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SOVIET WOMEN

by

Rose Maurer

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Soviet Women

by

Rose Maurer

Prepared for

THE COMMITTEE OF WOMEN

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A collective farm woman, turned partisan, guards the cornfields

Introduction

AT TEHERAN "the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance" was taken as the fundamental plank upon which rests the future "world family of democratic nations."

In no other sphere, save perhaps that of ethnic relations, has the Soviet Union so forceful a claim to "the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance" as in the matter of women's position in society.

The women of the Soviet Union, as the facts presented will indicate, have made great progress in the direction of a life of varied interests, a life of warm family relationships and of active participation in the economic, political and cultural development of their country. The most remarkable element in woman's new position in Soviet society is the speed with which the transformation, admittedly incomplete even as yet, has been accomplished. It is not a matter of the twenty-seven years of Soviet existence but of little more than half that time, for the large-scale social planning under which progress was chiefly made, did not begin to operate until late in 1928 when the first of the Five-Year Plans was instituted.

Soviet women's opportunities and responsibilities have differed in the different periods of their society's development. Therefore it is clear that chronology is as important in reviewing woman's role in Soviet society as in any other aspect of that continually changing scene. The emphasis in these pages will be on the years just before and during the war.

It is essential to the cooperation among women of the United Nations that they understand the principles and practices which characterize their own and their allies' daily activities. For this reason I am very glad to contribute through this pamphlet to the work that is being done by the Committee of Women of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship in developing the understanding that is basic to closer friendship between the women of the United States and of the Soviet Union.

In science, education, the arts, in labor and business relations, in engineering, in agriculture, in nationality problems, the women of

the United States and of the Soviet Union are playing an increasingly important role. There is growing recognition among them of the value of interchange of their knowledge and experience in these various fields. In addition the women of the United States and the Soviet Union, as of all nations, have special bonds of common interest in the everyday matters that concern them chiefly as women and mothers. In these brief pages I have sought to bring to American women what I have learned both from observations in the Soviet Union in the two years I spent there (1935-1937) acquiring material for a doctoral dissertation and from examination of the data available in various languages in this country. My selection of material is based on the questions I have found most frequently asked, by scholarly and popular audiences alike, concerning Soviet women and how they live, both in their family and their public life.

Soviet women, I found, were as deeply interested in us as we now are in them, and it is desirable that similar studies about American women's life and work be sent to them. Steps are being taken in this direction by the Committee of Women, I am told, and there is no question but that such sharing of knowledge and experience will enrich the women themselves as individuals and advance the welfare of both countries. The greater the degree of interchange with our Soviet friends the more we shall promote our common interests in winning and maintaining a peaceful world.

The American woman in surveying her Soviet sister will be conscious of a great debt to her. Soviet woman commands our respect not alone for her great contribution to building up her country's might in peace and in war, without which the fascist aggressors might have prevailed against the Soviet Union and against us too. She wins our gratitude for disproving so many of the time-hallowed contentions concerning women's *naturally* inferior role in society. That jobs can be combined with happy home life, that children can be secure and satisfied when the mother takes on responsibility outside the home, that women can master "men's" professions, that masses of women can be intelligently concerned with large issues, national and international—these have been shown by Soviet experience. American women can and should find in this fact a great source of satisfaction and an equally great challenge.

—R. M.

Soviet Women

I

Soviet Women in Economic Life

WOMEN in Tsarist Russia were no strangers to hard work. For very few of them, however, did that work bring pay envelopes, honor or even gratitude. On the farms, where the great majority of people lived, women as well as men toiled from morning to night, their primitive equipment demanding strenuous physical labor.

In the Not-so-Distant Past

In those winter months when little work was done—the more primitive the more highly seasonal was the farm work—women lived monotonously and narrowly. When in the evening she was beset by the needs of a large brood of children who, uneducated, unclean, and unambitious like their parents, had run about aimlessly during the day, or been pressed into rude farm work, the rural woman before 1917 had to listen to her husband's reproaches that she was a pair of useless hands and a mouth to feed! These reproaches were often climaxed by brutal beating.

Nor was her city sister in a much happier position economically, culturally, or in the family relationship. The few cities usually lacked those physical conveniences associated with urban life. Her husband worked ten and twelve hours a day under health-destroying conditions at a wage so low as to beat down their standard of living or force her into the labor market. Her entrance into production was not marked by the sound of trumpets. Society gave no sign of appreciation for what she would contribute to the national income. In her own home joy was equally constrained.

Severe disabilities were suffered by the woman worker: no child

care centers to care for her youngsters, lower pay than men, lack of mechanical improvements to save her toil, low sanitary standards inside the factory, little interest in training her to skilled status.

Laws and customs kept women oppressed not only in the area around the Caspian where Moslem influence prevailed but in western Russia as well. More than half the working women before 1917 were domestic servants, the very category which supplied the largest percentage of recruits to the vast army of prostitutes, the degrading evidence of the exploitation of women in Imperial Russia.

Some of the shadows in this sombre picture might be lightened a little by reference to the few protective laws passed before 1917, or to the small number of women intellectuals who managed to cut through the bonds of law and custom to devote themselves to alleviation of the misery of their people. But this would be to focus on the exceptional and to reduce in the reader's mind the magnitude of the problem and, correlatively, of the Soviet achievement. For this vast body of unskilled, illiterate, and politically ignorant women in a few years has been raised to a level that makes it possible not only to speak of Soviet women in the same breath with women of Britain, Canada, of the United States and other progressive countries, but actually to regard them as in the vanguard in some respects.

Creating New Attitudes

If women did not have to be taught to work when the Soviets came to power, they did have to be shown that work can bring satisfaction, material reward, prestige, family solidarity. They had to be convinced that work outside the home did bring advantages, economic and cultural, and that children as well as parents gained thereby. They had to learn that skills could be acquired which would ensure their place in an industrial economy and would relieve them of the workingman's traditional hostility to a cheaper, because unskilled, labor source.

These important new attitudes could not be instilled in the first decade of Soviet power. The spirit of the Bolshevik leaders was willing but the country's economy was too poor to provide the conditions of healthful, pleasant labor, too weak to compel the actual equality of women's economic opportunities which the law in theory granted them. To understand why the economy was so backward, the history

of Tsarist Russia should be examined as well as the devastation suffered in World War years and again in the years of civil strife, the latter so graphically described in books like Sholokhov's *The Quiet Don*. Not until the late twenties did Soviet industry and agriculture reach even the low standards of pre-war years.

It is difficult to understand the prevalence of the misconception that a characteristic feature of Soviet society has been *legal compulsion* for women to work. All during the twenties the great problem in the Soviet Union was, of course, to find work for those who wanted it. Only when the Five-Year Plans had solved that problem could the new problem, of persuading women to enter production, even begin to arise. But there was no question of compulsion. Only during the early war years and the present war have Soviet laws made women liable to labor draft. In the twenty intervening years the only compulsory note was the labor code provision that in emergencies (disasters created by the elements, etc.) citizens could be pressed into work.

If, then, the tremendous influx of Soviet women into production in the decade before the Nazi attack represented a voluntary choice on their part, why did they choose to leave their pots and pans for lathes and tractors? How was it possible to convince machine-fearful masses of women that they could and should be efficient masters of modern technology? The formula adopted is clearly marked in the Soviet record: first to establish legal equality that is absolute, then to provide the necessary economic and educational basis for the realization of that equality in life. Result—a politically literate woman who enjoys the processes and the yields of labor. But while more women are engaged in industrial work and in the professions in the USSR than anywhere else in the world, women may also choose not to work outside the home, as evidenced by the millions of Soviet housewives living on their husbands' wages even as the third Five-Year Plan drew to a close. However, even among these housewives many were contributing valuable volunteer services and were able to feel as easy of conscience as their sisters in production whenever they came across Article 12 of the constitution with its Biblical injunction: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." And their contribution to society as housewives is recognized, in laws concerning marital property, for example.

Persuasion versus Compulsion

Once unemployment was abolished in the Soviet Union, housewives and youths formed the only labor reservoir upon which an expanding economy could hope to draw. And in wartime this reservoir has been drained to the full. As the Nazis pushed further into the Ukraine, the Soviets in 1942 decreed a labor draft. The war, then, has brought into production many new millions of women in the Soviet Union as in many other countries. Will they want to remain at work after wartime compulsion is removed?

The Soviet woman knows that jobs will be plentiful in her country, that nurseries and kindergartens are an integral part of an ever-growing network of mothers' aids, that educational advantages keep narrowing the gap between her fitness for a variety of jobs and that of her menfolk. She has no reason to fear that her increasing productivity will result in her unemployment; the steady curtailment of working hours in the Soviet Union until the Nazi threat became unmistakable, indicates to her that the result of higher output is a shorter working day not only for herself but for those with whom she wants to spend her leisure time, her husband, son, brother and father. To the Soviet woman, thus, because of sufficiency of opportunity, the choice, to work or not to work, is a real one.

Why do the Soviets strive to make her decision an affirmative one? Because of the goods she produces? In part—but only in part. If it were for this alone, Soviet writings would stress only the immediate emergency need for woman's labor power. But Soviet authorities go much further. In their viewpoint, as expressed variously by men and women alike—Lenin, Stalin, Krupskaya, Kollontay—woman needs to assume responsibility outside the home if she is to realize, on the highest level possible, all her great potentialities as citizen, wife, mother, and creative individual. From this premise follows their significant conclusion that Soviet women's participation in industry, science, agriculture, art, is not a temporary expedient but a permanent feature of socialist society.

Their experience in the last fifteen years has seemed to the Soviets to prove that the woman concerned only with her own home is a less interesting wife, a less fit mother, a less democratic citizen, and a less happy person than the woman whose work brings her into the same

realms which interest her husband and children. An outstanding feature of Soviet society is the increasing agreement found there that work and home are not opposite poles of woman's existence but are interpenetrating, mutually enriching, essential parts of every person's life.

Widened Horizons

The Soviets are not doctrinaire about the value of work in an individual's development. They are aware that the working woman in Tsarist Russia had only formal economic independence, and that incompletely. She was not sure her job would last or that she could command a living wage in a man's economic world. Also, in terms of individual development, there was no assurance that her horizons would be much broader than that of her sister who in her own household was making a "daily sacrifice to a thousand trivialities." The Soviets, of course, recognize the greater social consciousness that typified the working woman and in Soviet literature rich tribute is paid to the women textile workers and others who, in 1905 and in 1917, were courageously articulate in their demands for democratic reform.

