THE RUSSIAN FAMILY

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# THE RUSSIAN FAMILY

THESIS

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# PREFACE

This study of the Russian family entailed a great deal of research in a field of unreliable writings. There has been much written about Russia, since the Revolution, which is biased and untrue. Victor Kravchenko, a Russian and one-time Communist, wrote in his book, I Chose Freedom, that American and English authors were not writing the truth about Russia either deliberately or because they had been hoodwinked during their visits to Russia. He deplored Wendell Wilkie's book One World in which Mr. Wilkie told of conditions in Russia. Kravchenko claimed he aided in the farce which Stalin ordered played for the special benefit of Mr. Wilkie, so that the true conditions of that pitiable country could not be told to the world by so prominent a figure.

It has been my problem to sift the voluminous material available and attempt to report my findings. It is almost impossible to assume an unbiased attitude toward the country and I am sure my personal views appear often in this thesis. There is no need to prove that the family will survive Communism because it does exist in this year of 1948 with a complete swing from extreme liberalism in sex relations to extreme Puritanism. What takes place in Russia this year and in the future is of vital concern to the

Western powers because the divergent views of the East and the West are potentially dangerous. There must be some common views of understanding between the two to prevent a third world war.

This study is divided into five chapters: (1) The Family Unit, (2) The Russian Man, (3) The Russian Woman, (4) Russian Children, and (5) Russian Housing.

At the request of my major professor, I have used footnotes only when quoting directly from a source of material or when there was a difference of opinion found in the references.

S. D. B.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE FAMILY UNIT

The Russian peasant must be considered first in his family because before the revolution in 1917 peasants made up four fifths of the total population of the country. Even in 1948 the population remains predominantly rural with about fifty-five per cent on farms and forty-five per cent in towns and cities.[1] The peasant provided the force to carry out the revolution in 1917, as well as many attempted revolutions before that time. It was among the "great families" of the peasant that Communism was first practiced as an economic measure. Yet, the peasants were most bitter against collective farming when it was introduced by Stalin.

The family develops and changes form at different periods to meet the needs of economic life. The peasant was at one time free to come and go in Russia, which he did frequently, leaving the women and children at home to farm the small strips of land. However, he gradually became tied to his land without the right to leave without his landlord's permission. These laws binding the peasants

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[1]Henry J. Taylor, "Russia: Peace or War?" Your Land and Mine, pp. 7-8.

followed the war which expelled the Mongol invaders. Laws or Ukazes were passed by Feodor Ivanovitch in 1592 and 1597, by Boris Godounof in 1601, by Vassili Chouiski in 1607, by Peter the Great in 1723, and by Catherine II in 1783, which were made necessary to keep the Russian Provinces together. The nobles were given land as a reward for services rendered the Tzar but soon discovered the peasants were running away from their tyranny. Each of the Ukazes bound the peasant more firmly to the soil so that he virtually became a slave. This was changed by the reforms of Alexander II, who freed the serfs in 1861.

The freed serfs soon found there was not enough land to go around even though many migrated to the east. This lack of land caused the "great families" to develop. The father became head of a household sometimes numbering as many as sixty men, women, and children. The sons brought their brides home to live and if the work became too strenuous the sons-in-law came home with their wives, thus increasing the size of the family. Often an entire village was one family, under the control of the oldest male. The village, of course, grew into a group of related families under one head. They were responsible to him for the labor necessary in the farming, and turned all food and goods over to him to divide among themselves or sell. Some members of the family were sent to the cities to work and were

compelled to turn their wages over to the head of the family. This is fundamentally Communism. The head of the family was called the bolshak, or powerful one, and the position was usually hereditary, although sometimes the members of the family elected him. He became responsible for taxes and, if incompetent, could be replaced by the authorities by a more intelligent and energetic member of the family. A woman became bolshak only if there were no males old enough to assume authority. The bolshak's power was unlimited and no one dared to speak in his presence, or eat or drink without his permission. But in spite of his unlimited power, there was usually harmony in the family if the grandfather or great-grandfather was the bolshak. However, it was a different story if an uncle or brother was chosen. They were partial to their own branch of the family.

The bolshak's wife superintended the work done by the women of the community and usually devoted her time to the kitchen, assigning the hard work to the daughters-in-law. The daughter's-in-law position in the family was especially difficult because it was considered humiliating for her if she complained. If the husband complained of his wife, they were both punished, the wife for failing to obey him, and the husband for not compelling her to obey. If the bolshak could not control the sons or men in the family, he appealed to the authorities for help and if the son was unmarried he

was punished by the authorities. If a widow appealed to the authorities because of a disrespectful son, he was punished whether married or not and regardless of his age.

The Communist type of family fell as a result of the industrial revolution. As long as the family was typically agrarian and everyone made about the same money or had the same products to contribute, the "great family" was a success. But the bolshak started sending one son to the city to work in the factory or be a coachman for a noble family; he sent another son to cut wood and the wages were so different that the worker in the city could see no reason why he should send three or four times as much money home as his brother. If another brother was still at home he would be consuming twenty to thirty cups of tea and sugar a day. The tea was paid for with the money sent home. A. S. Rappoport writes:

> My hosts guzzled without stopping; the combined family absorbs nine hundred cups of tea daily. Without a word each one keeps his eye on the saucers of the others, forcing himself to drink the same amount as his neighbour and watching that no one takes more than himself.[2]

The death rate in Russia increased from twenty per thousand at the end of the eighteenth century to thirty-five or even fifty per thousand by the end of the nineteenth century. In case of drouth a famine might wipe out entire

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[2]A. S. Rappoport, Home Life in Russia, pp. 85-86.

villages. Thus in 1890, in the canton of the Government of Pakov (where the cholera had not been severe), "in one year, not remarkable for any natural disaster, of each thousand of newly-born children, aged less than one year, 829 (82.9 per cent) died."[3] Between 1901 and 1904 the death rate dropped to thirty per thousand and improved still more between 1905 and 1914. According to official figures in 1912, eighty-two per cent of the people of Russia suffered from disease or other ailments. There was one doctor for each 13,000 city people and one for each 21,000 country people. Disease was expected among the peasants and an epidemic was catastrophic.

The high mortality is not surprising considering the filth, and poor food of the people. The food of the average worker was black bread at noon and a bowl of soup with more black bread in the evening. This was made of rye or barley, never from wheat since it was exported. It had much straw and other rubbish in it. All crops were poor because the peasant did little fertilizing or irrigation and the most primitive farming implements were used. The average crop was 7.7 bushels of wheat per acre compared with seventeen bushels in France, 19.3 bushels in Germany, and 30.8 bushels in England. The consumption of bread grains in Russia was only 7.6 hundred weight per person during the five

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[3]G. Alexinsky, Modern Russia, p. 147.

years preceding the first World War while Canadians used 26.5 hundred weight of grain per person. Bread is the staple food of Russia, often the only thing on the table to eat, which is not the case elsewhere.

In some sections of Russia the potato became the customary food with a little thin soup or gruel of black rye, or a little cabbage, boiled in water. Tea also became most important and was drunk in huge quantities, although it was hardly more than slightly colored boiled water. Meat was eaten on Sunday but by the twentieth century the peasant ate meat only three or four times a year. All the wheat, hogs, and steers were sold to get enough money to pay the taxes.

Contrast with this the dinner of the noble family. The dinner begins with the zakouska, which is a number of cold dishes on a sideboard. Here is to be found the caviar, smoked ham, dried salmon, potted fish, chicken, smoked sturgeon, and game. Soup, meat, and dessert then complete the dinner.

Barmine gives a slightly different version of the situation where his grandparents lived near Uman in the Ukraine. He describes the quantities of fruits and vegetables in market where a bucketful of cherries, a sack of potatoes, or of pears cost little more than an American penny. For half a cent two huge watermelons could be purchased. Piles of

hard candy, cakes, and barley-sugar figures were also there. However, at times his family lived days together on thin gruel.[4]

The first World War brought many changes in the family. The men were called into the army to fight Germany, which left the old men and young boys at home with the women. Crops must be planted and harvested, the factories must have workers to produce munitions and the women filled the void left in the ranks of labor. Without the skill or strength to do all this work, the food supply began to fall off sharply, and many manufactured articles disappeared from the market. Prices rose, bread lines formed in the city, and occasional riots were staged in Moscow and Petrograd. Even more depressing were the overcrowded hospitals of wounded men coming from the front. The people began to get lethargic and weary without the will to keep up the struggle against the Germans. Boys collecting for the Red Cross were being turned away without any gift. The people were getting hungry and wanted the government to give them food.

This began a modification of the family, since so many women no longer had men trying to demand obedience of them. These women slaved at their factory or farm tasks, learning many things about the world that had been hidden from them

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[4]A. Barmine, <u>One Who Survived</u>, p. 30.

before. The new knowledge revealed the rights women had been missing, also the rights the poor classes had been denied by the nobles and kulaks.[5] Women joined wholeheartedly in the underground movement of the revolutionists and gave added impetus to the outbreak of civil war.

In early March, 1917, the workers went on a strike and bread riots were staged. The Petrograd garrison was won over to the side of the workers and the functions of the civil government ceased. The revolution soon spread to the army and the soldiers disposed of their officers. The Tzar abdicated on March 15, 1917, and a provisional government was set up by Kerensky. The Mensheviks were weak and the Bolsheviks, under Lenin, took over with Lenin as Premier and Trotsky, Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Every effort of the European powers to dislodge the revolutionists and restore the Romanovs failed, leaving the Bolsheviks in control.

Alterations in laws on marriage, abortion, and divorce began a profound change in family life. The women were given equal rights with men in marriage and in work at the factories. They could hold any position they were capable of handling and draw the same pay as a man for the same type of work. Now the woman could earn her own living,

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[5]"Kulak" was a term used to designate a rich peasant who had made money out of the poorer class. A peasant who refused to cooperate with the government, also, was ordinarily a kulak.

marry or remain single, and have children or not as she pleased. There was no effort on the part of the government to break up the family, although some men and some women were in favor of that step. The government found the family, with adjustments, necessary to the maintenance of social stability. The individualistic idea of a family unit held little threat to the collectivist efforts of the Bolsheviks, because Communism is really an extension of the collectivism of the family. Substitutes, although varied and appealing, were just in the state of development and the Communists did not plan to speed the collapse of the family.

One form of substitution for the family is the "Commune" or "Collective," in which the members rent a barrack-like room, or rooms, and all live together. The members were mostly young and both men and women. The got together, a dozen or more, to rentthe rooms and form a commune or a collective. The commune received all their pay and other income in the common fund, but a collective only took part of the income from each, enough to take care of the costs of housekeeping and property used in common. There were probably two reasons for the club idea of living: first, it was putting the collective theory into practice; and second, it was the only solution to the housing shortage. This was very similar to the original family life of the

peasants under the Tzars. However, there were some important differences. The new commune did not hold the plowland and stock in common, relying totally or largely on it for subsistence. The modern domestic commune was based on the sharing of income; though some members worked in factories, some in offices, and some in colleges. The purpose was not to be a commune in the earning but in the spending of money. These communes were not altogether successful because some married each other and they had little or no privacy. Some were expelled for not living according to the rules laid down by the majority and some left because they could not tolerate the restrictions.

The family has always been held together by the common bond of private property. The father sought to amass wealth and property for his old age, or to pass on to his children, but in Russia all private property was abolished, especially in the city. This proved a shattering force to the family for some years following the revolution. Other forces which caused the family to lose its binding power was the establishment of community kitchens, laundries, nurseries, parks, theaters, and other institutions. This was necessary if both parents continued to work. Many parents worked at different places and on different shifts. Neither had time, or inclination, to take care of the baby or the meals. Lenin said that a nation could never be

free if half of the population was enslaved in the kitchen.

The proletarian family no longer had the support of law and religion to bind it together. The forms of marriage were simple and flexible, calling for the virtues of loyalty and love to keep it binding. Chastity became desirable as a protection to individuals and their offspring. Marriage was a free association of a man and a woman, of children and parents. Parents could not demand obedience of their children except through superiority of intelligence and experience. Out of the conflict and pain of these rules, the new family began to emerge and found itself still the primary social unit.

Another modification of the family came about because of the rapid transition of Russia into an industrial system. The need for workers brought the peasants flocking into the crowded cities. Here they crowded into a room as closely as in the peasant huts of the "great family," only this time they were not living with brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, and aunts. They were fortunate to get into rooms with strangers. The Communists had great theories about houses, or large comfortable apartments, for every family, but in practice it did not work out that way. Instead, there was not room for additional members of the family and women went to the State doctors for an abortion when they became pregnant. The size of the family fell to new lows in births

and deaths had risen in proportion to the number of births because of the unbelievable amount of filth in the homes.

Another factor in modifying the family unit was the theory of prices for goods and labor. Supply and demand no longer controlled prices; they might be changed only by the government. This fixing of prices and wages eliminated the workers from the unequal bargaining power of the individual in buying scarce goods or in getting good wages during a period of unemployment. The cost of living was the prime consideration in establishing the wage of the Russian laborer. Political policy may, for a while, turn a large percentage of the national income into expanding industry and rehabilitation but with the completion of new industrial units the wages of the worker will rise, giving him a new high standard of living. Thus theorizes Susan Kingsbury in Factory, Family and Woman in the Soviet Union.[6] In practice the theory failed because food became scarce during the famine of 1921 and the factories did not produce as large quantities of goods as before the war. Every individual became a competitor with his neighbor for the scarce items and the law of supply and demand stayed in force. The need of a place to live in the cold winter of Russia drove the price of a corner in someone else's apartment high. Prices rose to such an alarming figure that

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[6]Susan Kingsbury and M. Fairchild, Factory, Family and Woman in the Soviet Union, pp. xxii-xxiii.

with both the man and the woman at work, the family could not buy more food than was needed for bare existence. Then to their dismay there was not enough food to buy in the government stores. This forced everyone to try buying food on the black market at even higher prices.

The Communists were the first to put social insurance into general practice. They went much further than the United States in their coverage. Social insurance covered every phase which affected the standard of living. It provided funds for nurseries, care of new-born children, feeding of the infants, and pre-school organizations such as kindergartens and playgrounds. Social insurance provided funds for individuals to receive medicine, prophylactic treatments in hospitals, clinics, and sanitoriums. It provided dental and orthopedic clinics; oculist and optical care; with all the medicines and equipment needed by the individual. It further provided health resorts and rest homes for the workers to use during vacations or while recovering from illness. Workers suffering from complete or temporary incapacity due to industrial accident or disease were taken care of according to the degree of incapacity. Pensions for these unfortunates began at once for workers of three years' standing. The pay allotment was based on their highest earnings during the preceding five years. Though the pay did not exceed a fixed amount, there was no

time limit on how long they were to receive it, except that they must resume work as soon as possible.

There were other regulations governing social insurance. During the first five days of disability, only seventy-five per cent of the wage was received, but after that a hundred per cent was received if constant care was required; otherwise, only seventy-five per cent. If the head of the family was killed in an industrial accident and left behind him at least three members of his family, they received seventy-five per cent of his wage. If the death was due to natural causes, the family received only two thirds of his wage.

Old-age pensions were introduced in 1928 for workers in specific industries and extended to cover all workers whether men or women, in 1932. Women were eligible to receive them when they were fifty-five if they had worked for twenty years, but men must be sixty, and have worked for twenty-five years. The wage received by the workers during their last year of labor was the basis for a pension which was fifty per cent. Here, again, was theory failed in actual practice. Old men took jobs breaking rock to repair the streets during sub-zero weather to supplement their pitiful pittance, or begged from door to door, or still worse, rummaged in garbage pails for scraps of food. Old women would only beg or dig in the garbage. All these things had a profound effect on family life.

Russia, before the revolution, was filled with churches and small shrines where the people knelt in devotion. There was scarcely a street without its cluster of red and green minarets. Every shop, private room, boat cabin, hut, and shrine had its icons. Catholicism was firmly established as the State Church and everyone went to church every Sunday. The few struggling Protestant churches were small and poor. The priests in Russia were rich, drunkards, immoral, and cared little for their parishes. Their riotous living antagonized the peasants, although they continued to go to church driven by their fear and superstition, which were liberally encouraged by the priests.

The church under the Tzars acted as secret police. The priests in the confessions were able to discover many plots against the throne and the names of the conspirators. This information was given to government agents. Tens of thousands suspected of sympathy with the revolutionists were ferreted out by the church and sent to exile or execution. The Orthodox Church would tolerate none of the Old Believers of the Greek Church and had the government send thousands of them to the forest and wastelands in exile. It is no wonder that the church brought the hate and distrust of the people upon itself.

Perhaps the most serious blow to the family came from the attacks of the Communists against religion. They

proposed atheism as the national religion and turned most of the Russians away from the churches, Judaism and Christianity. The Church and the Bible have always exalted the family, and sanctified the position of the father and mother in the home. Christianity constantly teaches that the wife must submit to the husband and the children must honor and obey their parents. The opposite view as assumed and taught by the Communists had far-reaching effect upon the stability of the Russian home and family life. The children did not have to obey their parents and often gave the orders that governed the home. The wife now had equal rights with the husband and could get a divorce any time she wished. Atheism became extremely popular with young people and children. In schools, even kindergartens, a child whose parents still believed in Christianity was shunned and laughed at by the other children. A child starting to school, wearing the cross or other symbols of Catholicism, was persecuted by the other children nntil he stopped wearing the hated objects.

Church buildings were still plentiful in Russia before 1930, but were either abandoned or converted into museums, hospitals, or other public buildings. It took a thorough search to even locate a building being used as a church. January 23, 1918, the Church was separated from the State, and its great estates were distributed among the peasants. The Church could no longer educate the children.

School buildings became the property of the State although religious societies could use them free of charge, if requested by twenty or more persons. They must maintain the property or forfeit it to the State. This was especially advantageous to Protestants, since Catholicism was no longer tolerated.

The Communist was a zealot always eager to make converts, hoping that the unbeliever would soon see the light and embrace the faith. He fought the Church for fear that it might restore the old order. At first he fought only the Orthodox Church because of its hold on the peasant, yet disregarded his social problems. Later he included the Protestant churches and determined to exterminate any religion except "Anti-religion."

To realize the strength of the Protestant movement we must examine the stand taken against the Protestants by the Catholic Church. When the new religious movement first appeared in Russia under the Tzars, it was tolerated as being of little significance, but as soon as it showed itself capable of attracting converts the Church began persecution to suppress the Protestants. Surprisingly, the Protestants would not be suppressed but throve under persecution and spread because of the devotion of each individual. It was not a ceremony but a way of life. The two outstanding sects were the Baptists and the Evangelical Christians.

These people were very devout and the members who could read taught the ones who could not, so that all could study and ponder the truths of the Bible. They had no forms of worship except baptism and music. Their choirs were among the best of such organizations in Russia. They banned the use of liquor, tobacco, abusive language, dancing, the theater, and other indulgences of the flesh. They did not hesitate to use socials, parties, and other types of pleasures, not considered worldly, and adopted eagerly the modern methods of agriculture and the habits of thrift and cleanliness of the Germans. They became the most progressive farmers in Russia.

