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From *Krestianka* to *Udarnitsa*

Rural Women and the *Vydvizhenie* Campaign, 1933-1941

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Introduction

"We have never had such women before. I am fifty six years old already, I have seen some sights, I've seen plenty of working men and women. But I have never met women like these. These are entirely new people. Only free labor, only kolkhoz labor could have produced such labor heroines in the countryside."
— *Stalin,* 1933

"The kolkhoz system, having put an end to the backwardness and poverty of individual peasant farming, at the same time eliminated the basis of the centuries-old oppression of women in the peasant family. Soviet power won equal rights for women in the countryside, when it helped the peasants move from the individual to the kolkhoz path."
— *Ia. A. Iakovlev,* 1936

"Our revolution and our collective farm system alone have trained peasant women to be genuine heroines capable of performing marvels of socialist labor."
— *A. V. Kosarev,* 1936[1]

From the end of the first five-year plan onward, the Soviet Communist Party faced a chronic failure of its program for transforming the Soviet countryside from a cultural and economic backwater to an advanced, industrial society. The Party tried to cope with runaway labor turnover and consequent cadre shortages in one important way by attempting to mobilize a huge potential labor pool that had remained almost completely unexposed to modern technology: peasant women. In 1933, Stalin personally initiated a comprehensive campaign to tap this potential by actively requiring that peasant women be trained to operate heavy farm machinery, and that the most capable women be promoted to higher positions such as brigade leader,

kolkhoz chairman, and rural Party positions. This program was driven by profound pragmatism and hard-core ideology: It offered practical help for a desperate situation while being neatly consistent with the orthodox Bolshevik ideological line on the "woman question," which could be traced straight to Engels' ideas in *The Origins of Family, Private Property, and the State*. It was, simultaneously, a reflection of the genuine aspiration toward the ultimate *smychka*, the cultural transformation that was the heart of collectivization: By remaking the Soviet *krestianka* to resemble her newly liberated urban sisters, the Party could begin to modernize and urbanize peasant society and also cope with the acute agricultural labor shortage by exploiting what it recognized as a rich potential source of skilled labor.

The creation of a new role and place for women in rural society was an important component of the industrial utopian transformation Stalin tried to effect in the Soviet countryside during the 1930s. It is also an excellent example of how economic and cultural goals continued to be inextricably combined in this period. Beginning in 1929, a serious and sustained effort was begun to remake the culturally backward krestianka into a modern, urban Soviet woman, primarily by changing her economic role and her relation to agricultural production, in combination with cultural campaigns and the creation of institutions that would ease her domestic burdens. The assumption was that if women could achieve equality in the workplace, they would also *ipso facto* gain greater equality in other spheres of life, and the new gender equality would rapidly eradicate the backward attitudes that had traditionally oppressed peasant women. In turn, the emerging recognition of women's equality on the production and home fronts would facilitate the release of the huge productive potential of rural women, which would be crucial in allowing the agricultural sector to reach a par with industry and in eradicating the rural-urban gulf.

This program has received little attention from historians, as has the broader topic of women in the 1930s Soviet Union. However, it is fair to say that such work that has appeared has been influenced strongly by a feminist interpretation.[2] The broad outlines of this view was summarized concisely in a recent collection of essays on Russian women, as follows: The Bolsheviks emerged from the October Revolution

with "a thoroughgoing agenda for social and economic change that included transforming working women's lives" through a whole series of "women-oriented initiatives from above [that] helped foster the mobilization of lower class women from below."[3] These progressive feminist policies were pursued throughout the 1920s, even though they met considerable resistance from men, both in the Party and especially outside it, whose overriding interest lay in preserving the dominance they enjoyed under the traditional Russian patriarchy. By the 1930s, however, Krupskaia and Kollontai had lost favor, Stalin seized power, and the Party's policies regarding women changed dramatically. The *Zhenotdel* (the Women's Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) was eliminated, divorce and abortion laws were changed, homosexuality was outlawed, and the family was rehabilitated. "All political challenges to the Stalinist synthesis of transformation and tradition were suppressed. The proletarian women who had spoken out in defense of their own interests during the 1920s were silenced, and issues relating to women's liberation disappeared from the political agenda."[4] This supposed about-face is widely cited as a symptom of the broader phenomenon of increasing social conservatism called "the Great Retreat," after Timasheff.[5]

Evidence supporting such an interpretation is not easy to find in the collectivized countryside, where developments were underway that directly contradict the idea of a reversal of the pro-women policies of the 1920s. The years between 1933 and World War II witnessed a tremendous glorification of Soviet kolkhoz women, the creation of a vivid, omnipresent mythology of the heroine of socialist labor who came to represent the entire agricultural sector. The discussion of the transformation of the countryside under collectivization in all forms of mass media was filled with pictures and stories about women, in which the constant emphasis was not on any nurturing, maternal, or subservient role but rather on their independence, their contribution to social production, and their rapid cultural advancement. The press, both newspapers and popular magazines such as *Krestianka* and *Na Stroike MTS i Sovkhozov,* was packed with photos of women gathered in reading rooms poring over books, listening to radios, ordering sophisticated factory-made goods

from Moscow, smiling atop tractors in the fields, breaking records in all areas of agriculture, attending congresses in Moscow to bask in Stalin's presence, and being elected to the Supreme Soviet. Popular "tractor movies" of the time by directors such as Ivan Pyr'ev were filled with strong heroines who led tractor brigades, broke production records, and earned the admiration of their male colleagues. Real-life Stakhanovite record-setters such as Pasha Angelina and Maria Demchenko were admitted to the pantheon of national heroes, achieving a level of fame and prestige equal to that of Stakhanov himself, and certainly unparalleled by any of their male counterparts. Posters were filled with larger-than-life kolkhoz women urging their backward, uncollectivized sisters to partake of the abundance and enlightenment that the kolkhoz offered, and to give their all for ever higher harvest records once they joined. The *kolkhoznitsa* was portrayed in heroic socialist realist works of sculpture, in paintings, and in monuments. With the folklore revival of the mid- to late 1930s, the emancipation of peasant women was the topic of many pseudo-folk tales and songs, especially the new genre called the "Soviet lament," invented specifically to contrast the kolkhoznitsa's newfound joy and freedom with the miserable lot she had once suffered.[6] The attention paid to kolkhoz women, and the universal tendency to portray them as heroic, progressive heroines of socialist labor, were in fact so prevalent that it is no exaggeration to speak of a cult of the *kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa*. Although this cult always represented a profound distortion of the brutal reality experienced by rural women, it offers important insights into the central Party leadership's attitudes toward and aspirations for rural women during this period. These aspirations were, in turn, consistently presented as a fundamental component of the cultural and economic transformation that collectivization was supposed to produce.

The Party Line: "Women Are a Great Force on the *Kolkhozy*"

A key component of the initial promise presented by the Party to the peasants during collectivization was that the collective farm system would emancipate women. The rural press of the first plan years was filled with photographs of peasant *babas* struggling over their primers and examining tractor engines, and short stories about the liberating benefits of literacy. The kolkhoz was portrayed as the only route to a better life for women, because the machines on the kolkhoz freed peasants' time for studying, the kolkhoz had reading rooms where the peasant could find books and newspapers, and the kolkhoz kitchens and nursery schools gave women time off from housework and child care.[7] After 1929, Stalin consistently decreed that the peasants could raise their cultural level only through collectivized agriculture. On this point, indeed, he had the luxury of referring relatively accurately to Lenin's opinions of the early 1920s. In any case, the idea that the emancipation of women from their traditional gender role was considered an important index of rising peasant culture became, if anything, more critical to Stalin's policy in the countryside after 1933 and remained very important throughout the decade.

However, the passing of the first into the second five-year plan witnessed a broad shift in emphasis in Stalinist political culture, from the collective heroics of millions of workers together to the individual heroics of the shock work ethos. Accordingly, the principle of peasant women's liberation through the kolkhoz system was expanded and transformed into a pervasive glorification of the heroic achievements of individual labor heroines on the farms. If any single event can be identified as giving birth to the Stalinist cult of the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa, it is Stalin's speech at the First Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers in February 1933. This speech was given extremely wide exposure in the press, included in Stalin's *Problems of Leninism*, and invoked and quoted through the rest of the 1930s in discussions of rural social policy nearly as frequently as his statement that "life is becoming happier." In this speech, Stalin acknowledged that many comrades in the audience underestimated the importance of women on the kolkhoz, and even laughed

at them. "But that," he warned, "is a mistake, comrades, a serious mistake." He went on,

> The point, above all, is that the kolkhoz movement has promoted a number of remarkable and capable women to leading positions. Look at this congress, at the delegates, and you will realize that women have long ago ceased to be backward and have come into the front ranks. Women on the collective farms are a great force.[8]

From here, it was a natural step to identify the remarkable and capable representatives of this great force; and so pictures and news stories on exemplars of the new type of record-breaking kolkhoznitsa became a staple of the Soviet press for the rest of the decade. From this point on, a mass media campaign began, designed to create and glorify a mythical cult image of the new woman supposedly being created by the kolkhoz system. This campaign gathered tremendous strength as it combined with the Stakhanovite movement in 1935 and continued until the outbreak of the war. By the second half of the 1930s, this heroic figure—no matter how unrepresentative she was compared with the real women on the farms—acquired an iconographic importance second only to that of the tractor itself as a symbol of the wonderful new life that Stalin's wise guidance had brought to the peasants. This change, indeed, was the crux of the matter, the point of the cult. Who was the mythical image on which this praise was heaped? She was the udarnitsa, the *rekordistka*, the Stakhanovite. Why was a collective farm udarnitsa worthy of having her picture on the front page of *Pravda,* personally meeting Stalin, even being elected to the Supreme Soviet? She symbolized the new, urbanized countryside. She had acquired all of the characteristics that identified her with the urban sisters and distinguished her from her backward predecessor, the krestianka, symbol of the old.

What were these characteristics? First, given the vastly accelerated emphasis on production and economic life that permeated all aspects of Stalinist society, it is not surprising that the new kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa was defined overwhelmingly by

her role in production—and specifically, social production, which was the function of the collective farm. The krestianka had been defined by her role in the family; of course she had taken a considerable part in production, but the unit of production was the family, which made it by definition primitive or at best petty-bourgeois. The kolkhoznitsa, in contrast, was a competent, productive worker, actively involved in the collective farm. She was a valuable contributor to the social welfare, whose importance was not to be underestimated. As Stalin said, she was a great force on the farms. Indeed, she was often portrayed as an *udarnik* or Stakhanovite breaking records in all realms of agriculture.