The Soviet emphasis therefore, has been not merely to bring women into production but to make the center of production a new kind of institution. The Soviet factory or farm is designed not only to yield varied supplies to enrich the country's might and increase the individual's material welfare but to yield riches of another sort: knowledge of technological processes, familiarity with world cultural heritage, political literacy, a sense of humanity's interdependence. Of course, up until 1941 only the surface of these mines of human progress could be scratched. However, noteworthy beginnings were made. Not enough has been written of the cultural and political aspects of Soviet farms, factories, schools, laboratories and other institutions in which some thirty million Soviet women worked just before the Nazi invasion. Her working environment has been a great educational force for the Soviet woman. Fully as important for her possibilities of progress, the same mighty educational force has applied itself to her menfolk. But the Soviet woman did not wait patiently by for men's views to change. She often took her initial step toward school or factory in the face of men's derision, threats and even, among some groups, beatings and murders.

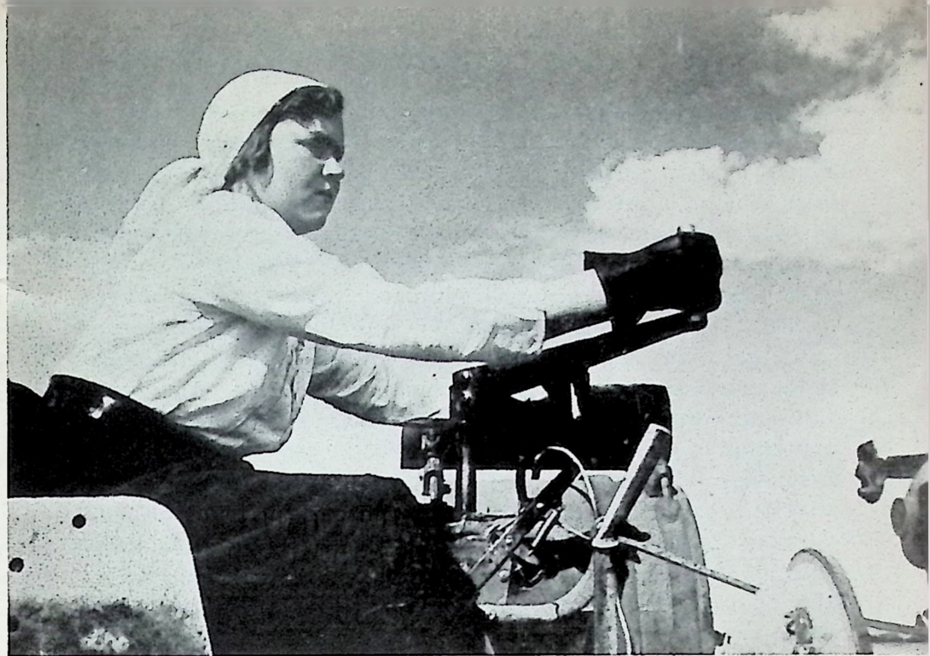
Educational Opportunities

Woman's educational opportunities before she enters production are, of course, a determining factor in the kind of job she is fitted to take on. They also effect the rapidity with which she can advance from lower to higher rungs in the production ladder and reach the more dominant positions in administration and technical skill which men have attained by virtue of longer industrial experience.

Soviet women's great historical handicap was illiteracy. Not even two women out of ten knew how to read or write in Tsarist days. There was a hunger for learning, however, and when the Soviets started their special courses for the eradication of illiteracy, there was an immediate enrollment of millions of women. Even more effective in the creation of a literate womanhood was the establishment of universal compulsory schooling. By 1941 the Soviets had succeeded in reversing the proportion and not even two women out of ten did *not* know how to read or write.

What hardships there were in constructing schools for millions of new scholars, training the thousands of teachers, producing the school books, ink, notepaper, pencils, is a story in itself. For this study the emphasis must be placed on the fact that girls, equally with boys, were given the right to education. Co-education in those early years was a useful weapon in the struggle for women's actual equality. Whatever little schooling had existed in Tsarist days had been largely based upon a division of the sexes and the assumption in the school curriculum that economic opportunities would not be the same for boy and girl graduates.

In the Soviet schoolroom boys and girls learned cooperation and respect for one another's intellectual capacities. In 1943 the Soviets felt on sufficiently safe ground with regard to the habit of taking women's equality for granted built up in the previous twenty-six years, to abolish co-education in the elementary and high schools. It was believed that different rates of development at different age levels, found characteristic for the two sexes, necessitated a separation so that girls could forge ahead quickly in the 11-14 year period which favored them and boys in the 14-17 year period when they matured more rapidly. The decision was taken, Soviet educators claim, after experimentation and scientific study of the problem, and like all



(Above) One of the thousands of women tractor drivers in the USSR
(Below) Three miners' daughters of the Kirgiz Republic spend a holiday in the hills

Soviet decisions is subject to modification in the light of experience.

For our purposes, the important point to note is the retention of almost identical curricula in boys' and in girls' schools so that the basic subjects of science, literature, language, etc., will be mastered by both sexes who, in colleges, universities and other higher educational institutions, will be studying side by side. Whether or not they go to college, boys and girls will continue in their separate schools to receive a polytechnical education, one which teaches the basic processes underlying all production and which fits boys and girls equally for entrance into the world of modern production. And in the vast extra-curricular program which provides all Soviet youth with opportunities to follow their special bent in art, music, science or technology, boys and girls of all age levels study together.

The length of compulsory schooling increased as the USSR built thousands of new schools and trained thousands of new teachers each year. At the time the Soviets were invaded the seven-year school (beginning at the age of eight, since 1943 at seven), was required everywhere but in the rural areas of republics other than the RSFSR. The Soviets were looking forward to a universal ten-year compulsory level in the near future, and were already graduating tens of thousands from those ten-year schools, completion of which was prerequisite to university entrance. By 1929 the feminine enrollment in universities and other higher institutions was 28 per cent of the total student body, by 1939 almost exactly 50 per cent. In the technicums and in other secondary schools which prepared skilled personnel, girls constituted over 37 per cent of the student body in 1928 and over 51 per cent a decade later.

Despite the present equality of educational opportunity, Soviet women are still, when examined as a whole, paying for the handicaps of illiteracy, technical ignorance, and lack of self-confidence fastened upon them in Tsarist days and retained in large measure in the first decade of Soviet existence. Soviet women do not hold the same number of skilled jobs as men, nor the same number of directorial, professorial, or governmental posts.

Growing Economic Participation

But this is only by way of caution, for the history of Soviet women's development shows us that with great rapidity they have actually

managed to play an economic role in their country's progress unequalled elsewhere, and that the trend is in the direction of rapidly increasing their share of higher responsibilities.

Soviet Women's Economic Participation (according to the last pre-war data issued by the Soviets, in IZVESTIA, March 8 and 9, 1941)

Women in collective farm work	19,000,000
Women workers and employees	11,000,000
Total	30,000,000
Including:	
Women operating tractors, combines, and other complicated agricultural machines	100,000
Women engineers and technicians in socialist industry	170,000
Women doctors in dispensaries, hospitals and clinics	73,000
Women scientific workers in scientific-research institutions and higher institutions generally	33,000
Women teachers in schools	650,000
Women agronomists, with higher education	9,000
Women elected chairmen or vice-chairmen of collective farms	14,000
Women managers of livestock-breeding departments	40,000
Women brigade leaders in collective farms	42,500

In this regard the war has strengthened Soviet women's self-confidence. There has been in wartime a striking numerical increase in Soviet women's assumption of skilled work and supervisory jobs. They found that they could cope successfully with the responsibility of directing industrial enterprises, of policy formation in governmental, trade union, and party conferences, of running large collective farms. Their preponderance in some professions, such as the medical, has become ever more marked.

Soviet women were enabled to forge ahead in wartime because of two basic conditions: their assured position as a *permanent* part of economic life and the previous training in skills and attitudes which enabled them to push up quickly into the higher positions and let the newcomers fill their former jobs.

Before the war Soviet women were doing everything from cleaning the streets to directing traffic, from making airplane parts to flying passenger and freight and ambulance planes, from building the Moscow subway to directing a railway, from growing potatoes to managing a collective farm. They were not, however, doing the kind of job which scientific research showed was harmful to woman's child-bearing functions and hence of danger to her chances of a happy

family life, and to the health of the future generation. Just which jobs those were was a matter subject to change as technological improvements transformed various occupations from semi-handicraft to industrial status. What was hazardous in 1932, was, because of advanced techniques, not necessarily so in 1938. Thus, in 1938, women could for the first time become locomotive engineers or their assistants, and within a year 44 women had qualified for the higher job and 4500 as assistants. Soon Zinaida Troitskaya, the first woman locomotive engineer, was heading the Moscow Circuit Railway, and thousands of girls were stimulated to enter transport work not only as station-masters, etc., but as expert technicians. Anna Shchetinina, the one woman captain of an ocean-going steamer, inspired thousands of women to join the crews of river boats, fishing vessels, and even Arctic craft. By 1940 some half a million Soviet women were engaged in transport work. Valentina Orlikova, third mate of a Soviet merchant ship that docked at our shores in 1943, was only one of dozens of feminine crew members and officers whose courage and skill had helped to navigate merchant ships through submarine and mine-infested seas.

Safeguarding Women's Rights

The protective limitation on women's economic life is not regarded by the Soviets as an abrogation of equality of rights but as a safeguard of that equality. Recognizing biological differences and providing protections to offset them is a logical procedure for a science-minded people. This does not mean that women's right to work is the right to do only the easy jobs. Soviet women can be observed doing hard physical work in urban and rural areas alike. They know, however, that technological advance resulting from government-financed research keeps lightening their burdens, that the weights they lift are scientifically set, that a vast system of socialized medicine is at hand guarding their health. Even for those Soviet women who are still unskilled, their work seems far less difficult than the laborious unmechanized domestic and farm work which most of them performed without recompense or security a generation ago.

Because equal pay for equal work is a settled principle of Soviet economy, women are not brought into production as a source of

cheap labor. There is a constant impetus for government, factory management, and trade unions alike to seek to improve working conditions and raise the productivity of both men and women, since they are paid alike for their output.

Labor Standards for Women

Since the economy is a socialist one, and factories, mills, mines, banks, and so on, are, in the words of the Soviet Constitution, "state property, that is, belong to the whole people," women are not, with the insignificant exception of domestic workers, employed by private individuals. Their working conditions are set by agreement between the government-appointed managers or directors of the various enterprises and the trade unions. Such agreement cannot go counter to the standards set by central governmental bodies in which trade union representatives participate ex-officio or by virtue of election. The head of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions sits in the pivotal Economic Council of the federal Council of People's Commissars, the Soviet equivalent of a Cabinet. Another central union official, Claudia Nikolaeva, the woman who declared after visiting war plants in Britain that women did less responsible work in them than in the USSR, is a member of the federal Presidium which is empowered to act between sessions of the Supreme Soviet. And in all the soviets, federal, republic, or local, a large proportion of the deputies elected—workers, teachers, doctors, scientists—are trade union members. (Over 25 million of the 30 million men and women workers in 1940 belonged to trade unions).