With the coming of the Revolution the Communists were eager to enlist the aid of the Protestants, who had been persecuted by the Catholics. The suppression of the Catholic Church gave Protestants a new opportunity to preach their doctrines. Maurice Hindus in The Great Offensive writes that he found the Protestants out in the open everywhere, preaching on the streets, in the bazaars, and in churches, the fundamentals of their religion. In 1924 they were to be found in city after city and village after village debating with Communists.[7] Baptists and Evangelicals were using their new-found freedom to emphasize the social phase of their faith. It was in many ways in harmony with

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[7]Maurice Hindus, The Great Offensive, p. 168.

the objectives of Communism. The Protestants organized clubs, mutual-aid societies, and co-operatives; they developed and encouraged music and social life; and made converts all over Russia. Philosophy, kindness, social guidance, practical help, and good-fellowship were something new in religion and they resembled many aspects of Communism. Many people turned to the new religion for spiritual consolation and guidance. Even young people, with all the attractions of the new freedom in morals and social life, found the new religion attractive and accepted its principles as a way of life.

The laws of Bolshevism forbade any religious group to hold educational classes for young people under eighteen, but made no objection to picnics, musical groups, festivals, and other forms of assembly. The young people of the Baptists organized the Baptomol and the Christians, the Christomol, in imitation of the Komsomol of the Communist young people. They stressed the importance of cultivating good habits, politeness, self-control, moral living, friendliness to strangers, respect of elders, industry, and chivalry toward women. They were so successful in these objectives that the press chided the young Komsomols for lagging so far behind. While other religions were losing their following, Protestants were gaining new followers daily because they offered a purpose of living and immediate returns on religion.

When the Bolsheviks realized the strength and influence of Protestantism, they became annoyed and alarmed. Considering it a new menace, they attacked the Protestants by cartoons and pamphlets along with the kulak, the priest, and the bootlegger as enemies of the state. The causes of this shift of policy went deeper than just fear of their religious influence. The Communists believed in Darwin's theory of evolution; they held science to the law of the land; they sponsored divorce, abortion, birth control, and the mixing of the sexes. The Protestants believed only the truths of the Bible and its story of the creation of mankind. They believed in the sanctity of marriage and the permanence of the family. They forbade divorce, abortion, and birth control. They taught against adultery, encouraged segregation of the sexes, and otherwise counteracted the theories of the Communists. This was the end of toleration of any religion by the State.

The battle became even more bitter when Stalin began his collective farms. The Protestants' stronghold was among the peasants; their people were the thrifty peasants who did not condemn private property. The co-operatives of the Protestants were the most successful in Russia; in many instances the co-operatives set up restaurants which were the best eating houses in the city. Everyone went there to eat and the profits were high. As far as the state

was concerned, these co-operatives were privately owned. Stalin's collective farms were operated by Communists whose ideas of family, marriage, religion, and the relations of men and women would never be tolerated by the Protestants. Collectivization would take the children from the Protestant parents and send them to Communistic kindergartens, and schools in which they would be taught Anti-religion and would slip away from the influence of home, family, and parents. The Bolsheviks would never allow the Protestants to form their own collectives but insisted on supervision by a Communist, whose way of life could not be accepted by the Protestants.

A deadly blow to Protestantism was the law of April, 1929, which applied to all religious organizations but hurt the Protestants in particular. Though reasserting the right of the individual to worship as he pleased, it permitted propaganda only for Anti-religion. This put an end to further missionary work, and to preaching in the streets or places not recognized as a church. The law further prohibited a clergyman from preaching for more than one congregation at a time. He could no longer visit another congregation than his own. Another provision of the law prohibited a religious body from using its administrative functions. This stopped all participation in clubs, aid societies, and co-operatives. Since these organizations were

an attraction for many of the Protestant congregations, they lost both members and prestige. Their children were Sovietized, which process included, among other objectionable things, atheism. Thus the Communists attempted to destroy the last stronghold of the family and of religion.

The success of the Communists in suppressing the churches in Russia may be seen from the description of a church, found after a long search, by Cicely Hamilton. The building had many broken windows which could not be replaced for lack of funds. Branches of evergreen had been woven to the lattice of the window frames in an attempt to keep out the cold. A priest and a little old woman prepared the building for the services. Sprays of box were scattered on the bare floor, and there were no seats. They hung old draperies and tied bows of tawdry ribbons around the large candle-sticks and lighted the candles. The congregation began drifting in by ones and twos until there were about forty to fifty assembled. Most were old, bent, and gray-haired. Two small children came with old ladies, possibly their grandmothers. They all kneeled and bowed and crossed themselves. The children would soon be laughed and scorned away from the church by their schoolmates and taught atheism by their teachers, leaving only the old people in the church. A state that insists on being supreme will not permit its subjects to worship a Supreme Being!

The Soviets were seemingly successful in wiping out the worship of the Supreme Being, which had a deep and profound effect on the family.[8]

After an investigation of the family in Russia during 1926, Maurice Hindus in Humanity Uprooted wrote that the family was not in ruins. Even though most of its supporting pillars were removed by the state, it was surviving the test. Divorce had reached an alarming proportion in the cities where nerves, due to housing shortages, the high prices, and political tension, made the man and wife irritable. But even these divorced men and women remarried, if not to each other, then to other parties and the family was preserved. In Moscow where a million five hundred thousand people lived there were only 1.6 divorces to every ten marriages. "As long as men and women thrill to each other's presence and reach out for each other's companionship and affection, they will enter into unions and maintain some kind of family."[9] Men and women have always wanted to get away from the busy world on occasions and seek the companionship of loved ones for council and inspiration. Parental instinct continues to make its demands known and these factors will preserve the family. The family of Russia during the years before World War II consisted of a union of lovers and with the ease of divorce it

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[9]Maurice Hindus, Humanity Uprooted, p. 144.

could hardly ever be more than such a union.

According to a survey conducted during the years of 1929, 1930, and 1931 by Susan Kingsbury and Mildred Fairchild, the family was much better off in 1931 than it was the two previous years. The following table gives a summary of their findings:

TABLE 1

THE AVERAGE INCOME OF THE RUSSIAN WORKER'S FAMILY

| Per Member of Family | Year | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1929 | 1930 | April, 1931 |
| Average total income per month (in rubles)..... | 28.47 | 32.60 | 39.57 |
| Basic wage of head of family per month (in rubles)..... | 24.31 | 27.92 | 27.47 |
| Per cent of income from social insurance, benefits and interest, and other members of the family..... | 14.60 | 9.90 | 13.90 |

Interest and debt payments advanced slightly, food costs increased, and rent decreased from year to year. More income was spent for clothing, food, and other necessities.[10]

[10]Kingsbury and Fairchild, op. cit., p. 233. For a different viewpoint on the conditions of the economics of family life see I Was a Soviet Worker by Andrew Smith. However, Smith did not go to Russia until 1932.

The death rate improved by fifty-seven per cent in 1930 over that of 1901-1904. Medical science advanced and there were many more trained doctors, both men and women. At the same time the birth rate declined by about one third through the use of contraceptives and legalized abortion. However, because of better conditions and greater knowledge of child care, the infant death rate fell and population increased. The life span of women rose from thirty-three and nine-tenths years in 1907-1910 to forty-six and eight-tenths years in 1926-1927. During the same period the average life of men had increased from thirty-one and nine-tenths years to forty-one and nine-tenths years. Compared with life expectancy in the United States and other advanced countries, Russia was still far behind in medicines, science, housing, safety precautions, and living conditions.

Clubs became the principal social center all over the country, attracting men, women and children from factories, stores, and schools. Many large factories set up complete club centers. Smaller establishments united with contiguous establishments for the same purpose. These centers took many responsibilities from the family, such as supervising the home life of the children. The club occupied most of the leisure time of the workers. Each had a library for children where the best books by famous authors could be read. Committees were set up to get better books,

periodicals, and radio broadcasts. Many radio stations sponsored special programs. About twenty minutes a day were set aside to entertain and educate children five to eight years of age, and forty minutes were reserved for the older youngsters. Experiments were conducted to see what kind of programs most appealed or were best suited for education. All these improvements for the family are carried out in the clubs. They introduce new games, provide education for adults, or devote time to political questions. They assumed greater importance in daily living as working hours were decreased. It took the social services and amusements out of the home life of the family, which went to the club. There some played games or read, others attended classes, the theater, or movies. However, the family was together, as at home, with a greater variety of entertainment to choose from than in the home. Parks, rest homes, and vacation homes or camps are provided by the state for the workers.

The state took more support from the home by arranging communal feeding, communal laundries, state stores, and other socialized living arrangements. The factories first started building kitchens and dining halls where the midday meal could be bought for just a few cents. Then the worker found it possible to eat other meals there or take the prepared foods home for the family, graded to suit his or her income. The lunchrooms were light, airy, and clean

with plenty of room for everyone, according to the Communists. But these lunchrooms failed also for several reasons. First, socialized feeding proved too profitable, reaching one hundred to two hundred per cent; second, the limit of good trained cooks was rare; third, the scarcity caused the serving of spoiled foods by the lunchrooms, to be consumed by the workers. Fourth, there was little or no attempt to keep the lunchrooms clean. Fifth, there were not enough dishes or knives, forks, and spoons. Sixth, the capacity of the dining halls was overestimated and there was never enough room for the workers or enough food or space to serve all. Seventh, factory officials ate in separate rooms, and were given better food than the workers, yet the latter paid as much. This was not Communism but class segregation. The workers were not happy.

Efforts were made to improve conditions. Some urged that dining rooms be under the supervision of the Central Board of Management of the Commissariat for Internal Supply. This was to be done in Moscow, Leningrad, and the industrial centers of the Donetz Basin. In the rest of Russia the kitchens were to be left under the consumers' co-operatives but under the supervision of the All-Union Co-operative Board of Communal Feeding. This accomplished some improvement. However, new apartment houses were equipped with kitchenettes or large kitchens for several apartments.

Large apartment houses made innovations in the field of laundries and baths. To great central laundries all families in the housing unit could send their clothes to get them done cheaply, eliminating hand laundry work and its waste of time, thus giving women more leisure. This also failed as the clothes came back with large holes, if they came back at all. It was hoped that all apartment houses could be equipped with the best machines of interest to women. Supplies prevented this. Central steam bath houses were built where patrons might rest and relax. These, too, proved impractical because they were never kept clean and it was inconvenient and too expensive for everyone to use this system.

Still another experiment was tried and still survives. The state set up stores and supply lines to provide the produce, wares, and manufactured goods in all parts of Russia. Consumers' co-operatives were also set up to handle the distribution of consumers' goods and this type of store handled the bulk of trade for the workers. These two types of stores absorbed two thirds of the earnings of the entire working population and distributed eighty to ninety per cent of the industrial goods. These stores, being controlled by a central committee, should rush goods where needed to fill demands. Here again Communistic hopes and theories failed in practice. The peasants refused to sell to the state and

the co-operatives, preferring the better prices in the open markets (black markets) and asserting that they did not get a fair share of the profits from co-operatives. A separate store served the G. P. U. (secret police) and high officials in the government and factories. This store sold the best and finest articles for the same price as workers paid for poor goods and often rotten produce.

Andrew Smith, author of I Was a Soviet Worker, became disillusioned and bitter because the workers were exploited by the Communists and by high officials. He found the stores selling "tiny, rotten potatoes, green worm-eaten apples, decayed fish and so on."[11] Only the cheapest and most inferior goods were sold in stores open to the lowest category of workers. (The workers were divided into seven categories, beginning with unskilled workers. The seventh category received more pay, more privileges, and the right to trade in the better stores.) These poor workers paid the same price for cheap and inferior foods as did the better paid workers for high quality foods. The quantity of goods allowed each worker was determined by a quota, and to buy in the factory co-operative stores the shopper had to stand in line for hours with the possibility that he would find empty, bare shelves by the time he arrived at the window.

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[11] Andrew Smith, I Was a Soviet Worker, p. 132.

Workers fortunate enough to have incomes other than wages could buy the necessities of life in the open market, but at exorbitant prices. By 1932 the poor traded, almost exclusively, in the bazaars or open market. Black bread became the medium of exchange and anything could be purchased. The peasants came into the city with their chickens, milk, eggs, and vegetables to trade in the bazaars. Even old dirty rags found a buyer. For the privilege of trading in the bazaar the dealer paid the government two rubles a day and a yearly tax. As Stalin put the peasants into collectives and endeavored to suppress the black market, the bazaars were wiped out and the workers caught buying and selling were punished.

To add injury to insult, the aristocrats in the Kremlin had their own store where articles of the finest quality were sold, but a guard stood at the door and kept out everyone who did not have the food-card required. Workers were not in that category. These officials had silks, satins, gold watches, earrings, necklaces, and rings for their wives. They were able to serve the finest foods on silver samovars and used the beautiful silverware left behind by the White Russians.

The peasants of 1932 and 1933 were still the backbone of the nation and raised all the food for Russia, but they, too, were exploited for the benefit of the bureaucrats.

They were already on collective farms or would be soon. Their crops were seized. They had collective restaurants but the prices were so high that they could not afford to eat there. Instead, the peasant had for breakfast "tea" (dried carrot or potato leaves) with black bread. The bread was made from wheat straw, linseed, buckwheat, and other material which made the bread clay-like. The peasants ranged the woods for mushrooms and berries or any other edible plant. If there was a surplus of berries and mushrooms after filling the family needs, the wife took it to the city to trade or sell, and the children went along to beg from door to door. Thousands were doing the same thing. A vast change for the peasant who had plenty, and some of them did, before the Communists came into power and started collectives!

The first Five-year Plan was put in force in 1928 by Stalin and one phase of the plan called for the collectivization of the peasant to raise the farm produce to feed a growing industrial system. This was resisted bitterly and most effectively by the peasants who refused to plant and harvest crops. This brought a serious shortage of food in 1931 and 1932, which did not ease a great deal for the next four or five years. The second Five-year Plan was begun in 1933 amid much discontent and disgust on the part of the peasant. The peasant family suffered shocks to its foundations,

which nearly broke the family up among its strongest adherents.

The general revision of laws in 1936 made some drastic changes. Abortion was forbidden except for reasons of health! Divorce was made very difficult; children's security was enhanced. This was probably a result of demands by the women.

Religion also obtained a lift by virtue of provisions in the new constitution of 1936, which eased restrictions on worship. In 1939 the new Soviet Republic of Lithuania gave priests, as well as peasants, a certain number of acres of land from the public domain and in 1941 the seven-day week was re-established, making Sunday the rest day for all workers. The back-to-church move began to sweep Russia, and some young Komsomols, who once denounced the church, began to insist that a church wedding was most proper. Most of Moscow's one hundred and fifty churches had been closed by the revolution in 1917. By 1939 fifty-five were open and by 1944, more than sixty, while plans were under consideration to restore and reopen others. About fifteen thousand churches were open to public worship in Russia by 1944. Bibles and other religious material were being published again by the end of World War II. High army officers were going to church services, bringing their entire staff, whether they were believers or not. The church was

allowed to instruct children who wished to participate.

In 1944, the Baptists and Evangelical Christians called a conference numbering forty-five delegates from all parts of Russia, including Siberia. They voted to establish an all-Union council of united Christians. Jews, Mohammedans, and Roman Catholics were taking advantage of the new Communist policy to restore their meeting places. These activities were sponsored by the Soviet for Church Affairs. However, the battle for religion is not yet over. Atheism is still taught in the schools and young people are still under its influence, and indifferent to religious ideas.

The family has regained the support from religion, the support of laws against abortion, and restrictions on divorce. Communism has yielded in many ways. It will be interesting to watch the future development of the family.

## CHAPTER II

## THE RUSSIAN MAN

Man, since the beginning of Russian history, has been the Tzar of the household. He had complete domination over his wife and children who had no rights. There is much of the Oriental in the Russian, and his treatment of woman followed that pattern. Marriage was arranged and often the bride never saw the man she was to marry until the wedding. Even the church encouraged men to chastise their wives, which was done heartily and often. In the "great families" the husband was punished if he did not make his wife obey. We must delve into the past environment of the Russian to explain his attitude toward his family.

The peasant was enslaved and bound to the land by the Tzars to keep him from wandering. He had been a nomad, moving when he pleased. Sometimes whole districts were left vacant with no one to cultivate the land and labor for the nobles. The landowner could not pay his taxes, the government suffered from cuts in income. There were many temptations for the peasant to accept the attractive offers of the princes owning land on the Volga and they left the small landowners who were unable to keep them. The defense of

Russia depended on the small landowners. The threat of the Mongols was very real, so Boris Godunoff issued decrees in the closing years of the sixteenth century, which bound the peasants to the soil. There are conflicting accounts of the quantities of food he had to feed his family. However, it appears that the peasant had very little to eat, and only on holidays did the family have meat. They were oppressed by nobles and landlords. The peasant had to labor for the nobles so many days a year that his own land would lie fallow unless the women worked it. His farm was made up of strips of an acre or less. This was a waste of land as there must be a dividing ridge between his strip and his neighbor's. He might have a dozen or more strips scattered around the village. It was an unhappy life and he was frequently in rebellion, following any leader who offered an easier life.

The changes in the ownership of land under Tzar Alexander II, in the reforms of 1861, brought little relief. The peasants, however, were freed from serfdom by the crown, and worshiped Alexander II. Their love of wandering returned, and a rumor that land was being given free in a district many miles away induced the peasant to load his family and furniture into his wagon and set off at night or during a fog so that he could not be stopped. They might wander for a long time, hunting the new free home, only to find that they had been deceived. With their savings and provisions

gone, and the horses no longer able to pull the heavily loaded wagon, their hope for a new life died. The land was fertile but already settled. The government discouraged these excursions but nothing could be done to stop them after the peasants were freed.

The division of land under Alexander's reforms was not fairly done. The size of the peasants' allotments was reduced by decree as a result of pressure by the powerful nobility and the price of land steadily rose. They were deprived of about one fifth of their pre-emancipation holdings, and their bitterness increased when the landlords included in these lands most of the wooded area, choice arable parcels, and in the north where fertilization of the clay soil was particularly necessary.[1] To aggravate this still further, the number of peasants in European Russia doubled from 1861 until 1900, thus increasing the misery and poverty of each family. "This average holding per family, which was thirteen acres in 1860, fell to nine and one-half acres by 1880, and to seven acres in 1900."[2]

The 1861 reforms brought rapid changes in rural Russia. Some peasants were left landless, others lost their land to the nobleman or more thrifty peasants, and some moved away. These thrifty farmers added to their holdings and were known

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[1]Alfred Levin, The Second Duma, pp. 157-158.

[2]E. A. Ross, The Russian Bolshevik Revolution, p. 14.

as kulaks after the revolutinn of 1917. The "great families" of fifty or sixty members developed between 1861-1917; as industry grew many peasants went to cities. The landless men worked for very low wages, depressing a standard of living already notoriously poor. The Russian peasant laborer in 1892 made about the same income as laborers in British India, or a little more than half as much as the Italian, about a third as much as the German, one fourth as much as the Frenchman, and one fifth as much as the Englishman. In 1900 his annual income was equal to that of an American farm hand for one month. From 1900 to 1910 wages ranged from eighteen cents to forty cents per day, not including board. This could not keep a large family in food and clothing. A class of small landowners resulted from the Stolypin reforms of 1906. The communes began to disintegrate, and by 1911, six million families had acquired land.

The peasant loved the land and gave everything he had to fill the demands it made on him. He killed the thief who stole from him and forced his wife and children to work such long hard hours that they died. He felt no responsibility for his own particular strips of land because they might be taken from him at any time. Except for working he did nothing to improve the land which supported him, believing the earth to be fertile enough without fertilization. He cultivated the corn and vegetables that his father and grandfather raised for their former masters. No attempt was

made to improve his agricultural methods.

