Women of Soviet Society 1918-1938

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In October 1917, the Bolsheviks' seizure of power created a new radical government, which led to the Civil War (1918-1921) and the brutal execution of the Romanov family. This new radical socialist government under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin (1917-1924) visualized a future of mass industrialization and gender equality, transforming the Soviet Union from a poor, backward, rural society to a modern, egalitarian, socialist society. One way of achieving this vision was through the emancipation of women, an essential element for building a socialist society. In 1918, the Bolsheviks passed the Family Code, a series of policies that gave equal rights to men and women in decisions about the family, marriage, the right to divorce, and for women to have access to an abortion. To free women up from the home, daycare centers, dining rooms, and laundry services were provided along with free education to help women become skilled laborers. However, with the economic crisis of the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks faced challenges in putting their policies into effect, and shortly after Lenin died in 1924, began a new era of an oppressive government under the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin (1924-1953).

At the top of Stalin's agenda was the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932), a program of rapid industrialization and collectivization. The goal with this plan was to radically transform the rural countryside of independent farmers into one of large-scale socialist farming through the sharing of land, animals, work equipment, and labor. Stalin argued that collectivization was essential for a fast-growing industrial society. However, due to unforeseeable events, the regime, like its predecessors, faced challenges in meeting its goals. There was the devastating famine brought on by the harsh winters of 1932 and 1933 and the resistance movement against collectivization. Between 1918 and 1938, many women of Soviet society struggled with the regime's policies.

This essay examines important studies of gender in the Russian Soviet State, focusing on three main areas: the negative impact of the regime's policies on urban and rural women, the disruption of rural women's way of life through the closure of churches and markets, and the use of young women as political propaganda tools in the drive to collectivization. The secondary scholarly sources used provide access to archival sources such as newspapers, journals, and visual imagery that would have been otherwise difficult for earlier researchers to obtain. Historians such as Wendy Goldman and Anne Gorsuch explain the negative impact the Bolsheviks' policies had on urban and rural women; Victoria Bonnell provides valuable information on the regime's use of young, attractive, energetic, hard-working women as a political tool in their drive to collectivization; historians Mary Buckley and Sheila Fitzpatrick provide insightful information on how collectivization impacted the peasants' way of life and their resistance and survival during the regime's collectivization campaign from 1929 to 1935 and life after collectivization (1935-1941).

The Negative Impact of the Regime's Policies on Urban and Rural Women.

With the passing of the Family Code in 1918, the Bolsheviks promised women the freedom to enter the public sphere, freeing them up from their motherly and wifely duties and giving them access to free education to become skilled laborers.[1] In her 1999 E-book, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin*, Victoria Bonnell noted one influential poster of the early 1920s (Figure 2.10) titled "Chto dala oktiabr'skai revoliutsiia rabotnitse i krest'ianke" (What the October Revolution Gave the Woman Worker and the Peasant Women) that highlighted the Bolsheviks' vision of mass mobilization of women into the workforce.[2]

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[1] Wendy Z. Goldman, *The State & Revolution: Soviet Family Policy & Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3.

[2] Quoted in Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* Vol. 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 95.

Figure 2.10. "Chto dala oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia rabotnitse i krest'ianke" (What the October Revolution Gave the Woman Worker and the Peasant Woman), 1920

This political poster emphasized the Bolsheviks' promises made during the early utopian phase. The peasant woman is pointing to the future, one of mass industrialization, and is willing to leave the past behind, as shown by the sickle by her left foot, a symbol of the past.[3] In this image, she is wearing a blacksmith's apron and has a hammer in her hand, an indication of gender equality in the workforce, and her right-hand gestures toward a group of buildings labeled "maternity home," "library," and "women workers' club," a reminder to its audience that this is a result of the 1918 October Revolution.[4] However, the passing of the Family Code in 1918 harmed urban and rural women, particularly relating to its policy on divorce.

[3] Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* Vol. 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 75.

[4] Quoted in Bonnell, 75.