The centrally established working standards, which become incorporated in the labor code of each republic, offer equal conditions for men and women, with special protections obtaining mainly where maternity is concerned. The seven-hour day was the maximum for all workers and employees, men and women alike, until a year before the Nazis struck. Then, in preparation for the war they knew was coming, it was fixed at eight hours, regarded by the Soviets as the maximum consistent with maintenance of good health and adequate adult education.

Child labor is prohibited; no one under 14 may work. In peacetime those of 14 to 16 needed special permission which if secured involved a maximum working day of four hours at full-time pay. Until

1940 girls and boys between 16 and 18 could not put in a full working day. These protective features for the young will undoubtedly be restored when the first great problems of reconstruction are solved after the war.

The enforcement of Soviet labor legislation is in the hands of labor itself through union inspectors and through government inspectors appointed with union approval. New safety measures are constantly being devised by trade union research and by eleven government-supported institutes of labor hygiene and occupational disease. Where research involves the working mother, the institutes work closely with the institutes for the protection of mother and child. Trade unions, which administer the social insurance funds from which men and women are paid during illness, reported in 1940 that illness had decreased between 10 and 20 per cent in 22 branches of industry in 1939 as compared with 1938 and in 32 industrial branches the reduction was from 20 to 30 per cent. There is, thus, a double incentive to give the working woman favorable conditions; the government must provide free medical care if she becomes ill and the trade union must supply sickness benefits.

The Factory as an Educational Center

While the Soviet woman worker is apt to spend her annual vacation (at least two weeks, with pay) in recreation, part of her daily leisure time is given over to study. Within the factory, mill, or other enterprise itself, or in a building adjoining, varied courses are offered without charge. Trade unions, particularly, figure in the attempt to popularize and provide adult education. They have steadily increased the network of clubs, libraries, and other study centers for workers. In 1936 there were over 35 million books in the 5,585 trade union libraries; by 1940 trade unions owned almost three times as many libraries, 15,000, and had expended vast sums to construct 6,000 Palaces of Culture, and less elaborate Houses of Culture.

Factory management cooperated actively in the matter of funds, schedules, and premises. In the factories themselves there were some 100,000 club rooms. In all these meeting places men and women workers assemble to listen, discuss, create. Study goes on all hours of the day and evening, for the courses are designed to attract workers from all shifts. Everything from the 3R's to preparation for the state

technical examination is taught. Since 1935 the range of technical courses has been extended because of the emphasis on understanding the machine stimulated by the method of rationalization of the working process known as Stakhanovism, in honor of the miner who demonstrated how productivity can be increased. The increasing proportion of women Stakhanovites among the workers is an indication not only of better educational opportunities before they enter production, but of the advantage they have taken of in-service training opportunities.

Because all courses in the Soviet Union are taught with a social orientation—the subject matter is related to the world around them and to its history—these technical courses often lead to an interest in political study. The political development of Soviet women is in large part attributable to the discussions and meetings at places of work. That the eagerness of Soviet workers to learn causes certain supply problems is evidenced by the consternation of the education chairman in a Moscow suburb when in 1936 the big overshoe factory in his neighborhood built a House for Technical Education. "Where can I get so many globes?" he worried. "Maps used to be a classroom accessory but now every worker wants not only a map but also a globe at home, so that he can follow world events more closely. How can I supply them all?"

While much of the study by women workers is closely connected with their work, an important part is also literary, musical, artistic. The mass desire for opera, for books by those great figures of nineteenth century Russian literature formerly read only by a small minority, for classical music—all this finds its roots, not alone in the Soviet education of youngsters, but in the education of their parents. The famous Bolshoi Theater of Opera and Ballet, for example, like all other Soviet cultural institutions, maintains close connection with places of work. Bolshoi Theater representatives hold frequent meetings with workers and often bring opera singers and lecturers into the factory to perform and explain an opera. "Most of our workers are young or have only recently arrived from the village. They have not yet learned fully to appreciate classical productions. We expend no little energy to enable them to understand the beauty that is to be found in the ballet and opera," reported a member of the Bolshoi Theater staff. Amateur performances, so popular among Soviet men

and women, are coached by professional musicians, writers, poets, playwrights, artists. Soviet woman acquires a new attitude towards work not only because of its material rewards but because of the new creative possibilities it opens to her.

The New Farm Woman

Despite the great trek to the cities when the Plans called for rapid industrialization, farm women still outnumber the women at work in urban areas. The trend toward mechanization and women's mastery of the machine, was evident on the Soviet farm before the war, although less marked than in industry. In 1934 there were 7,000 women tractor drivers. But even when the figure rose to 50,000 in 1938, a sevenfold increase in four years, it was still small compared with the 900,000 men tractor drivers. In 1939, however, a widespread campaign persuaded more than 100,000 women to enroll in spare-time courses organized for tractor drivers, truck drivers, and combine operators. Then next year in the Ukraine alone, 40,000 women were learning to handle tractors.

Farm women's economic progress cannot, of course, be measured only in terms of machinery. The collective farm itself brought opportunities of unparalleled significance for rural women. Some nineteen million farm households had, by 1940, merged into the quarter of a million collective farms and on the average one woman from each household became a full-fledged member of a collective farm. She acquired the right to elect the farm chairman (or be voted in herself), to debate farm policies in the frequent general meetings, and to be recompensed in her own name for the work-days put in on collective farm work. Her contribution to agriculture became a measurable one in a system which carefully measured each individual's performance and paid him accordingly, regardless of sex. To retain membership in the collective farm, women and men alike have to put in at least the minimum number of work-days, now set at 150. Since work-days are graded according to skill, the skilled woman farmer can earn two work-days in a day and thus put in only 75 calendar days a year at collective farm work if she wishes.

What would she do with the rest of her time? Each farm family may, according to the Soviet Constitution, possess its own house, livestock, poultry, and minor agricultural implements, and may use a

plot of land near the house for gardening, bee-keeping, etc. The care of these could be made very elaborate and time-consuming but the tendency has been for men and women alike to do more than the minimum work-days on the collective farm, rather than to put in a large amount of time on their individual husbandry. They are stimulated by competitions among farms, whole districts, and republics to make their particular collective farm outstanding and to reap the great material rewards and honors which follow. By 1936 women collective farmers were accounting for over 35 per cent of all the work-day units in the Soviet Union. During the war, the greater part of the farm work has been carried by women.

The collective farm woman has shown a steady increase in efficiency and skill. In 1933 she performed, on the average, only 87 per cent of the standard or "norm" set for a work-day; by 1935 she was almost up to the 100 per cent mark. While farm women as a whole are progressing, many among them are not only reaching men's standards but surpassing them. There were women at the First All-Union Congress of Collective Farm Shock-Workers in 1933 and at a reception in their honor Stalin commended the steps taken to move large numbers of these capable women into leading farm posts. In 1936 at the conference of foremost livestock breeders, 507 of the 1447 participants were women. At the famous All-Union Agricultural Exposition in 1939 the strong, resolute faces of farm women were numerous among the portraits and busts of outstanding cotton-pickers, beet-growers, dairy farmers, tractor drivers. Almost 6,000 women among those who had won the right to demonstrate their methods and yields were awarded medals. It was appropriate that the medal they received, especially designed for that Exposition, showed a man and a woman farmer, their strong arms jointly holding aloft a sheaf of wheat, for Soviet women almost equally with men have developed their country's agriculture to its present important position. They have been well-rewarded in the process. Their material situation has improved; there is no question but the standard of living in rural areas is far higher than that of Tsarist days. And their honors and awards have given them a new authority in village affairs. One of the coveted Stalin Prizes was won by a woman who raised a record potato crop. In 1936 more than half the women holders of the Order of Lenin were farm women, and among these milkmaids were conspicuous.

Bridging the Gap between Town and Country

While honors and awards are important for their inspirational value to other farm women, they are only symbols of the opportunities open to the collective farmer in her daily life to improve her knowledge, her culture, and her skill. These opportunities arise because the Soviet village is taking on many aspects of life commonly associated with urban culture. This process is deliberate, in keeping with the Soviet slogan: eliminate the lag between town and country. For the collective farm woman there is electricity to read by, a "cottage laboratory" in which to experiment under professional guidance; a public building (usually called House of Culture) in which to attend movies, lectures, plays; a school house for study; a community library. Often there is a sports stadium or some other special place of recreation built out of the cultural fund which each collective farm under the Model Rules of the Agricultural Artel sets aside before the farm's proceeds are divided among the members.

The collective farm woman spends an increasing number of hours on study. The peasant woman in 1923 had devoted fewer than ten hours a year on learning; by 1934 the woman on the collective farm was averaging almost 260 hours. She is encouraged not only by the teacher and the librarian in her village, who organize lectures, literary readings and exhibits, but by the Soviet press which, in simply-written but often quite scholarly articles, broadens her interests and her understanding.

Soviet women on farms and in cities, are encouraged to be articulate about their needs and their desires. They are encouraged to become local correspondents for many newspapers, to express their opinions on draft legislation, to criticize the administration of their farm or their district. Back in 1920, a Soviet commentator had spoken in terms of awe of the Cossack Conference in Moscow where women appeared side by side with men as delegates with equal rights: "Many a sensible remark, a clever suggestion, a thoughtful question, comes from the peasant woman. It seems like a dream but it is reality." In less than two decades not only is "a thoughtful question" no longer a marvel, but farm women are expected to have opinions on all important issues.

The outstanding feature of the Stakhanov rationalization move-

ment, is the obligation which each Stakhanovite feels to share his knowledge with his neighbor. Women, often accused the world over of inability to cooperate with other women, were no exception to this, and were in fact the chief beneficiary. Not only men Stakhanovite farmers but women too were teaching their superior work methods to other men and women. The sturdy form of Pasha Angelina, champion Soviet woman tractor driver, could be seen in fields other than those assigned to her brigade. Maria Demchenko did not rest content with the 500 centners of sugar beets she garnered per hectare but soon had imparted her methods and her enthusiasm sufficiently to be herself outstripped by other women beet growers. For Maria Demchenko, as for many other village girls, this kind of activity was the stepping stone to a course in an agricultural college.

Effect on Health

Rural working conditions not only ensure increasing skill for women but increasing vigor. Their health is not ravaged by the epidemics for which Tsarist Russia was notorious. They no longer give birth to their children in the fields. They no longer scorn cleanliness or lack the means for achieving it. Collective farm women are protected by a network of permanent medical institutions and also by the special services provided during sowing and harvesting seasons. Traveling health brigades provide medical care right in the field and also supervise organization of meals, quality of drinking water, bathhouse facilities. Seasonal nurseries and kindergartens take care of six million children from one month to seven years of age. The demand for these institutional aids by collective farm women far exceeds the supply, and each year plans are made for the construction of more of them. Even in wartime this process has continued; in 1943 there was a 33 per cent increase in village nurseries over the 1942 facilities. Their record is notable in reducing the death rate among children, in detecting disease in its early stages, in teaching the children new habits of play and instilling new attitudes towards work, nationality, parents, study, not to mention their role in imparting knowledge of child care to rural parents.