To increase his income, he might set up a shop or store, or hire out. His wages could not be taken from him. His wife and family tilled the soil while he was otherwise occupied, and when harvest time came he called in the neighbors, who would toil for the food he was able to give them. Often this other work consisted of a factory job in the nearest city. Here he labored during the part of the year when there was no plowing to do, no crops to plant or reap. He was not dependent on either the farm or the city job so he would work very cheaply in town to insure employment the following year. Having a factory job partially freed him from the land, so he neglected the farm. Until 1914 half of the industrial employees were said to be peasant part-time laborers. Many textile workers returned to their farms every year to harvest the crops. This was the principal cause of the low standard of living and working conditions in the factories. Laborers could return to their villages any time they became dissatisfied with the city, secure an allotment of land, and resume farming. This practice was halted by the Stolypin reforms, which in creating a new class of small landowners, cut off the village peasants from those who had entered industrial plants. A new class of proletariat workers grew out of the jumble of city and peasant wage-earners.

The three or four million factory employees quickly outgrew the simple ideas and low standard of living of peasant city laborers and were stimulated by city life and collective labor. They learned to read and write, wanted good clothes, acquired self-respect, learned how a civilized human being should live, and resented having to raise a family in the dirt and filth. But despite increased pay, wages were still too low to get the things they desired. The average yearly earnings of the worker rose from one hundred eighty-seven rubles[3] in 1899 to three hundred by 1913. In some factories and industries the worker was paid five times that much and in some the laborers received free rooms, hospital service, and schools. Miners and metal workers made as much as thirty-five rubles a month, but match-factories paid their laborers as little as fourteen and three-tenths rubles per month, about seven dollars and fifteen cents. Textile factories paid about seventeen rubles per month.[4] Russian wages in 1912 amounted to less than one hundred twenty-seven dollars as compared to one hundred seventy dollars for the Austrian, two hundred eighty-six dollars for the French, and two hundred ninety-two dollars for the English.

> In 1912, when raw immigrant labor commanded one dollar and sixty-five cents a day in the industrial

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[3]The ruble was worth about fifty cents.

[4]Susan M. Kingsbury and Mildred Fairchild, Factory, Family and Woman in the Soviet Union, p. 12.

> centers of the United States, this class of labor was paid about thirty cents a day in the industrial centers of Russia.[5]

By 1917 the Russian machinist received no more than eighty-five cents a day, but in the United States the same work paid two dollars and seventy-five cents a day. Even making allowances for the inefficiency of the Russian laborer, as compared with one from America, the Russian received about a third as much of the profits of his labor in wages as did the American.

The relations of the Russian peasant to his family were much the same as those of the Oriental. His wife became a slave to do his bidding in all he wished. She fed him, mended his clothes, kept the house, did most of the barnyard tasks, and then worked beside him in the fields, if he was home to help. The sons and daughters were not allowed to express an opinion without his consent. Daughters-in-law became subject to the father's orders upon marriage to his sons. Many times while his sons were in the city working, in the slack season of farming, the father-in-law supplanted his sons' places in the affections of the daughters-in-law. There were numerous incidents of this nature among the lower classes, especially when the son was away fighting. The peasant, when aroused, could become extremely violent and dangerous because he lived in such poverty. He became the mainstay in the Revolution of 1917.

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[5]Ross, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

The greatest fault of the Russian was excessive drinking. The village tavern was always full of the habitual tipplers. It was their club. Here they learned of the world and met the mayor, the aristocracy, and other notables of the country. The husband spent his time with his boon companions at the tavern, rarely staying home but if he did, he dozed on top of the stove. At social gatherings the men dominated. Even at church the women sat at the rear and could not participate in the services. The men did the singing, and some might develop a falsetto to sing soprano and contralto parts. The peasant was very devout although he might not understand the Orthodox ceremonies. His religion was tinged with a great deal of superstition.

The position of the Cossack was unique. Hardy warriors, they played an important role in Russian history. Brave, generous, and hospitable, they were violent when their passions were aroused. They loved war but cared little for commerce or industry. Both old men and young were fastidious in dress. By nature they were not content to farm or work. Only war could satisfy their turbulent natures. They were leaders in many rebellions, revolting against such rulers as Peter the Great and Catherine II. After the government's inspiration of using The Cossack as cavalry units, and guards for the Tzar, they became the terror of Europe and Asia.

The Cossacks did not form a regular army as did other Russians, because they preserved many traits of freedom. They had a colonel appointed by the minister of war but reserved the right to select their own leaders to serve under him. They were not subject to paying the same taxes as other Russian subjects, and had their own judges and general councils. They did not draw lots to see who had to serve in the Tzar's army but pledged themselves to furnish a required number of horses and men for service in Russia or on her borders. The Cossack furnished his own horse and equipment and in return received a plot of ground from the government, which was increased at the birth of each new son.

The Cossack spent nearly all his time out of doors, returning home at rare intervals for a drunken spree. The permanent part of a Cossack village was made up of very old men, who could no longer go with the troops, women, and children. Boys learned to ride early in life. While the men hunted in time of peace, or fought in time of war, the women cared for the land and house, fed the cattle, and did all the hard labor usually done by a man. As a result they aged early, losing their beauty in their early thirties. During rare visits at home the husband was likely to beat and insult his wife. It was a hard life for the Cossack, his wife, and his children.

Since 1800, city people had bought wool and cotton goods from England. They resented Napoleon's Continental blockade because it cut off materials that could not be made in Russia. However, textile mills began to develop shortly afterward. The people in the central provinces were supplied by the textile mills in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities. The peasants' clothing was homespun, made from flax, hemp, or wool. These peasants wore no underwear and in the summer time their clothes consisted of two garments, trousers and a smock. In the winter they wore a sheepskin coat with the wool turned inside. Often there was only one sheepskin coat for all the family. Coarse cowhide boots were worn on holidays and special occasions. Shoes woven from strips of bark and fashioned like a moccasin were the customary wear to prevent cuts and bruises but did not keep the feet warm or dry. The men wrapped rags and strips of cloth around their feet before putting on the bast shoes, but the women knitted themselves stockings. Clothing has always been a problem of first importance to the Russian.

Before the French Revolution most of her manufactured goods came from England. But when the Industrial Revolution reached Germany, that country became her major source of supply. During World War I German submarines made trade with England difficult, Russian factories were overworked

making war supplies, and the Trans-Siberian Railway was not able to carry all of the supplies which poured into Vladivostok from America and Japan. Russians stood in lines all night to buy a blanket, a pair of shoes, or some clothes at exorbitant prices. An overcoat sold for six times the pre-war cost. This shortage had its effects on the temper of the people, hastening the revolution. The family suffered because of these shortages.

The Russian soldier was a moujik (a peasant) in uniform. He was not gay as were the French soldiers, but was suppressed by discipline. He seldom listened to subversive ideas, and cases of mutiny or disobedience were rare; few soldiers participated with the revolutionaries in the revolt of 1905. The soldier was not savage, as the German killing for the joy of it, but fought because it was his duty, feeling no hatred for the enemy. He was carefully disciplined, being taught to keep in rank even at the cost of his life. The church prayed for him if he met death in line of duty. Since his future life was secure and his past life unhappy, he charged the enemy with his bare fists if no other weapons were available. He was a good soldier as long as he had the orders of his superiors to follow but was helpless when action called for his own initiative.

The officers were very different in temperament from the soldier as they came exclusively from the noble class.

They were cruel to the enemy, torturing, shooting, and hanging them because that kind of treatment guaranteed speedy promotions. They were also cruel disciplinerians with their own men.

The Russian police was the best organized army in the country and was in two divisions, the visible and the invisible. The visible section maintained order and required the people to observe the laws of the Tzar. The invisible portion were everywhere and although their number was unknown to the public, they were to be found in the person of the chambermaid, the clerk, the friend in the drawing room, the old man or woman, the young girl, the school boy, or the prostitute. They knew the secret thoughts of the populace because they eavesdropped on every conversation or encouraged talking by becoming loquacious themselves. They received secret orders and were accountable only to their superior officers. No one hostile to the imperial regime was safe from them at home or abroad. Russians, in a foreign country, talked freely to strangers but stopped if a countryman joined them. Men did not protest the disappearance of friends for fear of drawing the wrath of the police upon themselves. Travelers in Russia were subject to the closest scrutiny by the secret division. Father, son, brother, or wife might be a member of the dreaded police. The Tzar, sitting on a tottering throne, reckoned no cost of lives too great a sacrifice to maintain his position.

There were many changes in the status of the Russian man after the Revolution of 1917. His supremacy in the family and superiority to all women ended abruptly. Women were given equal rights in politics, industry, and in the home. This met with some opposition at first, then with grumbling, and at last was accepted as a good thing. Mothers or spinsters were made foremen and held other responsible jobs above men when they had the ability. The expansion of Russian industry absorbed all the women wishing to enter the laboring class. There were jobs for all.

The Russian man gained a new concept of things. He no longer considered God as necessary to aid him in times of trouble. He did not consider race of importance but thought of all men as his equal. In fact, a humanitarian outlook on mankind became the main belief of his new faith. The world had two classes of men: the heroes and the villains. The heroes were the workers, striving to build a better way of life, and exploited by the villains or capitalists. The capitalist was always fat, greedy, foul, and grasping and deserved no sympathy; while the worker was always lean, muscular, clean, dignified and noble. The worker was to be admired, always struggling against poverty. The Russian was horrified at tales of the injustices in America, where a mob gathered to demand a verdict of death for a Negro criminal, but if a mob gathered in Russia to demand the death penalty for an engineer accused of sabotage, that was a

patriotic duty. It was an honorable act to discharge a Russian professor if he failed to expound correctly the Marxian doctrines, but it became an outrage if a professor of an American university was expelled for radical teaching.

One new concept was the aversion to acquiring private, material wealth. He was concerned with stamping out the desire to garner private wealth, so that his society of Communism and equality might work successfully. Yet in direct contradiction he did not frown on material incentive to aid in speeding industrial production. He hoped for the time when every Russian could prosper as does the man in the West. This, indeed, encouraged him to work harder because muscular labor was as well paid as intellectual. The peasant moved about seeking higher wages, thus causing a huge turnover of labor in the factories. In 1932, Stalin denounced the conception of equality in material reward at this state of the revolution. It had been in existence for fifteen years and there was still a scarcity of food and houses for the proletarian. It was at this time that Communist directors and managers began to vary the pay from the basic wage of two hundred and twenty-five rubles per month to each earner to stimulate greater production of goods. Piece-work was established as a basis of pay and the laborers began to overload their machines to keep up their quota of piece-work to collect their basic pay. There was no limit to the amount of money they could make and rewards of a trip

abroad or a new apartment were given to the workers achieving outstanding quotas.

Minor officials might be greedy, but paid for their avarice, sometimes with their lives. Higher officials were supposed to have the same standard of living as the lower classes. "Whatever one may say of the Russian leaders, the desire for riches is one thing of which they cannot be accused."[6] But they managed to have large, well-furnished apartments, plenty of meat, bread, butter and other scarce foods; they did not have to wait in line for shoes or clothes, hoping there would be some when they reached the window of the store. Instead of the inconvenience of waiting in line they had special stores, stocked with luxuries, as well as with staple commodities.

Peasants were won to Communism by the promise of more land, and machines to till the soil, and were for this reason loyal supporters of the revolution. The end of the Civil War found the country in a state of inflation. Paper money decreased in value until bank notes were issued in large sheets which were often used for wrapping paper. Some peasants papered their cottages with bank notes. The inflation was increased by free utilities, such as railroad travel, street-cars, postal services, plays, movies, and medical

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[6]Maurice Hindus, The Great Offensive, p. 322. For contradictory ideas of the ideals of Communist officials consult Andrew Smith, I Was a Soviet Worker.

care. Food rose in price and became more scarce every day until in 1921 the rest of the world began sending food to the starving Russians. For a few years they were given new allotments of land and encouraged to raise larger crops, but they sold in the markets for as much as they could get, and hoarded when prices were low. Then the government required every farmer to turn his produce over to the state at prices below the normal rate so that the food could undersell world markets to buy needed industrial supplies. The peasant was punished for hoarding. Very little food came back to his family, so he decided it was not worth the effort to raise crops. A famine resulted during 1927-1928. Stalin decided to put the first Five Year Plan into operation. To increase the food supply of the nation, peasants were to give up their land, organize collectives, and farm the combined acreage in common with tractors, plows and combines which, in theory, would give more crops with less labor. It did increase the area under cultivation because the strip system was wasteful. But the peasant resisted bitterly the efforts to take his land. He was proud to own a cow, hog, and chickens and did not want to pool them with others. The government regulations became more severe and demanded that all join the collectives. The ones who held out were called "kulaks" and lost all civil rights. Many were exiled to Siberia or executed as obstructionists to Communism. Farmers could be forcibly collected but they

could not be made to produce and by 1932 the food shortage was serious.

During the years following the scarcities of 1932 and 1933 the city laborer was asked to volunteer his services in weeding potatoes and harvesting grain, or other crops, on the collectives during his holiday each week. The worker shoved his way into a train, already tightly jammed with other unfortunates, as soon as the day's work was finished in the factory. In a few hours he arrived at the sovhoz assigned to his shop and, in the dark, was taken to the mess hall or other farm buildings to sleep the rest of the night. The top of a table or the bare ground served as his bed. At dawn he was called and ate bread for breakfast if he was fortunate enough to have a piece in his pocket. Then he walked several miles to the assigned part of the farm for his day's tasks. He found the farmers dissatisfied with life on the collectives because of food shortages and the crowded conditions in the barracks. Knowing the food would go to the high officials instead of to the hungry, the city dwellers aided the peasants in destroying the crops by pulling up food-producing plants instead of the weeds.

Of the numerous changes in the life of the peasant as a result of the revolution, one of the more important was in his relation to officers in the Red Army. For the first time in Russian history he could become an officer, and advance to as high a rank as his ability warranted. This

equality of opportunity was a source of delight and awe to the poor people. Alexander Barmine was the son of a poor schoolmaster, yet rose to the highest ranks in both the army and the Diplomatic Corps.[7]

Leon Trotsky was second only to Lenin in the Bolshevik government and had charge of the army. Due to the pressure of White Russian or foreign troops, and internal disorder, there was a great need of a well-trained Red Army. The world expected the Bolshevik government to collapse every day because it did not have an army led by trained men. Trotsky put into action long-range plans to train officers in the field as well as in the classroom. Young men who showed leadership and intelligence in fighting the enemies, were sent to towns near the combat areas to study military strategy in the classroom and on the drill fields. Thus they learned close order drill, and during emergencies filled sectors of the front when the enemy pressed too hard. They were taught by army officers from the old Tzar's army who had been convinced that Russia was more important than the Tzar, and were willing to carry on their trade, whoever their superiors might be.

The peasants were getting so little food or pay on the collectives that they were forced to go to the city to beg bread. Children learned early the art of begging to aid

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[7]Alexander Barmine, One Who Survived, p. 274.

their parents in getting sufficient food for the family. The peasant spent the long winter evenings whittling and making other wooden toys which were sold to a vendor in the city. The vendor set up a stall to sell the toys but few had the small amount of money the toys cost to spare for unessentials.

By the second World War there was more food. Some changes were instituted before full co-operation from the peasant could be obtained. Most peasants were on collectives which allowed each family to have a separate house, a private garden, a cow, and chickens. The state farms did not do this but required every family to live in barracks. The peasants objected and went to the collectives rather than the state farms. It was recognized that the Russians were not prepared psychologically for communal living but there were hopes that the new generation could be educated in the new social patterns and could welcome the innovations.

The collective system of living together in country and city had a great influence in changing the working and living conditions of the Russians but did not change human emotions, desires, and hearts. It was the love and desire to care for the children that held the family together and preserved it through the shocks of revolution. The radicals, who wanted to do away with the family completely, could not destroy the factors that tied it together. Russian fathers

could be seen with their children in the parks and playgrounds during their free hours. When the father worked one shift and the mother another, he took care of the home while she worked. It was during this free time that he played with the children and kept love alive in their hearts for their father and mother. Parental responsibility was demanded in the 1936 and 1944 reforms. Education was reorganized and effort was made to control delinquency, restrict abortion, and change the marriage and divorce laws. Russian families were urged to have more children, or to adopt orphans, and many families did adopt children to be raised with their own. The young Communistic fathers were just as proud of their progeny as a father under the Tzar. They wanted to make them good Communists, too, and spent all available time with them. The Russian father and husband still considered himself head of the family after twenty-five years of Communism. He expected his wife and children to obey him, and they did if he had the intelligence and experience. But he now had no authority to demand anything of them. The husband and wife were relatively equal socially and economically and both enjoyed freedom. They shared their burdens, problems, responsibilities, interests, joys, and sorrows with each other. The men supported the freedom of women as wholeheartedly as did their wives.

The war served to disillusion the Russian. He had repelled the enemy and had followed their retreating armies

into foreign countries where he found poor people, like himself, living in cottages and houses containing good plumbing, lovely kitchens, nice furniture, and a house for each family. These people had watches, clocks, and other things he had never dreamed of possessing. He returned to Russia upon discharge from the army, hoping to obtain some of these commodities for himself, but found the country in a deplorable condition. There had been housing shortages before the war; now he found at least thirty per cent of the houses in ruins. Yet, though conditions might be bad, the future held bright hopes, for the factories which had been devoted to war since the early 'thirties could not be diverted to rebuilding the houses and providing the necessities of life. The Russian was tired from the sacrifices he had been called upon to make and was ready to relax. However, Stalin called upon him to continue his efforts, assuring him that Russia was surrounded by capitalistic countries seeking the complete destruction of Communism. The nation must maintain and supply its armed forces, even though this might curtail the production of luxuries. The question now facing the world is: will the Russian continue to sacrifice to build an industrial country for the benefit of Stalin and his clique, or will the masses make demands that will force a change of policy from the government? So little reliable information is coming out of Russia that no one

can venture more then a guess as to their future. We must wait and see.

## CHAPTER III

## THE RUSSIAN WOMAN

If there has been a great deal written about the Russian woman, it is because of the great changes in her status. Before Peter the Great's time, most of them were treated as slaves. They had to live in a separate room of the house; wore a veil in public; Russia was still under the spell of the Orient. It was due to the reforms of Peter the Great that the empire swung from the Oriental to European influence. He forced European culture upon the country. The first step was to burn their veils and bring them out of retirement. Public bonfires were lighted and they marched past, casting their veils into the flames, as a symbol of emancipation. The women objected as strenuously as the men to all these changes.

There was not much improvement in the conditions under which they lived after Peter the Great's reforms because the majority of Russia's population were serfs. The serfs and their families were exploited mercilessly by the upper classes and were held in bondage with the superstitions taught by the church. Men were not free to improve their conditions even if they possessed the intelligence. Girls

were taught from childhood to obey the men as superiors, by custom, by the clergy, and by the men.

After the emancipation of the serf in 1861, conditions improved for the men but not for their wives. The husband was free to spend his time in a tavern drinking and gossipping while his wife stayed at home to do the heavy field work and the barnyard tasks, as well as her housework, which must be done before daybreak and after dark. There was no leisure for her from early spring until the crops were garnered in the fall. Even then, there was little rest, for she must spin, weave, sew, and wash clothes besides prepare food during the winter months. She was seldom a good housekeeper, but knew everything that was going on in the fields. Her preparation of food was simple, due to the scarcity of even the bare necessities. The meal consisted to a large extent of a little black bread and cabbage soup, potatoes, cucumbers, or other vegetables. They often had only two kinds of food to eat at the same time. Meat was eaten on holidays when it was available. Malnutrition was commonplace. The women, especially the Cossack, had little experience with love. Their husbands loved them during the youthful days with passion but soon abandoned them to pursue an adventurous life with their swords, horses, and comrades. Her youthful bloom faded before she reached thirty years of age and at forty she was wrinkled with age. The caresses turned to insults and blows.

