pay alimony or child support.⁹¹

The Limitations of Soviet Modernity

In this classic struggle of the sexes, propaganda stressed that it was the Stalinist state that supported the heroine and ensured the success of the heroine in every sphere of her existence. It was claimed that the *trudoden'* (work day) system in the *kolkhoz* made the peasant woman financially independent of a husband or a father and for the first time rewarded her materially for her labor.⁹² As Stalin said and was quoted ad nauseam thereafter, "only collective farm life could have destroyed inequality and put women on their feet."⁹³ It was reiterated that it was the party that nurtured the hidden talents of women peasants and helped them become opera singers and parachutists.⁹⁴ The party created circumstances in which women could advance to high administrative positions. The party admonished Soviet men who held traditional attitudes toward women and wanted to limit them within the confines of domesticity.⁹⁵ Men were urged to help with childcare and housework.⁹⁶ The party also held modern notions that marriage was founded on equality between men and women.⁹⁷ Finally, it was repeatedly claimed that the party upheld women's rights to motherhood against the depredations of husbands and evil quacks.

The hyperbole surrounding the Soviet heroine was used to buttress the myth of upward mobility in the Soviet Union. Here, the traditional social and cultural stigma surrounding Russian women was especially useful. The creation of a Soviet hero was less miraculous in a society long accustomed to the myths of strong male rulers and valiant knights. But the transformation of the illiterate, uncultured, and counterrevolutionary Russian woman was an achievement of far greater magnitude. The capacity to create the Soviet heroine not only conferred legitimacy on the Soviet regime, but through association with the heroines, Stalin, and by extension the

Soviet Union, was guaranteed immortality. The conversion of the baba to a civic subject constituted a revolution of unique social dimensions and was represented in Soviet ideology as one of the most triumphant results of Stalinism. As Stalin said in his speech to the November 1935 Congress of “Five-Hundreders,” “there were not, nor could there have been such women in the old days.”⁹⁸

The extensive “thank you Stalin” literature that emerged in the 1930s as an integral ritual of Women’s Day exemplified this symbiotic relationship between Stalin and Soviet heroines. The narrative structure of the letters was essentially identical. To begin with, the women letter writers addressed Stalin with the familiar *ty* (you), rather than the more formal *vy* (you). Stalin’s name was prefixed with the adjective *rodnoi* (one’s own) to underscore the familial relationships that bound Stalin and the Soviet women. The women thanked Stalin for the extraordinary improvement in their cultural and material position. The extensive concern for women’s welfare that Stalin was credited with was congruent with the public imaging of the dictator as the paternal champion of women’s rights and the sole guarantor of their upward mobility to positions of power and prestige.⁹⁹

Thus the modernity of the New Soviet Woman was deeply ambiguous. If in her dedication to work and upward mobility, gender equality, efficient time management, and nationalism, the Soviet heroine exemplified the modern citizen, her pronatalism, reliance on sisterhood, and devotion to Stalin was redolent of the politics of a pre-modern era. Finally, the statist orientation of the category of modernity revealed its complex nature. Soviet heroines were completely dependent on the state to uphold their authority in both the public and the private sphere. This dependence, coupled with the atmosphere of terror, bespoke political allegiance from the women. Their power was based on the artificial support extended by the state, not grounded in any fundamental change in popular attitudes or gender relations. Also, since Soviet heroines rarely occupied positions of political power or strategic party posts, they could not form a serious pressure group for women’s rights within the system. The heroines’ claim to fame rested on the fact that they engaged in occupations traditionally reserved for men and by doing so lent credibility to the alleged Soviet commitment to women’s liberation. At the same time, the miraculously transformative power of Stalinism was revealed. Not only had Russia modernized almost overnight into an industrial giant, but the baba, the most benighted expression of Russian backwardness, had transmuted into a modern, confident, politically mature citizen, in short a *chelovek* (human being).¹⁰⁰

Notes

1. When I say moral issues, I refer to my own unease about the mass terror and to traditional historiography, which has demanded that “Stalinism” be treated as a shameful aberration of human civilization. Robert Conquest has been particularly insistent on this point. See his article, “What Went Wrong with Sovietology,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 July 1993.
2. According to Sheila Fitzpatrick, “there was a discourse in which women (like peasants and members of ethnic minorities) represented backwardness, and another in which their achievements were cited as evidence of modernity. The latter did not really replace the former.” Private communication, 1996. However, for the purposes of this paper, I am going to concentrate overwhelmingly on the constructions of modernity of the “New Soviet Woman.”
3. A survey of speeches given by famous Soviet women at the Kremlin shows that protestations of love, gratitude, and devotion formed an essential component of public addresses in the Stalinist era. See *Geroini sotsialisticheskogo truda* (Partizdat, 1936).
4. John Gray, *Post-Liberalism: Studies in Political Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 158.
5. Since the literature on what constitutes modernization and the experience of modernity is so vast I will cite only a few works that I have found particularly useful. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); Leszak Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: Norton, 1994); Cyril E. Black ed., *The Modernization of Japan and Russia: A Comparative Study* (New York: Free Press, 1975).
6. Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992); Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1982).
7. Habermas, echoing the critique of the Frankfurt School, claimed that by the twentieth century mass democracy and the commodification of culture led to the replacement of a contentious and informed public by an audience of passive and uncritical consumers of mass culture. This cultural despair was reflected in the works of Foucault, who claimed that the scientific meta narratives of the nineteenth century, far from emancipating the individual, helped create a candidate for a disciplinary society based on total surveillance. Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970); *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Press, 1980).