Second, although she was sometimes a milkmaid or shepherdess, she was most commonly portrayed as a "mechanizer," usually a tractor driver or tractor brigade leader. That is, she was a highly trained specialist who had "mastered the technology." This was important, because the connection with advanced technology was a definitive characteristic of the new countryside and was similarly fundamental in distinguishing the kolkhoznitsa from her former persona. The krestianka, mired in religious superstition, had been ignorant, mistrustful, and fearful of technology; the krestianka-udarnitsa went to the tractor-driving course, studied day and night, and mastered the technology. This respect for technology was an indication of her advancement and a symbol of the changes in gender roles that the new system tried to promote. Because such machinery that made its way into the countryside before 1929 had been automatically assumed to be the province of the men, the profession of driving and repairing it had been considered men's work. The *traktoristka*, therefore, by appropriating dominance over this prestigious and critical position in the rural economy, was proving that women could make an economic contribution no less important than men's.

Third, in stark contrast with the narrow self-interest so characteristic of peasant production, the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa adopted a profoundly "Bolshevik" attitude toward her work and duty to contribute to society. That is, she was completely committed to increasing her own and her comrades' productivity; she

derived joy from making a valuable contribution to improving the prosperity of the Soviet people. Her outlook was collectivist rather than individualist.

Fourth, whereas the krestianka had been ruled by superstition, passivity, and fatalism, grimly accepting oppression and poverty as the natural result of God's will, the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa had thrown off the shackles of religious fatalism and was taking control of her own life. In consonance with the hypervoluntarism and pseudoscientific ethos of Stakhanovism, she had boundless contempt for the idea of objective limits and modest production norms. The idea of peasants taking control of their environment and their lives through rational organization, collective effort, and science and technology was a crucial component of the ethos of Stalin's rural revolution, and the contrast between the former attitude of passive resignation and the new activism was illustrated more compellingly by the heroic new *kolkhoznitsy* than by anyone else.

Finally, whereas the krestianka had been illiterate and ignorant, and therefore poor and culturally "dark," the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa rose out of illiteracy as a result of her insatiable thirst for knowledge. She was cosmopolitan and well informed, and she engaged in political issues and international developments. She had acquired urban tastes, wanted to wear factory-made clothes, listen to the radio, and watch films. She had undergone a cultural revolution.

This, then, is the pattern: The udarnitsa heroine was defined by her contrast with the old-fashioned krestianka. She was glorified because she was completely transformed by the Stalinist program in the countryside. Of course, this is not really surprising, given the overriding cultural-transformative goals of Stalin's agrarian program. In his report to the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934, Stalin described the great cultural revolution supposedly occurring in the countryside and the importance of the new role of women connected with it. The old type of village was disappearing, he claimed, and being replaced by the enlightened new village with its clubs, schools, crèches, and modern machinery. As one indication of this cultural progress, Stalin specifically cited the increased activity of the kolkhoznitsy in social

and organizational work, including service as kolkhoz chairmen, brigade leaders, members of kolkhoz boards, and tractor drivers.[9]

Of course, this cultural revolution was not strictly a women's affair; it was equally intended to transform the *muzhik* (peasant) into a worker, and all of the characteristics that defined the new kolkhoznitsa are similar to those that distinguished the new progressive enlightened kolkhoznik from his predecessor the peasant. But one further trait, peculiar to the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa, is of paramount importance: She was financially independent. Unlike the krestianka, who had been forced by economic necessity to remain in a relationship that often amounted to little more than slavery (looking back from the mid-1930s, it was often called that),[10] the new kolkhoznitsa had achieved economic liberation as a result of the kolkhoz system and, in particular, the mechanism of the labor day. The economic opportunity offered equally to men and women under this system had freed women from the domestic bondage under which they had suffered for centuries. She was no longer treated like property, because she was no longer beholden to her father or husband. She made her own wages, and if her husband objected she could order him out without fear; in fact, now she did not need to marry at all if she did not wish. The krestianka had been enslaved by the patriarchal institution of marriage and the patriarchal peasant economy; the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa transcended her traditional peasant gender role and acquired an entirely new one.

Stalin described this new independence in incomparably explicit terms in his speech to the November 1935 congress of the "Five Hundreders" (*piatisotnitsy*), an elite group of women members of tractor brigades whose sugar beet harvest during the previous season had exceeded 500 centners per hectare. Stalin's brief speech on this occasion deserves considerable scrutiny, because it establishes unambiguously the core assumptions about the nature of the gender role transformation that collectivization was supposed to bring to the old-style krestianka. He began by stating that the five hundreders represented the new socialist life, because they had accomplished heroic feats that were impossible under the old system. They were, indeed, a completely new phenomenon:

> We have never had such women before. I am fifty six years old already, I have seen some sights, I've seen plenty of working men and women. But I have never met women like these. These are entirely new people. Only free labor, only kolkhoz labor could have produced such labor heroines in the countryside.
> There were not, nor could there have been such women in the old days.[11]

Stalin credited the arrival of these completely new workers to the institutions of the kolkhoz and the labor day, which served as equalizers of men's and women's work. In the old days, he noted, because peasant women worked like slaves for their fathers until they were married and for their husbands thereafter, all work was drudgery and a curse to women. All this was changed by the new economic order under collective farming.

> Only collective farm life could have destroyed inequality and put the woman on her feet. That you know very well yourselves. The collective farm introduced the work-day. And what is the work-day? Before the work-day all are equal—men and women. Here neither father nor husband can reproach a woman with the fact that he is feeding her. Now if a woman works and has work-days to her credit, she is her own master.[12]

Stalin continued with an anecdote about a kolkhoznitsa he had spoken with, who joked that two years ago no one even thought of marrying her; but now that she has a credit of 500 work-days, the suitors were overwhelming her with marriage proposals. However, she said, she was now in no hurry and would take her time and choose her own man. He continued,

> The collective farm has liberated woman and made her independent by means of the work-days. She no longer works for her father when she is unmarried and for her husband when she is married, but works primarily

> for herself. And that is just what is meant by the emancipation of peasant women; that is just what is meant by the collective farm which makes the working women the equal of every working man.[13]

This concept of emancipation clearly demonstrated Stalin's overwhelming emphasis on economic factors as determinants of society and culture. In his view, the patriarchy of the old peasant world was supported and perpetuated solely by the property relations that prevailed under conditions of peasant production; if the production system were replaced, a new culture would naturally arise as well. This crude economic determinism was the essence of industrial utopianism.

I would emphasize that this unambiguous ideological line was laid down, and by this most authoritative of sources, at the very end of 1935—the year of the preparation of new abortion and divorce laws, supposedly the culmination of the Great Retreat, when the final nails were pounded in the coffin of the progressive pro-women legislation of the 1920s, the turning point when the Party threw its weight behind a campaign of glorifying the family and the woman's maternal nurturing role in it. But the new labor heroine, the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa, was definitely *not* characterized as maternal, nor as an obedient, comforting, subservient bourgeois wife. In defining her persona, the complete emphasis was on her heroic productive qualities and her independence: She took the initiative in going to school and acquiring skills, she drove the tractor, earned her own wage, set her own production records, brought home her own bacon—and all of this, very often, despite resistance and ridicule from the as-yet unenlightened men on the farm. When she earned high bonuses for her work (and the press placed plenty of stress on the high bonuses she was paid, as it did in discussion of all Stakhanovites), she did not hand the money over to her husband or spend it on cradles or toys for her children; she splurged on herself or her home, buying new dresses, curtains, fancy shoes, or a sewing machine.[14] Indeed, we very seldom learn if she is married or has any children. She earned her reputation on her independent accomplishments, and one of her great accomplishments was precisely this independence. As in the anecdote Stalin related

to the five-hundreders, if suitors were now flocking to her because of her prestige and high earnings, she was perfectly at liberty to turn them away. In February 1935, Agriculture Chief Iakov A. Iakovlev related a story remarkably similar to Stalin's, about an udarnitsa he had recently met who told him she was in no hurry to choose a husband because she was making such good money.[15] An Armenian kolkhoz brigade leader in 1936 also stressed the independence that her new economic status had brought: "Now our kolkhoz women have become free, now they sometimes earn more than their husbands. And when you earn more than your husband, how can he oppress you? That makes him curb his tongue."[16] This attitude of economic self-sufficiency was applauded and encouraged by the Party and was, again, a crucial defining characteristic of the new kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa.[17]

Of course, Stalin was not the only high-ranking Party leader to expound on the liberation the kolkhoz system had supposedly brought peasant women. For example, Soviet President Mikhail Kalinin, who was intensely occupied with agricultural affairs, stated essentially the same points in a March 1933 speech at the First Congress of Northern Caucasus Kolkhoz Shockworkers. Kalinin praised the "real patriots of kolkhoz construction," observing that "the main patriots" were the women, whom he called "the best defenders of the kolkhoz and of its strengthening." That was natural enough, he continued, because the kolkhoz system had liberated women from their thousand-year enslavement to a life of petty, deadening housework.[18]

At the Tenth Komsomol Congress in April 1936, Komsomol chief Kosarev emphasized the historic nature of the transformation of the Russian krestianka:

> Peasant women of all nations, including the Russian nation before the Great October Revolution, never had their own genuine heroines. The Russian peasant woman was only a heroine of suffering, poverty, and privation, and it was as such that she was once sung by the poet Nekrassov [sic]. Our revolution and our collective farm system alone have trained peasant women to be genuine heroines capable of performing marvels of socialist labor.[19]

However, this ethos of the kolkhoznitsa's new-found independence and economic prominence, and the program of gender role restructuring, was nowhere expressed with greater prominence—and more importantly, given more enthusiastic Party approval—than at the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers in February 1935. This meeting was called primarily to discuss and vote on the draft of the Model Kolkhoz Charter, which would thereafter serve as the rules and regulations governing the nation's kolkhozy. The charter itself contained several sections that protected the rights and interests of women on the farms, most notably the much-praised clause requiring that the workload be lightened for all pregnant kolkhoznitsy and guaranteeing them a paid maternity leave for one month before and one month after the birth of each child.[20] The delegates heard brief speeches from dozens of kolkhoz farmers, both men and women; each followed a standard pattern, touching one after another on a small number of required points such as the stunning success of the collective farming system, the rising level of culture and prosperity on the farms, the great increase in the quality of life thanks to the wise policies of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, and so on. Very prominent and frequently mentioned as well (more frequently by women, but also by male delegates) was how the liberation the kolkhoz system had brought to women, the improvement in their lives since the revolution had arrived in the countryside, and the great gratitude women felt for the protective guarantees being offered by the new charter.