She was defenseless from her husband and the older men of his family, often being held in concubinage by her father-in-law during the absence of her spouse.

In spite of the humiliating position of the Russian woman, she had some outstanding property rights. While the peasant was forced to turn his wages into the family commune, she could save and keep all the income derived from the sale of chickens, eggs, and sheep, as well as the income from her spinning and weaving. Flax and wool were her exclusive property. The woman's dowry was her own and could never be taken by the husband or his family. The daughter-in-law was sometimes given a garden and an orchard to raise produce for sale so she could have money of her own.

The marriage of the woman to the man during the period before the revolution was a ceremony worked out over the preceding centuries. Here again we find the Oriental influence of choosing a wife for the young man instead of letting him pick a wife in the Occidental fashion. When the son arrived at the right age for marriage, his father visited from house to house to talk to the mothers of marriageable daughters. The girls were displayed to the best advantage in the hope that he would choose one. The father looked for one who could spin, knit, sew, weave, cook, keep house, and who was strong enough to work in the field. If with all these accomplishments she was pretty, too, the boy who was to marry her was considered lucky. The girl must

come equipped with a suitable dowry of a cow, a pig, a sheep, or other farm animals. When the father discovered a candidate he thought was suitable for a daughter-in-law, he invited her mother to make a secret visit to his hut to watch his son work. A day was set for the visit and she came early in the morning and observed the boy all day. He was supposed to know nothing of the proceedings and would be acting natural. When the arrangements were completed, the boy's mother took other women with her to visit the young lady's home. They went after dark and demanded food, as they were hungry, and of course they were invited into the house. The mother told the prospective in-laws that she had heard they had a daughter just right for her son's wife. Other village queens had been invited to the house for this occasion and they were paraded before the mother and her friends. After they were all rejected, the daughter was brought in and was accepted at once. The wedding day was set, and a feast began which lasted all night. The next day the boy and girl were taken to the house of a relative where they had a chance to see each other by looking through the keyhole or a crack.

With the breaking down of the "great family" near the end of the nineteenth century, the son was allowed to pick the one he wanted to marry, but she still had no voice in the matter. She was forced to accept blindly the man her family chose for her. If the son had not picked a young

lady by the time his father decided he should be married, the father commanded him to pick a wife from the group chosen as suitable by his parents. A professional matchmaker was chosen to go to the girl's house to negotiate the dowry and to make all the arrangements for the wedding. This was not just an affair of the heart but a business deal. The marriage agent was usually an aunt of the boy. She sometimes talked in allegorical terms but this procedure was discarded in later years so that she bluntly asked if the daughter was in the market for a husband. The girl's parents said "yes" if they were pleased with the boy or "no" if the choice did not suit them. After the matchmaker left, if the parents had said "yes," they called the girl in to tell her of the impending wedding. By tradition she was compelled to shed tears over the announcement, but if she really did not like the choice, she cried, sobbed, and protested so hard that her parents took pity on her and broke off negotiations.

If the girl agreed to accept the boy, they paid a visit to his family. If the latter came of a poor family, they might borrow provisions, livestock, or even a house to show the prospective mother-in-law. In the meantime the parents proceeded with the bargaining. The boy's father offered a small amount of money, usually about fifteen rubles, and the girl's father refused, claiming he had received twenty rubles for the eldest daughter. A cloak was added to the

bargain, and then more until an agreement was reached. The amount to be paid for the girl varied according to the wealth of the boy's family. She was expected to have a dowry which must include rakes, pitch-forks, spinning-wheel, thimble, thread, needles, and linens, because the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law will give her nothing. The negotiations completed, the boy's family visited the girl's home and she bowed to the ground to show submission to his parents. A feast followed. Then her relatives went to visit his parents and to eat salt, bread, and meats, and to drink vodka. After the exchange of bread there could be no alteration in plans.

On the wedding day the bridegroom and his family came to the village. The villagers not invited to the wedding stretched a rope across the road at the entrance to the village and demanded a present of money. They were given three to ten rubles by the boy's father, and the young men and women were given money for tea; the bridegroom gave the boys and girls money for cakes. If the gift was too small, they played tricks on him. His carriage might lose all its wheels. Tables were loaded with food for the guests and a special table was set for the bride and groom. The young couple neither ate nor drank but must watch the others eat. The groom usually helped defray the cost of the banquet, which might be fifty rubles. The young guests sang while

the meal was eaten with the groom paying a coin for every song. This done, the bride and groom were given tea. At the end of the day the bride parted from her future relatives with tears which could be stopped with a present from the groom.

Following the wedding, the carriages or sledges were mounted and the horses galloped to the young couple's new home, to which they were welcomed by the firing of pistols. Houses were decorated with evergreens in their honor. The groom's father and mother were waiting at the door with bread and salt, symbols of life-long friendship and love, and with the icon for them to bow in tribute to the Holy Mother; then they kissed the parents of the groom. They were given a piece of cloth and a ruble. The wedding feast followed, the guests eating in one room and the bride and groom in another. The guests each drank a toast of vodka to the couple and placed a coin on their plate. This finished the wedding ceremonies, but the next day the bride was subjected to a series of tests and tricks, after which she began her life of toil.

Morals have always been held lightly in Russia. Since ancient days the great families of peasants slept and lived in one-room huts. The men and women slept beside each other on the stove top, the platform, and on the hay in the barn. They have always been frank about sex and have never had the sense of mystery that puritanism gave to Europe and

the United States. This in some measure accounted for the Communists' views of marriage and sex after the revolution, and in some measure accounted for the great number of prostitutes in Russia.

The peasants were too miserable and ignorant to care about the morals of their village. The nobles considered the village maidens as their property and playground. Women who worked on the great estates were cruelly abused, and everywhere prostitution flourished.

> The following facts will give some idea of this prostitution: . . . every winter numbers of peasant women come to St. Petersburg from the neighboring provinces. All the winter they practise prostitution. In summer they return to their native district to help in the field work.[1]

In some districts, the women brought their sixteen-year-old daughters to the city and placed them in licensed houses of harlotry rather than have them married to a quarrelsome drunkard. The girl was supposed to stay in the house for two years, then get a job in a factory. She usually sent part of her earnings to her mother.

In St. Petersburg, girls of ten and twelve years of age offered their bodies openly on the streets, where they accosted men with obscene language. St. Petersburg had about fifty thousand women who were either permanent or occasional prostitutes; of this number sixty-five per cent were peasants as were seventy-four per cent of those to be

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[1]Gregor Alexinsky, Modern Russia, pp. 157-158.

found at the fair of Nijni-Novgorod. The main cause was their economic condition. They were hungry and miserable, forced to labor for pitifully inadequate wages. Therefore both the factory worker and the peasant became harlots. The domestic servant earned three to eight rubles per month, and a factory girl only a little better. Russian laws afforded them no protection, and they had no education. Just before the turn of the century, at least ninety per cent of the Russian women were completely illiterate.

The prostitutes were the best dressed women in Russia, wearing good shoes and stockings and well-made clothes, some of brightly colored silks. They led fairly easy lives and not being subjected to the heavy labor of the worker and the peasant, stayed pretty much longer. They solicited among the wealthy class and reaped a satisfactory harvest. Business men, away from home, were a source of profit. This practice was not only tolerated by custom but also recognized by the government, which required every prostitute to have a yellow card to stay in business. Russia was only one nation among many faced with the delinquency of its women.

The social and economic development of Russia through its industry helped develop a class of intellectual women. The emancipation of the serf in 1861 had a tendency to reduce the income of the nobles and their daughters were

forced to earn their own living. They were educated in the liberal arts to become teachers, doctors, or to enter some other profession. The daughters of the nobility were joined by the daughters of the officials, or priests, and of the small middle-class townspeople. As these intellectuals gained their education, they became conscious of the social struggle. They embraced theories on the rights of man held by the Socialists and became ardent disciples. Many acts of terrorism were performed by the feeble hands of a woman.

During the first World War men were taken from the factory and farm to fight. The women filled such vacancies as they did in England, the United States, France, and Germany. But in Russia, little attention was given to work conditions and the state factory inspection, never very rigid in its requirements, relaxed still further. The women who poured into the factories were not qualified for the available jobs. They could not get the training or skills needed for the work. Most of them were illiterate peasants, unused to tools or machines. They could replace the unskilled worker, but his duties were too heavy for a woman. They did only the simplest work and few became skilled machinists or high-grade operators. Their tasks were heavy and the conditions of labor were hard.

Women were prominent during the Russian Revolution of 1917. They threw bombs, intrigued and killed to help bring

the revolution. They had the most to gain by being freed from the slavery of Russian laws. The eighteen million Moslems of Russia still practiced polygamy and their wives wore heavy horse-hair veils. The peasants in the villages were still indoctrinated with their inferiority to men. Their complete freedom was one goal of Lenin and the Bolsheviki, who championed their rights and their advancement. Early in 1917, Lenin, just returned to Russia from exile, wrote to the central executive committee of his party demanding their support of freedom and responsibility for women. Lenin believed they must be drawn into taking an independent part, not only in political life generally but also in daily social service obligatory to everyone. He maintained that "care of the sick, of the homeless children, pure food supervision, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until they are on a footing of perfect equality with men, not only on paper, but in reality."[2]

Their new freedom left its mark upon the family. The stability of the family was seriously threatened by the new laws on marriage, divorce, and abortion. Chastity was not a badge of honor and glory, nor was its loss considered a disgrace by the younger generations, but some of the older generation were still under the influence of their old religious belief. Women were no longer bound to accept

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[1]Susan M. Kingsbury and Mildred Fairchild, Factory, Family, and Women in the Soviet Union, pp. xxi-xxii.

maltreatment as a part of marriage or to preserve their honor and reputation by remaining married. They were not dependent upon men for maintenance. The government encouraged all to take jobs making them economically independent. There was no discussion as to whether a career would interfere with a family; the children had to wait until there was an opportunity for them to come without interfering with the mother's work. The crowning glory was no longer child-bearing but becoming a unit in the production of industry.

The Communists were strict in placing responsibility for their children upon the parents. With the ease in obtaining a divorce there were many children cast adrift and to remedy this situation the Communists specified that one parent must keep the children if there was a divorce. If the mother kept them, she received one third of her former husband's wages. She paid one third of her wages to him if he kept the children. If they were not taken care of, the parents were dragged into the people's court where they received unfavorable publicity. In spite of all this freedom, the parents loved their children and this bond often held the family together amid the chaos of Communism. Many stiff-necked party men, with a theoretic dislike for the family, played with their children, tossing them up into the air, kissing and hugging them just as fathers in other countries do.

This freedom of women was puzzling to the old mujiks in the village. They were accustomed to beating their wives if the cow got out or if they felt badly, but this was changed by the new laws of the Communists. The men were arrested and punished for maltreatment of their wives. The young Communists aimed at the participation of the majority of the girls in the elections which was vigorously opposed by the old men who said, "A woman is a women and has no place in politics."[3] The elders argued that her place was in the home, caring for the children and the kitchen, but they could not get around the question of the young Communists of why was that not remembered when harvest time came! Women entered factories in increasing numbers following the revolution, many coming from the country. The need for more money to support the family forced many city mothers to seek similar employment, thus gaining economic freedom.

The women in the villages entered into the modern age by learning to drive tractors, operate combines, and other agricultural machines. They went to school to learn improved methods of farming. By 1932, there were three hundred thousand peasants trained to operate tractors and of this number eighteen thousand were women. The tractor driver was rated as a skilled worker upon the collective farms and

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[3]A. R. Williams, The Russians, p. 169.

drew high wages. The competition between the sexes for that rating was keen. Most men favored the withholding of opportunities of training and high wages from the girls, who were hesitant about entering the competition against the men. The government encouraged their participation in every job.

Women became managers of the collective farms after they finished school, but they were young and immature, with no real knowledge of the land. These girls had one crop planted where the land was more suitable to another. They let the hay rot in the field while the cattle starved. The new tractors were left in the field to rust and would not be repaired until plowing time came and by the time they were ready, the plowing season was over. Complaints from the peasants about mismanagement were answered by the secret police, who took the peasants away.

Communism called for three principles which influenced the position of woman: absolute equality among all people, in practice as well as in theory, which called for no discrimination because of sex, race, or nationality; the abolition of any economic class that depended on any other for the means of living; and the use of all the people in labor so that everyone worked according to his ability. The Soviet law guaranteed equality of payment for equal work for both sexes. It gave equality in the right to vote and to hold office. Sex or race was not to be a basis for wage

scale other than established by the government. The main difference in wages grew out of using piece-work to set the scale. Women could not turn out as much work in a day as men.

Women learned to do every kind of work and became skilled in every field of endeavor. They became plasterers and bricklayers, motormen on trams and streetcars, engineers on trains, coal miners, and helpers for brickmasons. They were teachers, doctors, foremen or inspectors in factories, cooks and waitresses in public dining rooms and sometimes members of the secret police. They did not enter agriculture as readily as other jobs, although a few had places of responsibility on the collective farms. Most of them had to do the hard work on the farms and it was unattractive. Consequently, they flocked to the cities to get jobs in the factories. They were joined by the wives and daughters of men working in the city. These peasant and city women flung themselves into the new, exciting, and interesting phases of factory work. They joined the shock brigades of the factory, gave new life and energy to the clubs, and spurred the volunteer social worker to new activities. They were proud and happy in their new life of work.

The Petrograd Council of Trade Unions and Factory Committees took the stand in April of 1918 that dismissal of employees was to be dependent upon the need of the worker, regardless of sex. If a period of retrenchment became

necessary, only those who could endure the crisis should be laid off. Again in 1921, the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions stated that all women workers in case of personnel reduction were to be dismissed on equal terms with the men. Mothers with children up to a year old, if they were unsupported, should be given preference to other workers. The labor code carried explicit regulations for their protection. Equal pay for equal work was assumed in the regulations. Employment could not be denied for being married or a mother. She could not be discharged during pregnancy or during the first year of the child's life, while she was nursing it. A mother out on pregnancy leave could not be discharged during a general reduction of personnel. Full wages were paid during leave by the factory where she worked, before and after the baby was born. Nursing mothers could not be put on the night shift, or be called on for overtime work. A prescribed limit on the load they were permitted to lift was set at thirty pounds, but they were free to work at any job which did not prove harmful to them or their offspring. All of these regulations were broken.

Every factory employing over five hundred women paid four per cent of gross income for the day nursery. All factories paid into the "motherhood" fund, which helped the state in its program for the care of mothers. The Health

Department cared for them from the time pregnancy was discovered until the child was three or four years old. The women were to have their confinement in the hospital. Education and propaganda were conducted to get them to come for an examination. Each one took a Wassermann test and had an external examination of pelvis, uterus, heart, and lungs. They were examined every two months, then every month, and during the last two months, every two weeks. If the condition of the women was not normal, she was placed in a lying-in hospital for special care. Following the birth the mother and child reported to the Consultation Home every two weeks and at lengthening intervals for the first four years of the child's life. The same doctor examined them both each time and visited the home if the child became ill.

The Communists were concerned over the well-being of Russia's women and to assure health:

> . . . Moscow city imposes other regulations on mothers of young children and makes certain provisions for the family. (1) Social insurance allows 30 rubles for expenses of confinement and 30 rubles for layette. But the factory or employing organization must carry the wage of the working mother during the three or four months of absence. (2) Allowance of eight rubles per month for nine months after birth is made for support of the child. (3) If the mother nurses the baby she receives in addition one-eighth of this allowance per month during the nursing period. (4) Law forbids all women to lift weights over 30 pounds. Pregnant women and nursing mothers work only on the day shift. If a woman's health is poor, on a doctor's certificate, she may work four hours a day only. (5) Telephone girls may not work at night without a permit. (6) Children and women have the same protection and provision whether or not the marriage status is legal.

(7) If separated, the father or mother must pay one-third of the income for support of the child. The necessary sum is deducted from the wage of the parent not keeping the child. If there are several children, the court decides upon the obligation of the parents. Also, it is the function of the court to determine which one shall keep them. Usually, however, it gives them to the mother.[4]

Meanwhile the old roots of the family were shaken, if not killed entirely. The upheaval, due to the first World War, famine, and the Civil War, caused such looseness in the conventions of marriage that morality declined. People of all countries become more promiscuous during a war and Russia was no exception. Indeed, in Russia conditions indicated a more serious state than elsewhere because of the looseness of morals under the Tzars. The strong opposition of the Communists to the church accounts in part for the looseness allowed by law in the marriage requirements, denying the right of the church to register marriages and setting up Civil Registers' offices to replace it. The equality of men and women in moral responsibility also played a part in the looseness of morals. Marriage in Russia was undergoing a change, with its sanctity and significance ceasing to have any hold on either husband or wife.

The Bolsheviki made common-law marriages legal early in their regime, and a great number of the young people took immediate advantage of the liberty and entered into marital relations. It was not even necessary to record the marriage.

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[4]Kingsbury, op. cit., p. 152.

The young people just started living together and their children were accepted as legal. Society no longer frowned on such practices. Both Communists and non-Communists lived in a state of free union and free love. The women were the most staunch upholders of the easy marriage and divorce laws during the early 'twenties because they were getting the first taste of real freedom in centuries. They laughed and scoffed at criticism of their system of marriage. In the courts, the unregistered marriage was recognized as legal as a registered one, except that proof of cohabitation and the existence of a joint household must be given to claim alimony. All marriages had to be dissolved by a registered divorce before remarriage.

The Soviet Russian marriage law was set up in 1918. The couple must sign a declaration to the effect that they were free of venereal disease, and if it was discovered that one was not free, the person was punished by forced labor. They forfeited a percentage of their wages. Both must be at least eighteen years old and mentally sound. The wife might assume her husband's name if she wished or retain her own. The husband could, and sometimes did, assume his wife's name. One essential to the freedom of women was the provision which allowed each to choose her own occupation and guaranteed joint rights in all property acquired during marriage. All they accumulated before marriage remained their own.

There was a strong move by the early 'thirties to restore monogamy in Russia. Soviet legislation, without exactly stressing the principle of a single marriage, adhered to it by refusing to recognize a transient union. This was a reversal of the original doctrine of the Communists. The attitude of the Russian youth had much to do with the change of the administration's policy of recognition of free union as marriage. Plebiscites were taken in various districts of the opinion of the youth toward polygamy and seventy-five per cent were in favor of monogamy. Another unhappy experiment was the communes of young men and women. Many of them fell in love and were married, but found that the girl must stay in the rooms for girls and the boy in the boys' rooms. This had a distressful effect upon the young married couples because there was no chance to establish the home life so necessary for a family. The couples had no privacy to fulfill the communion of body, mind, and soul so necessary to man and wife.

Following the revolution, a couple could go on a boat trip on the Volga or to the Caucasus for a honeymoon all their own for a week or a year, even though both were married to someone else, and no one interfered. Public opinion did not condemn nor censure them. Men and women talked frankly of sex with no more embarrassment than a discussion of music and books. However, foreigners soon discovered that the Russian woman, in spite of the new freedom in sex and her

frankness in discussing it, was not easily won to sex association. Maurice Hindus believes that either men and women will become less given to promiscuity or

> the Russians will curb personal liberty in matters of sex. They will intensify the emphasis of the disciplinary measures mentioned. They will bring into play the weapon of social censure, so effective in their battle on drunkenness.[5]

The Communistic system was conducive to early marriages for several reasons: individuals need worry no longer about the economic problem; they could get a divorce easily if they did not suit each other; they were able to mate when love first came to them; and the woman had equal rights with her husband. However, there were serious abuses of the new laws and new freedoms. Men working in the higher categories were much better paid than the common laborer and had access to the better stores. They were well enough paid so that they could afford to hire a servant girl. There were two types of domestic help available; the old woman, who likely acted as a spy for the dreaded GPU; or the young girl who was likely to get pregnant by any man other than her employer. If she did have an affair with a common laborer, she blamed the employer because he made a big salary and she was entitled to one third of his income. Old women were usually hired as servants.