To the Bolsheviks, divorce was essential for individual freedom by freeing up men and women from loveless unions; it would also free women from the shackles of the patriarchy and the confined spaces of their homes.[5] Furthermore, women did not have rights to property that had been acquired through their husband's wages, even though they had been living together as husband and wife.[6] For many women with children, this was devastating as they relied on the security of their marriage, and if divorced a woman was only "entitled to six months" of alimony payments.[7] After 1918, it was noted that many women sought alimony through the courts from their ex-husbands, and by 1925, many single women sought alimony from their ex-partners.[8] From a rural society's perspective, the Family Code—which was based on individualism—conflicted with the Land Code, which stipulated that all household members be "independent of sex or age."[9]

In rural society, the male was the head of a multigenerational household and made the final decisions. Furthermore, a household that consisted of many sons had a better chance of prospering in a society that relied on agricultural production for its survival.[10] However, many young men embraced the new policy as their newfound freedom, contradicting the older generation that viewed the Family Code as a license to promiscuity and damaging to their household's income.[11] When it came to collecting one's alimony, some women often found it held back because for many households a divorce was a threat to their economic way of life. For example, for a household, losing land as a payout in alimony would result in a reduction in the household's income.[12] Goldman quoted a male peasant who in the early 1920s claimed that for a woman with a plot of

[5] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 101.
[6] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 195.
[7] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 101 and 133.
[8] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 133-134.
[9] Quoted in Goldman, 152.
[10] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 146-147.
[11] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 171.
[12] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 172-173.

land, it was "always unploughed because they do not have the strength."[13] Moreover, a divorced peasant woman cast out from her husband's household life was difficult; a woman on her own was easily taken advantage of by others in the commune. For example, the encroachment of land was common, but because of her illiteracy, it was difficult to file a complaint or a lawsuit.[14] Furthermore, if a woman out of desperation returned to her parents' household, they did not welcome her with open arms, as they viewed her position as one of shame.[15]

From 1914 to 1921, there were unpredictable events that hindered the Bolsheviks' policies from going into effect: World War I (1914-1918), the Civil War (1918-1920), and a devastating famine in 1921. Millions of people perished in these events, either killed in battle or died from starvation, the cold, or deadly diseases such as typhus and scarlet fever.[16] All of these events combined only set the precedent for widespread discontent amongst the peasants. In 1920, the regime also faced discontented peasants who rebelled against the state policy on grain requisitioning that was required to feed the entire army and factory workers, thus creating a severe shortage of food throughout Russia.

In March 1921, at the Tenth Congress, the Bolsheviks implemented the New Economic Policy (NEP) to help combat the economic crisis.[17] In her 1996 article from the Slavic Review, *A Woman is Not a Man: The Culture of Gender and Generation in Soviet Russia, 1921-1928,* Anne Gorsuch argued that due to the NEP's lack of funding, major cutbacks were made for single-mother homes and childcare centers, forcing many to close; for the available daycare centers, sanitary conditions were questionable, and many women were hesitant to use them. Towards the end of the

[13] Quoted in Goldman, 177.
[14] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 177.
[15] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 172-173.
[16] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 60.
[17] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 71.

Civil War, many community dining rooms were forced to shut their doors, but for those that remained open the quality of food was poor, and they were overcrowded with factory workers.[18] Additionally, there were severe cutbacks on the funding for the children's homes where many were forced to close, and those that managed to stay open were severely overcrowded, forcing many children to become homeless.[19] With these changes across all industries, many women struggled financially: thousands lost their jobs, and many were left illiterate and unskilled. Furthermore, after the Civil War, men returned from the front line and reclaimed their old jobs, pushing women into lower-paying, unskilled positions or unemployment.[20] Many women who struggled to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table for their children resorted to prostitution.[21] However, from the mid-1920s, the Family Code was disputed as it was recognized it was incapable of working in a country that remained so backward and poor.[22]

Although the Family Code was revised and came into effect in 1927, it failed to prevent the divorce rate from skyrocketing, which negatively impacted women. Authorities called this a "sexual anarchy" where men married a woman just for sexual pleasure, which led to a public outcry for a crackdown on men's irresponsible behavior.[23] During the late 1920s to the early 1930s, the courts were swamped with a series of women's complaints, of which 65% sued their husbands for child support.[24]

Assault on Rural Women's Way of Life: Closure of Churches and Markets.