Women were very prominent in the audience at the Second Congress. They constituted nearly one-third of the delegates (442, or 30.8 percent of the total), which was in fact far higher than the actual proportion of women among udarniki in the countryside at that time. Indeed, Nikolai I. Yezhov, who would later become chief of the N.K.V.D., spoke at length on the encouragingly high level of female *aktivnost'* that this attendance rate indicated; after all, the proportion of women delegates at the First Congress, two years earlier, had been less than 15 percent, and the increase was viewed as an indication of the rising cultural level in the countryside. However, Yezhov continued, such a level was still "completely insufficient," and the level of women's active participation, although laudable, must

be further increased.[21] Iakovlev also devoted a section of his lengthy keynote speech to women and the need to increase their involvement in leadership roles and in the most prestigious jobs on the farms. And in a speech he gave to Moscow and Leningrad party activists shortly afterward to discuss the results of the congress, Iakovlev again placed considerable stress on the issue of women's equality and promotion, noting that the kolkhoznitsy-udarnitsy at the Congress

> showed by their example how the kolkhoz system, having put an end to the backwardness and poverty of individual peasant farming, at the same time eliminated the basis of the centuries-old oppression of women in the peasant family. Soviet power won equal rights for women in the countryside, when it helped the peasants move from the individual to the kolkhoz path.[22]

Nadezhda Krupskaia also spoke at length at the Second Congress, concentrating entirely on women's issues and education. She began by attempting to lend a historical continuity and legitimacy to Stalin's policies by referring to the 1910 International Women's Conference in Copenhagen, where Klara Zetkin had proposed the inauguration of International Women's Day, and by invoking Lenin's determined struggle for women's equality and his enduring faith in the kolkhoz system. She then made the connection to Stalin, noting that he was carrying on Lenin's struggle. "Everyone remembers, everyone knows Comrade Stalin's speech at the First Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers," she observed. "All the women present here have referred to that speech. It had a colossal significance. In the two years since then, life in the country has totally changed."[23] She then discussed the need for increasing literacy and culture among women, for training in the tractor driving courses, more kolkhoz reading rooms and libraries, and more well-organized and well-supplied communal nursery schools and trained daycare personnel. This last, not incidentally, was Krupskaia's only reference to children. Her speech contained not a whisper of any sacred duty to the family, joy of motherhood, domestic bliss, and so on; on the contrary, she concluded by observing that the new

Soviet kolkhoznitsa had rejected and left behind the archaic peasant tendency to care only for her own home and disregard the social welfare. "This shows," she concluded, "that the old, petty bourgeois outlook—that it is everyone for himself, and the Lord God will look out for all—that this view has faded into the past and that now a proletarian psychology is beginning to take root on the kolkhozy, an understanding of how to approach all kinds of issues in a proletarian way."[24] These references to a proletarian culture are a vivid indication of the continuing relevance of the ethos of industrial utopianism.

The more emancipated economic and social role of women was an important part of the new urban culture that was supposed to be replacing peasant backwardness on the kolkhozy. In the words of Karl Marx, quoted in a 1933 Soviet journal article, "Social progress may be gauged with accuracy by the social status of the feminine sex."[25] On many occasions Stalin fully endorsed this principle, as for instance when he observed at the Seventeenth Party Congress that the increasing active participation of kolkhoz women in the realm of social and organizational work was "a gratifying fact and an indication of the growth of *kulturnost'* in the countryside."[26] But other aspects of the krestianka's transformation were given a great deal of attention as well. Among these was the supposed acquisition of more refined urban tastes of all kinds, especially a demand for radios and films, but including new tastes for everything urban, from clothes to musical instruments to bicycles to alarm clocks. The spread of more refined, city tastes was observed in both sexes, but women seem to have received more attention. Moreover, as a result of the strict materialism prevailing at the time, labor heroism and urbanization were portrayed as directly proportional: The most dedicated and productive shock workers also were the fastest to acquire urban tastes. A Kharkov delegate at the Second Congress described the hunger for culture among the members of his kolkhoz, especially the udarnitsy, who craved political education. Thirteen political schools had been organized already, including two exclusively for women, "but that's not enough," he proclaimed. "The kolkhozniki are crying, 'Give us more.'" The masses were also demanding movies, and quality ones at that. "People think: they are kolkhozniki, which means they are

peasants, backward, and you can give backward people old stuff. Not so. The kolkhozniki have matured culturally and are demanding the same movies as are shown in the city."[27] The press was filled with stories about the growing prosperity and increasingly urban tastes of the kolkhoz masses; for instance, a Belorussian calf-herder gushed in late 1935 that collectivization had literally made the peasants' dreams come true: "Our houses are becoming cultured, there is wallpaper on the walls, just like in the city, and some even have painted floors."[28] This same observation was made by food commissar Anastas Mikoyan, in a 1936 discussion of the bread-baking industry:

> Do you think you can induce our women tractor drivers, harvester combine operators, such women as Maria Demchenko and others, to sit at home and bake bread and to wear homespun? That won't work now! They are changed people, they are demanding factory made goods, including factory made foods, so as to be able to devote their time more rationally to production, driving a tractor or harvester combine, to cultural work and to tending their children.
> The face of our country, the face of our cities and villages, has changed. Our people have also changed, and so have their habits.[29]

This acquisition of sophisticated urban tastes was an important part of the image of the independent, heroic udarnitsa-kolkhoznitsa that the Party embraced as official dogma during the middle and late 1930s to represent women in agriculture and to symbolize the complete cultural revolution. Whatever the accuracy of this image (and I will turn to this question later), it is an important historical fact. Even if the cult of the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa, like so much other socialist-realist mythology, depicted not life as it actually was but life "as it was becoming," it nonetheless should be regarded seriously and understood to reflect the hopes the central Party policy makers had for the new face of the countryside. Such hopes for rural women are difficult to fit into the interpretive framework of a Great Retreat or a sexual thermidor.

The Cult of the Kolkhoznitsa-Udarnitsa in the Mass Media

The theoretical or ideological line describing the character of the new kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa, laid down by Stalin and reinforced by official pronouncements from a wide spectrum of Party officials at the highest levels, was reinforced by a Soviet press campaign and the other mass media that depicted a prestigious, even exalted image of the new woman and made her a symbol of the larger changes Stalin's wise policies had brought to the backward peasantry. The primary method for this campaign was to focus intense fame on individual examples of competent, conscientious, and highly productive workers.

The most famous of these were the Ukrainian sugar beet farmer Maria Demchenko and the Ukrainian tractor brigade leader Praskovya Angelina (known everywhere as Pasha), who achieved superstar levels of fame and influence that placed them on par with Stakhanov, Petr Krivonos, and Maria and Evdokiia Vinogradova, and far exceeded the fame of any other agricultural labor heroes. In fact, in January 1936 Viacheslav Molotov was referring to "the Stakhanov-Vinogradova-Krivonos-Demchenko movement."[30] It was at the November 1935 Five Hundreders' Congress that Demchenko received her great boost to stardom, chiefly through the personal attention and effusive praise of Stalin and the whole Central Committee. Her name became a household word and remained so for the rest of the 1930s; she was consistently singled out as first among the new kolkhoz heroines, the nation's top agricultural rekordistka, the foremost exemplar of what the new kolkhoznitsa should be. Angelina was the organizer of the first all-women's tractor brigade in the USSR, and she made it her mission to use her brigade not only to break production records but also to train more than one hundred traktoristki, who then set off and established their own women's brigades at other machine tractor stations (MTSs). Her fame closely rivaled Demchenko's, and she later became a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet. These two labor heroines were certainly among the most famous persons in the USSR and were the inspiration for their entire generation of young tractor drivers and kolkhoz udarnitsy. In fact, it became a stock cliché in

biographical sketches of kolkhoznitsa heroines to observe that they had heard about Demchenko and Angelina and set their minds on emulating their feats. But there were many other kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa heroines—such as Anna Koshevaia, another of the five hundreders; Praskovia Kovardak, a tractor driver; and the flax harvester Anna Vorob'eva, called by *Pravda* in late 1935 "the most famous person in Kalininskaia oblast"[31] —who received lavish praise in the press and were held up as models for the new Soviet woman.