The rural nurseries are under the aegis of the health commissariats and the kindergartens under the education commissariats. Nationwide standards are set up after extensive research by the Central In-

stitute for the Protection of Mother and Child and its affiliates. Nurseries and kindergartens were not only unknown among farm women of the Soviet East but were feared and agitated against in the early years. To explain the nature of these institutions as mother's helpers, women's clubs like the one in Baku on the shores of the Caspian Sea, would set up a model nursery, kindergarten, and clinic, and also initiate courses for the training of pre-school personnel.

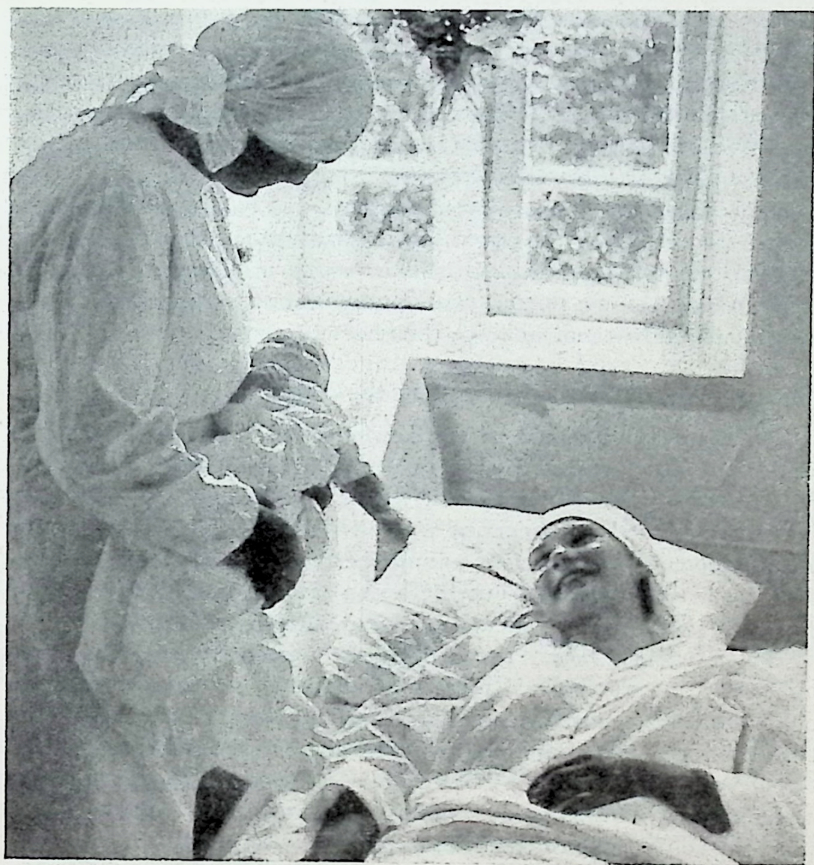
While all women in rural areas, whether they work or not, receive free pre-natal care, hospitalization, and medical services for themselves and their children, women collective farm members are entitled to one month maternity leave before childbirth and one month afterward with half their average pay. There is the attempt, thus, to bring to the farm woman in the Soviet Union the kind of health and maternity protection usually associated only with urban employment.

Pioneer Women

The conditions of work already described for both factory and farm extend throughout the vast territory of the Soviet Union, more than twice the size of the United States. There are no "colonial" conditions of production in the area east of the Caspian, for example; on the contrary some of the best equipment and methods may be found in a Tashkent factory. This does not mean that Soviet women never labor under hazardous conditions. The girls who lived in tents and ate monotonous, inadequate food on *stroikas* (construction projects) in the Urals or who served as radio-technicians at polar stations or as aviators over the lonely taiga, or who responded to the famous appeal of Valentina Khetagurova to join her in building a civilization in the Far Eastern wilderness—these Soviet woman pioneers chose to leave the protection of cities and villages already established and hew fresh paths of progress for themselves and humanity. The munitions which poured from the Urals to defeat the Nazis at Stalingrad and ensure the victory of the United Nations, the cargo facilities at Murmansk and Archangel and the planes safeguarding northern convoys, the strong new eastern centers like Komsomolsk which immobilize vast Japanese forces, all made possible in large part by Soviet women's great courage and imagination, their toil and sweat, now repay those women twofold. The survival of their country has been

assured, a country in which their position is one of equality, and the work which they had entered in hardship now provides many of the health safeguards they thought they were surrendering.

The Soviet Union's prospects of settling its vast unpopulated areas in the post-war years are bright for the very reason that the imagination of women has been fired equally with men's and that Soviet women have in the past found tangible rewards for their daring and their initiative.



A new-born baby is brought to its mother in a collective farm maternity home in the Ordzhonikidze Region

II

Soviet Women as Citizens

In Imperial Russia there was no tradition of women's participation in the exercise of government. One of the first steps towards women's expression of rights as citizens was taken when working women helped choose delegates in 1905 and 1917 to soviets, those councils which had to be elected *ad hoc* for lack of legal trade union bodies to negotiate in labor disputes. Soviet Russia in 1917 had to face the formidable task of rendering its vast body of womanhood politically literate. It is one thing to give women the vote and another to get them to use it at all, let alone intelligently. It is one thing to elect women to office and another to create the self-confidence which will allow them to voice their views forcefully.

"Every Cook Must Learn to Run the State"

And political education was likewise needed for most men; even among the supposedly most advanced, the members of the Communist Party, there were many in the early years who roused Lenin to scornful criticism by their backward mentality regarding women, by their failure to realize "the masses cannot be drawn into politics without drawing in the women". But the lesson was gradually learned, that, as Lenin put it, "every cook must learn to run the state."

Soviet women began to see that the problem of gaining rights for themselves was part of the larger problem of making the society one in which women can have equal rights, legal and actual. Men began to see that without women's participation, "building socialism" —or developing an economy based on public ownership—and running a government with so vast a domain to administer, would be impossible or would at least be a dangerously slow process, because continued weakness might tempt aggression. While these realizations developed slowly in the years of unemployment up to 1930, not a

little was accomplished even in the twenties to give Soviet women experience in wielding a gavel, discussing policy in soviet and party conferences, in making trade union decisions. Indicative of the more advanced attitude towards women on the part of factory workers, the larger the industrial population of a city, the higher was the proportion of women elected to office in the early years. Urban areas generally were the first to vote women into soviets. In 1924 there was a woman deputy for every four men elected to a city soviet, more than double the proportion in village soviets. But the villages were coming along. By 1926 women deputies constituted 14 per cent of the rural soviets and by 1927 were *chairmen* of 700 of them. Changes of other than a statistical character were also taking place. "In our village last year," reported Siberian delegates to a Moscow conference of women, "the two women elected in a soviet of 28 people seldom attended meetings because the men laughed and made it too unpleasant. But this year we elected six women and they go to every meeting."

Women's participation in the deliberations of higher governmental bodies was also increasing. In the first Congress of Soviets they constituted 3.5 per cent of membership. They doubled this proportion in the third Congress and at the fourth meeting of the federal body women were 8.2 per cent of the total. They almost doubled this proportion again when, at the election of the new federal parliament, the Supreme Soviet, established under the Constitution of 1936, 189 women became members of the highest governmental body in the Soviet Union. Elections in the areas which became part of the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941 brought the number up to 227, or almost a sixth of the total membership, a proportion far beyond that existing in any other parliament or congress in the world. New elections scheduled for 1941, were prevented by the Nazi invasion.

The advance of Soviet women is even more notable where republic or local government is concerned. In the Soviet republics, sixteen constituent and nineteen autonomous, women are elected in large numbers to the highest bodies They constitute over 20 per cent of the RSFSR's Supreme Soviet and in smaller republics, like the Tadzhik (Central Asia), they are 30 per cent and more of the deputies. In 1941 women in the Supreme Soviets of union and autonomous republics numbered over 1500. In local soviets they are almost half a million strong, or a full third of the entire membership.

It will not be unexpected if Soviet women's wartime contribution results in markedly increased numbers elected to high office. Maria Sarycheva's election, early in 1944, to the vice-presidency of the Supreme Soviet of the largest republic, the RSFSR, is a sign of the times. While it is doubtful whether even the greatest development of women's capacities will ever result in a mechanically even distribution of the sexes in elective posts, there is little doubt that more Soviet women are qualified than are elected or appointed to responsible positions. Lena Stern, instead of saying a grateful thank-you when elected to the Academy of Sciences as its first women member in its two centuries of existence, took the occasion to criticize the slowness of women's promotion into top professorships and directorial posts in higher edutional bodies.

In Trade Unions and Other Organizations

In trade union, Communist Party, consumers' cooperative, and other organizational posts, women have been elected and appointed in large number. An incomplete tally in 1937 showed 41,500 women in elective positions in cooperative societies. In trade unions, to which ten out of eleven working and professional women belonged in 1940, some 650,000 women were elected to office; there is one woman to each three men heads of union locals and one to two in the membership of local executive boards. Five women head major national unions. Of the three secretaries of the powerful Central Council of Trade Unions of the USSR one is a woman. The Communist Party, in which women are present in increasing proportion—they were only 13 per cent in 1926 but almost 30 per cent of total membership by 1940—has been relatively slower in providing top posts for women, a fact in part related no doubt to the experience and judgment in administration which these "vanguard" positions require and which women have only now begun to attain. Krupskaya, Kollontay, and a handful of other Soviet women could assume responsible posts from the start. Mme. Alexandra Kollontay (today the Soviet Ambassador to Sweden) was in fact the first woman commissar and cabinet member, and was the first woman anywhere to represent her country in a foreign land—but most Soviet women were obviously ill-equipped for high office. Through the years, however, some became commissars (of justice, health, social welfare, and so on) in the various republics

and hence members of republic cabinets, some have become presidents or vice-presidents of republics, or chairmen or members of Supreme Courts, and some have been elected to head large city soviets. The number of governors, mayors and judges, while impressive by comparison with other countries, is still small in absolute terms. But that they, only two and a half decades ago one of the most submerged sectors of womankind on the face of the earth, could head the Byelo-Russian Republic or the Yakut Republic or the City of Tashkent or the City of Kursk, or fill the second highest post in the federal health commissariat, must be taken as a healthy indication of women's rapidly growing role in Soviet policy-making and administration. This is the more remarkable when we remember that the step forward is being taken by women of diverse nationalities, women like Chimnaz Aslanova who had not discarded the enshrouding veil of the eastern woman until she was 19, but who is now vice-chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities, one of the two houses making up the Supreme Soviet.