8. E. Kamenka, "Public/Private in Marxist Theory and Marxist Practice," in S. I. Benn and G. F. Gauss, eds., *Public and Private in Social Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 266–79; See also D. O. Helly and S. M. Reverby, eds., *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).

9. Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Public Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime," *History and Theory* 31, no. 1 (1992): 1–20; Benjamin Nathans, "Habermas's 'Public Sphere' in the Era of the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 3 (1990): 620–44.

10. Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Leslie A. Rimmel, "Another Kind of Fear: The Kirov Murder and the End of Bread Rationing in Leningrad," *Slavic Review* 66, no. 33. (1997): 481–89; Stephan Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinsim as Civilization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); Jochen Hellbeck, "Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931–1939)," *Jahrbucher fur Geshichte Osteuropas* 44, no. 3 (1996): 344–73.

11. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender* (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1987); Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1988); Joan Landes *Woman and the Public Sphere in Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

12. See for example, Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, the State and Welfare* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Carole Pateman, *The Patriarchal Welfare State: Women and Democracy*, Center for European Studies Working Paper Series, (Cambridge, Mass.: 1987); Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

13. Barbara Evans Clements, "The Birth of the New Soviet Woman," in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites eds. *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985): 220-37; Thea Margaret Durfee, "Cement and How the Steel was Tempered: Variations on the New Soviet Woman," in *A Plot of Her Own: The Female Protagonist in Russian Literature*, Sonia Stephan Hoisington ed., (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1995): 89-101.

14. "Vypolnit' plan vovlecheniia zhenshchin v promyshlennost'," *Kul'tura i byt*, no. 6 (February 1931): 4; A. Smirnova, "Byt na sluzhbu piatiletke," *Kul'tura i byt*, no. 6 (February 1931): 5; "Mezhdunarodnyi zhenskii den': Vosmoe marta," *Kul'tura i byt*, no. 4 (March 1932): 4–5.

15. In 1930/31, 422,900 new women workers entered the work force, and the percentage of women in heavy industry jumped from 22 percent to 42 percent. Women workers made

unprecedented gains in the male-dominated sectors of construction such as railroads, mining, metallurgy, and machine production. S. Serebrennikov, *Zhenskii trud v SSSR* (Moscow, 1934), 63–64. Between 1932 and 1937, women employees constituted 82 percent of the workers newly employed. Solomon Schwarz, *Labor in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1951), 66–69; See *Zhenshchiny strany sovetov* (Moscow, 1977), 144–56, for figures on women employees by industry and the percentage of women stakhanovites by occupation. *Zhenshchiny v SSSR, Sbornik statisticheskikh materialov* (Moscow, 1970), 27. Despite this numerical increase, women workers overwhelmingly filled the ranks of the lowest skilled and worst paid. Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1986), 63–67.

16. Roberta Manning has calculated that from the mid to late 1930s there were 2,500 rural Soviet chairwomen and 7,000 to 10,000 collective farm chairwomen. Also, nearly 80 percent of agricultural stakhanovites were female. “Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935–1940,” in *Peasant Women*, Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 206–35. For more information on women’s growing roles in the countryside see Dorothy Atkinson, *The End of the Russian Land Commune, 1905–1930* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1983), 367–68; Sue Bridger, *Women in the Soviet Countryside* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 10–16.

17. Following the February 1929 government decree that reserved 20 percent of the places in higher educational institutions for women, the number of women in these institutions increased rapidly. The number of seats reserved for women was raised to 25 percent from September 1930. E. Lishchina, “Podgotovka spetsialistov,” in *V edinom stroiu* (Moscow, 1960), 317. Also, between 1926 and 1939, the number of literate women between the ages of nine and forty-nine in cities grew from 73.9 percent to 90.7 percent, and in the villages, from 35.4 percent to 76.8 percent. *Zhenshchiny strany sovetov*, 171. In 1935, 36 percent of students in vuzy (institutions of higher learning), 40 percent of the students in technical schools, and 30 percent of the students in rabfaki (workers facilities) were women. (TsNAM), 150, op. 25, d. 78, ll. 37–38 ; For details on women’s educational achievements in various fields of engineering, medicine, etc., see Norton Dodge, *Women in the Soviet Economy* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 100-59. Of course, women’s enrolment declined proportionally to the prestige of the field, thus in engineering there were few women.

18. A decree of the All-Union Soviet of Housing Cooperatives, passed in April 1931, underlined the need to create crèches, children houses, and dining rooms in cooperative houses. It specified that 20 percent of the kitchen space in cooperative houses be set aside for communal dining rooms. The Commissariat of Labor would meet the costs by deductions of 10 percent from each person’s rent and by long-term loans. Ia. Perel and A. A. Liubimova, eds., *Okhrana materinstva i mladenchestva* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1932), 24, 25, 27, 31-32. A strongly worded decree of the Central Committee ordered Gosplan and Narkomzdrav to ensure that the 100 percent all workers’ children in large industries be enrolled in crèches and kindergartens by 1932. (GARF), f. 5451, op. 16, d. 854, l. 4, Party concern was further reflected in the larger appropriation of funds towards the creation of social services institutions in the Second Five-Year plan. “Rezoliutsii i postanovleniia XVI s’ezda VKP(b),” in the *Shestmadtsatyi s’ezd VKP(B). Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1935), 738. It appears that finances were not always the major problem. Of

the 38,961,000 rubles assigned to the territory of RSFSR for the construction of crèches in 1932, almost half remained unutilized by the end of the year. Construction of buildings progressed very slowly, even in areas like the Moscow and Leningrad provinces, where the largest sums had been allocated for the building of crèches and kindergartens. (RSFSR) f. 482, op. 24, d. 43, l. 22.