Although these women were singled out as superlative producers with the obvious intention of setting them as models all kolkhoznitsy should emulate, press coverage of their feats also tried to present them as representatives of the whole unsung collective of dedicated Soviet kolkhoznitsy. They were portrayed as merely the tip of an iceberg, the visible evidence that all of the women in the countryside were being transformed and leaving their former passive, ignorant, oppressed life behind. The usual formula for creating such an impression was to follow passages of praise for individual women with suggestions that many more heroines are at work, far too many to name. For instance, Agriculture Commissar M. A. Chernov, in his speech before the December 1935 conference of leading grain farmers, tractor drivers, and threshing machine operators, after singling out the accomplishments of Demchenko and Koshevaia and the rest of the five hundreders, suggested that the situation in sugar beets was not exceptional, and that the same growth in yields were being achieved in grain, cotton, and in fact every crop being grown on kolkhozy. "If I began to enumerate all the heroes," he concluded, "all the master grain growers, it would probably take up three or four days of our conference."[32] In her memoir, Pasha Angelina gave another example of how the labor heroines were representatives of rather than exceptions to the masses. "The chief thing is not my particular person," she stated, "but the fact that my elevation is not an exception." Contrasting her own fabulous fame with that of Lord Beaverbrook in England, she observes that he had risen from the ranks of the people to enter the peerage, whereas "*I rose with the people*, I became a heroine together with the whole of my heroic people. This is the chief thing."[33]

The most intense fervor over kolkhoz udarnitsy coincided with the initial frenzy of the Stakhanovite movement, in 1935 and 1936. Press adulation of these labor heroines continued through the decade, although after 1936 it was, like Stakhanovism, a somewhat subdued phenomenon. Still, articles in the agricultural and popular press continued through the later 1930s to publish hagiographic articles describing the miraculous transformation of the nation's krestianki. A good example is a March 1938 article, "Stakhanovite Women of the Kolkhoz Fields," which presented profiles of four heroic "leading women-kolkhoznitsy, who have distinguished themselves by their highly productive work for the glory of the motherland." It is no accident that these four are specifically identified as "glorious representatives of our heroic kolkhoznitsa-women, who have worked ceaselessly to strengthen the kolkhoz movement." The concluding sentence of one of their stories illustrates the way these women were intentionally presented as representatives of the much larger transformation of peasant society: "Thus, on our kolkhozy under the leadership of the party of Lenin and Stalin, out of former illiterate batraks are growing outstanding organizers of social production, leaders of the kolkhoz."[34]

The contribution of the new Soviet woman, the udarnitsa in the agricultural sector, was presented far out of proportion with her actual role and presence. By 1935, the udarnitsa dominated all discussion of the agricultural sector. Fame and prestige were heaped on record-setting milkmaids and swineherds (professions that, unlike tractor and combine driving, really were dominated by women); but the highest glory was reserved for the tractor drivers. For instance, in February 1939 *Pravda* published the complete list of medal-winning agricultural workers of all kinds, both men and women, in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The lists continued for three issues and contained 1,156 medal-winning men and women, of whom 346, or 30 percent, were women. These champion women, however, were not in the more prestigious professions: the most represented profession was kolkhoz field team leader (*zvenevaia*), closely followed by swine-tender and milkmaid; of the 346, only fifteen were traktoristki, and just five were combine operators. And yet notwithstanding this paucity of women "mechanizers," the *only* illustration

accompanying the lists, through all three issues of *Pravda*, was of a photo of Pasha Angelina, traktoristka, winner of the Order of Lenin, and Pasha's sister.[35]

Another indication of the disproportionate attention focused on traktoristki-udarnitsy is the simple fact that all of the famous tractor-driving heroes were women. Of course, plenty of men drove tractors and overfulfilled the norm, but they were rarely raised to even the second-rank fame of Kovardak, for instance. There were a few very famous male Stakhanovite combine operators—S. V. Polagutin and the Oskin brothers particularly come to mind—but the tractors were reserved for women. And even notwithstanding a certain level of attention paid to male Stakhanovite kolkhozniki, it was not unusual for women's names to dominate the discussion, at Party meetings and in the press, of the heroic successes being won in agriculture. For instance, when at the 1938 second session of the Supreme Soviet the notorious Lysenkoite quack N. V. Tsitsin spoke at length on the accomplishments of kolkhoz Stakhanovites in the Omsk region, all of the exemplars he cited were women.[36] And many of the pseudo-folkloric poems and tales propagated during the latter 1930s emphasized the prestigious positions women held on the prosperous new kolkhozy, as in the following passage from A. M. Pashkova's 1939 song, "You Are Our Bright Sunshine":

> How the kolkhoz fields bloom!
> How the sovkhoz herds go forth!
> Our poor little children
> Now study in high schools;
> Our peasant women
> Are elected to the Supreme Soviet.
> Our village lad
> Circle like falcons in the air,
> Our peasant girls
> Drive tractors in the fields.[37]

The reason for this exaggerated emphasis was the symbolism of the new rural woman: She literally represented Soviet agriculture. As she was changing, so was the whole countryside. The kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa was, in fact, second only to the tractor itself as the most important symbol of the Soviet countryside and remained so until the war. One well-known example is Vera Mukhina's 1937 statue, *Rabochii i Kolkhoznitsa*, a celebration of the ideal of equality of men and women workers, and of the ever-stronger smychka between the urban and rural worlds. Feminist historians have suggested that the fact that a woman was chosen to represent "the backward peasantry" proves the continuing inferiority of women in Stalinist society, because in the partnership between workers and peasants the latter were traditionally the junior partner.[38] Such an interpretation completely misses the point: The figure on the right in Malukhina's statue is *not* a peasant, but a kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa. The difference was and is crucial. It was precisely *because* of her cultural advances, the fact that she had transcended the old peasant culture and patriarchal oppression, that the new woman became a symbol of the entire new countryside, freed from the fetters of individual farming and peasant ignorance and backwardness, and worthy of standing side by side with her urban comrade. By the middle of the 1930s, the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa (whether in the abstract, or, more commonly, in the person of real exemplars such as Angelina and Demchenko) became a stock symbol for all of Soviet agriculture and the rural cultural revolution.

This phenomenon is well illustrated by the mural in the Soviet Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. The entrance hall of the Main Pavilion of the Soviet exhibition at the fair was adorned with a huge mural, forty feet across, so arranged that on entering the pavilion

> the visitors will see, as though advancing to meet them, a joyous, colorful throng of people, bathed in sunlight, which represents the Soviet people welcoming you to their pavilion, where they will show you their way of life. In the foreground are the leading people of the land, Stakhanovite

> workers, scientists, aviators, artists, Red Army men—among them are children and following them, masses of the Soviet people.[39]

These leading people, painted larger than life, were portraits of real Stakhanovites, who were indeed chosen to represent the glorious accomplishments of the Soviet Union, and the professions they represented illustrate the official image the Party sought to project at that time. There were twelve aviators in the mural, more than any other profession, and second in number (seven) were industrial Stakhanovites. Scientists and actors were prominently represented, with six of each. There were just two figures representing field kolkhozy: Pasha Angelina and Maria Demchenko. In all, four representatives of the agricultural sector were depicted in the mural: Besides Pasha and Maria, there were two figures representing livestock farm workers, a thirteen-year-old Pioneer calf-breeder and an Uzbek shepherd. Of these four, however, there is no mistaking which were the more prestigious and advanced professions, and it is surely important and telling that women held these jobs. (Incidentally, one of the aviators, Paulina Osipenko, was also identified as a former collective farmer—a further indication of the road to culture and prestige that kolkhoz life offered to women[40]).

This tendency to have women represent the kolkhoz sector is frequently encountered in group portraits of "new Soviet people" in other media, such as on magazine covers and posters. A good example is the back cover of the June 1938 issue of *Sputnik agitatora*, which shows the portraits of six heroes of Soviet labor, all of whom had reached the exalted position of Deputy to the Supreme Soviet, with the caption, "The Honored and Renowned of the Land of Socialism." It is no coincidence that the group comprises three men and three women: The obvious intention was to stress the equality that women had achieved. Each person represented an important sector of the economy: Stakhanov from mining, the machinist I. I. Gudov from heavy industry, Maria Vinogradova from light industry, the famous pilot Valery Chkalov from aviation, Tatiana Fedorova from the Moscow

metro (representing both transport and construction), and, representing agriculture, the traktoristka Praskovia Kovardak.

In fact, the discussion of rural life and agriculture in the mass press was dominated by images of women in general. Specialized journals and articles in the mass press dealing with collective farming were, with a striking frequency, accompanied by illustrations and photographs of women rather than men: women on tractors, in reading rooms, gathering in the harvest with a broad smile, leaning over a tractor engine in a repair shop, listening earnestly to the radio. But implicit in all the images of women was their rejection of the old and embrace of the new life offered them by Soviet power.

The new woman was used to symbolize these changes precisely because she was so different from her former self, the krestianka. And the reason she was so different was not just that she had been drawn into production, but rather that she had been drawn into the most prestigious jobs in the economy, which were no longer reserved for men. Her former second-class gender role had lost its meaning; she stood on an equal footing with her male comrades, thanks to the independence that naturally followed from economic opportunity and education. The whole ideal of the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa, in short, represented a profound change in gender roles, the target of which was the old patriarchal system and the dominance of men in the agricultural economy. That, and not any reimposition of maternal and domestic roles of the prerevolutionary patriarchy, is the essence of the change that was underway in the countryside in the 1930s.

Image versus Reality: The Failure of *Vydvizhenie*

We have so far been describing the image of the heroic new women, which was given extraordinary prominence in the mass media after 1933. What can we make of this image? Were the emancipation, the gender role shifts, and the cultural

revolution real? How closely did the image reflect or represent the actual situation for women in kolkhoz production?

We can be confident that it was not an accurate reflection. Among rural professionals in such responsible positions as tractor brigade leader and kolkhoz chairman (not to mention MTS director or various local Party positions), the proportion of women remained very low throughout the 1930s. The same is true even of the rather less exalted although still prestigious job of tractor driving. Although reliable statistics on traktoristki are difficult to find (if indeed there could be such a thing, given the persistent high rates of labor turnover plaguing the farming sector), all indications are that throughout the decade more than nine of ten of the nation's traktoristy were men. In early 1934—at the very outset of the campaign to promote and train women to drive tractors—Stalin bragged that 1,900,000 drivers had been trained during the first five-year plan, and that at that time there were 7,000 traktoristki, or fewer than half of 1 percent. (At the same time, he counted some 6,000 women kolkhoz chairmen, distributed among 224,500 collective farms, which was just more than 2.5 percent.[41]) This refers to the kolkhoz sector; the figure on sovkhozy may have been somewhat higher. V. I. Zaidener states that in 1930 one of ten sovkhoz traktoristy was female; the figure for the famous grain sovkhoz Gigant, however, was fewer than 5 percent.[42] As for an estimate of the total of the nation's traktoristy, Roberta Manning has estimated that by 1935 the proportion of women in the ranks reached 4 percent; this increased to perhaps 8 percent or higher by 1940, but only as a result of very energetic recruitment policies spurred by the imminence of war.[43] According to Norton T. Dodge, who cites Soviet statistics published in the early 1960s, in 1933 women contributed 7 percent of all labor in the nation's MTSs, presumably including mechanics and drivers but also nontechnical positions such as field assistants and bookkeepers; by 1940 this share had increased to just 11 percent.[44] In short, the traktoristka-heroine's overwhelming prominence in the popular press and public imagination as representative of the new collectivized farmer was greatly disproportionate to her real presence in the rural economy.