Voluntary Responsibility

Soviet women's political participation cannot be measured alone by their almost 100 per cent turn-out at the polls, their service in the electoral commissions, or their work as elected deputies. Perhaps even more important for the development of democratic processes is the vast extent of their participation in running the state on a volunteer basis. Deputies to the soviets are for the most part men and women who continue at their regular jobs during their term of office. They would find their duties onerous indeed if there were not millions of men and women who, as unpaid public servants, are attached to the various bureaus of the soviets either as experts or simply as citizens particularly interested in some branch of civic activity such as price control, hospital inspection, housing, etc. Usually these men and women have jobs of their own; sometimes the women, like some of the deputies themselves, are housewives who want to be part of the new life pulsating about them.

This opportunity for significant volunteer activity has been a great educational force among Soviet women. Volunteer work in the Soviet Union commands respect and gratitude, and outstanding performance has frequently led to government awards. Women have been enabled to discover potentialities within themselves they had hardly been

aware of; many a woman volunteer not already earning a salary has become interested enough in such work to take it on as a regular job. Then as a wage-earner, she seeks further volunteer activity to engage in after-hours. Contrary to the common misconception that every action in the Soviet Union is government-initiated, the men and women who make up the Soviet government depend upon the mass of citizenry to think up new and better ways of doing things and new and better things to do. The speed with which a vast pre-school network has been built up, the efforts to prevent government workers from discharging their duties in a bureaucratic or de-humanized way, the rise in cultural level, these and other noteworthy Soviet developments are attributable in part to the "social work" conception which permeates every layer of the population and draws millions into some volunteer welfare activity.

(Volunteer work has reached its highest point during the war, and in the vast reconstruction program already under way, thousands of women put in their spare time as bricklayers, painters and carpenters to help rebuild their ruined cities.)

Gretchukha, a judge of the People's Court, at home with her children

The "Wives Movement"

This conception was given widespread publicity, and for housewives an organizational form, when in 1936 the so-called "Wives Movement" was reviewed, encouraged to develop further, and accorded high official honors. The Commissar of Heavy Industry praised the contribution made by wives of engineers and technicians to the comfort, efficiency, and cultural progress among workers in heavy industry. Voroshilov did the same for wives of Red Army staff. The wives of writers, of leading railroad personnel, of water transport Stakhanovites, etc., were not to be outdone. The press was full of photographs and speeches.

The activities of the women taking part in this movement cover a wide range. They plant trees and flowers on the factory grounds, teach art and literacy classes, edit wall newspapers, equip and repair nurseries, dormitories, rest rooms, set up tea canteens in workshops, improve dining rooms in schools and factories, coach amateur theatricals, organize after-school activity for the children or introduce child care lectures for parents at the place of work. Study, self-improvement, is an integral part of the "Wives Movement" too, and many of the wives enroll in the courses offered in the enterprises where their husbands work.

No evaluation of the factors in Red Army morale can ignore the contribution of the "Wives Movement" which gave to the Red Army thousands of teachers, lecturers, librarians. "Wholesome recreation for commanders and men has become a matter of the constant care of our women," declared a Conference of Wives of Red Army Commanders. Especially in the distant garrisons in the vicinity of Japan, Red Army wives helped make the barracks attractive, grew vegetables in the taiga, assisted in the construction of parks, schools, sports stadiums, encouraged the amateur art activities so popular among men in the Red Army. Thus the Soviets take the historical fact that women play a large part in their husbands' achievements and make it a source of conscious pride among women and a means to the continuous development of women themselves. The salutary effects upon family life are apparent from the wives' own stories of the greater happiness they have found in their home by taking responsibility outside it as well.

III

Soviet Women and the Home

IN THE first years after the World War when civil strife in Soviet Russia prolonged both family separations and physical hardships which had already had a disruptive effect on relations between husbands and wives and parents and their children, there was much theorizing about and some practice of so-called "free love". This tendency was condemned by Lenin and other far-sighted Soviet authorities who saw the dangers inherent in preoccupation with sex and in promiscuity. It is certainly debatable whether sex morals among the mass of Soviet people were on a lower level than in other countries in those early post-war years. But in Russia there were indeed more prominent individuals who talked more about what they were doing and even sought to evolve general principles which would identify promiscuity with the new society.

Early Ideas about the Family

While this attempt to rationalize the break-up of family life, which began before the Soviets came to power, was a natural temptation as well as a natural reaction to the enslaving conditions imposed by the old type of family, it was hardly in accord with the doctrines enunciated by the "founding fathers" of Soviet thought. Engels had, decades previously, pointed out that only as socialist society developed would the position of the family become clear; he indicated the likelihood that monogamy—the only form of family which permitted the development of individual sex-love—would prevail. The extremists of the early Soviet years were trying to create a set of so-called socialist sex mores before they had gotten around to creating socialism! Lenin told them to get busy and build the new society and the new relationships would arise in the process. For the Lenin camp and the

free-love camp could agree at least on one thing: they did not want the kind of family that had existed in the old days, characterized by men's superiority, by widespread prostitution, by marriages artificially perpetuated after mutual love and respect were gone, by property, nationality and religious barriers to marriage between those who loved each other, by parental tyranny or carelessness, by perpetuation of old prejudices concerning sex, nationality, hygiene, human nature.

But while they could agree on what they did not want, they differed in their estimate of the role the family could play in building the new human being and the new society. The free-love proponents thought the family as such was outmoded; the Lenin supporters thought the family should be retained but in the process of its regeneration should be relieved of some of its old functions. This latter view, which inevitably won out in the course of Soviet developments, is not so different from the principles and practices adopted, more slowly, in most progressive countries. The educational function of the family is quite generally diminished by the introduction of free, compulsory public schools for the young. The feeding, laundering and other services traditionally performed exclusively in the home, are everywhere more and more taken over by specialized institutions.

The industrial revolution pre-dates the Soviet revolution, a fact worth remembering when the Soviets are criticized for pushing women along a path of development counter to their "natural" desires. When Lenin called for the rapid development of public dining rooms, nurseries and kindergartens, and laundries, which he declared "although presupposing nothing pompous, highsounding and solemn, are capable *in deed* of liberating women, capable *in deed* of reducing and eliminating her inequality with man as regards her role in social production and public life," he was formulating a program which was radical only in one respect, and that was the emphasis on universality. He wanted for all Soviet women those family aids which only the wealthiest sector of any population can generally command: expert care for babies and pre-school youngsters during the day, carefully prepared meals available outside the home to cut down the meal burden of the household, leisure time created for parents so that they can keep culturally abreast of the younger generation and ensure their continued respect and admiration without which filial love is a doubtful quantity.

Strengthening Family Life

As the Soviet family developed, surrounded by more and more of these educational, health and recreational institutions, it itself acquired, in seemingly paradoxical fashion, more and more importance as an educational force. Because marriages were based increasingly on romantic love and true mutuality of interests and not on property, religion, nationality, parents' preference, and other formerly dominant considerations, and because the parents were themselves working and studying, they were able to communicate to their children enthusiasm for the fundamental ideals of the society: sex and racial equality, respect for labor, for world culture. Taught in hundreds of courses, lectures, articles and books to understand children's needs and actions, Soviet parents became increasingly successful as parents, happier themselves and capable of giving their children greater emotional satisfaction and security. In this, as in other matters touched upon, what is being described is a trend, a direction, and cannot be taken as implying that all problems of relationship between Soviet husbands and wives and between them and their children had already been solved by the time the great destroyer of family life—the Nazi invasion—came upon them. Difficult housing conditions because of rapid urbanization, consumer shortages because inadequate Tsarist development of industry made it necessary to concentrate first on machines to build other machines, and because of the Soviets' defense preparations, and various other factors, created real problems in family life.

But because it is a fact not generally recognized sufficiently in American reports on Russia, the one major point bears repetition here: the family was never abolished in Soviet Russia but has, on the contrary, been constantly strengthened through the years.

Does the state rear the young? *Must* parents put their children in nurseries and kindergartens? The answer is emphatically no. Nurseries and kindergartens while regarded as essential to Soviet woman's utilization of her constitutional rights to work, study, and rest, are never in peacetime permitted to become a substitute for the home life which every child needs. They function just as schools do for older children, providing expert care for part of the day, and helping parents with the educational and physical development of their young-

sters. Every effort is made to enable mother and child to be together as much as possible. Day nurseries are directly connected with the place of work or dwelling to eliminate time spent in transportation, nursery hours are adapted to the mothers' working hours, special arrangements are made to give working mothers facilities to nurse their babies regularly. Far from being compulsory even the largest network of child care institutions in the world, which the Soviets have succeeded in establishing, cannot as yet fill the great demand for such facilities.

Soviet recognition of the importance of home life extends, it should be noted, to its policy concerning orphans. Wherever possible adoptions are arranged and foster parenthood encouraged.

What are some of the factors that have contributed to a strengthened Soviet family and hence greater happiness for Soviet women in their home life? The economic changes have already been mentioned, how the Five-Year Plans gave increasing opportunity to enter production and engage in social activities, how the material fruits of the plans raised the cultural and physical level of all members of the family and provided healthful opportunity for joint recreational activity. Other direct and indirect results of the improved economic situation should be noted.

Abolishing Prostitution

One of these is the abolition of prostitution and the equally unique world accomplishment, radical reduction of its twin evil, venereal disease, to insignificant proportions. Tsarist Russia had left a sorry heritage of thousands upon thousands of women who carried the prostitute's yellow ticket entitling them to follow their profession legally and many thousands more who illegally walked the streets of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw and other cities and swarmed about the annual fairs. The number of registered venereal patients was 28.8 per 1,000 of Tsarist population, and those registered, as in the case of registered prostitutes, were but a fraction of those who should have been.

The basic Soviet slogan, Fight Prostitution—not the Prostitute, was in itself a recognition of the social roots of the evil and a radical departure from the traditional mode of regarding the prostitute herself

as legally culpable. Soviet experience demonstrates the close tie between women's economic insecurity and prostitution. During the dark early years of unemployment, prostitution increased. The end of unemployment brought prostitution, too, almost to an end, in the mid-thirties. The process was not an automatic one. Many enlightened steps were taken even in the twenties; efforts were made to raise the political consciousness of women, and to set up psychological barriers against entering into prostitution. Women were encouraged to enter production wherever jobs could be had, and thus counteract the practice, favorable to prostitution, of women depending economically upon men.