The greatest freedom given to women was the right to a divorce, in a few minutes, from the husband who refused to

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[5]Maurice Hindus, Humanity Uprooted, p. 105.

consider their feelings. This provided an escape from an unwise marriage and forced the husband to care for his wife instead of beating her as he would have done during the time of the Tzars. Divorce became alarming; in Moscow in March of 1928 divorces granted outnumbered marriages. In the country the separation rate was much lower; still holding to the ideals of family and although marriage forms were altered, the peasants continued to practice the ceremonies. In fact, it was due in part to the pressure of public opinion fromthe rural sections of the country that the evil was curbed.

Divorces were as easy to obtain as marriages. If the man and woman had not bothered to register their marriage, they parted without a divorce but they must register a divorce if either planned to remarry. It was a simple proceeding without the use of lawyers or briefs. Either the man or woman or both could go to the Register's office and step into the line waiting for a marriage or a divorce. The clerk at the desk asked only the simple questions necessary to fill out a form in his books. He was paid about a dollar and would notify the husband or wife not present within three days of their standing in the eyes of the law. This might well be the first hint of dissatisfaction. The clerk made no attempt to reconciliate the couple and would have been put in his place if he had done more than file the information. The only complication was children. The parents

reached an agreement as to which would educate and support the children, and which would keep them. If this was impossible, it was decided in court, where the child's welfare alone was considered. The mother was usually given the custody but sometimes the court decided to place them in a children's home. This was theoretically the proceedings, but on occasion the clerk did question the right of the couple to separate and they were forced to explain their reasons. Later the Communists changed their attitude and by the late 'twenties divorce became more difficult to obtain.

Another great boon to the freedom and equality of women was the special legislation which made both birth control and abortion legal in Russia. Literature and lectures were made available for all women. It was discussed on trains, at work in the factory, in the drawing room, and in public. Women were trained to prevent pregnancy but in spite of all caution and preventive measures, women had unwanted children. Hospitals were set up to care for these women and doctors, trained to perform abortion, were there to see that the operation was properly done. Midwives were forbidden to practice because of inadequate training and equipment. It cannot be made later than two or two and a half months after pregnancy, and was not advised except for the safety of the mother or for health. A commission was set up to consider the social reasons and decide if it was to be

allowed. However, most women could get the operation by insistence. The commission also investigated the number of abortions the women had undergone before. They limited the number to prevent sterility, if there were not more harmful results. A few women had as many as fifteen to twenty such operations, and the estimated deaths as a result was placed at one per cent in Russia, while in Europe it ran as high as three or four per cent. Cicely Hamilton estimated the deaths as one in twenty thousand cases, while Fannina Halla raised the figure to one in every twenty-five thousand cases. In 1930 there were one hundred and seventy-five thousand abortion operations performed in Moscow alone.

The high rate of pregnancy even after all the teaching of birth control was accounted for by the shortage of preventatives. There was an institute for research in this field established in Moscow and this institute ran a small factory to produce them, but the demand could not be filled. With all the propaganda and education about birth control and legalized abortion, the birth rate increased the population of Russia faster than any of the Western races. The percentage of deaths of babies and children dropped greatly below the pre-revolution rate.

Women were given freedom and equality with men, but not all women were equal. Those who worked in the factories were on very low wages and were often forced into prostitution during the famine of 1931-1933, caused by the exportation

of wheat and food stuffs to pay for machinery. Other women were workers just to get a food card. The following examples taken from Andrew Smith's book, I Was a Soviet Worker, show the inequality of women:

> In the lamp department of the Elektrozavod worked Maria Adamovicovna. She was about 32 years of age. Her husband had died of tuberculosis and she received 17 rubles a month pension toward the support of herself and three children. Her wages were 85 rubles a month, piecework at the factory. After the many deductions there was very little left of her pay.
>
> Maria lived in a dilapidated woodshed near the Sokolniki Park with her children. She was not looked upon with favor by the administration because she never attended demonstrations or meetings. Thus she had little opportunity to become a udarnik or obtain the privileges of a higher category.
>
> Maria had no time for demonstrations or meetings. At 4 a. m. she rose and rushed to the ochered. If she was lucky she got some bread after waiting for a number of hours. If she was unlucky and got no bread in the morning, she had to wait again in line after 4 p. m. when she quit work at the factory.
>
> After having fed her children a meager meal of kasha, black bread and boiled water, she put them to sleep on the bare floor and covered them with rags. Then she spruced up with whatever finery or cosmetics she had treasured away and proceeded to the sidewalks of the hotels where the better-paid foreign specialists congregated -- to the Savoy, the Grand or Europe Hotel. If she was fortunate that day, her solicitations were accepted by some man and he paid for her supper before he took her to his room. Sometimes he bought her some rouge or some clothing for the children. At about 3 a. m. she was back in the house to boil some water for her children's breakfast and the day's routine started all over again.
>
> At the factory she operated a dangerous gas automatic soldering machine. But her mind was not on her work. She was sleepy and tired. She was thinking of her children and what luck she would have that night.
>
> In January, 1935, the Government abolished the bread system. Now Maria could buy bread in the open market without a bread card. She left the factory and could be seen any day plying the hotel sidewalks

in the hope of meeting some generous foreign worker to compensate her for her services.[6]

Comrade Rosenberg was cordially detested by everybody in the house because of her conceit and aloofness. She was in a privileged class by herself in every respect. The chief editor was, of course, in the highest category, receiving 500 rubles a month plus premiums. She had a servant girl to do all her housework. Her shopping was done in the magazin (store) restricted to the highest officials, where she could purchase food and goods, which other workers never saw.

One day I was walking with Comrade Rosenberg from the factory to our house. On the way we were accosted by a poor women begging for alms. As I put my hand in my pocket to give her something, my companion said sternly, "You must not do this, Comrade Smith. These people are lazy and do not want to work. You only encourage them by giving them money or help."

Some days later we were walking together again and as we came near our house we noticed a man and a woman rummaging in the garbage barrels. As we came closer we noticed that they were Adam and Petchenikova, two workers of the Elektrozavod factory. I turned to Comrade Rosenberg and said:

"What do you say now about people who don't want to work?"

She bit her lip and hurried on.[7]

Claudia and Victoria were two pretty, blond, buxom village girls who worked in the office of the technical department of the Elektrozavod. They were nineteen and twenty-one years of age respectively. They were Komsomols (Young Communists).

I found that both Claudia and Victoria did not receive 75 rubles a month as did the other girls in that department. They received 150 rubles a month. They never had to live in the barracks and pay in advance as the others did. They lived in an apartment house on the Matroskaya Tishina, and paid when convenient. They were always well-dressed, well-rouged and well-perfumed in strange contrast to the evident poverty of their fellow-women workers. I wondered how this could be.

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[6]Andrew Smith, I Was a Soviet Worker, pp. 105-106.

[7]Ibid., pp. 107-108.

Claudia and Victoria were in our apartment building almost daily. Across the corridor from our apartment lived two American mechanics, one a bench-hand aged fifty-five and the other a toolmaker aged thirty-two. The two girls were to be seen at the apartment of the two Americans almost daily.

Since there was one kitchen for three apartments, we had to use the same kitchen with the American mechanics. Claudia and Victoria would do the cooking for them. They would appropriate our groceries and dishes. They would leave the kitchen in a filthy condition.

After an all-night drinking carouse, we found find the kitchen or the adjoining corridor covered with the vomit of the two Komsomols. Sometimes one or both of them would be lying in the filth, clad only in light shift, to be dragged inside by one of the mechanics later on. We could not sleep at night for the screaming and dancing. I could not stand it any longer. I demanded of the girls that they change their ways, or I would complain to higher authorities. They laughed in my face and said to me:

"This is a free country. You can't stop us."

I complained to the House Committee, and received a reply that they would investigate. But nothing was ever done about the matter. And I thought to myself, "Is this the youth upon whom the future of the Soviet Union depends?"

Claudia and Victoria were not subject to the same discipline as the other women workers. They did not have to go to subotniks. Because of services rendered to various officials in the factory, they automatically were made udarniks. The collective agreement regarding hours, wages and working conditions which applied to other workers did not apply to them. When I asked them how it was that they were so exceptionally favored, Claudia replied saucily:

"They give us more because they like us."[8]

After a few minutes' walk I reached some sort of a market. A crowd was gathered near an old deserted wooden house, and apparently gazing at something on the cobbled street. The crowd was passive. There was no excitement or other indication of anything unusual.

I made my way into the crowd to see the object of their curiosity. A woman, with three children beside her -- one boy and two girls -- was lying on the bare cobblestones. They were all dead. Someone had thrown a dirty rag over each of them to cover their nakedness.

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[8] Ibid., pp. 108-109.

> The women seemed to be about thirty-five, the children about four, six, and nine respectively. The bodies were bloody and in places there were chunks of flesh torn away. Swarms of flies buzzed greedily about the carcasses. My stomach turned in dusgust. I had never seen such a sight before.
>
> Frantically, I approached one after another in the apathetic crowd, "Where did they come from? How did they die?" But nobody answered me. All they said was, "Nie znayu," (I don't know).[9]

The Communists began to fear the Germans when Hitler came into power in 1933, and made some changes in policy. They no longer encouraged birth control and abortion but pointed out the dangers of both to the health of the women. They advised those seeking an operation to report to a hospital where the doctors used all their influence to encourage the mother to have her baby. Stalin assumed more power in the constitution of 1936, using the threat of enemies on every side of Russia as the means of forcing the people to submit. Among the most important changes in the Bill of Rights for the family was the provision for religious freedom. The believers could once more assemble to worship God. This was a source of comfort tothe women and strengthened family ties. The bill provided better social insurance during illness, which encouraged them to have children. In fact, some girls became pregnant to obtain the special privileges of the mother. The seventh child brought an increased allowance as did every child after the seventh. It was paid until the child was five years old.

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[9] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

In 1936 the Russians investigated to see the progress made by easy divorce during the past nineteen years and found it led to too many abuses. The worst feature was the development of a light-minded attitude toward the family and its obligations. Many climbed the social ladder by marrying a man with a good income and leaving him for his wealthier friends. Some complained that their husbands deserted them for younger wives. Peasants were accused of marrying young, able-bodied women in the spring and leaving them when the harvest was over in the fall. Some married to get a house. The 1936 law required both husband and wife to attend divorce proceedings and raised the fee from two dollars to ten dollars for the first, thirty for the second, and sixty for the third or more.

The need to replace population lost in the second World War made necessary even more drastic changes. In July, 1944, the Supreme Soviet passed new laws on divorce, the family, motherhood, and marriage. It required them to be recorded on passports. Regulations discouraged divorce by increasing the expense and making the litigation more involved. An announcement must be published in the local paper. The applications cost twice as much as in 1936. The people's court heard the evidence, summoned witnesses, heard the arguments of the lawyers, clarified the validity and seriousness of the grounds for the action, and endeavored to effect a reconciliation. This court could not grant the

application, but if reconciliation failed the case was sent to the highest court and it cost one or both of the parties from two hundred to four hundred dollars. These regulations were intended to give the family more social obligations than it had ever had previously, lightening the economic burden of parents to encourage large families. Childbearing was subsidized by the government even before World War II. The state made a grant of nine dollars for each baby's layette and a food allowance of one to two dollars per month during the child's first year. "With an average birth rate of some six million a year, those items alone were estimated to cost the state more than one hundred and sixty million dollars."[10] The allowance of eighty dollars began with the birth of the third child. Each succeeding one brought additional grants but only those living could be counted. Unmarried mothers received twenty dollars for the first one, thirty dollars for the second, and forty dollars for three or more. They were entitled to the same status as the married mothers, starting with their third child. They received money from the state for twelve years instead of five. Table 2 on the following page shows the married mother's scale of bonus.

The 1944 laws took the right of claiming part of the husband's estate, and other benefits, from the unregistered

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[10]E. Snow, The Pattern of Soviet Power, pp. 18-19.

mothers. A common-law marriage no longer gave the wife any claims for support of her child against its father. Those born out of wedlock were still considered legitimate but the legal rights of women were changed. There was a rush to get married and those with large families were either registered or had marriage ceremonies in the church. There

TABLE 2

STATE ALLOWANCES IN THE SOVIET UNION TO MOTHERS OF LARGE FAMILIES BY SINGLE GRANTS AND MONTHLY ALLOWANCE ACCORDING TO EACH SUCCESSIVE BIRTH*

| For Each Successive Birth | Amount in Dollars** | |
|---|---|---|
| | Single Grant | Monthly Allowance |
| Third | 80 | 0 |
| Fourth | 260 | 16 |
| Fifth | 340 | 24 |
| Sixth | 400 | 28 |
| Seventh-eighth | 500 | 40 |
| Ninth-tenth | 700 | 50 |
| Eleventh and over | 1,000 | 60 |

*Data from "Text of Decree Issued July 8, 1944, by Presidium of the Supreme Soviet," The American Review of the Soviet Union, VI (1944), 69-70.

**One dollar equals five rubles.[11]

[11] E. W. Burgess and H. J. Locke, The Family, p. 189.

were cases where a man was married to one woman and raised a family by another. The new law made provisions to care for such circumstances with the special allowances. State homes were established to care for these waifs free of charge if the mother so desired. To further stimulate the birth rate the government gave awards to mothers with large families. The "Motherhood Medal," first class, was given for six children and the second class medal for five. The "Order of Glory of Motherhood Medal," first class, was given to the mother of nine; the second class, for eight; and the third class, for seven. "Mother Heroine," the greatest honor a woman could attain, was given to the mother of ten. Taxes were imposed on bachelors and childless couples, and smaller taxes were assessed on one and two-child families. The period of vacation from work for pregnant woman was increased from sixty-three to seventy-seven days. That allowed thirty-five days before and forty-two after the birth of a baby.

The Russians entered marriage with the understanding that if they were not satisfied they could get "written off the records" without any trouble. To make the divorce easy to get, they avoided having any children to complicate the situation. For some years before the 1944 chante in marital laws, the party members and Komsomols gave as black a mark on the party record for divorce as they did for sexual promiscuity.

The Communists found by the trial and error method that the family must stand to preserve the nation. The changes in the marriage, divorce, and abortion laws were brought about mainly through the efforts of the women of Russia. The future of family life is still in the hands of women.

## CHAPTER IV

## RUSSIAN CHILDREN

In a poor nation the children are the greatest sufferers in times of famine or other trouble. Russia had her share of famine during the time of the Tzars, when bad crops left the population short of food, with no reserves to tide them over. Livestock was better cared for than the children. A peasant could always get more children if a few died but the loss of one cow reduced his income and the savings of years that had paid for her.

Boys were more highly prized than girls. The entire family rejoiced and celebrated if the newborn baby was a son, but a daughter was an added burden until she was fourteen or fifteen and could be married. Her birth brought joy only to the mother's heart; she was just a girl and so, unwelcome. Her father might be beaten by his friends after a daughter's birth. When she was five, it was her duty to mind her younger brothers and sisters as a nurse, even though her family were rich, and she received little food and poor lodging. A boy had no tasks until he was eight, then he watched the horses.

All children bathed and slept together from birth and

had little modesty. The girl was expected to retain her virginity until marriage, when she might become very promiscuous, boasting of her lovers. The little folks accompanied the women to work on the landowner's property and the younger they looked, the smaller pay they received. The maximum wages for a hard day's work of twelve to fourteen hours brought the women about thirty copecks, and the children were paid much less. They slept on straw but had no shelter or food. The girl's labor on her father's farm brought no returns except food but all the money she earned working elsewhere was her own and could not be taken from her. For this reason many of the girls began to leave the village for the factory work of the city after the dawn of the industrial revolution.

The birth rate in Russia in 1900 was thrice that of the United States, but mortality was also three times as great. Children were born close to each other but so terrible were living conditions that one out of three died before they were one year old. In the summer the mother worked in the fields, possibly far from the village. She must leave the baby of a few months at home alone on the dirt floor. If it became hungry, it had poltices of chewed bread tied on its hands and feet to get enough sustenance to last until the exhausted mother came home at night.

Populer education caused much controversy among the

leaders. Count Tolstoi wanted all the people of the country taught but others feared lest they might learn of the freedom in other countries and demand it for themselves. Though Conservatives and Liberals pretended to work together, their discussions were spirited and heated. All agreed that the people should be instructed but differed on the methods to be used. The Conservatives, advisers of Alexander III, realized that the state must do something to prevent the Liberals from doing it privately. They decided supervised training would insure state control, and set up schools not to save the people from ignorance, but as bulwarks against Liberalism.

These schools were to teach the children to be loyal to the church and to pay the Tzar the respect and gratitude due him. They were eminently religious and the development of intelligence was of little importance if they could praise God according to the church rites. The Liberals wanted to include a broader course of study, which would attract the children to Liberalism. They maintained that real learning was the beginning of progress.

Russia, not including Siberia, was divided into thirteen regions, each under an inspector, appointed by the Minister of Education. The Curator was the head of all the universities and schools in his district, and appointed their

headmasters. He might introduce new methods, even changing the whole system, with the consent of the Minister of Education.

There were 18,815 Zemstvo schools in 1903 under the direction of the Minister of Education.[1] His control was continually fought as he desired to hamper their educational work. They were organized in 1864 as county or district councils with the right of taxation. It was their aim to give everyone the opportunity to acquire knowledge and to provide medical services for the peasants. They planned to make instructors available to all parts of Russia, and in some parts of the Province of Moscow the school was brought to within three miles of every village.[2] But the project failed due to the animosity of the Government. They determined the length of each term of school and selected the teachers. The Zemstvo fixed and provided the salary of the faculty but each village provided a building. Pay varied from one hundred ninety-five rubles to four hundred and thirty with an average of two to three hundred. Priests were paid from thirty to sixty rubles annually to teach religion and were required if the headmaster did not have a theological education. The Zemstvo maintained a library and reading-room for the master.

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[1]A. S. Rappoport, Home Life in Russia, p. 140.

[2]Bernard Pares, History of Russia, p. 402.

In contrast to this, the village teacher provided by the state was poorly paid and led a miserable existence in bad surroundings. Living in one room, he could not afford a family. He was summarily discharged if suspected to be friendly with a revolutionary. He was often dismissed on the evidence of persons having some petty spite against him. If removed for such reasons, he could not get a post anywhere else because the inspector would never dare hire him. If a girl passed the examinations and received her certificate to teach, she began her work in the village schools and was in danger of seduction from the men.

Compulsory attendance was unknown but most places of learning had to refuse entrence to many for lack of room; some did not receive girls but where they were allowed, the boys were better behaved. Corporal punishment was condemned by the inspector and by most of the teachers. There was less difficulty with discipline in the villages than in town, as the relations between students and masters were better. Many schools had only one teacher to handle all the work but all offered four years of study. No awards or prizes were given for good scholarship but on completing the four-year course the child was given a certificate or a book, which was generally one of the four Gospels, to show that he had finished.