This is not to say that the image of the udarnitsa was a fabrication. Of course there was a small number of enthusiastic, overachieving young women drivers breaking records on the farms, just as there really was a miner named Stakhanov and a steelworker named Busygin. It could be argued that although women were a small proportion of all tractor drivers, they accounted for a high percentage of agricultural shock workers because they were better workers than men (as Kalinin and Iakovlev asserted at various times, along with *Pravda*[45]), and that this explains the disproportionate fame and attention they received. But lists of prize winners regularly published in *Pravda* show that traktoristki constituted a remarkably consistent percentage of prize-winning drivers, varying from 5 to 10 percent, depending on the level of the prize and very rarely rising into double digits.[46] As we have seen, the proportion of women delegates at the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers in 1935 was much higher—nearly one of three—but it is unwise to place much significance on that figure, because it is not known what other criteria were used in selecting delegates. Clearly one of the purposes of the Congress was to intensify the cult of the udarnitsa heroine by focusing enormous attention on the accomplishments of women, and it is likely that women were therefore intentionally overrepresented.

It seems, then, that the image of the udarnitsa that so dominated the official and the popular impressions about Soviet agriculture, although not strictly speaking mythical, was a substantial, even vast, overrepresentation of the presence and contribution of the real new women, the young Stakhanovite traktoristki actually at work on the kolkhozy. The image of the udarnitsa heroine was not actually false, insofar as such persons existed, although in small numbers. However, the campaign to present them as representative of all kolkhoz women, and indeed as symbolic of the entire agricultural sector, was highly deceptive, and at best is understood as a carefully and purposefully constructed myth, a component of the larger mythology of the new soviet society and the new *homo soveticus*.

What was the purpose of this myth? How does the mythical image reflect the Party's actual policy regarding women in rural society? There are two possibilities. Was it a case of socialist-realist wishful thinking, a representation of

the world "as it is becoming," rather than as it is? Was it a reflection of the sincere program for transforming gender roles that was still underway but had not yet succeeded? Or was it a cynical masquerade designed to disguise the "sexual thermidor" in which Stalin betrayed and abandoned the progressive feminism of the 1920s? Was it just another component in the vast structure of Stalinist fantasy and eyewash, created to conceal and deny the continuing oppression and exploitation of women under the second serfdom of collectivization, along with so many other repressive aspects of Stalinist society?

To be sure, it was both of these. Of course there was no squeamishness about such cynical lying in the Soviet 1930s, and certainly one important function of the udarnitsa cult, as of all socialist realist mythology, was to conceal the reality, the "life as it was." But it would be a grave mistake to ignore the concurrent function of describing "life as it was becoming": to persuade rural men and women that the old krestianka not only should but could be transformed into the udarnitsa. It is crucial for historians to recognize that the posters, the news stories, the statues, and the movies were the voice of the Party speaking directly to women on the farms, saying, "This is your future! You can do it!" This message and the expectations that accompanied it offer a window into the genuine goals of the Party in the gigantic social engineering experiment that was the Soviet countryside in the 1930s. They clearly suggest that the Party throughout the 1930s was not merely cooking up a myth to conceal the ugly reality of kolkhoz life; it was sincerely dedicated to realizing the mythical image of the New Soviet woman, that there was a sustained and serious program throughout the decade to transform the peasant women in the image of the traktoristka heroine.

In fact, historians of Soviet women's history generally agree that the Party was undertaking a concerted program to remake women. But how? A broadly held assumption is that the Party was trying to move women into production roles at a much higher rate, while increasing their duties and responsibilities to home and family by reversing the progressive, pro-women legislation of the 1920s. The result was, of course, the infamous double burden of job and housework, which Russian

women suffer to this day. This view owes a great deal to Gail Lapidus' seminal discussion of "the Stalinist synthesis," which interprets the 1930s not as an effort to move women into the workforce at the expense of their reproductive function but rather as an attempt to increase the former without sacrificing the latter, and in fact reinforcing it.[47] Lapidus' framework, however, loses some explanatory power when applied to the agricultural context, because every peasant woman was already involved in production before collectivization. The krestianka was not being moved into agricultural production by the policies of the 1930s; in the countryside, the synthesis was already centuries-old. The krestianka had always cooked and cleaned and cared for the children while also sowing, reaping, and threshing the harvest. Stalin's program of creating what Lapidus calls "enabling conditions of sexual equality"[48] aimed to release women from some of their domestic duties so they could spend more time in production than before. But the real point of Stalin's program was not so much to get her out of the kitchen and into the fields—she was already out there!—but rather to get her to drop the sickle and the flail and to climb onto a tractor or combine. The goal was not to move her from domestic to production labor but more importantly to promote her within production into roles previously the exclusive domain of men. The image of the new udarnitsa was precisely an image of women moving, indeed being actively promoted, into many of the most prestigious jobs in the agricultural sector.

Moreover, there is little evidence for the assertions of the domestic side of the synthesis. Feminist historians frequently describe a shift in the image of women toward a nurturing, maternal figure; but this cannot be said of the portrayal of the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa in the mass media. The udarnitsa type, who was presented as the model, the exemplar for rural women, lacked all traces of maternalism. As we noted earlier, the total emphasis was on her role in social production, specifically in a skilled, man's job, which had brought her an exciting new identity, independent of marriage and family. To be sure, the Party did institute a policy designed to increase birth rates, but you would never know it by looking at or listening to the

udarnitsa. There is nothing maternal about her: She had appropriated a man's job and was performing as an equal of men.

The best evidence of this conscious effort at transforming gender roles is the campaign for *vydvizhenie* of women into positions of authority at production level. The campaign began in precisely February 1933, with Stalin's speech at the First Congress that proclaimed women a great force on the kolkhozy, the underestimation of which would be a serious mistake. Beyond this, he admonished his audience for failing to put this force to proper use, by which he meant the active promotion of women into leadership positions such as tractor driver, brigade leader, and kolkhoz chair. He concluded by stating bluntly that it was a criminal act to hold this force back, and that it was everyone's responsibility to promote women.[49]

Even in 1933 (the year of the Metro-Vickers trial) "serious mistakes" were serious indeed, and when Stalin characterized something as criminal it was no joke. So it is not surprising that this speech initiated a determined campaign to promote women to leadership positions at the local level. A few months later Kalinin made a forceful plea at the second convention of kolkhoz shockworkers of Gorkovskii Krai for the rapid promotion of women on the collective farms. He stated outright that the women of the RSFSR were playing the very same role as the men, and that the leaders of the kolkhozy should not forget that the women were bearing the same weight on their shoulders as the men were. Therefore, he noted, it was important to promote women at a much faster rate to positions of brigade leader and kolkhoz chairman. "It seems to me that this question of the promotion of women into the organs of kolkhoz administration—kolkhoz chairman and brigade leader—that this is a question of great urgency, I think, which has a great significance in terms of productivity."[50] In January 1934, the Central Committee issued a decree applauding the outstanding role played by women and ordering local organs, especially MTS directors and politotdel chiefs, to increase the rate of promoting women into leadership positions. The decree stated that the Central Committee considered it impermissible that a kolkhoz governing board would ever lack a woman.[51]

One of the functions of the political departments, which were in operation from early 1933 to the end of 1934 (approximately the two years immediately after Stalin's call to respect and promote kolkhoz women), may have been to enforce the Party's policy of promoting the independence of women. This point has been suggested by Soviet historians such as Viktor I. Zaidener,[52] and it is supported by an interesting comment made by an udarnitsa from Western Siberia, one of the very few women tractor mechanics at the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers. In recalling her experiences in 1932 and the resistance she had encountered as a tractor driver, she observed, "At that time there still were no *politotdely*, and attention was not paid to women as it is now."[53]

The model farm charter that was passed with such ballyhoo at the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers—and referred to in 1938 by *Pravda* as "the unbreakable Stalinist law of kolkhoz life"[54]—actually contained a section requiring the administration and members of all farms "to attract women into kolkhoz production and the social life of the artel, promoting competent and experienced kolkhoznitsy into leadership positions, and relieving them as far as possible of household labor through the creation of crèches, playgrounds, and so forth."[55]

Other Party leaders added their voices to emphasize the priority of this issue at the Second Congress. Iakovlev concluded the section of his speech "On Kolkhoz Women" by relating the story of the udarnitsa who was in no hurry to marry, and then noting,

> This is the force we must promote further in the service of the kolkhozy and the whole Soviet country. This is why we consider it necessary to include in the Charter a special section on the obligation of kolkhoz administrations to attract women into the production and the social life of the collective, promoting talented and experienced kolkhoznitsy into leadership positions, reducing as far as possible the load of domestic work through the creation of crèches and playgrounds, and easing their workloads and helping them during pregnancy and when they are nursing, and so on.[56]

Yezhov also urged the delegates at the Second Congress to increase the promotion of women into leading positions, complaining that although the proportion of women among all delegates had increased, still women constituted only small fractions of those delegates in more responsible positions: For instance, only 8 percent of kolkhoz chairmen at the conference were women.[57]

In April 1935, *Na agrarnom fronte*, the journal of the Institute of Agrarian Marxists in Moscow, ran a prominent article by N. Goliandin reiterating the Party's policy of promoting women.