More educational opportunity for women was urged so that their technical knowledge would improve their economic position. Equally notable was the establishment of a wide network of free venereal disease clinics and the introduction of new rehabilitation institutions, the so-called Prophylactoria for former prostitutes. These Prophylactoria combined medical care with work and study, and after a course of one to two years duration, for which the former prostitute paid out of her earnings while mastering a trade at the institution, the "graduate" was ready to take her place as a skilled worker in a factory and to find a normal home life through marriage and motherhood. As educational and job opportunities for women increased, and the women habituated to the life of a prostitute learned other ways of living, the need for Prophylactoria decreased and in the one that still remained in Moscow, in 1937, the writer found a director happily anticipating his own "unemployment".

What it means to family life to have a 93 per cent reduction in the incidence of syphilis in cities and 77 per cent in villages, in the short span between 1913 and 1935 can be understood more clearly, perhaps, if we focus on the farms in a single district such as one in Voronezh Province: in 1925 an expert examined the inhabitants and found 1,649 cases of syphilis in 420 households; in 1935 the same physician found only 52 patients in only 30 households. In a single area, thus, almost 400 families were freed of a scourge which had lain heavily upon them. The Soviet medical corps faced many physical hardships to bring their knowledge to far-off places: Yakutia, for example, where syphilis cases decreased 89 per cent between 1929 and 1936 or Buriat Mongolia where syphilitic infection among children

Husband and wife are both Stakhanovite workers on an Uzbekistan cotton farm

under ten years of age was in 1936 a bare seventh of what it had been a decade earlier.

In 1935 it could be reported that "there was not a single syphilitic among army recruits in large cities like Moscow, Kharkov, Kursk, Sverdlovsk nor throughout whole republics such as Armenia, Byelo-Russia and Turkmenia." Today only a few hundred prostitutes remain, according to Soviet authorities, and those mainly at hotels where foreigners reside!

It is occasionally suggested in deprecation of the Soviet accomplishment in abolishing prostitution that the loosening of sex morality made prostitution unnecessary. The history of prostitution in the Soviet Union demonstrates the error of this view, for it was in the early years when the "free love" advocates were most articulate that prostitution in the Soviet Union reached its height. And prostitution disappeared in those very years, the thirties, when the family was being strengthened and responsibility for sex relations was being increasingly emphasized through education and through changing marriage and divorce laws.

Early Marriages

Not irrelevant to the matter under discussion is the fact of early marriage in the Soviet Union. Soviet girls cannot marry until they are 18 (16 in some republics) but they do not lose much time after they reach that age! Even those studying in universities and other institutions of higher learning usually marry young. It is economically possible to have a family at an early age in the Soviet Union. The woman worker does not fear that marriage will lose her the job she is doing or lessen her chances for advancement, or that babies will mean the end of her career.

Soviet girls had not always felt sure of the possibilty of combining jobs and family life. At first, they were inclined to fear that the latter would interfere with the former, just as their mothers had feared that the former would interfere with the latter. To read the novels and plays describing the attitudes of the first decade of Soviet existence is to realize what a long road the Soviet girl had traveled by the mid-thirties. In the earlier years personal adornment was "bourgeois", men interfered with her work, babies took away her "freedom," deep attachment for individuals lessened loyalty to the col-

lective. But such views had become old-fashioned once the leisure for romantic love emerged with a seven-hour day and a less frantic tempo of production, once special protective legislation for pregnant women and nursing mothers, and clinics, nurseries and kindergartens assured aid for young mothers. Not that all vestiges of the old rigid attitude were removed even in the thirties. The famous discussion in the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in 1934 revealed that more than one member of the organization of Young Communists thought work required all his attention and left no time for "petty" family matters. But significant indeed was the vigorous condemnation of that attitude and the majority support given to the view that the Young Communist "should take advantage of all the good things of life, combining good work with a well-organized private life in which there is time for cultural development and thoughtful care for his children."

Changes in Marriage and Divorce Laws

Changes in marriage and divorce laws, made possible by better economic conditions, have been of great influence in encouraging the desire to found a family. Soviet family law had, from the first, altered the traditional basis for marriage. A husband was not to be a "meal-ticket"; the Soviet wife could not compel her husband to support her. (If she were an invalid or there were children involved, his financial obligations changed, of course. And, to be sure, many millions of husbands voluntarily and not by virtue of the law supported their wives when the latter chose not to enter production.) This feature of Soviet law has remained unchanged. The marriage broker, the dowry, and wife purchase, all sounding in different degree the note of women's economic dependence or servitude after marriage, have been rendered obsolete by the Soviet conception of women's equality with men.

However, Soviet family laws clearly recognize the need for protecting the interests of the weaker members of the family, and both father and mother are made responsible for the welfare of their children. This protection of the child is, obviously, a protection of the mother as Soviet experience well demonstrated in the harsh early years when fathers sought to evade the law and mothers were left with the whole responsibility for the young.

As Soviet economy became more stable, marital relationships be-

came more stable too. Even when "postcard divorces" were still possible, they were used less and less frequently. Early in 1936, the year that changes were introduced into the divorce law designed to deter hasty marriages and separations, it was possible for the Soviets to announce that in the previous two years the number of divorces had been on the decline while the number of marriages and births kept increasing. In the years after 1936 the same trends were apparent, and in more pronounced form. Working women were now learning how to make their homes more interesting and more comfortable, there were more opportunities for sharing of leisure and cultural facilities for the whole family, and children were constituting less and less of a financial burden.

The gay Lothario was becoming a museum piece, mourned by "free love" exponents outside the Soviet Union but not by those Soviet women who had found their desire for home and children frustrated by his lightminded attitude toward family obligations. While there will continue to be sympathetic solutions available for those couples who enter marriage with no thought of deception but who find themselves incompatible, those who seek to pervert the purposes of divorce to libertine uses will find themselves increasingly at a disadvantage in the Soviet Union. A new decree (July, 1944) makes divorce a matter of court decision and allows the court discretion in fixing the divorce fee between the limits of a minimum of 500 rubles to be paid by either husband or wife to a maximum of 2,000 to be paid by both. Inasmuch as Soviet experience showed that among the relatively small number of individuals who contracted numerous marriages and sought numerous divorces, men predominated, the new provision is a further protection for Soviet women.

The new decree also restores the original distinction between registered and unregistered marriages. In 1927 *de facto* marriages had been put on a par with registered marriages in an attempt to make men and women financially responsible for all the children they brought into the world. By 1944 it was felt that sex relations had been normalized and feelings of family devotion sufficiently developed to return to the standards set up before the chaos and disorder of civil war had necessitated changes in the 1917 law. While the right to claim alimony for support of children is now limited to cases of registered or legal marriages, provisions for state financial aid to un-

married mothers obviate any possibility of hardship for either mother or child.

The greater difficulty of securing divorce and the larger financial obligations of registered marriage will undoubtedly contribute to increasingly deliberate choice of husband or wife; the Soviets regard careful forethought as desirable, promoting family stability and hence the personal happiness of men, women and children alike, and wholly consonant with the romantic love which they insist is the only true basis of marriage.

State Aid for Large Families

There has been some unrealistic criticism of the new law on the ground that it is designed to encourage large families. Every country in the world, to be sure, wants a strong and numerous younger generation. And it is wholly natural that in view of their millions of losses in the present war, the Soviet Union should have this problem in mind. But it should be noted that while there is *encouragement*, there is certainly no compulsion toward large families. And the emphasis is as much on the conservation of life, and the reducing of infant illness and mortality, as on increasing the birth rate.

Certainly the new marriage and divorce law will not only encourage families but large families, for it increases the various protections and aids previously provided for pregnant women and young mothers. When marriages were unstable, when harsh living conditions made home life far from enjoyable, Soviet women deliberately put off bearing the children they wanted. They insisted on the right to abortion and in 1920 they won it over the protests of the medical profession. This right was terminated in 1936 except in special cases, after a month-long public discussion of a proposed law to this effect. Those who were trying to win Soviet women over to the less harmful and more intelligent means of planning parenthood—birth control—at last had a dread competitor out of the way.

One Soviet worker who made anti-abortion efforts her "social work" tells how in the medical offices of the Electrozavod, a huge plant in Moscow, she and many others including the medical corps itself, sought to discourage abortion and teach birth control. "From the time a woman enters the factory we get at her on the question of

contraception. This is our big job. We organize lectures on the subject. We give free daily consultation. We give the necessary appliances free of charge . . . Yet there are many we cannot convince . . . Since publication of the draft law, however, there has been noticeable a distinct increase of interest in birth control methods." She added quite frankly: "We believe that birth control methods can still be improved."

With this last remark as caution, it can be generally asserted that the large families in the Soviet Union are planned families, that the parents choose to have numerous offspring. That they are aided in this choice by the various services put at their disposal is undeniable. There is also tradition to consider. The big family was characteristic of Tsarist days and the Soviets have sought not to do away with big families as such—they have always been staunchly anti-Malthusian —but rather to do away with what usually went with them: high infant mortality, women's kitchen servitude, a lowered standard of living, decreased educational opportunities for all.

Family Services

What services are made available so that men and women who love children and want to rear a family can do so without incurring the hazards mentioned? Free medical care, job security, limited working hours, free compulsory education, and various other safeguards have already been mentioned. One by one, within the limits of a constantly expanding national production, the Soviets relieve men and women of the fears that among all civilized people necessarily inhibit their natural desire to have children.

Health and pain hazard in childbirth? A growing network of maternity homes, and skilled gynecologists who have brought the maternal mortality rate ever downward and who have since 1935 made mass application of painless childbirth techniques.

Health and financial problems for the working mother? Free prenatal care, exemption from overtime after four months' pregnancy, special diets worked out by the Gynecology Division of the Central Institute for the Protection of Mother and Child, lighter work assignments approved by the factory doctor after six months' pregnancy (with no reduction in pay permitted), paid maternity leave (increased

to eleven weeks by the 1944 law or thirteen in case of twins or difficult birth), paid annual vacations, exemption from night work and, with no pay loss, a shorter working day during the nursing period, layette allowances (increased from 45 rubles to 120 in the 1944 law).

The problem of caring for young children? Free medical service, preventive and curative, nurseries and kindergartens, lectures and instruction in child care by experts, including visiting nurses.

Physical, educational and recreational needs of school-children? The school doctor without fee, the hot school lunch at nominal rates or free, the teachers who consult with parents and advise them about the particular needs of Vanya or Tanya, the special movies, theaters, clubs, newspapers and other sources of enjoyment and enlightenment specifically designed for the junior level, the summer camps, the after-school supervision, the sports instruction to occupy the young in healthful fashion.

All of these aids and services are being increased and the assurance that they are a permanent system of protections is in itself an affirmative factor when parents make the great decision to increase the family. None of these aids and services is a substitute for a good wage —the Soviet wage fund has increased steadily through the years and such increase is a part of the annual and the Five-Year Plans—but no wage has yet been devised to take cognizance of the differing size of families who will have to live on it. That is why the method of special allowances to large families, particularly in the critical first years of the children's lives, is gaining recognition in many countries. In the Soviet Union such allowances were established back in 1936. In 1944 they were pushed forward to begin with the birth of a fourth child, rather than the seventh, as before, and even a third child is now to be the occasion of an initial grant, although not the graduated five-year monthly allowance.