19. In reality, many of the so-called new crèches were hastily revamped old buildings such as schools or former living quarters. The cotton textile factories could only provide places for 80 infants per every 1000 women workers. GARF, f. 5451, op. 17, d. 386, ll. 92–93. As late as 1937, despite fixed Gosplan estimates of construction, the cost of building crèches varied widely from province to province, creating anarchy. *Ibid.*, op. 21, d. 133, l. 16. The conditions of kindergartens were even worse due to lack of funds for buildings and the intermittent cessation in food supply. Premises were often highly congested and unhygienic, linen supply was inadequate, and furniture such as cots and desks was almost completely missing. Children were badly clothed and dirty, and there were no efforts to quarantine sick children. Furthermore, the employees at these institutions were usually untrained and poorly qualified. *Ibid.*, op. 17, d. 385, ll. 62–68. Trade union reports on the childcare institutions in various industries from 1935 spoke of the insufficient food, poor quality of care, and the lack of resources which constantly threatened these institutions with closure. *Ibid.*, d. 386, ll. 91, 92, 100, 101b, 115. and op. 19, d. 453, ll. 92–103.

20. Thus in 1933 there were only 305 women who served as directors of factories in the Soviet Union, and a total of 26,264 women were employed by Narkomtiazhprom (People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry) specialists, managers, and research scientists. M. A. Shaburova, *Zhenshchina-bol'shaia sila* (Partizdat, 1935), 51; Stalin, in his speech to the 17th Party Congress in 1934, bragged that there were 6,000 women kolkhoz chairmen, which, distributed among 224,500 collective farms, amounted to a mere 2.5 percent. *Voprosy Leninizma* (Moscow, 1947), 449, 460. But the numbers declined further over the decade.

21. *Naidionnaia doroga: Sbornik ocherkov o rabote zhenshchin v kolkhoze* (OGIZ, 1935); *Geroini sotsialisticheskogo truda; Povesti Minuvshego* (Leningrad, 1937); *Sovetskie zhenshchiny* (Moscow, 1938); I. S. Akopian, ed., *Zhenshchiny strany sotsializma* (OGIZ, 1939).

22. Ilya Ehrenburg, *Out of Chaos*, trans. Alexandr Bakshy (New York: Holt, 1934), 49; Boris Pilniak, *The Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea*, trans. Charles Malamuth (New York: AMS Press, 1931), 240–41; Maksim Gorkii, ed., *White Sea Canal: Being an Account of the Construction of the New Canal Between the White Sea and the Baltic Sea*, trans. Amabel Williams-Ellis (London: J. Lane, 1935), 328. See also Nikolai Pogodin's play, *Aristocrats* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1937).

23. For a study of the importance of International Women's Day in Bolshevik politics and Soviet life, see Choi Chatterjee, "Celebrating Women: The International Women's Day in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910–1939" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1995).

24. See the February-March issues of *Sputnik agitatora* for 1933–1938.

25. “O mezhdunarodnom kommunisticheskom zhenskom dne 8 marta.” Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b). *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo*, no. 2 (March 1936): 25; *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4, (February 1937): 9; 8 *Marta: Mezhdunarodnyi kommunisticheskii zhenskii den'*: *Materialy dlia dokladov i besed* (Rostov, 1938), 3.
26. *K mezhdunarodnomu zhenskomu kommunisticheskomu dniu. Material dlia dokladchikov i gruppyvykh agitatorov* (Moscow, 1931), 15; GARF, f. 5451, op. 17, d. 525, ll. 1–2, 1933.
27. GARF, f. 5451, op. 20, d. 191, ll. 44–45, 1936.
28. *Ibid.*, op. 15, d. 364(1), l. 14, 1931; op. 16, d. 845, ll. 1–11, 1932; op. 18, d. 553, ll. 4–6, 1934; f. 5457, op. 19, d. 196, ll. 33, 44, 1933; op. 22, d. 80, l. 31, 1934.
29. Stalin said this in a speech to the meeting of outstanding male and female combine operators on 1 December 1935. Robert McNeal, ed., *I. V. Stalin*, 1(14) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 106.
30. For an analysis of the strange coexistence of Stalinist terror and carnival, see A. I. Mazaev, *Prazdnik kak sotsial'no-khudozhestvennikh iavleniia* (Moscow, 1978); Rosalind Sartorti, “Stalinism and Carnival: Organization and Aesthetics of Political Holidays,” in *The Culture of the Stalin Period ed. Hans Gunther* (Houndmills, England: Macmillan, 1990), 41–77 ; Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 173–80.
31. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 10 March 1935, 2; For the popularity of American dances in the Soviet Union, see Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 75.
32. Nina Markovna, *Nina's Journey: A Memoir of Stalin's Russia and the Second World War* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989), 13–22.
33. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 9 March 1936, 1. A photograph of the reception depicts much conviviality. There is confetti floating in the air, and one of the guests is wearing a frivolous paper hat. TsGAKFD, photograph no. 015577.
34. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 7 March 1935, 2.
35. For a complete transcript of these meetings from 1934 to 1939, see TsMAM f. 150, op. 25, d. 77, 78,83; op. D. 91, 94, and 150. See also, *Pravda*, 8 March 1937, 1; 9 March 1938, 1; 9 March 1939, 1. Similar celebratory meetings of Soviet women were held in provincial capitals. For example in 1934, Kirov presided at a Women's Day meeting held at the Opera Theater in Leningrad. Invitees included women workers, directors of firms, police officers, scientific workers, aviators and other notable women from the city. *Leningradskaia pravda*, 9 March 1934, 2; *Pravda*, 9 March 1935, 3. Soviet publications from the 1930s almost always included a section on the terrible conditions for women in capitalist countries: unemployment, a repressive legal code, male oppression, a lack of health care and child welfare institutions,

sexual exploitation, and prostitution. The public identity of Soviet women was thus inextricably linked with that of women in European and colonized countries. See, for example, Shaburova, *Zhenshchina bol'shaia sila*, 8–30.