Count Dimitri Tolstoi, in 1872, founded town schools

offering six years of training to cover three classes. These were of service to the merchant and city classes and prepared pupils for technical institutions and were organized to counteract the work of the Zemstvo. The position of the teacher in the city was not much better than those in the villages except that they might be promoted to an inspectorship after twenty or twenty-five years of teaching.

The course of instruction consisted of reading, writing, the beginnings of grammar, the four rules of arithmetic, and Bible history. Most of the children could learn all the teachers had to give them in two years. The village priest supervised the program; the elder of the village acted as honorary Curator; and the landed proprietor paid the small wages of the teacher. The children were needed at home but their parents wanted them to learn to read, write, and do arithmetic.

There were many types of schools; some gymnasiums were for girls, others for boys. Some were operated for the use of the middle-class children and the courses offered were good. Forty private institutions offered the same course of study to both sexes. Private governesses were employed by some of the rich, although it was not a common practice as most of the wealthy families sent their children to the gymnasiums.

Russia had several girls' colleges, whose course

of study was usually confined to modern subjects with possibly some Greek and Latin. They offered Russian history, geography, natural history, elements of algebra, philosophy, and two or three living languages. However, by 1900, fine arts, medicine, and pedagogy were added in an effort to catch up with other European countries.

Life for the pupils and instructors was not much better in the universities than in the lower schools. The censorship of textbooks was very strict during the time of Nicholas I but the parts blotted out were taught by word of mouth so that young men studied about freedom and learned forbidden scientific knowledge, and Darwin's and Spencer's ideal philosophy, which horrified the clergy. Political and economic theories were discussed in spite of opposition. Lectures were given on Marxism. Professors of law were openly for constitutional reform. The universities had to contend with the clergy, the magistrates, and the newspapers, which were in the hands of the ruling classes and did their bidding. Many Liberals lost their positions and lives in the battle to give the pupils knowledge.

Students were falsely accused of despising learning, yet crowded the lecture rooms of talented professors. They listened attentively and their sharp, probing questions were frank and to the point, giving some indications of the future action of these pupils during the revolution of 1917.

They accepted the doctrines of Marx with fervor, willing to become martyrs to further social ideals. They were outspoken in demands for universal suffrage with equal rights and a secret ballot. Disturbances resulted in arrests and banishment of large groups of students to Siberia, but this only caused further agitation by those left behind. The intelligentzia and students joined hands with the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks but this union could not stand as the intelligentzia were too conservative. Younger scholars went with the radicals as they had learned too well the theories taught by their instructors.

The Civil War changed the standing of university professors and widened the rift between them and the radicals. Thousands were executed because of suspected disloyalty to Communism. Engineers and technical experts were needed at once in every field of industry. Doctors, nurses, lawyers, and educators were in demand by the thousands. "At the Revolution, the figures for illiteracy were in European Russia roughly seventy-five per cent and in Siberia eighty-five per cent; in Russian Central Asia literacy had practically to start from scratch."[3] Primary instruction had been given to many by the church but the state no longer allowed priests to teach, thus handicapping the battle against ignorance. So many of the intelligentsia escaped

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[3] Ibid., p. 491.

death to impart knowledge to young Bolsheviks.

Education of the masses was one aim of the new state and it began with birth. The Communists planned to set up state nurseries to care for infants from the time they were born until ready to go to school. Some Communists wanted all of them to be taken from their mothers and placed in the state nurseries soon after birth. They also advocated doing away with marriage and the home completely. This extreme view was not held by the majority of the leaders, but state nurseries were set up for the convenience of working mothers. The factories were required to furnish places to keep babies and many large apartment houses built nurseries. Lenin called for the release of mothers from the constant care of their progeny.

Children up to four years of age could be taken to Creches, nurseries. There were day and night nurseries where the mothers could leave their babies on the way to work, then pick them up on their way home. Others were set up to care for the children of women attending the universities and others for the use of mothers who were going out for the evening. Some were reported as special nurseries, which were operated during harvest time when every woman was needed in the fields. There were still others which operated twenty-four hours a day in railway stations and in the parks. The infant was brought by the mother and undressed, then

handed naked to the attendant, who bathed it and placed it in a crib or play-pen. The mother returned at stated intervals to feed the baby if it was breast-fed. Otherwise, the child received two light breakfasts, a dinner, and a tea. It was examined daily by a doctor who recorded weight and temperature, and it was given a blood test every year.

Nurseries were not only places for the mothers to leave their children but they also were schools where the youngsters were trained in good habits of mind and body and prevented from learning bad habits. The first years were formative and more could be done to guide them into Communistic thinking. They were divided into groups of ten according to age and were trained by the nurses, who taught them to do things for themselves. They put away their own clothes, played with pencils and crayons, poured water from one jar into another without spilling it, cleared the table after eating, and put away their toys. To stimulate cooperation, they helped each other dress and undress. They were taught how to cross a busy street in the city, and on the farm they learned to care for rabbits and chickens.

That was the theory of care for children held and supported by the Communists, but these beautiful nurseries were realities only for the really privileged classes of workers and Party officials. There were not enough of them for all and the poorer laborers could not afford to use them. Many of the pre-schools were bleak, primitive, and dirty.

In they village they were dilapidated, cold, unscreened, and filled with flies. They were used by two classes of people: the rich, and the very poor who were provided nurseries by the settlement houses.

Much the same procedure was followed in the kindergartens where the four- to eight-year-olds were left. They changed from street clothes when they arrived to prevent contagious diseases. They had close-cropped hair, their own glass, toothbrush, soap, and towel. There were many books for them to look at and for the teacher to read to them. Some were stories of children in other lands and some were fairy tales which were banned for a few years but were later permitted. They preferred narratives that dealt with work in the factories and on the farm but were encouraged to make up their own stories and games. They modeled animals from papier-mache and built tractors, planes, ships, and machinery out of tin cans, wood, and wire. But most important of all for the Party, they learned about Communism and studied the politics they saw about themselves. They found that the work of five children equaled that of one man.

The changes made in the social structure by the revolution extended to the schools. To help counteract the influence of the teachers inherited from the old regime, every institution was made self-governing. The children met and

drew up the rules which governed both pupils and teachers. They planned their own studies and to discover the most effective methods of instruction, they experimented with all kinds of innovations. They took the village street, the budget, agriculture, shop work, or some other phase of practical training as a class project and concentrated on it, leaving reading, writing, and arithmetic to be learned as incidental. Pupils worked stated hours in the fields and factories to get close to life and labor. They went on excursions to distant districts, paying their way by speeches, songs, and plays. The children were more social-minded than their fathers, freer of race prejudice, knew more about civics, economics, and politics. They could talk fluently and knowingly on Marxism, the evils of Capitalism, and the class struggle, but they could not spell correctly. They knew that New York was the center of the hated Capitalism but did not know where New York is located. The schools turned out good Marxists but poor engineers, who were needed so desperately in industry.

To remedy the situation, a series of decrees were passed which reformed the system. The authority of the teacher was restored which placed lesson planning back into his hands. History, geography, and mathematics became required subjects again. Definite lessons and work schedules were established and the pupil's progress was tested by marks

and examinations. The students were still allowed a voice in the affairs of the school by sitting with the teachers in council and helping enforce discipline. They continued the excursions, the new decree prescribing three visits to electric-stations, factories, and farms. Educators still held that the best way to learn about life was to participate in it. They upheld the theory of group solidarity and the responsibility of each for all. The best students coached the lagging ones to study harder to win a higher standing for the class. Greater stress was placed on technical knowledge than in the earlier days of the revolution.

The elementary and secondary divisions were called the Seven Year Schools and the Ten Year Schools. Children started when eight years old and began to learn the three R's just as Americans do at six years. They advanced into the study of geography, drawing, history, and physics. The primary aim of Russian education was to train workers but the state also wanted them to be directors, as it is the sole owner of industry. The child was trained to work in the mill or organize a collective farm, to be at the workbench one day and to be a Commissar the next day. These institutions were supposed to give a comprehensive education leading to a specialty, so handicraft and shop-work were given. The best talent in the fields of engineering, art, agronomy, electrical engineering, machinists, etc., came to

lecture, each on his specialty. One hundred eighty-nine different tribes of people inhabit Russia. Each speaks a different dialect or language. Languages were therefore stressed in school to draw all these peoples together. Every child must study at least one besides his own. For the minor nationalities the study of Russian was required to provide a common medium of communication. German, English, and French were learned in that order. As the physical and social well-being of Russian youth became more important, sports which had been discontinued after the revolution were re-introduced. At least one hot meal a day was provided free or for a nominal fee. Decrees prevented the pupils from being overworked with outside tasks. Teachers were not allowed to make assignments for vacation time. Homes were advised to set aside a study corner if they could not provide a study room. The active interest and co-operation of the parents was sought by having them sit in council on the problems of education.

Students, having completed the full time in the Ten Year School, were ready for the colleges. In many places the three upper grades of the Complete Secondary School were not offered but every district had three or four-year technicums where students could train in any field they wished. If they did not care for books or were anxious to get directly into active work, the training in the technicum

was sufficient. They could choose one of several courses: commerce, transportation, social economics, art, medicine, teaching, or agriculture. These studies prepared specialists such as typists, teachers, nurses, mechanics, agronomists, and draftsmen. The student spent three months in the classroom, then two months on a job getting practical experience, which required a year or more longer so that he could finish the study of theory. The embryonic architect had to do his apprenticeship in all phases of building. He learned to lay bricks, mix cement, acted as an assistant foreman, and worked in every branch of construction. The graduate of the technicum spent the first five years in the field instead of the office. Some students, in place of working in the field the first five years, went back to school for post-graduate work.

The young men and women who went directly to work instead of going to a technicum could begin to attend the Rabfac, the factory school, and get helpful training. If they showed outstanding ability, they were sent by their union to universities on a scholarship. The pride of each factory was its school. The worker was under the supervision of the foreman one day but attended class the next, while those in class the previous day labored. These students produced more finished articles than the common employee. They competed with those in other factories, and

the winners of the contest were given a holiday tour around the country.

Besides the great number of technicums, there were colleges specializing in the humanities, history, languages, and arts. The famous Russian universities trained professors, scientists, and research workers. In nearly all the social sciences were stressed. There were Party schools for those wishing to specialize in politics and public work, where they studied the problems of Socialist society.

The university students were perhaps the best example of Communism in Russia. There were "mass quarters" for men and women. Old hotels or nobles' houses became living quarters and each room held many inmates. A narrow bunk stood in each corner with a small table for study. There was a bookshelf; nails on the wall for extra clothes with a curtain to protect them from dust; a chest of drawers for food and other possessions; a suitcase or two for each person in which to keep underwear and letters; and on the walls pictures of Lenin, Stalin, and Buhnov, Commissar of Education. A man or girl slept on each bunk except when a married couple used one bed and lived in a room with ohher students. The last to leave each morning had to clean the room. The noon meal was furnished by the college or hotel canteen and generally consisted of cabbage soup and black bread. Most of the students prepared their own breakfast

and supper in their rooms. They had tea, black bread, herrings, and apples. If they had the ingredients to make soup, they prepared quantities sufficiently large to last for several meals. Food was never private property and everyone in the room shared whatever was available; even those in other rooms came in for something good, which is true Communism.

Russian children, as those everywhere, liked to play and when winter came with its ice and snow, were out skating and tobogganing. This was the time of year that yielded the most pleasure in play, and the streets were filled with playing children. All managed to get skates in spite of shortages. The snow fell and packed to a firmness that permitted skating in the streets, in the yards, and in the city parks. Sleds came shooting down a sloping street and pedestrians had to look to their own safety. But in the spring and summer there were fewer children in the streets because nearly all the houses had big yards where they could play. "Every house stands in its own grounds. Even where the front is flush with a main street you will find inside the big courtyards and extensive back yards."[4]

The revolution took its toll of the lives and health of children. The Civil War made thousands of orphans among the families of the aristocrats, nobles, and bourgeoisie.

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[4]A. Wicksteed, My Russian Neighbors, p. 137.

Their ranks were increased by children abandoned by parents who did not want them and by those who had no fathers. These roamed the streets and lived by stealing, begging, and rummaging in garbage cans. They sold on the black market cigarettes which had been issued by the government. Their clothes were the dirtiest of rags and always too large. A coat served as complete covering for some, and they died by the hundreds.

Travelers in Russia tell of numerous incidents where they say these orphans or "wild children." They slept in dark doorways in the coldest weather or traveled about on the trains from town to town, out of sight until the train started moving, then they swarmed out of their hiding places and climbed aboard like locusts. The trainmen were helpless to prevent them from staying because if they were pushed off one car they got on another. When the train pulled into a station these children jumped off and swarmed all over the town begging and stealing food, and were the dread of the townspeople. They were feared because they bit those who refused to help and many were syphilitic and could pass on the disease with a bite. So they traveled about until they found a city or village that suited their fancy, where they settled for awhile. A well-dressed foreigner might expect to be accosted by small beggars many times.

> . . . "Uncle," I heard a boy's voice, "give us a ten-kopeck piece for a loaf of bread."
>
> He was a street waif, I had not heard him approach. He seemed to have shot out of the earth,

> and, even as he finished speaking, several other waifs dashed over to his side, all boys, barefoot, ragged, faces smirched with soot as if they had come out of a chimney. They explained that they had just arrived in the city on a freight-train and were fearfully hungry. I invited them to follow me, and together we walked about in search of one of those woman pedlars in Moscow who sit out until the early hours of dawn selling sandwiches, rolls and hard-boiled eggs. In the doorway of an old building we found such a woman fast asleep over her basket. I bought all her rolls and eggs; the waifs pounced on the food with delightful avidity. As their spirits mounted, they grew chummy and talkative. They had never before been in Moscow or in any other city. They were from different villages on the Volga, orphans all, and after weeks of wandering afoot, on boats and in freight-trains they had at last reached Moscow in the hope that some Soviet organization would put them into a home. They seemed not at all worried over their rags, their desolation, their aloneness in the world. They were good-humored peasant children.[5]

To care for these wild children the government built institutions, combining a school, a farm, a factory, and houses. Captured like any wild animal and brought to these centers, they were given food, clothing, and a bed. They hated confinement, so it was a job requiring much patience to tame them. Accustomed to running in hunting packs in the cities, they snatched purses from women, waylaid and overpowered men, sometimes beating them fearfully. Such a child would have to be retrained mentally before a normal life could be expected of him. They numbered hundreds of thousands, mostly boys who took to the vagabond life more readily. When girls had taken to that kind oflife, they were easier to capture and tame.

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[5]Maurice Hindus, Humanity Uprooted, pp. 21-22.

The Soviets did not permit corporal punishment even in the institutions where they were taming the wild. Even parents were not to impose their authority over their own progeny by punishment. Any adult caught striking a minor, even to fend off the wild ones, was liable to be hauled into court and reprimanded severely, if not fined for such contemptible behavior. Many children reported their parents to the authorities for punishing them or for disloyal remarks about the government, which might result in deportation to Siberia. This left its mark on the character of Russian youth which should be showing in the generation now coming into power, who are now in their thirties and forties.

Youths were encouraged to believe that they were the source of power for the Communist revolution and on them fell the duty to make Communism successful. Three age groups were organized to act as training units, and to be the eyes and ears of the Party. They were (1) Comsomols, (2) Pioneers, and (3) Octobrists. They considered it their duty to keep their elders up to standard.

The Comsomol, or Communist Youth League, was the school for recruits to the Communist party. It was the strongest support of the regime, numbering about five million members, ranging from fifteen to thirty years old. They were organized into more than two hundred thousand cells in factories, on farms, and in the universities. The league resembled the

Communist party in structure and by-laws but did not have the strict admission regulations of the Party. Anyone could join the Comsomols, regardless of class origin, if recommended by another member as to character and loyalty. Members were expelled for drunkenness, rowdyism, race-prejudice, love of luxury, inactiveness, or a masculine attitude toward women. Later, finding an influx of hostile elements from the intelligentsia were joining, the Comsomols set up a grade "B" class and required new members to go through a probation period of eighteen months before they could become full-fledged members. There were usually at least a hundred thousand candidates waiting in this category.

The Comsomols were founded in 1918 and did not grow rapidly the first year.

> At the first Congress no more than 22,000 were represented, at the second, 96,000; in May 1920 the Association possessed 320,000 members, and when the Third Congress met in the autumn of 1920 the number was 480,000, of which 60,000 were provided by the districts of the Ukraine and the Ural, which were occupied by Red troops.[6]

During the first Party purge, its membership was cut in half so that by 1922 its rolls contained only two hundred forty-seven thousand. There was a rapid expansion after the purges and by January, 1925, there were one million, one hundred and forty thousand members.

> The Komsomol continued to grow rapidly during the second decade of the Soviet regime, and overtook the party. Already in 1928 it had 2,070,000 members; in

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[6]Klaus Mehnert, Youth in Soviet Russia, p. 59.

> 1930 the membership rose to about 2,500,000; and in 1933 it mounted to 4,000,000. Like the party, the Komsomol halted its expansion at this point for several years. . . . The growth of the Komsomol continued at an increased tempo. By 1939 the membership had reached 9,000,000; in 1940 it was 10,000,000; on the eve of the war in 1941 it was about 12,000,000. . . . At the end of 1943 the membership had reached 17,500,000. Whole sections of the new army-recruits as well as more seasoned soldiers . . . were incorporated in the organization. On one occasion, the celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary (October 29, 1943), the Komsomol addressed a greeting to the Central Committee of the Communist Party signed by 17,320,000 men and women.[7]

The Comsomols were the "shock-brigades" during the early years of the first Five-Year Plan. They were the scourge of the Kulaks, foremost in the drive for collective farming, and the leaders in the new methods of farming. They were to be found working on every construction front, wherever there was a crisis, regardless of danger, hardship, or hunger. One thousand volunteered to work in the gold mines of Siberia during Russia's desperate drive to acquire capital to import modern industrial machinery necessitated by the first Five-Year Plan (1928-1932). One thousand five hundred Comsomols volunteered to man the stations along the new seaway through the Arctic; seven thousand, to build the tractor plant near Stalingrad; and thirty-six thousand, to get coal out of the mines and into the furnaces. In every great task they were to be found: digging the subway in Moscow; putting up the steel mills in the Ural mountains; building the new hydroelectric centers in Siberia; and

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[7]D. J. Dallin, The Real Soviet Russia, pp. 233-235.

erecting the new city, Comsomol-on-the-Amur, on the Pacific coast.

The reception of a shock-brigade of Comsomols in a factory was often far from friendly because their methods to spur greater production were not very considerate of the workers or officials. They dragged everyting out into the open and printed in their papers everything that they felt should be exposed. The factories were always short of tools and raw materials and living conditions were desperately bad. The passive resistance of the workers to the methods of the Comsomols wore them down until brigades that marched into a factory singing songs of joy and victory, marched out again shedding tears of despair.

The organization, although founded on a democratic basis, demanded blind obedience from its members. Each group elected its executive committee, who in turn selected the secretaries to direct the activities and affairs of the unit, but these officials must be confirmed by higher authorities. Stalin and the politbureau appointed the Secretary of the Central Committee of Comsomols. This appointee approved the choice of the region and the district official, who in turn approved the village secretary. Actually all control was in the hands of Stalin.

In 1936 Stalin tried an experiment on the Comsomols, which, if successful, would be tried elsewhere. He ordered

them to admit intellectuals to their organization, just as they already accepted government officials and their families and even children of Kulaks and former Capitalists. With this order they complied.