Thus Soviet parents even at the present stage of economic development are assured out of public funds that the babies they want need not be delayed for financial reasons. This is of particular importance to young couples, of course, because their income in the first few years after marriage is apt to be lower than it will be after study and experience at work bring more responsible posts.

Are the Soviets paying their people to have babies whether they want them or not? To think so is to show ignorance of the provisions

of the law. The allowances are paid only for five years, and parents who face the responsibility of supporting the children fully after the fifth birthday could hardly think of the matter as a good business proposition; they must want the babies! Also, as a general principle, it should be noted that there is no very great difference between the provision of free pre-natal care, free hospitalization, free children's clinics, free schools and lunches, income tax exemptions, maternity privileges at work, etc., and the issuance of monthly allowances for the support of young children.

The Soviets hope, and have hoped, that all these inducements to have babies will indeed result in a strong and numerous younger generation. The problem of overpopulation does not frighten a huge land with rich resources utilized in a planned way. The old argument against large families as sources of cheap labor supply does not hold where the right to work is guaranteed and there is no unemployment possible, where no labor power (women's or anybody else's) is cheaper than any other, where on the contrary, labor shortages have been a typical feature, where socialized medicine and social insurance tend to make the welfare of each citizen, young and old, the responsibility of all. Nor does the Soviet Union ignore the need for increasing the housing, clothing, food, education, recreation facilities so that a rising birth rate will not lower living standards. Examine the record of increasing output in the Plan years even of consumers' goods which admittedly received less emphasis than capital goods before the war, and look at Soviet reconstruction plans—the August, 1943 law on restoring normal life in liberated areas, for example. The basic housing laws allot space in crowded centers in proportion to the number of members in the family, and adequate housing facilities are a main concern in all the reconstruction plans.

Also, it should be remembered, the Soviets do not fear that large families will arise in some one segment of the population, that the rich will get richer and the poor will get babies, because they feel they have eliminated antagonistic classes, and have provided the entire population with similar standards and have increased the equality of opportunity. There are no traces of "social Darwinism" in Soviet thinking; their experience has shown them that all human stock, regardless of nationality and "previous condition of servitude" is good stock if the environment will permit—and encourage—its finest poten-

tialities to develop. The Soviet Union has been built up with the strength and imagination of just those segments of population which once seemed most hopeless. They reject the notion that some blood lines are better than others, and that human progress depends merely on encouraging the "best" people to have children.

(Above) Nadezhda Vassilievna, an engineer, takes her child for medical examination to the Child Welfare Center
(Below) Mealtime in a worker's family at the Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works

IV

Soviet Women in Wartime

It was not surprising that Soviet women should play so powerful a role in assuring the defeat of the Nazis. In the two decades during which their country knew peace, Soviet women had acquired knowledge, skill, strength, and above all a passionate wish to defend the gains they had made.

Defense Preparations

They were more war-conscious than the women of other peace-loving lands, and observed with a greater sense of impending danger the failure of collective security efforts at Geneva. They prepared themselves for defense. Millions of them joined the Civilian Defense Society. Even in peacetime, it was mainly the women who were to be seen regulating traffic, blowing air raid-whistles, conducting practice drills. In the basement shelter of St. Isaac's Cathedral in the mid-thirties, this writer observed the respectful attention given a young woman who was explaining the purpose and procedures of the defense precautions to the Leningraders later so effectively to utilize the lessons, and in the peaceful Caucasus women hotel employees were observed trying on their gas masks and discussing safety measures which they too would one day need. In their spare time Soviet women were learning to shoot, to ride, to use parachutes.

"And when our country needs heroes, we'll be heroes, each of us," runs a popular Soviet song. But Soviet women knew they were not acquiring military skills in order to become soldiers. It was already clear in the thirties that Soviet women's heroism if war came was chiefly to be demonstrated in the rear. Marina Raskova, a brilliant flyer who was to lose her life in the war, urged women interested in aviation to think not of air fighting in case of war, but of flying ambulance and supply planes, of teaching in aviation schools, of becoming meteorologists, radio operators, engineers, technicians. Similarly the the women tractor drivers were not preparing for tank combat but

to plow up more fields when the men would no longer be there to help.

Heroines of the Front and Rear

Not that Soviet women's military skills have been completely unused. The hundreds of thousands of girls who volunteered to serve at the front as stretcher-bearers, as nurses, as doctors, or as technicians and clerical workers, often saved their own and others' lives by their ability to defend themselves when necessary. The farm women in invaded territory were enabled to join guerrilla units and put their familiarity with weapons and local terrain to good use. And they also served who only cooked and laundered for those intrepid bands, facing with them grave personal dangers and physical hardships. The women of Moscow, of Leningrad and of other cities which heard the enemy approaching, joined their menfolk in digging and manning trenches outside the city lines; these worker battalions often included whole families, men, women, children.

From defense to reconstruction has been a happy change of function for women in guerrilla units and worker battalions. Some have not been content only to rebuild their own villages and cities but have volunteered for the difficult work of restoring Stalingrad and other cities reduced to rubble in unyielding defense.

In the Red Army itself there are some women snipers, tankists, machine-gunners, bomber pilots. These exceptional cases are women who insisted on fighting assignments and who because of high technical qualifications were permitted to go to the front. Some are widows or sisters of men killed in action. The tank driver Maria Oktyabrsky, for example, could not rest after her husband's death and practically bought her way into the army by giving her savings, 50,000 rubles, for the construction of a tank and petitioning for enrollment in a training course! The exploits of these women fighters are told in countless stories in the Soviet press. Poems and plays and short stories are written about them. By the spring of 1944 eighteen of them were bearing the highest title for valor, Hero of the Soviet Union, and thousands had been awarded various other military decorations. These honors are often posthumous, for many women have died in action. High honors too have gone to women of the medical corps who have braved gunfire, flaming houses, dive bombers, to drag wounded men

to safety, to operate on them, to get them through, by plane, sled, train and auto, to evacuation centers. Young Maria Moslova, who performed over 500 operations in dugouts while shells were falling, is typical of the frontline surgeons who ignored their own safety to save the lives of the injured. Soviet men will not soon forget the skill and tenderness which women demonstrated in the front lines.

Most Soviet women have manifested their courage and resourcefulness without a uniform. In occupied areas they keep the invaders worried, insecure, fearful, at terrible cost to themselves and their children. Wanda Wassilewska's *The Rainbow* tells most graphically the way these women fought the enemy and the agonies they endured. And even when sent as slaves to Germany these women have not, despite torture and crippling work, given up the fight. Some of them manage to get back to their own villages. The Soviet journalist, Ilya Ehrenburg, recently described four who were released from Cologne. "Marfusha arrived minus her right arm, Mina minus the fingers of her left hand, Shura had lost her vision, and Varya was suffering from an incurable illness."

In transport, as in fighting, medical work, and guerrilla activity Soviet women have faced mortal risks with great courage. The heroine of a new Soviet play is a boatwoman on a ferry, and Soviet girls, so recently permitted to become locomotive engineers, now drive armored trains or troop and supply trains through enemy fire. And to a girl like Anna Babushkina who ran the blockade with food for starving Leningrad, ferrying American planes is a responsibility she can assume with complete self-confidence.

In civilian defense activities Soviet women have distinguished themselves by fighting incendiary bombs on precarious roof-tops, by organizing a continuous flow of blood to the blood banks, by subscribing to bond issues and donating to the Defense Fund, by felling trees to warm the schools and hospitals, by bedding down the children in shelters and tending the sick and wounded. As Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, Soviet women by the millions took first aid courses and organized medical posts to cooperate with health authorities in preventing epidemics.

But these were spare-time services rendered by women who had been doing a full day's work under trying wartime conditions. (A wartime decree permits three hours overtime daily, and women pro-

ducing munitions in the caves of Sevastopol or in Leningrad's bombed factories often volunteered to remain on the job for several shifts at a time.) Soviet women's greatest contribution to victory has undoubtedly been in holding the production line. For millions of them who had never worked or who had retired from work, or who were doing simple office work, it meant mastering men's professions quickly so that husbands, brothers and sons could rush off to the front lines. If the women had faltered in their devotion or their skill, the Soviet Union could not have pushed the Nazis back. They were steadfast.

There were, of course, millions of skilled women workers. The year before the war Soviet women constituted 36.9 per cent of milling machine operators, 13 per cent of electrical welders, 13.3 per cent of all highly skilled turners. But with millions of the most experienced men workers mobilized, the Soviet Union, despite its headstart in the utilization of women's abilities, had to take many steps to fill in the great production gaps.

After almost a year of war, women between the ages of 16 and 45, unless ill, pregnant, or with children under school-age, were made subject to mobilization for industrial work; in rural areas they were, within wider age limits—14 to 50—made subject to call during the sowing and harvest seasons. That many women had not waited to be drafted is shown in the fact that some three months after the Nazi attack, women constituted 45 per cent of workers and employees in contrast to 37 per cent the year before. After the labor draft, Soviet women outnumbered men in industry—in the parachute industry nine out of ten workers are women—and together with youngsters practically took over agricultural production in entirety. Many beyond the draft age volunteered to work in factory and field; mothers and grandmothers of Red Army men shouldered a musket on sentry duty, led youngsters in search for scrap metal, vied with younger women in setting production records.

The speed with which Soviet women trained for skilled work in the hectic days of war is one of the most striking features of their recent development. In three years of war there was a sixfold increase in women tractor drivers and combine operators. Over 175,000 women tractor drivers worked in the 1942 spring sowing. The Red Army needed tractors and those left for farm use often had to be run twenty-two hours of the day, blackout and all. Nonetheless agricult-

ural yields are greater than in peacetime, and millions of acres of virgin soil have been plowed. Famous women tractor drivers like Pasha Angelina and her sister Nadia worked for two years in Kazakhstan and taught the women of that eastern republic their efficient sowing methods.

Mastering New Jobs

Quick training courses prepared 173,000 girls and women for railroad jobs in 1942. Women volunteering to work as lumberjacks in sub-zero weather are reported to have "studied various methods of felling and to have applied the Canadian method to perfection." In the northern areas women joined their husbands in hunting expeditions to ensure warm clothing and foodstuffs for the front. And in the south, in Armenia, the chairman of a collective farm declared: "'I'd never have believed that women would make good shepherds in our mountains, among the wolves, gales and blizzards. But they're fully up to the job. In fact our flocks have never been in finer condition or increased so fast. The women have saved our collective farms. When the men get back from the front they'll have the surprise of their lives. They'll have to roll up their sleeves if they want to catch up with our women, and they will have a lot to learn from them about farming."