36. Having women narrate their life stories was a common event at Women's Day celebrations in factory clubs and collective farms across the nation. GARF, f. 5457, op. 22, d. 80, l. 33.

37. Examining the major characteristics of the "New Soviet Woman," a journalist wrote: "Her distinguishing features are that her interest in socialist production engages all her attention; labor for her is a matter of honor, valor, and heroism; and she has mastered technology." See "Boevoe pokolenie stroitelei kommunizma," *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 11 (November 1939): 2; N. Labkovsky, "The Story of a Heroine of Labor," *Soviet Cultural Review*, no. 2–3 (1932): 40.

38. Maria Isaakovna, an employee at a book printing factory, a party worker since 1925, and a member of the factory committee, saw her pay rise from 6 rubles to 8–9 rubles a day after she became a stakhanovka. She lived in a three-room apartment with a kitchen along with her husband, mother, and three children. This kind of living space was an unbelievable luxury for the 1930s. GARF, f. 5451, op. 19, d. 401, l. 40. For similar data on the high living standards of women Stakhanovites see, ll. 42, 50, 51, and 62. Also see Mary Buckley, "Why be a Shockworker or a Stakhanovite?" in *Women in Russia and the Ukraine* ed. Rosalind Marsh (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 199–213. Of course, women workers were substantially underrepresented among stakhanovites in industry primarily due to their lack of skills and protective legislation that prevented women from working in certain branches of the industry. Lewis Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935–1941* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 170–72.

39. Pasha Angelina, the celebrated tractor driver, actually divorced her husband when he demanded that she spend more time with her family. See Arkadii Slavutskii, *Praskov'ia Angelina* (Moscow, 1960), 20–30, 178–79.

40. At this time, women were in charge of 7,000 kolkhozes in the Soviet Union. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 8 March 1935, 1. In 1936, 170,000 women served as members of the collective-farm boards, 19,000 as managers of dairies, 200,000 as field brigade leaders, and 329,726 women were members of rural Soviets. *Pravda*, 22 December 1936, 1. But as Sheila Fitzpatrick's recent work shows, it was very difficult for women to retain positions of authority in the countryside. *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 181–83. Fitzpatrick believes that the party was committed to the upward mobility of women and was frustrated in its intentions by the activities of misogynous peasants and rural officials.

41. *Izvestiia*, 9 March 1936, 1.

42. TsMAM, f. 150, op. 25, d. 83, ll. 19, 26. For similar stories see *Nai'dionnaia doroga*. Smirnova and other similar heroines became a recognizable social type and were satirized by the

Soviet novelist Vladimir Voinovich in the character of Lyushka in *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Chonkin*, trans. Richard Lourie (New York: Farrer Straus and Giroux, 1977). See Xenia Gasiorowska, *Woman in Soviet Fiction, 1917–1964* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 75–89, for a witty sketch of the kolkhoz maidens in Soviet prose.

43. Sheila Fitzpatrick, in her masterly article, “Middle-class Values and Soviet Life in the 1930s,” has advanced a class analysis of the propaganda aimed at women. According to her, while Stalinist propaganda stressed that it was important for wives of administrators and engineers to be supportive helpmeets to their husbands, in the countryside, the liberation of women from patriarchal domination continued to be an important theme. In Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon eds. *Soviet Society and Culture*, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1988), 20–38. For further elaboration on this theme, see Manning, “Women in the Soviet Countryside.” In this article Manning finds that the party was consistent in supporting the enrolment of women in nontraditional pursuits and women therefore faced hostility from the village and their immediate families. As she says, “no ‘Great Retreat’ from emancipatory goals can be discerned in the Soviet government’s policies towards rural women in the mid-to late 1930s” (226). Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism*, 236–38.

44. See Victoria E. Bonnell’s incisive article on the changing image of the kolkhoznitsa in the 1930s. “The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art of the 1930s,” *American Historical Review* 98, no.1 (1993): 55-82.

45. *Sovetskie zhenshchiny; Zhenshchina v kolkhoze-bol’shaia sila* (Moscow, 1934), 26–32. The film, *Member of the Government* (1939), by A. Zarhi and I. Kheifits, dealt with the story of uneducated and down-trodden farmworker, Aleksandra Sokolova, who eventually became head of the collective farm and a delegate to the Supreme Soviet. Cited in Lynne Atwood, *Red Woman on the Silver Screen* (London: Pandora, 1993), 65. For a discussion, see Denise J. Youngblood, *Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era, 1918–1935* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985), 204–06.