> The introduction of female labor in all areas of kolkhoz production is of very powerful political significance, since it is on that basis that the enormous problem of the economic equality between men and women will be solved in practice. It is only on that basis that women's qualifications and labor culture can rise, along with their general cultural level.[58]

The policy was described explicitly in terms of gender roles, and the author stressed that although some progress had been made, there was still a long way to go in moving women into such traditionally male positions as MTS director, kolkhoz chairman, and tractor driver, which he called "men's work":

> It must be most acutely stressed that our achievements in this matter are still not great, and the issue of introducing women's labor into "men's work" continues to stand before the raion-level organizations with all of its political acuteness.[59]

Goliandin repeated this formula in his conclusion, where he recommended that the solution of this task is for all kolkhozy, raion zemotdely, and MTSs to establish strict plans for the bold promotion of women into "men's work," and a corresponding expansion of the network of courses for training women to qualify for these higher positions. The article ends, in fact, by quoting from and calling for strict enforcement of the section of the new Model Charter, which required vydvizhenie

of women by all kolkhoz administrations.[60] Anastas Mikoyan, then food industry commissar, repeated this call for more rapid promotion of women in a January 1936 speech to the Central Committee, quoting at length Stalin's 1933 speech and noting, again echoing Stalin, that "this year we have seen such heroines as have never been seen before." He also observed that women should be advanced more rapidly because they are more careful than men, are more devoted to their work, "and never get drunk, as certain men do."[61]

This was followed by many other decrees trying to enforce this program. In December 1935, the Sovnarkom and the Central Committee issued, over the signatures of Stalin and Molotov, a decree bitterly critical of the administration of agriculture in the non-black-earth regions. Among other faults, the decree described as "totally unacceptable" the fact that "the promotion of women into leading positions in kolkhozy, and the training of women to work on complex agricultural machinery, is occurring completely unsatisfactorily." In fact, the decree stated that "such disregard for the promotion of women is one of the main sources of the low competence and cohesion of the kolkhoz *aktiv*." The decree concluded by ordering all obkoms and raikoms in the region to ensure that within one or two years women would constitute a substantial proportion of kolkhoz chairmen, traktoristy, combine operators, and brigade leaders.[62] In January 1936, the Western Obkom Plenum issued a decree complaining that the MTSs and kolkhozy in most of the western raions were proceeding completely unsatisfactorily in their obligation to promote women to responsible positions and to train them to operate complex farm machinery.[63]

This campaign remained in force through the end of the decade. From 1933 to World War II, official Party policy encouraged and indeed required the promotion of women to top jobs on the farms and MTSs. This policy, like any other, was pursued with varying levels of vigor during these years; but it never met with anything like satisfactory success. Certainly it was given exceptionally high visibility and emphasis in 1935 and 1936 and again in the 1938-1939 campaign initiated by Pasha Angelina to recruit and train 100,000 women tractor drivers. This campaign,

motivated by the increasingly obvious military imperatives, somewhat increased the percentage of women among tractor drivers. As we have noted, however, that percentage still remained less than 10 percent by 1940, and the general disappointment in the progress of this recruitment drive was bluntly expressed by Agriculture Commissar I. A. Benediktov in a December 1939 article.[64]

We see, then, the systematic construction of a mythical, ideal image of the traktoristka heroine, the true kolkhoznitsa who has left backward, patriarchal peasant culture behind her. At the same time we see a kind of affirmative action program, a sustained attempt to make the reality of the kolkhozy conform to this image by recruiting women into tractor-driving courses and higher status and authority. Did the program succeed in transforming the krestianka into the idealized udarnitsa and place her on an equal basis with men in high-status jobs in the countryside? Obviously not; otherwise the image would not have been mythical. All indications are that only modest gains were made by this promotion campaign before 1941; and after the enormous irregularities caused by manpower shortages during the war, the percentage of female tractor drivers rapidly decreased to levels less than those achieved during the 1930s. The share of women among Soviet tractor drivers decreased even more precipitously after Stalin's death, to less than half a percent of the tractor-driving force by 1974.[65] How do we explain the failure of this recruitment program?

One possibility is that the program's failure is evidence that it was not a serious or high-priority policy: Women did not advance because the Party did not want them to; rather, in accordance with the new emphasis on family values and domesticity, it preferred to have them giving birth and raising children and dependent on their husbands. However, it is fallacious to judge intentions by actual outcomes in this way. The tactic is a holdover of old-fashioned assumptions of omnipotence connected with totalitarian views of Party and its ability to accomplish things; the heart of much new scholarship, in contrast, is the revelation of the powerlessness of the central Party in many of its programs and policies in the periphery.

So why did the program fail? Feminist historians commonly blame the persistence of a vague patriarchal attitude, defined implicitly if not explicitly as the insistence of men on maintaining their monopoly on leadership positions, and blocking the advancement of women despite the new opportunities Stalin's policies offered.[66] Certainly the lowest echelon of authorities in the countryside, primarily men, tended to view the promotion policy with skepticism and were often reluctant to take women in positions of responsibility and power seriously. This kind of culturally based resistance by men was undoubtedly one obstacle in the path of women's promotion, and it received much criticism from high-ranking Party officials. It was, after all, in the context of criticizing men for not taking women seriously that Stalin laid down his "women are a great force" line in 1933, and subsequent calls for increasing vydvizhenie were often accompanied by criticism of just this kind of resistance by men. Pasha Angelina made much of the ridicule her brigade had to suffer at first, and many other instances of such treatment could be cited.[67] This kind of resistance from men is the main explanation Roberta Manning cites for the poor success of the Party's promotion program, and it certainly was a prevalent and important factor; but it is inadequate by itself to explain the failure. The call to train and promote women was not always and everywhere ignored or stonewalled; women were drafted for the tractor-driving courses in high percentages. For instance, a January 1937 report by the Smolensk leader I. P. Rumiantsev, Secretary of the Western Obkom, stated that his oblast had exceeded its quotas by enrolling 2,770 women in the region's tractor courses and schools, which constituted 40 percent of all students.[68]

However, enrolling in and even finishing the courses was one thing, and becoming a traktoristka was quite another. According to archival sources cited by Iurii Arutiunian, 133,000 women were trained in the schools and courses for tractor driving in the 1939-1940 academic year; but during the summer of 1940, the total of all women working as traktoristy in the nation's MTSs, including women trained in all previous years, amounted to just 64,000.[69] Tractor drivers, like kolkhoz chairmen and most other positions of authority in the agricultural sector, suffered

terrible rates of labor turnover throughout the 1930s; collective farmers pressed into training courses to fill quotas tended to use the scant training they received as a ticket off the farms and into relatively better paid (and less responsible; read: dangerous) jobs elsewhere. There is no reason to suppose that the disincentives of the profession were any less for women drivers than for men, and high labor turnover was probably an important source of the failure of the women's vydvizhenie policy.

But probably more important than turnover was the simple fact of resistance on the part of the peasant women themselves. The poor record of the Party's campaign to rearrange gender roles by promoting women into men's work is surely a reflection, in large measure, of the krestianka's lack of enthusiasm for the new role being offered her. Women's historians are understandably reluctant to consider that women may have preferred their traditional role under peasant patriarchy to the new emancipation of Stalinist utopianism; but it is a possibility that must be recognized. After all, feminist historians frequently draw attention to the fierce resistance occasionally mounted by peasant women during the early phase of collectivization,[70] but they do not always acknowledge that the *bab'y bunty* of 1930 were the product of cultural resistance, conservatism, and traditionalism—in short, a preference for family and patriarchy over the progressive Marxist ideals the urban Party representatives were trying to foist on the villages. Krestianki were opposed to the Moscow's culturally alien policy in 1930; should it be very surprising that most of them continued to oppose it in 1936 and 1939 as well? The restructuring of gender roles through women's vydvizhenie in the years of the second and third plans was just an extension of this attempted rural cultural revolution that collectivization began, and there is no reason to suppose that peasant women's culturally embedded resistance, suspicion, and hostility toward this change should have suddenly evaporated in 1933. On the contrary, exasperated Party officials continued throughout the 1930s to complain that collective farm women were resisting the progressive changes brought by Soviet power and holding fast to their old-fashioned peasant superstitions and religious prejudices—often a kind of code for political opposition—even into the late 1930s.[71]

As Sheila Fitzpatrick recently argued, following Daniel Field among others, the Russian peasant was shrewd at manipulating official policies and using the current political jargon to promote themselves, settle old scores, and otherwise further their own interests.[72] It seems likely that if the Soviet krestianka had really wanted to throw off the yoke of patriarchal peasant culture and earn a level of social independence and prestige consonant with her portrayal in the official cult of the udarnitsa, she had sufficient opportunity to do so. Moscow's emphatic, vigorous insistence that women be supported and assisted in assuming jobs and status formerly reserved for men placed a powerful weapon in the hands of any ambitious young krestianki who, instead of marrying and having babies, really did want to learn to drive and repair tractors, become a brigade leader, go to the agricultural institute, enter the Party, break All-Union records, be invited to meet Stalin, or become a deputy in the Supreme Soviet. There were such women, of course, and some of them did rise to prominent positions as a result of their intelligence, competence, and persistence—but also thanks to the special consideration offered them by the Party's vydvizhenie policy. Pasha Angelina, for one, recalled that her initial proposal to form a women's tractor brigade overcame the general resistance to women driving (even her friends were saying, "after all, the tractor is no place for a woman") only with the strong support of the local Politotdel chief, who threw his authority behind the idea. This surely was a case of a shrewd peasant recognizing and manipulating the explicit policy of the Party to get her way, despite resistance at the local level. Pasha notes that it was not a matter of happening to find one good man to support her, but rather of pressing for the implementation of the official program: "Kurov was indeed a man with a responsive heart, but above all he was a Bolshevik and, in supporting my proposal to form a women's tractor team, he was *pursuing the Party's policy*." Indeed, as she suggests, it was no coincidence that she formed her brigade just after Stalin made his 1933 speech that initiated the women's promotion campaign.[73] But such women willing to press resistant local officials into implementing Moscow's calls for training and promoting more women were always a tiny minority, and the fact that more peasant women did not take advantage of the

potential weapon placed at their disposal by Moscow strongly suggests that not many women wanted what the Party was offering. If there had been widespread pressure from women to take advantage of this policy and work their way up to higher positions, they could have used any number of speeches by Stalin, Iakovlev, and other leaders as leverage to overcome the obstructionism they encountered from male authorities at the MTS or kolkhoz level (just as millions of peasants took advantage of Stalin's March 1930 "Dizzy from Success" article, as incontestable permission to bail out of the kolkhozy), and the percentage of women traktoristy and kolkhoz chairmen would have been much higher than 8 or 10 percent by the end of the decade.

Historians and sociologists can easily see that peasant women were oppressed by the patriarchal traditions of peasant culture, but Russian peasants did not look at their world or the prospects offered by the Stalin's programs in this way. They were deeply distrustful, conservative, and resistant to cultural change. Traditional gender roles were and remain a crucial component in determining individual self-image in peasant society, and the decision to reject the values and roles they had been brought up on by adopting a profession and a social responsibility that everyone interpreted as properly belonging to men must have been a difficult one indeed, even for young peasant women. Krupskaia told a story in her speech at the Second Congress, about a girl who wrestled with the anguish of making this decision; she cried and cried for two days before eventually declining her opportunity to enter the traktorist school.[74] In sum, more peasant women did not take advantage of the campaign for advancement and training perhaps because they did not want any part of it. The Party's hopes for emancipating collective farm women may have met with as much resistance from the krestianka as from the peasant.