Younger than the Comsomols were the Pioneers, who were ten to sixteen years old, enrolling by the mid-thirties about six million boys and girls and eight or nine million at the outbreak of World War II. They were divided into brigades of fifty members, each composed of "links" of ten. The brigade was usually attached to a Comsomol unit to which its leader belonged. The Pioneers were open to all classes but centered around the factories and collective farms. New members underwent a probationary period during which they were instructed how to be good members. They then made the following solemn promise:

> "I, a Young Pioneer of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in the presence of my comrades, solemnly promise that I shall stand steadfastly for the cause of the working class in its struggle for the liberation of the workers and peasants of the whole world; I shall honestly and constantly carry out the precepts of Ilich [Lenin], and the laws and customs of the Young Pioneers."
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> The Five Laws: The Pinneer is faithful to the cause of the working class and to the precepts of Ilich. The Pioneer is the younger brother and helper of the Comsomol and the Communist. The Pioneer organizes other children and joins them in their life. The Pioneer is a comrade to other Pioneers, and to the workers' and peasants' children of the whole world. The Pioneer strives for knowledge. Knowledge and understanding are the great forces in the struggle for the cause of the workers.

> The Five Customs: The Pioneer protects his own health and that of others. He is tolerant and cheerful. He rises early in the morning and does his setting-up exercises. The Pioneer economizes his own time and that of others. He does his task quickly and promptly. The Pioneer is industrious and persevering, knows how to work collectively under any conditions, and finds a way out in all circumstances. The Pioneer is saving of the people's property, is careful with his books and clothes and the equipment of the workshop. The Pioneer does not swear, smoke, or drink.[8]

The Communists demonstrated on all occasions to keep the revolutionary ardor high. To aid in impressing the children, they permitted the use of emblems such as the red flag badge with sickle and hammer and a campfire with three logs symbolizing the Third International. No other organization might use these badges and emblems. The Pioneer saluted with the open hand raised above the forehead to show that above his own interests he placed the working class of the five Continents of the world symbolized by the five fingers of his hand. The children paraded through the streets in precise military formation with much bugle blowing; the boys dressed in gray or khaki, like the Boy Scouts in other countries, with red handkerchiefs around their heads and carrying little red flags. When the column was called to "mark time" they did so with vigor, constantly shouting their slogan: Vsegda gotov! "Always ready!" Much like the Boy Scout motto: "Be prepared!

At school the Pioneer sought to excel in his lessons;

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[8]A. R. Williams, The Soviets, pp. 76-77.

also in maintaining order, in celebrations, and in editing the "wall-newspaper." At home he favored fresh air and opposed vodka or other liquor, objected to his father beating his mother or the smaller children, or fought flies, bedbugs, and cockroaches. He extended extermination to the crop-destroying pests, both insects and rodents, with the goal of killing at least five rats and ten mice every year. He collected bones for fertilizer; paper for newsprint; and scrap-iron for tractor building; he was a missionary for the Communists in and out of the home, trying to persuade the wild gangs to go to the children's colonies. At the brigade meetings he reported all that he had done and was advised on his future activities.

The children were trained at the most impressionable age and it was here that the Communists sought to make atheists of them all. The one requirement before joining the Pioneers was that each should qualify as an atheist.

> The members of a Pioneer club in Moscow wrote: "We, the young godless ones, are waging active war against our religious parents." And the pupils of an elementary school sent this note: "We understand what it means to be Pioneers. They are the chaps who believe in neither God nor devil, and do not wear crosses. . . . We would like to join them."[9]

The third and youngest youth organization was the "Octobrists," enlisting eight to ten-year-olds. They were similar to the Pioneers in all respects except age, and

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[9]L. Lawton, The Russian Revolution, p. 246.

numbered about four million at the beginning of World War II. The kindergartens were preparatory schools for the Octobrists.

Andrew Smith, in I Was a Soviet Worker, wrote that it was a common sight in the poorer workers' section of Moscow to see swarms of boys and girls going into the squalid, government-owned saloons to eat the remnants of food left on the tables and empty the dregs of the glasses which had been used to drink kvass, a drink made of fermented black bread and vodka. They filled the streets, wandered about completely intoxicated and remained as numerous as ever in spite of government efforts to wipe them out. One might try to steal a ride on the street cars and, when thrown off, be struck by speeding autos, but no one stopped to see whether the child was hurt. They had no morals and no one was surprised to see even young girls have children.[10] Such conditions impelled the authorities to attempt changing conditions for children.

New nurseries, schools, and institutions were built as rapidly as possible but never fast enough to keep up to the level of the demands. The Communists then changed their policy and demanded that parents assume responsibility for their own children. The law required both father and mother to support their offspring until they were eighteen, provide

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[10]Andrew Smith, I Was a Soviet Worker, pp. 112-113.

for their health and education, and train them in the spirit and interests of the workers' state. If the parents did not wish to keep their children, a third party might have them and only by a court order could they be compelled to return them, and the welfare of the children dictated final disposition. This made a noticeable improvement in the looks of children. The young people twenty to twenty-five years old were small and thin, their skin sallow, their chests flat and backs hollow. They were the generation that suffered malnutrition, disease, exposure, and abuse during the famine of 1921. Another group ten to fifteen years old showed the effects of the famine of 1932-1933. Food during their formative years was so scarce that the effects would always mark their bodies. Children born in the mid-thirties and later were in better health with sturdy bodies, clear skin, and bright eyes.

The educational system changed during World War II. 1943 and 1944 military training became universal beginning with boys in the fifth grade. They took pre-military training, technical or professional courses in agriculture, industry, or science. The girls enrolled in courses on housekeeping, cooking, sewing, and the care of children. The old Tzarist system of grading students was restored, and gold and silver medals were awarded for high scholarship. Students were given entrance examinations and were graduated from school. An important forerunner of the 1943-

1944 changes in curriculum which replaced the old Bolshevik concept that history began with the 1917 Revolution was the resumption of the teaching of the "humanities" and history, both Russian and foreign.

In 1946 the refusal of Kiril Alexeiev, acting commercial attache of the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, and his family to return to Russia made newspaper headlines. His wife wrote of the reasons they sought to stay in the United States. Even though both husband and wife belonged to a privileged group of technical specialists and earned five or ten times as much as the skilled employees under them, they were so overworked and so wretchedly poor that the life of a typical American family looked luxurious by contrast. There was no limit to the extra hours a skilled laborer was required to donate to the state. They could not condemn their son and daughter to the fate of youth under the Soviet regime, where they might be sent to work at forced labor at any moment. The Kremlin found that juvenile depravity interfered with industrial production and paid a bonus for each new child to obtain larger families, as did Hitler and Mussolini. But the new generation of children was still taught to despise moral codes and religious ideals. They continued to spy on their elders and to have contempt for their parents. The twelve-year-old children were made subject to the death penalty for political crimes and few

in Russia were shocked. The Alexeievs' apartment in Russia consisted of one room ten by thirteen feet, occupied by five people. There was never enough food after lining up at the neighborhood store at six o'clock every morning to get the few vegetables and the bit of bread that were available. Tea and dry bread were the menu for breakfast. There was neither milk nor eggs for the young. During the illness of one of the Alexeievs' children, a specialist was required, with his exorbitant fees, instead of the overworked and incompetent government physicians. He advised against sending the child to a hospital, because their filthy condition might aggravate her illness. The specialist wrote a prescription which could be filled only at the Kremlin hospital pharmacy reserved for upper officialdom.[11]

No toys were available. The boys and girls played "prison" and "liquidation," making use of the tragic distresses around them for entertainment. The Soviet Government in 1940 put into effect a system of child exploitation. Under the guise of a labor-training program the authorities instituted an annual "mobilization" of children from thirteen years old and up. Millions of boys and girls were torn from their homes and apprenticed as miners or factory hands. Their wishes for the future were not consulted. These children were literally made slaves, they were placed in barracks under rigid discipline, and given food unfit to

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[11]Nina I. Alexeiev, "I Didn't Want My Children to Grow Up in Soviet Russia," Reader's Digest, L (June, 1947), 11-12.

eat. They operated machines in munition factories or tractors on the collectives. Their black uniforms were dirty and torn, few of them had shoes, and all looked drawn and sick. But even worse than the physical handicaps was the mental servitude that every Russian child had to conform with to be a good citizen. They had to put their minds into a straight jacket, had their best instincts distorted and their emotions crippled to fit the needs of an all-powerful state.[12]

From the evidence of reliable witnesses, it may be safely assumed that Russia has never been a good place in which to raise normal, healthy, and happy children. The revolution made conditions worse for them and Stalin's regime has not improved conditions after nearly twenty-five years of experimentation.

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[12] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

## CHAPTER V

## RUSSIAN HOUSING

Under the Tzars the Russian village housed over ninety per cent of the population. Foreigners visiting Russia were seldom allowed to wander among the rural population to see conditions or houses for fear they would talk to the peasants about the situation in other countries and make them more restless than usual. The urbanite was not even permitted, for the same reason, to go to a village for any length of time.

The villages in Little Russia were built on well-chosen sites, close to a river and mostly on the summit of a hill. The houses were scattered over the pasture lands, and cattle, ducks, and fowls roamed about freely. There were no streets. The church building and cemetery were in the midst of the town. There were giant winged windmills over high well tops. The man who owned no well got water from his neighbor and occasionally gave a coin in payment. It was surrounded by small farms, with strips of black soil ready for seeds, fields of golden wheat, or green pasture. Gardens were filled with melons and sunflowers, an important food.

The houses were built of earth and thatched with fresh

straw. A well-thatched roof did not leak when the rains beat upon it and the house was cool in the summer and warm in the winter as the straw served to insulate against the changes in temperature. Cleanliness was born in the Little Russian, but not in other provinces. The houses, in the gardens, were always clean and white since the walls were white-washed often. The windows were bright with pinks, roses, and many-colored poppies. There were no trees around the village or in the surrounding steppes. The black land of southern Russia was supposed to have been wooded at one time but the nomads preferred prairies and destroyed the forests. However, it may well have been the scant rainfall which caused the land to be bare since it rains only about twenty-four days in the year. Building lumber was therefore scarce.

The peasant of Great Russia did not build durable stone homes. The well-to-do had one-story houses, whose gables were decorated with wood carving. Inside, and near the front was the isba, or living room, which was not always clean or comfortable. Wooden benches built around the walls served as beds. Elsewhere a bedstead might be found for the father and mother. At the entrance there were icons, pictures of saints, whose faces were black with age and stains until they could no longer be recognized, since they were heirlooms, held in high honor. Even in poor homes a small lamp was kept burning day and night before them. The

tableware was kept in a cupboard, which completed the furniture in the room. Chairs were rare.

The winters in Russia were long and cold and all people suffered severely. When the peasant had been out, he came into the house, pulled off his shoes and stretched out along a bench beside the stove, where it was comfortably warm. When the fire was first built, the door or a window was opened to let out the smoke. As this cleared, the door was shut and the room became very warm. The peasant dressed as warmly as possible and never took his clothes off indoors. He covered the house from top to the ground to keep out the bitter cold and in unusually severe weather, brought his cattle into the <u>isba</u> to protect them. They, in turn, helped keep the living room warm at night when the fire sank. The room smelled strongly of animals, smoke, cooking food, and drying clothes. For those unaccustomed to living under such circumstances it was difficult to breathe in such a hut, which was small (about twelve feet square), with a door so low that a man must stoop to go through it. The floor was of earth, and the ceiling so low that a tall man could not stand upright. Tiny windows let in very little light but too much draft and cold. Besides, the whole building was made of thin wood through which the cold penetrated. Such houses were typical of Greater Russia, whose peasants made up nine-tenths of the population.

The stove was the most important item in the peasant's house because there were six months of snow and cold. It occupied a quarter of the room, furnished heat, cooked the food, baked the bread, and boiled the dirty clothes; all the members of the family bathed by it in turns, and most of the family slept on top of it all winter. The peasants burned everything in the stove before spring -- wood, straw, dung, and sometimes even the roof beams. It was torture to stay in the room when the stove was being lit on account of the smoke, which burned the eyes all winter and caused much blindness. There was no chimney and the smoke went up into the roof where some escaped through the thatch or holes in the wall, and when the family could no longer stand the smoke, the door was opened. Chimneys were introduced, but the peasants preferred the old-style stove without a vent because it let out some of the heat. When the stove was hot, there still were frost crystals in the corners of the room and if the fire died down the house became deadly cold.

In the summer the peasant wife kept her house scrupulously clean and tidy. There was a cold corridor between the <u>isba</u> and the room in which food and clothing were kept. This was used as a living room in the warm season and life was more pleasant than in the winter-room. The cooking was done outside when the mild weather permitted. Several families might use the same shed. In the rear was the cellar.

The stables behind the house were usually of wood but the cracks between boards were so large that the wind and rain blew through leaving puddles of water on the floor. The barn did not always stand in the yard, although sometimes it was built nearby. The toilet was usually attached to the living quarters and if the peasant could afford it, the entire courtyard was surrounded by a high wooden fence. Few raised flowers since there was no market for them. In the garden were vegetables, with a clump of sunflowers in a corner to furnish seed to be roasted and eaten as a delicacy. A quick-set hedge surrounded the garden, but no trees or shrubs broke the monotony; not even fruit trees. The houses faced each other across the wide street to prevent the spread of fires. Sidewalks for pedestrians did not exist. Deep snows in the winter alternated with mud or dust in the summer.

To the Russian, a bathroom (however primitive) was a necessity. During the winter months he poured water on hot plates or rocks to fill the room with steam and, to hasten perspiration, the bather beat himself with birch sticks. When the skin was red and the blood warmed, he ran outside and threw himself in the snow. Many families improvised by crawling into the oven of the great stove, taking a bucket of water to rinse off. Each member of the family, on Saturdays or before holidays, waited his turn to get into the

oven, where he sat bent over until the perspiration flowed, then he jumped out and put on clean clothes. Some stayed too long and died before others took them out.

The peasants were superstitious and believed in spirits and fairies in spite of the teachings of religion. They feared to antagonize one of the house fairies who lived with them, the domovoi; no harm should be done them, and as twilight fell it was wise not to mention them. If an evil one took a dislike to some member of the family, the spirit wandered about the attic at night, waking the children, seizing people by the throats, and generally making life miserable. If they were fortunate in getting a good one that loved the master of the house and his children, he would feed and care for the horses, protect the daughter of the house and find suitors for her, and bring prosperity.

The landed proprietor had two houses, one in the capital, the other on his estate. Living during the summer at his country place, which was almost as comfortable as that of most Europeans, he exercised close supervision of all farming operations. His chateau, unlike the castles and manors of the aristocratic English, was a one-story building with big lofty rooms, comfortable with Russian-made furniture. One of the many bedrooms was set aside for guests. Since hotels were scarce, travelers stayed with the landed

proprietor and slept on a sofa if all the bedrooms were filled. The windows were double to keep out the cold but one set could be removed during the summer. The stove was a big one like that in the peasant hut but differed in construction. A stove, built between two rooms, reached to the ceiling and was faced with ornamental tile of various colors. At the small door near the floor wood, straw, and other fuel were pushed in and a chimney carried off the smoke. The tiles became so hot that they could burn the bare hand and the steve retained its heat for many hours. The landed proprietor lived much more comfortably than his peasant neighbor.

The Moldavian peasant inhabiting Bessarabia built his house of clay, straw, and horse dung. When a new house was needed, all the relatives were invited to a feast where some performed the national dance, <u>djogue</u>, to strains of soft music, while others began to build. A bench ran along the outside of the carefully plastered walls and the roof was thatched with straw or rushes. Only the well-to-do had a chimney; the poorer people just left a hole in the roof over the hearth.

These peasants were cleaner than those of Great Russia. Everything in the house was polished and shining. An altar in the corner of the room faced the east and was decorated with real or artificial flowers and hung with silk or cotton drapes. A blessed loaf of bread and candles were placed

on a table under the images and wheat straw was arranged in the form of a cross. The beam running across the ceiling of the room was hung with apples, small yellow gourds, and bunches of grapes (in season). Bouquets of bluebells were popular and the girls dried and powdered them on their dresses when they were going to a celebration. A large soft divan ran along one wall covered with hand-made tapestries and at the back were cushions of red or green. A table with two or three padded chairs completed the furniture.

The housing in the large Russian cities was, if possible, worse than that of the peasant's hut.

> The census of 1890 in St. Petersburg showed 7,374 underground cellars housing 49,669 persons. An additional 3,499 garrets served for another 21,804 persons. In these quarters people lived on an average of four to the room. Only 48 per cent of the lodgings in the city had separate kitchens and 14 per cent were kitchens only. Less than half had sanitary conveniences. A study in 1897 reported that in many workmen's lodgings less than 86 cubic feet of air space was available per person, that is, a space approximately 3 x 4 x 7 feet. Cellars were particularly unsuited to human habitation in St. Petersburg also, because of the frequent inundations from the Neva River; St. Petersburg was built upon a swamp.
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> Living quarters in Moscow were reported as even worse, in some ways, than those in St. Petersburg. An investigation in 1898 reported by the Moscow City Council covering 16,478 lodgings in one of the poor quarters in Moscow showed 180,919 persons, 17 per cent of the population of the city, living under shocking conditions. "The details are almost incredible. The stairs which lead down to the dens which the people inhabit are covered with all kinds of filth, the dens themselves are almost filled with dirty boards, upon which there is equally foul bedding, and in the corners there is only dirt. The smell is close and heavy. There is hardly any light,

> because the dens are half underground and the little light obtains entrance through the dirty windows. Beneath the windows it is absolutely dark; the walls are damp and covered with mold."[1]

Workers received about thirty to fifty cents a day and many could not afford to rent. The sanitary and hygienic conditions of the Russian factory were horrible. A few (and this was the exception rather than the rule) had dormitories where men, women, and children slept side by side on wooden benches in sultry, crowded barracks, or in cellars without windows. Most had no dormitories and the poorer paid toilers labored twelve to fourteen hours a day and slept on a bench or table beside their task at night, with some rags for pillows. This even happened in shops where dyes or chemicals were used that injured the workman's health.

These wage-earners, living at some distance, had quarters almost as poor as those sleeping in the shops. They built small yellow houses in a vacant field to get away from the crowded areas but soon others had joined them until the narrow streets became filled with dust, mud, or rubbish and their condition was as unhealthy as before.

The homes of the bourgeoisie were much better than those of the workers. They were built around a courtyard where the poultry roamed. In the cellar were supplies of food. The living rooms were large and furnished comfortably with chairs,

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[1]Kingsbury and Fairchild, Factory, Family and Woman in the Soviet Union, pp. 10-11.

and divans. The bourgeoisie left the city during the summer if possible and if they could not afford a country house, built small huts in the neighboring forests. The wealthy built country villas with every convenience for summer living.

The factories tried to solve the housing shortage by building barracks near the shop. These might be rent-free and furnished living quarters in addition to the wages. Some of the best housed two or three families in one room, others had great rooms where several families lived together with no privacy. Lighting and ventilation were bad, sanitary provisions were completely inadequate, and the furnishings were meager. Children slept on rags in a corner and adults sometimes had to take turns sleeping in vermin-infested beds or on bare boards. The cost of living more than doubled between 1914 and 1916, and during the war there was little building. This made living conditions more oppressive for the women who remained at home.

The Civil War in 1917 destroyed, possibly, twenty-five per cent of the houses. There was little new construction, or even repair, following the revolution. Many of the cellars and tenements were torn down or used for other purposes by the Soviet authorities. All this was offset in part by opening the big houses of the nobles and wealthier bourgeoisie. The workers were given preference over the former

higher classes and more than a half million in Moscow moved from their tenements into fine houses.