46. For women’s resistance to collectivization, see Lynne Viola, “Bab’i Bunty,” *Russian Review* 45 (1986): 23–42; Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine* (New York, Oxford University Press: 1986), 152, 154–55, 166; A. A. Novosel’skii, ed., *Materialy po istorii SSSR: Dokumenty po istorii sovetskogo obshchestva* (Moscow, 1955), 327–67; M. Shaburova, *Zhenshchina bol’shaia sila*, 61–67. An article in *Krest’ianka* sampled the reason why women in the Northern Caucasus joined local kolkhozes. While the majority described their initial antipathy to the kolkhoz, a couple of women declared that they joined of their own volition, and one took the initiative of joining the kolkhoz against the will of her husband. “Pochemu my idem v kolkhoze,” *Krest’ianka*, 5 March 1931, 14; “Oblastnoi s’ezd krest’ianok-kolkhoznits,” *Leningradskaia pravda*, 10 March 1930, 4; *Zhenshchiny v sel’sovetakh* (Moscow, 1934), 16; memoirs of E. Bushmanova in *Zhenshchiny Urala v revoliutsii i trude* (Sverdlovsk, 1973). Rather than attribute agency to women themselves, in public propaganda, kulaks, priests, and the political immaturity of peasant women were cited as reasons for this counterrevolutionary behavior, as in not wanting to join the kolkhoz.

47. In one extreme case, an exemplary agricultural worker named Khitrikova from Kurgansk District in the Northern Caucasus was wrongfully sentenced to one year's hard labor by class enemies. *Zhenshchiny v sotsialisticheskoi stroitel'stve SSSR* (Leningrad, 1932), 27; *Izvestiia*, 8 March 1930, 5; *Krest'ianka*, no. 4 (February 1932): 11; A kolkhoznitsa, in conversation with Kalinin in 1934, recalled how the village women spat at her and called her the apostle of the Antichrist when she tried to persuade them to join the kolkhoz. RTsKhlDNI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 483, l. 29. See also, V. Sidorova, *Rabota sredi zhenshchin v kolkhozakh i sovkhozakh* (Moscow, 1932), 25; Praskovya Angelina, *My Answer to an American Questionnaire* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), 22.

48. M. Iur'eva, in her article, "Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i raskreposhenie zhenshchiny," *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 19 (October 1937): 10–13, explained that following the October Revolution, women received legal rights and privileges, and attempts were made by Zhenotdel (Women's Department of the Central Committee Secretariat) to raise their political consciousness. However, it was only after the inception of the First Five-Year plan in industry and agriculture that women became free of economic dependence on men and assumed the status of fullfledged citizens of the Soviet Union. For earlier repetition of this theme, see *Krest'ianka*, no. 4 (March 1930): 5; no. 4 (February 1931): 3; no. 5 (March 1934): 6; no. 5 (March 1935): 1; *Mezhdunarodnyi zhenskii den'* (Magnitostroi, 1934), 3–4.

49. *Pravda*, 8 March 1933, 3. For a cinematic treatment of the same theme, see I. Pyrev's film, *The Party Card*, in which the wife unmasks her husband as the enemy kulak. Cited in Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917–1953* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 142–46. For accounts of woman activists singled out for retaliation, see also Viola, *Peasant Rebels*, 126.

50. Mashalkina, chairman of the Orshanskii district mutual aid fund, in a conversation with Kalinin in 1934, said that her primary objective was to acquire an automobile so that they could convey medical help quickly to women in labor. RTsKhlDNI, f. 78, d. 483, op. 1, l. 5. A report about Halima Apa Kasakova, an administrator of the Women's Club in Tashkent, referred to the loving relationships between her and the women of the city. Whenever she appeared in the club or on the streets, local women clustered around her with cries of "Mother," shook her hand, and complained about conservative and recalcitrant husbands. Halima Apa always responded with affectionate concern and sound practical suggestions. *Pravda*, 8 March 1937, 3. Female solidarity was also crucial as a means of survival for victims of the Stalinist terror. For examples see the following memoirs: Evgeniia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*, trans. Paul Stevenson and Max Hayward (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1967), and *Within the Whirlwind*, trans. Ian Boland (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981); Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Hope Against Hope*, trans. Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1970), and *Hope Abandoned*, trans. Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1974).

51. For elaboration of this concept see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

52. *Vecherniia Moskva*, 10 March 1936, 1.

53. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1935, 3. For similar sentiments, see E. V. Vinogradova, "Speech Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the Young Communist League," 4 April 1936, in *Soviet Union 1936*, (Moscow, 1936), 723; Biography of Klavdiia Sakharova, deputy to the Supreme Soviet, in *Sovetskie zhenshchiny*, 44–45.

54. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 8 March 1938, 3. Often women workers were forced to form female work brigades on the shop floor because of the hostility of male co-workers and management, but of course this reason was not advertised in the propaganda. See David Hoffman, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 119.

55. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 7 March 1937, 2; 8 March 1937, 3. The theme of the international solidarity of proletarian women was repeatedly cited in Women's Day propaganda. See "8 Marta: Mezhdunarodnyi kommunisticheskii zhenskii den': Materialy dlia dokladov i besed." *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1938): 11; "Primernye plany dokladov i besed. 8 Marta-mezhdunarodnyi kommunisticheskii den'," *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1938): 24.

56. The contrast between a weak and indecisive man and a strong Russian woman has deep roots in Russian literary traditions long predating Soviet innovations. See, for example, Vera Dunham's article, "The Strong-Woman Motif," in *The Transformation of Russian Society*, Cyril E. Black ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 459-83; Antonia Glasse, "The Formidable Woman: Portrait and Original," *Russian Literary Triquarterly*, no. 5, (1974): 433-53.