In industry too Soviet women by the millions lost little time in mastering new skills. At their own insistence, it is reported, they entered work from which they were barred in peacetime, such as underground repairs in the oil industry and underground work in coal mines. In the mines near Moscow, in the Karaganda coal fields, in the Siberian collieries, Soviet women do everything from blasting and wielding pneumatic drills to operating trolleys and hoist cranes. Special protections in the form of increased food rations and rest home facilities are provided women miners. In steel plants and in other war-vital enterprises women manage to exceed the production records of seasoned men workers. There will undoubtedly be a reevaluation in the post-war period of the trades previously regarded as hazardous for women, and while the proscribed list will probably be shorter than before the war, some of the work in which Soviet women are now engaged will, with equal probability, be closed to them again.

The course in domestic science instituted recently in girls' schools in the Soviet Union should not be taken as indication of a trend away from women's participation in economic life. It is designed to give Soviet girls the knowledge of child care, nutrition and household management they will need as working mothers and which they have until now had to acquire more laboriously outside the school.

Soviet girls who have attended the vocational schools established in the school year preceding the Nazi attack, schools intended primarily for boys but opened to girls when war broke out, are now working as electricians, turners, steel smelters, mechanics, and in other trades which will be vital to Soviet industrial development after the war. The Labor Reserves Administration which directs these schools reported after a year of wartime experience that among the million and a half students girls rated high in their studies and that girl graduates were also winning the praise of plant directors for the excellence of their work. These schools have done much to raise the proportion of skilled workers among women in industry and it is likely that the system of special technical schools will be retained in peacetime, with probably some modifications in the direction of more theoretical study. It is also likely that many of the girls who were trained in these vocational schools and who acquired work experience during the war will, as reconstruction proceeds, enter various industrial institutes to train for executive work in industry.

Advance in Scientific and Cultural Fields

In science, medicine, the arts, Soviet women have been enabled to contribute to victory because of their peacetime training and because further study in these fields was not curtailed but was, on the contrary, expanded in the war years. Women doctors outnumbered their men colleagues before the war; in the last few years girls have come to constitute 90 per cent of medical school enrollment. Professor Pankratova—historian and winner of a Stalin prize—reported in the spring of 1944 that, in addition to herself, there are half a dozen other women holding corresponding membership in the Academy of Sciences, half of them elected in wartime. After recalling that thousands of women took part in the work of Soviet scientific and research institutions before the war, she declared: "During the war the Academy of Sciences of the USSR has been drawing ever greater numbers

of gifted young women into scientific work. There are 357 women with the degree of Doctor or Bachelor of Science in the scientific and research departments of the Academy. Including the junior scientific workers, assistants and laboratory technicians, the number of women in the Academy constitutes about 50 per cent of the total personnel. In individual departments the percentage of women is even higher."

To the brilliant array of experienced Soviet women scientists, the microbe hunters like Maria Krontovskaya, the surgeons like Valentina Gorinevskaya, the physiologists like Lena Stern, the present generation of girl students gives promise of adding many names. At Moscow University two of the newly established Isaac Newton scholarships were awarded to girls, one for mathematics research and one for research in aero-dynamics.

Similarly ballet dancers, opera singers, authors, musicians, actresses, artists, composers and others who must spend years in perfecting their knowledge and performance, are continuing to study and work during the war years. The great contribution of these women to sustaining morale, to deepening comprehension of the war issues and strengthening appreciation of the culture threatened by the enemy, ensures an even fuller flowering of cultural opportunity for Soviet women after the war. Full recognition has been given in the Soviet press and in various honors and awards, to their heroism in performing in the frontlines, in continuing to compose and to write amid the harsh physical hardships and grievous personal loss, in keeping theaters and concerts and stories and stirring posters available for the hard-working civilian population. An immense amount of creative work is being done by Soviet women artists. Vera Mukhina, one of the world's leading sculptors, is at work on a massive statue of Chaikovsky. Vera Inber's poem on Leningrad is undoubtedly one of the great poems of this war.

Women in Sports

Soviet sportswomen, too, have been effective and courageous under war conditions. The great emphasis on sports during peacetime years had drawn millions of Soviet women into healthful activity. Almost a third of the membership of physical culture clubs for students and workers consisted of women, many of them record-holders. In wartime many of these champion skiers, parachute jumpers, runners,

swimmers, volunteered for frontline duties, but most of them were asked to use their skills far from the fighting areas. Nina Dumbadze, famous discus thrower, serves as an army instructor in hand grenade throwing. In the hospitals women experts in curative exercises help restore wounded Red Army men to use of their limbs. Women athletes are doing much to reconstruct shattered cities. In Leningrad the famous Admiralty spire was repaired with the help of two intrepid mountain climbers, Olga Fersova and Tatyana Vezell Physical culture is being carefully nurtured even in wartime, and women skaters, sprinters, skiers and hockey players join in big sports meets after work, to keep up their skills.

Welfare Work

No account of Soviet women's wartime role, could ignore the important efforts they make to care for the young and to aid the families of servicemen. Millions of orphaned children and children separated from their parents by evacuations and other wartime situations create a tremendous need for women's tenderness and skill. Soviet teachers, nurses, housewives with young children of their own, have been giving unstintingly of their time to preserve and further the health, the morale, the knowledge of Soviet children.

Not all that Soviet women have done to win the war can be computed statistically, and it would be impossible to list all the things for which they have been mainly responsible. Schools were kept going amid falling bombs or were quickly built up again as the Red Army liberated towns and villages. Orphans by the tens of thousands were, without question of nationality or religion, adopted by families themselves suffering from wartime food and clothing shortages. Volunteer social workers from trade unions and other organizations checked daily on the proper administration of laws protecting servicemen's families. In the orphan homes and in the boarding houses for children temporarily separated from their parents, a cheerful atmosphere was created and affection lavished upon the lonely children.

Some women famous for other work have turned to the valuable task of strengthening family life in the face of war's disruption and assuring the development of a generation worthy of the great sacrifices made in its behalf. Khetagurova, who once summoned women to pioneer in the Far East, now summons them to a tamer but no

less essential task. "The needs of families of Red Army men became my chief care," she related recently. "This is my contribution toward our fight . . . I almost feel that I am actually in the ranks of the Red Army." And while General Rokossovsky leads his army toward Berlin, his wife, Julia, works to see that the morale of his men will not suffer through worry over their families at home; she heads one of the numerous Women's Councils who make the welfare of servicemen's families their chief concern.

Have there been no "weaker vessels" among Soviet women, has none lost hope or courage, has every single one been "all-out" all the time? Of course, among the women of wartime Russia there have been differences in degree of effort, of sacrifice, of comprehension. It is not by grammatical accident that O.G.G. *(odna grazhdanka govorila)*, the Soviet reference to rumor-mongers, is used in the feminine. The Soviets have undoubtedly been changing human nature but they have not succeeded in ridding all women as yet of gossiping, credulity and other tendencies handed down by their centuries-long narrow mode of life. However, Soviet wartime life, due to its total concentration on the war effort, has been such as to make it difficult for even the most self-centered woman to ignore her great social responsibilities. Volunteers for medical and technical work in the frontlines, for

A fisherwoman on the Volga replacing her husband who is at the front

blood donorship, for air raid work and every other kind of defense work have been more numerous than needed; the Soviets refer to their women's response as "mass heroism". It will be the exceptional Soviet child who will not hear from granny's lips some 25 years from now what she did to save the world from fascist tyranny back in the Forties!

Heroines Are Lovely Too

Those who have not actually seen the Soviet women in large numbers often wonder whether their concern with work and politics makes them less attractive as women, and particularly whether their war work, so many-sided, so much closer to horror and bloodshed than that of American women, does not make them hard and unfeminine. It is interesting in this connection to observe how the Soviet women themselves talk. Valentina Grizodubova, the famous flyer, Chairman of the Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee, tells of a friend of hers who pilots a night bomber and when she changes into regular clothes after a flight takes particular pains with her appearance, and has no trace of masculinity in her bearing. An account of a woman miner recently emphasized how on her day off she goes to town perfumed and clad in Persian lamb. When a famous woman tank driver was interviewed in the hospital some months ago she pointed out gaily that the scars on her neck would soon be invisible. Pavlichenko. the noted sniper, delighted American audiences by her warmth and comeliness, and Valentina Orlikova (third mate) was deluged with movie offers on her visit to our shores. Soviet women have long since passed through that phase of development when girls thought that to succeed in a man's world they had to look and talk like men. Soviet women believe that women have as much right to be feminine as men to be masculine, and still hold down jobs. Soviet women's willingness to forego temporarily pretty clothes and other aids to a happy personal life arises not from indifference but from a sense of values identical with that of their menfolk. International security will not only satisfy that sense of values but will provide the opportunity for the satisfaction of many of those feminine interests which Soviet women have in common with women the world over.

Will the great interest in clothes, housefurnishings, recreation, to be expected among Soviet women as a reaction against the harsh

days of wartime sacrifice, lead them away from jobs and volunteer welfare work and other such activities which reduce the amount of time available for personal concerns? The Soviet answer is strongly in the negative. Olga Mishakova, familiar to many Americans from newsreels of women's meetings in Moscow, can be regarded as a representative spokesman. She is a handsome and smartly dressed young woman, holding a responsible job as secretary of the countrywide Communist Youth organization. In an interview with an American correspondent in 1944 she stressed Soviet women's continued belief in their ability to reconcile a happy personal life with a useful social existence: "A woman who confines herself purely to domestic life deteriorates mentally and in other ways. She is in danger of becoming an idler, a gossip, and of frittering away her time and energies on dull hobbies and useless practices. A woman must combine socially creative work with family life *and she must be well prepared for both.* We will do all that we can to lift the burden of domestic duties from women's shoulders. We may find it necessary to reduce her hours of work to six or four. But not for one moment do we intend to draw her away from a career". And on the matter of femininity she had this to say: "A woman must always seek to make herself as attractive as nature and good taste permit. For enrichment of her personal life, her personal happiness, she must observe purely feminine attributes and feminine virtues."

Cooperation Between American and Soviet Women

Soviet women, then, will most certainly continue to be the politically literate people they have been encouraged and trained to be at school and work and we can be sure that they will want to discuss with us not only how we bring up our babies and how we fashion our hats but how to work more efficiently, how to make scientific progress more widespread, and, close to the hearts of women who have endured so much, how to keep the world at peace. Because women in the United States have always had a high place in Soviet women's regard, we have a great advantage, a great opportunity, and a great obligation, to assume the leadership, along with British and Canadian women, in cooperating closely with the women of our powerful ally. For they are women whose basic attitudes bring them very close to our own way of thinking about human values and objectives.