The migration from the country to the city continued in increasing numbers as factories grew, but this only increased the housing shortage. How to remedy the situation became a controversial issue among the Communists. Some favored building cities for a population of fifty or sixty thousand people, in exceptional cases as high as two hundred thousand people, including three- or four-story buildings capable of housing four to eight hundred citizens in each. These socialist cities would be divided into three parts: the industrial, the cultural, and the living centers. Each adult would be entitled to a separate room but each house would furnish communal rooms for recreation, study, sports, lectures, eating, laundry, and other activities. Other Communists favored building all new factories at some distance from the cities so that all employees could live near their work, thus relieving overcrowding in the cities. This group also favored communal laundries and kitchens to free the women. With both sexes employed in the factories, the size of the new cities would be about half that of cities where only men worked.

These ideas on the housing problem got no further than the theory stage. The Communists issued decrees making all buildings, houses, tenements, and furniture property of the

state, but they were not fully carried out; instead, changes were to be made at the discretion of local authorities. In Moscow and Leningrad all houses were confiscated with revolutionary ardor. The terrified owners made no protests. This was easy to do, but management of the houses was quite another ticklish problem. Hence, complete chaos prevailed. How could new tenants be found? The question has not yet been answered. So great was the disorder in the beginning that departments of the Government were powerless to use the newly acquired houses. They could not even find out exactly how many they owned. Rents were abolished, so that no money was available to keep property in repair, and deterioration followed swiftly. The tenants did what they could to keep a roof over their heads but little of their meager wages could be so spent.

Sanitation, light, and water were supplied free of charge, but in many places the light and sanitation services ceased altogether and water service became unreliable. Pipes burst during the winter and could not be repaired for lack of plumbers and materials. The basements were flooded with water, which rotted the foundations. A fuel famine developed and the woodwork of houses was torn off, even complete buildings demolished, to provide fuel. There was an orgy of destruction because no one could stop it. Committees of tenants, who were responsible for the management of the

houses, were powerless. The authorities criticized the committees, accusing them of falling under the moral corruption of their bourgeois neighbors. But nothing happened for all initiative was paralyzed with the abolition of private ownership. The Communist State came into existence for the purpose of controlling and distributing wealth but it did not even control housing.

No one was entitled to living space unless licensed by some authority and proletarians were given preference which meant living in the fine bourgeoisie homes. The working-class tenants entered their new homes in a resentful mood against the wealthy and in spite of their swagger they did not feel at ease. The owners were hostile and were living in adjoining rooms. The laborers could not realize that the furniture they had seized was really theirs. Most of them did not know how to care for it, and spitefulness led others to indulge in senseless destruction. The fear of eviction at any moment also caused failure to care for the property. Men sprawled on divans with muddy boots, or chopped wood on the polished floors until the ceiling below them fell. Women put dirty, black pans on tables covered with fine linens. The toilers did not know how to care for fine homes even if they had had the inclination.

The state proved to be one of the chief instruments of destruction. It created numerous government departments

which required housing and a continuous shuffling of accommodations went on. Often a department in leaving one building for another carried the fittings and even the doors with it. The Soviets had a mania for collecting statistics but after hundreds of attempts to discover the amount of destruction, they abandoned the task for lack of money and competent officials. So much paper was wasted in these vain attempts at registration that the supply ran short. Thousands of houses were in ruins; thousands had been completely destroyed; and the proprietors fled from thousands more, leaving them without caretakers. The Soviets proved themselves inefficient in ownership. During the early period of Communism, the management of houses was entrusted to communes of workers but they were unable to exercise their powers. They issued thousands of decrees without results and the few little repairs made were the result of spontaneous efforts by the committees of tenants. The State was powerless to come to their aid.

At last the Soviets realized their failure to handle the houses properly, but they were reluctant to abandon the experiment completely, and no one wanted to own the ruined property. The State issued decrees which returned small houses; owners could lease them for not more than twelve years if their charges were legal. If the building contained more than eight rooms, ten per cent of the habitable

area must be at the disposal of the authorities. The right to buy and sell them was restored at the same time. Families living in the old mansions might become owners by paying for them. They bought only the building, not the land on which it stood. Payments were based on the group income and distributed over a period of years, the purchasers being responsible for the upkeep. The new policy was not highly successful because in Moscow and Leningrad only about twenty-five per cent of the property was freed. Tenants, fearing eviction, made only superficial repairs. This, too, proved a failure.

The next experiment was co-operative building. This was of two types: house-building and tenants. The first included workmen, employees, and other citizens. They were allowed credit for building purposes from the State which was to be repaid within sixty years. One per cent interest was charged and did not begin for three years. The property did not really belong to the builders even after payment, the government retaining actual ownership. Loans were also made to house building units by the factories and trade unions, or were obtained from the Fund for the Improvement of the Workmen's Living Conditions (FUBR). Under this program workmen were required to contribute ten per cent of the cost of the building from their own funds, while the employees (not manual laborers) were required to furnish twenty per cent of the cost of the building. Citizens wishing to build

could obtain loans, but they must invest fifty per cent of their own money, pay six per cent interest, and repay the mortgage within ten years. They were repaid in the form of rent because experience had taught the Bolsheviks that only thus could buildings be maintained. The building co-operatives charged higher rates than did the tenants, because it must cover interest, amortization, repairs, and payment in full. The tenant co-operatives were a group who bought the old house they were living in and the monthly fee was lower as it did not cover fully the amortization, repairs, and administrative costs. Old houses then fell into disrepair unless the government gave special assistance. An increase of twenty-five per cent was required of new houses which prevented their deterioration. This experiment was slightly more successful than the communal housing plan.

The cost of apartments was regulated upon a class basis and was charged according to the space occupied by the tenant. The unit was one square sagen (forty-nine square feet). The workmen paid the least and the bourgeoisie the most, but in addition the latter were taxed ten rubles (five dollars) per square sagen. This was devoted to building new houses for the working classes. In some instances the highest amount paid was one hundred times in excess of the lowest. Rents were repeatedly raised and it was recognized that they ought to defray the cost of management and repair,

but so low were the wages paid to workers that they were never able to pay enough. The revolution was supposed to be for the special benefit of the workers, but they suffered most from the housing catastrophe. The purpose of Communism was to end inequalities but as has always been the case, the man with money could get anything. Speculators and men of means got the best accommodations while the workers lived in poorer quarters. These bourgeoisie even managed to get into the special communal houses set apart for the toilers attached to State factories; until, in some instances, half of the tenants were merchants. Those in control preferred bourgeoisie tenants because more rent could be charged and the houses could be kept repaired with money left over for the committee of management.

In 1924 the Government decreed that elections must be held to select committees of tenants to keep the houses repaired and the rent collected. General meetings of tenants were called and were forced to accept a Bolshevik as the presiding officer. Two lists of candidates for the committees were submitted, one of the non-proletarian tenants and the other of the Communist party members and its proletarian adherents in the house. The president excluded all who belonged to the exploiting class, and if they protested, referred them to a higher court which delayed a decision so that they could not vote. Meanwhile the election proceeded and Communists were chosen for the posts, although even the

thinning of the ranks of the bourgeoisie did not always insure victory for the Party. The executive officer then called for a vote on the Bolshevik list of delegates, ignoring the bourgeois candidates, and if the majority decided against the Communists, the president disputed the majority and declared the Party's list elected. Protests followed and second and third meetings were held in the same manner. At last, in compromise, a delegation representing both sides was chosen to settle the matter but the Communists demanded a representation of five members out of seven. The negotiations of course broke down and the president announced that the original list of delegates was elected as the House Committee. Thus, as far as the tenants were concerned, the Bolshevik-owned housing was also a failure.

Accommodations became steadily worse the first decade following the Revolution while the population in the industrial centers increased. Many people found themselves in worse conditions than before the Civil War. The effect upon health was appalling. Whole families were confined to one room and even rented space to strangers to help pay the cost of living. Rooms were often damp, dark, and depressing. The poor were driven into the cellars. Here they washed and tried their clothes. A change in underwear was made once in every few weeks and sometimes once every few months.

In an effort to correct such abuses the government passed the Housing Laws of 1926.

> . . . Several regulations reveal the principles followed thereafter:
>
> (1) Compulsory transfer or crowding of citizens is prohibited.
>
> (2) Scientific workers are permitted to retain the right to "spread over" any rooms that might become free.
>
> (3) Exchange of rooms for "obviously speculative purpose" may be refused; also if the person moving in belongs to the "non-working population."
>
> (4) Any person, no matter of what status, who has lived in a house over two years, may occupy living area that may become vacant.
>
> (5) Proper area, so defined, for housing quarters, does not include rooms without natural light, kitchens, corridors, halls, lobbies, service quarters, protruding walls and stoves or other immovable heating equipments.
>
> (6) Height above 3.5 meters is not included in the cubic space allowed.
>
> (7) Housing area that has been vacated, but not assigned by the municipal housing bureaus within two weeks, may be populated by the house management.[2]

There were differences in opinion about conditions after 1929. Susan Kingsbury, a friendly critic, maintained that the Communists had made great strides in housing.[3] But Andrew Smith's experiences as recorded in I Was a Soviet Worker showed that standards were very low. Under the first Five-Year Plan (1928-1932) the factories must provide adequate housing for their workers. The Dynamo factory devoted twenty per cent of its surplus to building under the Moscow Building Corporation. The Amo factory, in 1930, claimed it had attained the standard of one person per room and five or six square meters per person (fifty-five to sixty-five square feet), at an expense of three hundred thousand rubles,

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[2] Ibid., pp. 206-207.

[3] Ibid., p. 200.

thus providing for eight hundred families. The Red Rosa Mill had furnished three-room apartments for three hundred and fifty families at a cost of five hundred and fifty thousand rubles. However, the State judged housing by three rules; the number of persons per room, the average floor space, and the minimum height. The law required an average of one room per person, a minimum of three meters in height. The government was not able to attain this requirement, due to the rapid growth of the urban population.

Andrew Smith on his first visit to Russia reported that each worker received as much room as his family needed, with not more than one or two persons to each room, all clean and neat. On his second trip, however, he discovered that these so-called workers' homes were actually used by higher officials in the factories. The following descriptions are of homes he visited:

> Kuznetzov lived with about 550 others, men and women, in a wooden structure about 800 feet long and 15 feet wide. The room contained approximately 500 narrow beds, covered with mattresses filled with straw or dried leaves. There were no pillows, or blankets. Coats and other garments were being utilized for covering. Some of the residents had no beds and slept on the floor or in wooden boxes. In some cases beds were used by one shift during the day and by others at night. There were no screens or walls to give any privacy to the occupants of the barracks. There were no closets or wardrobes, because each one owned only the clothing on his back.
>
> In the center aisle, which was about three feet wide, there was a row of kerosene stoves, on which men and women were heating kipiatok (boiled water), which they drank without sugar or milk, eating along with it a piece of sour black bread. There were no other heating facilities. The men and women sat upon

> their beds as they ate this, which was their supper, their knees touching the adjoining bed as they did so. There were no tables. . . . I could not stay in the barracks very long. I could not stand the stench of kerosene and unwashed bodies. The only washing facility was a pump outside. The toilet was a rickety, unheated shanty, without seats. I could not feel comfortable when I saw the bedbugs and lice crawling about. The atmosphere was one of sadness and misery unbroken. No song or laughter could be heard. I left as quickly as I could. I was told that 11,000 Elektrozavod workers lived in such barracks.[4]
>
> Some time later I visited Vassiliev, a Russian machinist, who was in the fifth category and lived in what is known as a General House on the Izmaelov. This was a four-story brick structure about three years old, but of slipshod construction. In this building lived about 150 families, divided up into groups of 15 families with one room each. The group of 15 families used one kitchen and one toilet, at which there was always a long line waiting.
>
> In the kitchens was a coal and wood stove made of brick, which was not used because it was inconvenient. The tenants used chiefly kerosene or primus (wood alcohol) stoves. With a dozen of the latter in full blast, there was a roar like that of a huge furnace, in which no conversation could be heard. These stoves were also the only means of heating. Vassiliev heated some tea (chopped, dried vegetable leaves) and we had black bread with it. His wife apologized profusely because that was all she could offer me. . . . Vassiliev and his wife lived in a room about twenty or twenty-five feet square. There were six beds in the room to accommodate the couple and four other tenants who lived in the room. The furniture was very scanty, including a few chairs, a table and a chiffonier. For want of space a number of coats and dresses hung on the walls. They had no radio or pictures.[5]

In the apartment of an administrative official he found conditions were much different from those of the workers:

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[4]Andrew Smith, I Was a Soviet Worker, pp. 47-48.

[5]Ibid., pp. 48-49.

> I was led into a gorgeous seven-room apartment equipped with its own kitchen and individual bathroom, with elevator service, telephones, steam heat, hot and cold water. My host lived there with his wife and two maid servants. The couple had no children. The apartment consisted of a salon, or sitting-room, a dining-room, two master bedrooms and one bedroom for the two servants, an office or workroom for the master of the house, a room for card playing and dancing and a summer porch. The apartment was sumptuously furnished with thickly upholstered chairs, soft couches and expensive antiques. Scattered throughout the suite were small, hand-carved tables covered with beautifully colored mosaics made of rare Ural stone. The parquet floors and the walls were covered with thick, hand-woven Oriental rugs. In odd corners one could see rich knickknacks consisting of jewel boxes made of seashells, vases, hand-carved ash trays and Oriental bric-a-brac. From the ceiling in each room hung a heavy crystal chandelier. These were supplemented by more modern floor lamps, with cut glass and silk shades. The couple possessed a radio of Russian manufacture and a German phonograph. On the floors of the master bedrooms were thick white bearskins. Rich Russian hand-made draperies hung about the walls to complete the picture. It was the most luxurious apartment I had ever seen, richer even than the apartment of the wealthy business man in Pittsburgh for whom my wife had worked as a cook.[6]

The laborers were amazed when they found the room allowed the foreign workers:

> "How many of you live here?" Peter asked as he entered the apartment. "Just my husband and I," I answered.
>
> "Two people for such a big room!" exclaimed Peter in amazement. "You foreigners have it good. My father died in the Revolution and what do we have? We live sixty in one room like this. They tell us that under the Czar the Russian people lived in the same room with cattle. But the pigs, the cows and the chickens were healthy, at least. Now we have to live with all kinds of diseased people. Some have syphilis, some have tuberculosis. All are covered

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[6] Ibid., p. 50.

> with lice and dirt and we have to live packed in one room, use the same toilet and all breathe the same foul air. The pigs lived much better than we do now!"[7]

Thus Smith was completely disillusioned.

The Bolsheviks built Sanatoria and Rest Houses for men, women, and children. They were in the Crimea, the Caucasus, along the Volga, in the suburbs of Moscow and of Leningrad, and in the Ural mountains. Some of these Rest Homes had been the palaces of the Old Regime but were not devoted to the workers and peasants for their vacations, or to convalesce from illness. These homes were maintained in all their former splendor for the edification of the poor tenants. Eighty per cent of the beds were reserved for the workers. Other authorities stressed the fact, from personal knowledge, that these Rest Homes were filled with high officials, their wives or sweethearts, and very few workers, who were mistreated and denied favors readily granted to the officials. Communism failed to achieve its stated aim of everything for the proletariat, nothing for the bourgeoisie in Sanatoria and Rest Homes.

The revolution was a relief for the cramped peasants because many of them left for the cities, leaving fewer crowded into the huts. During the Civil War, the peasants entered the great forests, cut logs and built houses by the hundreds of thousands. Getting as many logs as possible,

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[7] Ibid., p. 54.

they erected bigger and better houses with more window space. The unsquared logs dovetailed at the ends and were caulked with moss and mud. The roof was thatched with straw, with which all were familiar. The walls were banked with earth to keep out the wind and frost. The windows were doubled.

In 1928, Stalin began his first Five-Year Plan, in which he planned to collectivize farming. One goal was the building of barracks and homes for the peasants. First, however, barns and sheds had to be built to care for the cattle, grain, and machines. Houses could wait since population was no problem, but machines and cattle were scarce. Gradually the efforts of the Communists were rewarded in the collectives where first the barracks were tried unsuccessfully and replaced by small houses with a garden and a cow for each peasant family. The izbas were replaced by new fireproof buildings of concrete, roofed with tile or slate and sided with peat slabs. New farming towns rose all over Russia, though slowly as materials were scarce. There are still many homes of the old type left in the villages.

By 1937, many houses were being turned out by a huge combine on the Volga, which made them complete from door-sill to roof-beams in sections so that they could be assembled rapidly on their sites. However, these houses, like

most others, were bleak and bare inside, as not much was spent for decoration. The Russians had few rocking chairs, and chairs, tables, and cupboards were built strictly for use rather than artistry. Fine, easy mattresses were practically unheard of in the country, but the people had learned to sleep anywhere on anything. Many of the new apartments were equipped with dumb-waiters, gas rings, electric irons, tea-pots, and toasters, which are often broken and out of order for the same reason the machines in the factories break down. The Russians were not familiar with machines and modern appliances and did not take the proper care of them or tore them up to see how they operated. They questioned everything. Instructions said the toilet would not dispose of newspapers and garbage; they experimented to see whether that was true with a resulting stoppage of sewer lines. Newcomers in the country complained that the lavatories could be smelled for thirty or forty feet but old-timers remembered when they could be smelled for that many hundred feet and were pleased with the progress. Time is required to train a backward people in the use of modern living equipment.

All the hard-won progress in housing during the latter years of the 1930's was destroyed by the war. Shortages were greatly aggravated in the cities by the four years of conflict, and the mass movement of refugees. The average

apartment house in Moscow was a shocking sight, according to the observations of George Moorad.[8] Broken windows were boarded up or stuffed with paper and rags. There was seldom any heat and the lights were restricted to a few hours at night. Toilet facilities were unspeakable. The war caused the destruction of about thirty per cent of the houses which crowded the people into single rooms again as in the years following the revolution. Rooms or parts of a room were sublet to tenants at a rate set by the local Soviet but a tenant moving in made a cash payment, which had no legal sanction. This might vary from eight thousand to twenty thousand rubles for a room sixteen by twenty feet.

A long-range building plan has been put under way in new Five-Year Plans. Twenty-five millinn homes are needed at once, but the authorities hope to have them in ten years. Every effort is being made to give the people small houses for single families instead of the huge apartment houses built during earlier experiments. These are easier to make than a large apartment house. However, housing has been regionalized. Brick is preferred where clay is abundant; log houses in the forested areas; and stone houses near quarries. Building has been slow because of the shortages in every branch of construction. Two years after the German surrender, the majority of Stalingrad's population of three hundred thousand were still living in cellars and dug-outs along

the river banks. The Red October steel plant had eased the shortage somewhat with new bungalows and flats for about six hundred families. The Soviets have again failed to carry plans to a successful conclusion. The Red Star of Russia is climbing higher into the sky, but it has not climbed rapidly nor far from the horizon.

## CONCLUSION

The Communist experiment, which started with extreme plans of government by all the people, failed to allow them a voice in the running of their country. The worker who was to have ruled is still exploited. The country is virtually in the hands of a dictator, and is capitalistic in that the mass is exploited for the benefit of the few. However, some modifications have given more liberty and freedom to the people. The next ten years should be sufficient to prove whether Russia will continue under the present regime or will throw off the shackles of slavery.

Communism has failed in almost every experiment made by the Bolsheviks, but life for the people has improved greatly over older standards. Yet Russia has far to go to attain the civilization of more advanced parts of the world.

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