57. As Sheila Fitzpatrick pointed out to me, not all men were so vilified in the literature. A wise Communist mentor, usually male, aided the evolution of the heroine's consciousness. Private Communication, Aug. 1997

58. Examples for such Bolshevik observations are too numerous to include. For a representative sample see, N. K. Samoilova, *K mezhdunarodnomu sotsialisticheskomu dniu rabotnits (Petrograd, 1918)*, and *V ob'edinenii zalog pobedi: K mezhdunarodnomu sotsialisticheskomu dniu rabotnits, 8 marta* (Moscow, 1921); *Tri goda diktatury proletariata*, MK RKP(b), (Moscow, 1920); A. Kollontai wrote, "At a time of unrest and strike action . . . the self-centered, narrow-minded and politically backward "female" becomes an equal, a fighter, and a comrade." Alix Holt ed., *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai* (London: Allison and Busby, 1977), 40; P. F. Kudelli, *Bor'ba za zhenskii den'* (Leningrad, 1928); Cecelia Bobrovskaia, describing the pre-revolutionary years, wrote, "It never occurred to us to carry on work among them [women]; the job seemed such a thankless one." *Twenty Years in Underground Russia* (New York: International Publishers, 1934), 109. Finally, see Elizabeth Wood's excellent monograph, *The Baba and the Comrade. Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

59. A. F. Smirnova, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, was forced to divorce her husband as he constantly interfered with her political and social engagements and criticized her for coming home late. See M. Mikhailov, "Zhenshchiny-deputaty ver'khovnogo soveta," *Obshchestvennitsa*,

no. 21 (October 1937): 27; Sh. Khadzhimirova, chairwoman of a kolkhoz in Kazakhstan, left her husband for similar reasons. *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 3 (February 1935): 73–74. Describing a train journey, a reporter wrote that a seaman was entertaining his fellow travelers with stories about life on the high seas. A woman passenger seemed particularly interested, but the seaman was quite curt with her and said that it was easy for women to be excited by tales of exotica, but that life on the sea was very arduous. Later it turned out that the woman in question, Barbara Mikhailovna, had served as a barmaid on various kinds of ships, sailed in distant seas and oceans, and had been in ship that had been torpedoed twice in the Mediterranean. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 8 March 1938, 3.

60. TsMAM, f. 150, op. 25, d. 83, l. 15.

61. *Pravda*, 8 March, 1936, 5. Maria Osipenko faced the same problems with her first fiancé when she wanted to become a pilot. Her second fiancé was undisciplined and at the point of being demobilized, but she took him in hand and together with the party and the Red Army turned him into an exemplary soldier. “Maria Osipenko letchik,” *Sovetskie zhenshchiny*, 122; For similar stories see, N. Lur’i, “Mat’,” *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 12 (June 1937): 12–13.

62. *Pravda*, 8 March 1935, 2; T. Slovachevskaia, “Agitator Agafia Karpovna Durniashova,” *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1936): 32–35.

63. Natalia Fedorova, chairman of the kolkhoz Revolution, in Leningrad Province, recounted that when the kulaks in their village waged a violent campaign against collectivization, her husband was so afraid that he ran away and only returned when the kolkhoz started producing results. “Dva delegata,” *Leningradskaia pravda*, 8 March 1933, 3. According to one source, about 18.7 million people, mostly men, migrated to urban areas from the countryside between 1927 and 1938. *Bol’shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 3d ed., vol. 24, bk. 2 (Moscow, 1977), 16. If, to this number, we add the many millions who were killed and deported during collectivization, we can get some sense of the huge shortages of able-bodied men in the Soviet countryside in the 1930s.

64. TsMAM, f 150, op. 25, d. 83, l. 26. We find an identical sentiment expressed by Seligeeva, a secretary of a party cell in a kolkhoz in the black-earth region. She was obviously resentful of the fact that men from the village ran away during collectivization. When they returned the women refused to feed them or pay them although they worked the equivalent of forty-five trudodens (workdays). RTsKhiDNI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 483, l. 21.

65. Joan Wilson, “Domesticity as the Dangerous Supplement of Liberalism,” *Journal of Women’s History*, no. 3 (1991): 60–80; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic : Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).

66. Jessica Tovrov, *The Russian Noble Family: Structure and Change* (New York: Garland, 1987); David L. Ransel, ed., *The Family in Imperial Russia: New Lines of Historical Research*

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Samuel C. Ramer, "Childbirth and Culture: Midwifery in the Russian Countryside," in Farnsworth and Viola, *Russian Peasant Women*, 107-120; David L. Ransel, "Infant Care Cultures in the Russian Empire," in Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Engels, and Christine Worobec eds., *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 113-34.

67. For early Soviet efforts to instruct the population in scientific notions of obstetrics and child rearing, see E. D. Emelianova, *Revoliutsiia, partiia, zhenshchina* (Smolensk, 1971), 151-58; Elizabeth Waters, "The Modernization of Russian Motherhood," *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 1 (1992): 123-35; Fanina Halle, *Women in Soviet Russia* (London 1934), 148-52; Susan M. Kingsbury and Mildred Fairchild, *Factory Family and Woman in the Soviet Union* (New York: AMS Press, 1935), 145-56; A. Kollontai, "Pervye shagi po okhrane materinstva," reprinted in *Iz moei zhizni i raboty* (Moscow, 1974), 336-40.

68. F. Niurina, "O slave zhenskoi, o radosti materinskoi, o gordosti sovetskoi. (Materialy dlia doklada i besed o 8 marta)," in *Materialy k mezhdunarodnomu kommunisticheskomu zhenskomu dniu. 8 marta, 1936* (Rostov-Don, 1936), 28-53.