This is, after all, why the mass media campaign to portray the new woman had to be directed toward women at least as much as toward men. This is especially true of posters, which, as Elizabeth Waters has observed, clearly had women as their principal audience.[75] The inertia of peasant women's self-image as cast in traditional gender roles represented a huge obstacle to the Party's rural policies, and if it sought

to transform peasant women by changing these roles, it had to offer them a new self-image, a new role or model in which they could see their own future. As Victoria Bonnell has observed, the image of the traktoristka was novel and anomalous, and an important function of the propaganda posters of the 1930s was to make the image more familiar and credible.[76] What Bonnell does not stress, however, is that this novelty applied as much, if not more, to women as to men viewing the posters, and it was to the women that they were primarily directed. What is true of posters specifically may be expanded to apply to the entire cult of the udarnitsa-kolkhoznitsa: Although it was in part an attempt to show men that women could do "men's work," more importantly it was a campaign to change women's self-image, to convince them: You can do it.

The campaign, like the larger program of urbanizing and proletarianizing peasant culture to its demise, failed in the end. An important source of this failure was the fallacy of its fundamental assumption: that primitive peasant culture would evolve to the higher urban level through an inevitable process, and that if only the peasants were given the requisite tools and accouterments—electricity, advanced machinery, modern organizational schemes, newspapers, radio, and political support—they would naturally choose the superior, "cultured and prosperous" path and would transform quickly into sophisticated, progressive proletarians. But it was not so simple, and centuries-old cultural patterns were not so easily or so rapidly broken. Merely placing the peasant on the tractor did not make him "technologically literate," just as giving him a wall newspaper and a radio did not make him give a damn about events in Manchuria or Abyssinia. Similarly, giving the krestianka a bona fide opportunity to adopt a new gender role did not mean she would make it and use it to attain a new, liberated and independent social position. That these policies encountered a cultural resistance too stubborn to overcome in one short decade, however, does not mean the programs were not real, not serious, and not a source of tremendous frustration for the central Party. It does indicate, however, the deep strain of utopianism imbedded in Stalin's program for rural transformation, a strain that was a direct continuation of the utopian traditions in which the Bolshevik

revolution was steeped in its first decade. This tradition included the Zhenotdel's plans for forging the New Soviet Woman, which cannot be said to have perished with the dismantling of that department in 1930.[77]

Notes

1. Joseph Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma*, p. 420; *Itogi Vtorogo vsesoiuznogo s'ezda kolkhoznikov-udarnikov, Na agrarnom fronte 1935;* 2-3:5; *Soviet Union 1936*, p. 631.

2. In the recent collection edited by Barbara Clements, Barbara Engel, and Christine Worobec (*Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), two articles (by Elizabeth Waters and Wendy Goldman) and parts of two of the editors' essays (Engel and Clements) focus on the Stalinist 1930s. This work devotes much more attention to this period than do any other collections on Russian and Soviet women, and all four pieces are excellent examples of the orthodox interpretation. Another is the recent article by Victoria E. Bonnell, "The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art of the 1930s," *American Historical Review 1993;*98(1). Bonnell asserts (p. 72) that "political art witnessed its own version of a 'great retreat' beginning in 1934," but her case is weak and much of the evidence she discusses actually undermines her argument. For other examples of the orthodox interpretation, see Barbara Evans Clements, "The Utopianism of the Zhenotdel," *Slavic Review* 1992;51(3); and Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, "Love on the Tractor: Women in the Russian Revolution and After," especially pp. 386-390, in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, First ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

The emphasis on a "great turn" in the status of women in the early to mid-1930s owes a great deal to the seminal work of Gail Lapidus (*Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) and Richard Stites (*The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). The interpretations of both these scholars maintain a more careful balance than many of the later feminist historians of the orthodox school, between the restrictions and the opportunities inherent in Stalin's social policies; between the exploitation by the state and the protection from irresponsible husbands and lovers; and between the, so to speak, anti- and pro-women aspects of the Soviet 1930s. Still, both Lapidus' "Stalinist synthesis" and Stites' discussion of the 1930s as the "sexual thermidor," like the more rigid orthodox view that evolved from them, are difficult to reconcile with Stalin's policies regarding collective farm women, which are the subject of the present article.

Two notable exceptions to this orthodoxy are Sheila Fitzpatrick and Roberta Manning. Fitzpatrick has stressed that Timasheff's notion of a "Great Retreat" is too simplistic, that the submissive feminine norms emerging in the 1930s did not apply to peasant women, and the kolkhoznitsy in the mid-1930s were defined strictly "as producers, persons of importance in their own right who are fully fledged members of the kolkhoz *as individuals*, not just

subordinate members of households as they had been in the old village community" (" 'Middle-class Values' and Soviet Life in the 1930s," in *Soviet Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Vera S. Dunham*, Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon, eds., Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 33-35). Manning, in her study of kolkhoz women in the later 1930s, concludes point-blank that "no 'Great Retreat' from emancipatory goals can be discerned in the Soviet government's policies toward rural women in the mid- to late 1930s" ("Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II," in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, eds., *Russian Peasant Women*, New York, 1992, p. 226). It is fair to say, however, that on this issue these two influential scholars hold an interpretation not shared by many others.

3. Barbara Engel, "Transformation versus Tradition," in Clements, Engel, and Worobec, *Russia's Women*, p. 145.

4. Ibid., p. 147.

5. Nicholas Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1946, especially chap. VIII.

6. Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990, pp. 66-67. Miller gives several examples of these laments, such as E. A. Kokunova, "Liberation Has Come to Us Everywhere" (p. 118), A. N. Koreshkova, "Oh, How We Miserable Ones Remember" (p. 120), and A. M. Pashkova, "You Are Our Bright Sunshine" (p. 165).

7. These arguments are from "Kolkhoz—put' k znaniiu, kovladeniiu tekhnikoi," in *Krestianskaia gazeta dlia nachinaiushchikh chitat'*, 19 October 1931, p. 3. This 4-page newspaper contains frequent articles stressing the benefits of collectivization for women; for example "Marfa stala gramotnoi," on the same page, tells of an illiterate grandmother who learned to read and is now organizing a literacy circle; "Ot rabstva k sotsializmu," (5 December 1931, p. 3) describes the growing activism and independence of Central Asian women thanks to the kolkhoz system. The valuable contributions of women both on the kolkhozy and in industry is also a frequent theme, as in "Zhenshchina v pervykh riadakh" and "Vovlechem milliony zhenshchin v stroitel'stvo sotsializma" (5 December 1931, p. 3) and "Brigadir Maria Martyniuk," (28 February 1932, p. 2) which is about a plowing brigade exceeding the norm. The biweekly magazine *Krestianka* for 1932 was filled with stories and items on the new woman in the countryside, stressing the importance of literacy, technological competence, independence, and dedication to increased production.

8. Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma*, p. 420.

9. Ibid., p. 460.

10. For instance, Maria Demchenko's reaction to Stalin's 1935 speech stating that the labor day had made all kolkhoz workers equal: "Yes, yes, labor has equalized us under the law, before the labor day we are all equal—men, women, old men, old women—and therefore we can never return to the past, when woman was a slave." *Geroiny sotsialisticheskogo truda*, Moscow: Partizdat, 1936, p. 37.

11. *Pravda*, 11 November 1935, p. 1.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Sheila Fitzpatrick makes this point, although she stresses the bourgeois nature of the tastes that these purchasing patterns reveal (" 'Middle-class Values' and Soviet Life in the 1930s," pp. 27-28). Newspaper articles commonly focus approval on the practice of traktoristki enjoying the material fruits of their labor; for instance, one late 1935 account in *Pravda* describes the beautiful new factory-made beds, with nickel plating and blue enamel, ordered by two rank-and-file tractoristki. The story also mentions the great demand for such beds in the raion; eighty more were ordered by the other collective farmers, along with watches, record players, bicycles, and so on. All of this conspicuous consumption is interpreted as an indication of a rising cultural level ("Kolkhoznaia Kuban," *Pravda*, 5 November 1935, p. 4).

15. At the first session of the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers on 11 February 1935, Iakovlev told the delegates a story about a conversation he had recently with a kolkhoznitsa widow from the Severnyi krai, who had risen to brigade leader and then manager of a large dairy farm. In the preceding year she had earned 600 labor days. Iakovlev asked why she had not remarried, and she answered that none of the fellows struck her fancy, and anyway a husband just meant two kids and a mother-in-law; but nowadays being single meant 600 labor days. This story was greeted by prolonged applause and loud laughter from the delegates (*Vtoroi vsesoiuznyi s'ezd kolkhoznikov-udarnikov, 11-17 fevralia 1935 goda, stenograficheskii otchet*, Moscow: Ogiz-selkhozgiz, 1935, p. 34).

16. *Geroini socialisticheskogo truda*, p. 59. Cited in Sheila Fitzpatrick, " 'Middle-class Values' and Soviet Life in the 1930s," p. 34.

17. As a hagiographic article on four women Stakhanovites stated in March 1938, "The Great October Socialist revolution emancipated women in our country, and the kolkhozy put peasant women onto the broad road to an independent, cultured and secure life" (D. Abramov, V. Dyman, G. Sokolov, "Stakhanovki kolkhoznoi derevni," *Sotsialisticheskaia rekonstruktsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva* 1938; 3 (March):203). The answer to the question, "independent from whom?" goes without saying: from the bondage of patriarchy and her former dependence on a husband (as well as the notorious tyranny of her mother-in-law).

18. Mikhail Kalinin, *Stat'i i Rechi*, Moscow, 1935, p. 107-108.

19. *Soviet Union 1936*, p. 631.

20. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, Moscow, 1935, p. 249.

21. Ibid., p. 186.

22. Ia. A. Iakovlev, "Itogi Vtorogo vsesoiuznogo s'ezda kolkhoznikov-udarnikov," *Na agrarnom fronte* 1935;2-3:5.

23. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, p. 114. She is specifically referring to Stalin's 1933 "Women are a great force" speech.