69. Cited in Irina Korovushkina, "Gender Equality under Real Socialism: Women and Their Careers in the USSR, 1930s-1960s," in Andrea Peto and Mark Pittaway eds., *Women in History-Women's History: Central and East European Perspectives*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1994), 101.

70. Chiara Saraceno, "Redefining Maternity and Paternity: Gender, Pronatalism, and Social Policies in Fascist Italy," and Gisela Bock, "Antinatalism, Maternity, and Paternity in National Socialist Racism," in *Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s*, ed. Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (London: Routledge, 1991); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987); Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

71. *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1937): 18-23; *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1938): 10-11; *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 3 (February 1939): 33; F. Zborskaia, "Sovetskaia mat'," *Obshchestvenitsa*, no. 1 (August 1936): 14-15; "Schastliveiishaia v mire mat'," *Obshchestvenitsa*, no. 6 (June 1938): 3-5; F. E. Niurina, *Patriotki sovetskoi strany* (SSSR, 1937), 55; K. Nikolaeva, *Zhenshchina za boiakh za kommunizm* (Moscow, 1940), 11. The theme of differential birth rates was also highlighted in Women's Day articles published by the International Women's Secretariat of the Comintern in the 1930s. RTsKhiDNI, f. 507, op. 2, d. 243, ll. 18; f. 507, op. 2, ll. 24-26 d. 242.

72. Dr. E. Konius, "Strana schastlivogo materinstva," *Obshchestvenitsa*, no. 5, (1937): 16. Women's Day articles highlighted the complete lack of governmental concern for pregnant women in fascist countries. "8 marta—mezhdunarodnyi kommunisticheskii zhenskii den'. Materialy dlia dokladov i besed," *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1938): 10.

73. *Pravda*, 12 March 1936, 4.
74. For typical Soviet hyperbole on the care expended on children, see V. Zorin, “Vospitanie novogo pokolenie,” *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 4 (1936): 3–4 ; M. Amshinskii, “Schastlivye deti schastlivoi strany,” *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 5 (1936): 24–26; A. S. Berliand, *Okhrana materinstva i mladenchestva* (Moscow, 1935); B. Papernova, “Woman in Socialist Construction: On Equal Terms with Man,” *Soviet Cultural Review*, no. 2 (1933): 30.
75. M. Shaburova, “Rabotnitsa i kolkhoznitsa v peredovye riady,” *Pravda*, 8 March 1933, 2. See also Krupskaiia’s speech in *Vtoroi vsesoiuznyi s’ezd kolkhoznikov-udarnikov, 11–17 fevralia 1935g. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1935), 116–17; *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 4 (February 1937): 17–18, In an article entitled, “Zakon schastlivogo materinstvo,” *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 7 (July 1939), the writer reported a terrible incident at a crèche in which, due to the indifference of care-givers, an infant dislocated its arm. Naturally, this greatly alarmed the local mothers who, after the incident, did not want to put their children in day care. The writer exhorted the obshchestvennitsy (wives of Industrialists and Engineering Technical Personnel) to step up their efforts to improve services at local day-care centers. Cf. note 18 above.
76. There were comparable organizations such as the Wives of Leaders of Light Industry and the Wives of Commanders and Leaders of the Red Army. For a good survey, see Mary Buckley, “The Untold Story of Obshchestvennitsa in the 1930s,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 4 (1996): 569–86.
77. M. Sokolova, “V pomoshch’ materiam i detiam,” *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 1 (1938): 36; *Zheny inzhenerov i tekhnikov i tekhniko* (Profizdat, 1936); V. Shveitzer and A. Ul’rikh, *Zheny komandirov tiazheloi promyshlennosti* (Moscow, 1936).
78. Lur’i, “Mat’,” 12–13.
79. *Mart’ 1937*, directed by I. Setkina, Souiz Kinozhurnal, T-I 2190, TsGAKFD.
80. A. Kollontai, “Mezhdunarodnyi zhenskii den’”, RTsKhIDNI, f. 134, op. 1, d. 238, ll. 96–100. A recently published memoir of an obshchestvennitsa from the 1930s details her exhaustion in trying to play both a public and private role. But at the same time the author appears reluctant to give up her community activity and devote herself full-time to the care of her family. “Diary of Galina Vladimirovna Shtange,” in Veronique Garros, *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s* (New York: New Press, 1995), 167–217.
81. *Pravda*, 26 May 1936, 1; “Schastliveiishaia v mire mat’,” *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 6 (June 1938): 3; G. N. Serebrennikov, *The Position of Women in the U.S.S.R.* (London, 1937), 261–77.
82. Even during the 1920s abortion was perceived as a necessary evil, and the Zhenotdel, the OMM, and doctors in nursing homes fought against granting permission for abortion. See *Sbornik instruksii otдела TsK.RKP po rabote sredi zhenshchin* (Moscow, 1920), 76–77; Wendy

Goldman, "Women, Abortion, and the State, 1917–1936," in Clements et al., ed., *Russia's Women*, 243–66.

83. For letters from women criticizing the 1936 restrictions on abortion see RTsKHiDNI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 588, l. 55; *Pravda*, 6 June 1936, 4; 1 June 1936, 4; 4 June 1936, 3; 30 June 1936, 4.

84. Postanovlenie Soveta Narodnikh Kommissarov RSFSR, 8 September 1938. "O khode vypolneniia postanovleniia TsIK i SNK SSSR ot 27.6.1936 otnoshenii zapreshcheniia abortov," TsGA, f. 482, op. 29, d. 5, ll. 9–10.

85. *Ibid.*, l. 11.

86. *Ibid.*, ll. 17, 18, 19, 28, 29.

87. For articles celebrating motherhood and outlining the evil effects of abortion, see *Rabotnitsa*, no. 17 (July 1936): 4–6; no. 18 (July 1936): 12–13; *Pravda*, 12 March 1936, 4; 10 March 1936, 4; Dr. V. Iushkova, "Kakoi' vred prinosit zhenshchine abort," *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 20 (1937): 38–39; Janet Evans, "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Women's Question: The Case in the 1936 Decree 'In Defense of Mother and Child,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 16 (1981): 757–75.

88. *Izvestiia*, 8 March 1938, 1.

89. See, for example, a letter from a woman worker to *Rabotnitsa*, no. 16 (July 1936): 6. She castigates men who take advantage of their wives' illiteracy to force them to have abortions. S. Kapelianskaia, "Zashchita prav materi i rebenka," *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 5 (1937): 18, makes the same point. Blaming men for abortions while celebrating the maternal instincts of women was an old Bolshevik line, popular among social conservatives in the 1920s such as Sofia Smidovich, former head of the Zhenotdel. For a discussion of this issue see Beatrice Farnsworth, *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Question* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1980), 336–67.

90. A. Agranovskii, "Materinstvo," *Molodaia gvardiia*, January 1936, 178.

91. Wendy Goldman, *Women, The State, and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 327–31.

92. Masha Scott, in an interview with Pearl Buck, recalled that her mother used to wave her collective farm card in her husband's face and taunt him, "'You always said you supported me. Now you see I am earning as much as you', she declared. 'So I have as much to say as you have, don't I? You had better not say anything more to me.'" Pearl S. Buck, *Talk About Russia with Masha Scott* (New York: John Day, 1945), 37. But this system was not foolproof. In many kolkhozes the workdays completed by women were usually registered in their husbands' tables. In some kolkhozes in Uzbekistan, husbands actually confiscated their wives' workbooks. See

E. K. Kravchenko, *Krest'ianka pri sovetskoj vlasti* (Moscow, 1932), 39.

93. "Rech na prieme kol'khoznits-udarnits sveklovichnykh polei rukovoditeliami partii i pravitel'stva," 10 November 1935, in Robert McNeal ed., *Stalin: Works*, 74–77, Vol. I (XIV). Kalinin, in a speech to Congress of the kolkhozniki-udarniki of the Northern Caucasus, expressed almost the identical sentiments. M. I. Kalinin, *Stat'i i rechi* (Moscow, 1935), 107–08.

94. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 7 March 1937, 3, carried a story of a peasant girl from Siberia who, thanks to the help from the Komsomol, became a student at the Moscow conservatory as an opera singer and even appeared as a soloist at the Bolshoi Theater.

95. See A. Kollontai's articles and speeches written for International Women's Day in 1933, 1934, and 1937, RTsKhIDNI, f. 134, op. 1, d. 238, ll. 2, 4, 34, 35, and 99.

96. See E. Iaroslavsky's strictures to irresponsible men in the article, "Kommunisticheskaia moral," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 30 May 1936; "Ot'ets," *Pravda*, 9 June 1936. In a letter to the journal *Obshchestvennitsa*, a wife of an engineer at Magnitostroi complained in detailed length that despite her relative youth and willingness to work, her husband wanted her to remain at home, pour his coffee, take care of his clothes, and listen to his grumbling at the end of the hard day. He refused to let his wife join the obshchestvennitsy movement and became almost incapable of work himself if his wife wasn't around to minister to his every need. The wife feared the engineer's temper and wanted advice and help from the editors of the journal on how to take up some meaningful occupation without suing for divorce. The letter writer obviously knew which way the state's sympathies lay. *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 6 (June 1939): 46. Aleksandra Kuznetsova, caught in a similar situation with her husband, had little trouble in telling him that he could either live with her or leave. *Zhenshchina v strane sovetov: V pomosche besedchikam i agitatoram* (OGIZ, 1938), 30. In a story about an exemplary worker family, one journalist highlighted the fact that Kriuchikhin, a metal worker, was deeply involved in his daughters' schoolwork. "Schast'ie rabochei sem'i," *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 19 (October 1938): 27.

97. *Pravda*, 11 March 1936, 1. See the article entitled, "Zhenshchiny nashei rodiny," in which men are upbraided for not doing their fair share in parenting. See also D. Bakhshiev, "O liubvi, sem'e i brake," in *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 10 (October 1939): 33–34; Nikolaeva, *Zhenshchiny v boiakh za kommunizm*, 21–22.

98. *Pravda*, 11 November 1935, 1. Orators echoed the dictum at every opportunity. "Mezhdunarodnyi kommunisticheskii zhenskii den': Materialy dlia dokladov i besed," *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 3 (February 1939): 32.

99. For the "thank you Stalin letters," see *Pravda*, 11 March 1936, 1; 10 March 1938, 1; 10 March 1939, 4; *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, no. 14 (1936): 14. See also the collection of letters collated in "O proshlom i nastoiashchem," *Obshchestvennitsa*, no. 3 (March 1938). Similarly, Stalin's personal contribution to women's liberation and their public expressions of gratitude were acknowledged in every biographical sketch of famous Soviet women.

100. *Pravda*, 8 March 1937, 3, uses the phrase “miraculous transformation” when speaking of a Stakhanovite worker, Tamra Vladimirova, who went from being an unskilled laborer to the leader of a labor team with twenty workers under her command.

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