24. Ibid., p. 117.

25. B. Papernova, "Woman in Socialist Construction: On Equal Terms with Man," *Soviet Culture Review* 1933; 2:25.

26. Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma*, p. 460.

27. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, p. 119.

28. "Ispolnenie zhelaniia," *Pravda*, 5 November 1935, p. 3.

29. *Soviet Union 1936*, p. 254. Mikoyan continued (pp. 314-315), "Life is changing in the villages as well as in the towns. Our peasants are not what they used to be. [. . .] Do you think the women harvester-combine operators and tractor drivers there [Ryazan] still wear the costume of the women of Ryazan? No. Our village women are already wearing good city clothes. They buy good perfumes and scented soap—because life has become more cultured.

(Applause.) The distinction between town and country is being obliterated. The countryside has become more cultured."

30. Ibid., p. 76.

31. "Gordost' Kalininskoi oblasti," *Pravda*, 4 November 1935, p. 2.

32. *Soviet Union 1936*, pp. 410-411.

33. Praskovya Angelina, *My Answer to an American Questionnaire*, Moscow: 1951, p. 7.

34. *Sotsialisticheskaia rekonstruktsiia sel'skogo koziaistva* 1938; 3 (March):203, 205.

35. *Pravda*, 8, 9, 10 February 1939.

36. *The Soviet Congress in Session*, New York: International Publishers, 1938, p. 644. Tsitsin plainly presents these women as representative of all of Soviet agriculture, because he repeatedly follows his descriptions of their exploits in sugar beet, milk, or grain production with explicit suggestions that they are just the tip of the iceberg: "Only a few years ago they were only individuals, few and far between; now they number hundreds and thousands"; "We have many such instances now"; and "now our Soviet land has record breakers in combine harvesting—not isolated individuals, but hundreds and thousands of them—working even more productively."

37. Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990, p. 165.

38. This argument is made by Elizabeth Waters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917-32" in Clements, Engel, and Worobec, eds., *Russia's Women*, p. 240. The caption for Plate 19 in this collection, which shows the Mukhina statue, is accompanied by a caption observing that "The female figure, representing the backward peasantry, is secondary to the male figure." As though "the backward peasantry" was an acceptable object for glorification by such a prominent piece of socialist realist art in 1938! For a similar interpretation, see Victoria E. Bonnell, "Stalinist Political Art," pp. 79-81. She argues that Vera Mukhina is "using gender differences to convey the hierarchical relationship between the worker (male) and peasant (female) and, by implication, between urban and rural spheres of Soviet society." In other words, male/worker/urban is superior, female/collective farmer/rural is inferior. This view has it exactly backwards: The *equality* of the two figures symbolizes the ever-closer parity that the *formerly* inferior countryside had come to enjoy vis-

à-vis the city, thanks to the great culture and prosperity that collectivization supposedly brought.

39. The description is by Herman A. Tikhomirov, the USSR's Commissioner to the World's Fair. *Soviet Russia Today*, June 1939, p. 20.

40. "Meet the People in the Mural," *Soviet Russia Today*, June 1939, p. 65. Roberta Manning also discusses the way Paulina Osipenko was presented in the Soviet press as a symbol of the possibilities open to the new, emancipated Soviet kolkhoznitsa. See Manning, "Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II," p. 226.

41. Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma*, pp. 449, 453, 460. Stalin announced these figures in his report to the Seventeenth Party Congress. The 1,900,000 total drivers included tractoristy, combine operators, and truck drivers; but most of these were certainly tractoristy, because the tractor was given overwhelming priority over trucks and combines on the farms, and in any case at this early date there were (as Stalin notes in the same speech, on p. 452) only about 25,000 combines and a similar number of trucks on all the country's MTSs and sovkhozy.

42. V. I. Zaidener, *Partiinoe rukovodstvo sovkhozami v gody dovoennykh piatiletok*. Rostov, 1984, p. 56. In any case, we should be wary of comparing percentages for 1930 with those in later years, because the actual number of tractor drivers at this time was very small compared with the middle and late 1930s.

43. Manning, "Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II," p. 220.

44. Norton T. Dodge, *Women in the Soviet Economy: Their Role in Economic, Scientific, and Technical Development*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966, p. 179.

45. Manning cites *Pravda* for 23 October 1938 in "Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II," p. 225; Kalinin, p. 139, 183.

46. *Pravda*, 26 December 1935, pp. 2-3; 31 December 1935, pp. 1-5; 25 April 1936, p. 1; 8 February to October 1938. Admittedly my quantitative analysis of such lists, which are numerous in *Pravda*, is far from comprehensive; however, it is sufficient to suggest consistently low percentages of women among tractor drivers.

47. Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, chap. 3.

48. Ibid., chap. 4.

49. Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma*, p. 420

50. M. I. Kalinin, *Rech'i i stat'i,* Moscow, 1935, p. 140.

51. P. N. Sharova, *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziiaistva: Vazhneishie postanovleniia Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Pravitel'stva*, 1927-1935, document 163, Moscow, 1957, p. 482.

52. Zaidener, p. 72.

53. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, p. 128.

54. "Vozglavit' sorevnovanie na kolkhoznykh poliakh," *Pravda*, 11 July 1938, p. 1.

55. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, p. 241. The full text of the Model Charter is printed here as Appendix 1.

56. Ibid., p. 34.

57. Ibid., p. 186.

58. N. Goliandin, "Pobeda kolkhoznogo stroia i osvobozhdenie zhenshchin," *Na agrarnom fronte* 1935;1:132-133.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid, p. 135.

61. *Soviet Union 1936*, p. 291.

62. *Pravda*, 20 December 1935, p. 1.

63. D. I. Budaev, ed., *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v zapadnom raione RSFSR* (1927-1937 gg.), document 117, Smolensk, 1968, p. 600.

64. This article is cited by Freda Utley, *The Dream We Lost: Soviet Russia Then and Now,* New York: 1940, p. 167.

65. M. Fedorova, "The Utilization of Female Labor in Agriculture," in Gail Warhofsky Lapidus, ed. *Women, Work and Family in the Soviet Union*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharp, 1982, p. 136. Susan Allot also notes the rapid decrease in female agricultural machine operators by 1970 to levels so low that they ceased to be recorded in the Soviet census. "Soviet Rural Women: Employment and Family Life," in Barbara Holland, ed. *Soviet Sisterhood: British Feminists on Women in the USSR*, London, 1985, p. 179. Allot, referring to the 1930s, correctly notes that tractor and combine driving "was once a symbol of emancipated womanhood."

66. Barbara Evans Clements argues this way in her essay, "Later Developments: Trends in Soviet Women's History, 1930 to the Present," in Clements, Engel, and Worobec, eds., *Russia's Women*, p. 269: "Despite a significant shortage of male labor in the countryside in the 1930s, and despite demands from the central government that women be promoted to positions of leadership, men continued to control farming, monopolizing the most lucrative and powerful jobs on the newly organized collective farms. Women did unskilled field work and tended the family's vegetable garden, tasks they had performed for centuries." The terms *control* and *monopolizing* place complete emphasis on the men's refusal to hand over the jobs, while conveying no suggestion of the women's widespread refusal to accept promotion or power.

67. Praskovya Angelina, *My Answer to an American Questionnaire*, pp. 11, 22-23, 25-26; Kalinin, *Stati i rechi*, p. 184; Yezhov at 2d Congress, *Vtoroi s'ezd*, p. 186; Budaev, p. 594: October. 1935 report, complaining that the point in the Model Charter exempting pregnant women from work was not being enforced: Because women feared they would not be paid if they took time off, they kept working right up to the time they went into labor. See also Manning, "Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II," pp. 219-222.

68. Budaev, document 123, p. 625.

69. Iurii V. Arutiunian, *Mekhanizatory*. Moscow, 1957, pp. 59-60.

70. References to women's resistance to collectivization invariably cite Lynne Viola's 1986 article, "*Bab'i bunty* and Peasant Women's Protest during Collectivization," *Russian Review* 1986;45. In one particularly confused case, Elizabeth Waters cites this article to support her suggestion that peasant women were at this time becoming more active and politically conscious, as a result of the Zhenotdel's rural campaign for literacy and welfare rights. See Clements, Engel, and Worobec, eds., *Russia's Women*, p. 241, note 56.

71. Pasha Angelina specifically recalled the resistance of women in her village to the women's tractor brigade (*My Answer to an American Questionnaire*, pp. 25-26; see also Nikulikhin in *Na agrarnom fronte* 1935; April:26, for women's opposition to combines).

72. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces," *The Russian Review* 1993; 52(3).

73. Praskovya Angelina, *My Answer to an American Questionnaire*, p. 24.

74. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, p. 115.

75. Clements, Engel, and Worobec, eds., *Russia's Women*, p. 235.

76. Bonnell, "The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art," p. 70.

77. Barbara Evans Clements describes the zhenotdel's utopian vision of the new Soviet woman as follows:

> The central feature of zhenotdelovki utopianism was the creation of a "new woman" whose defining characteristics were independence and activism. Zhenotdel writers portrayed her as a true believer and a revolutionary fighter who was, as one propagandist stated, "a human being, the builder of a new life." Inspired by what another propagandist described as the "fire" of her faith, she enjoyed work. She was "bold, impetuous, practical, prudently intelligent, greedily drinking in knowledge;" "her eyes burned with a great inner fire, it was as if all of her shone with that faith which lived so strong and steadfast in her soul." "A strong, free citizen, not inferior to man in anything," she was politically and legally equal to any man. She was as fully involved as any man in the productive work of the world beyond the family. She drew emotional sustenance from her work, from the comrades with whom she lived and from lovers whom she could freely choose and just as freely reject. Putilovskaia, a zhenotdel worker, happily summed up the credo in 1920: "Communism emancipates women, communism emancipates children, communism transforms the relations between the sexes into simply 'private relations,' communism transforms woman from the 'wife of a person,' into a person." ("The Utopianism of the Zhenotdel," *Slavic Review* 1992-51(3):486-487.)

Although Clements is referring to the Civil War period, the entire passage might as well be describing the extensive discussion of the new woman at the Second Congress of Kolkhoz Shockworkers; all these characteristics (with the possible exception of the free-love element) were also characteristics explicitly attributed to the kolkhoznitsa-udarnitsa throughout the 1930s.

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