[18] Anne E. Gorsuch, "'A Woman Is Not a Man': The Culture of Gender and Generation in Soviet Russia, 1921-1928," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 3 (1996): 655.
[19] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 73.
[20] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 110.
[21] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 118-119.
[22] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 253.
[23] Quoted from Goldman, 253.
[24] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 327.

In her 1996 book, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance,* Viola Lynne argued that during the late 1920s with collectivization at the top of Stalin's agenda, the Soviet Union witnessed the closure of churches as the regime saw them as the breeding ground for anti-collectivization sentiment delivered through the priests' ceremony.[25] In late 1929, party cadres were sent out to the countryside to oversee the closure of churches and priests were arrested and church bells removed.[26] The removal of the church bells in villages throughout rural regions set off a public outcry from peasant women. For example, Viola quoted one peasant woman saying, "Look, Matrena, yesterday your husband joined the collective farm and today they took our icons, what is this communism, what is this collectivization?"[27] To the rural women peasants, the church was not just a place of worship, but also a place that was iconic to their traditional way of life; major events, such as baptisms, marriages, and death ceremonies, took place in the church, and it brought villagers together in times of urgency.[28] Roughly 80% of churches were closed, church bells "melted down for the industrial drive…" and the buildings used by the regime for "socialist clubs and reading huts."[29]

Also during this period was the closure of the peasants' markets to stop them from selling their agricultural products, which was seen as an assault on their livelihood. For example, there were the craftsmen, owners of shops, the millers, the traders, and those with strong voices to stand up against collectivization.[30] In her 2006 book, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants: Heroines and Heroes of Stalin's Fields,* Mary Buckley argued that at a time when there was a high demand for agricultural production to feed the cities and towns, "emergency measures" were put in place to

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[25] Lynne Viola. *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 39.
[26] Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin,* 39.
[27] Quoted in Viola, 39.
[28] Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin,* 39.
[29] Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin,* 40-42.
[30] Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin,* 41.

tackle the insufficient amount of grain being sold by the peasants to the state.[31] Furthermore, the state had set the price of grain too low, and many peasants had turned to the "black market" to sell their grain at a higher price.[32] In her 1994 book, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance & Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization*, Sheila Fitzpatrick argued that within the first months of 1928 and 1929, roadblocks were set up and markets closed by the "procurements brigades and local authorities," and properties were searched for grain.[33] Hoarding grain was a "political crime" and the accused were arrested, their grain confiscated along with their "horses, threshing machines and other property." Villagers also came under scrutiny; for example, entrances to the villages were blocked off so no one could come in or out, and every house was searched in the village.[34] Those found hoarding their grain were arrested and forced to spend several days in a freezing barn and around the villages. Demonstrations were organized with the waving of "black flags and slogans" that stated, "Death to the village of Griaznoe," "Boycott this village," and "Entrance and exit forbidden."[35] Buckley argued that the regime's campaign for collectivization was so aggressive that one could only describe it as going from a "crusade" to a "state of siege."[36]

In November 1929, collectivization was approved by the Central Committee, which requested "25,000 urban workers" to go out into the countryside to promote collectivization. Along with these workers were agents that consisted of students, workers, party members, the Komsomol, etc.; however, these agents, in their efforts to promote collectivization, often used aggressive tactics in getting peasants to register for collectivization by threatening them with dekulakization,

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[31] Mary E.A. Buckley. *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants: Heroines and Heroes of Stalin's Fields* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006),18.

[32] Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants*, 18.

[33] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance & Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 38.

[34] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 38.

[35] Quoted in Fitzpatrick, 39.

[36] Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants*, 18-19.

a campaign to politically oppress kulaks and their families.[37] Peasants were given a day's notice to collectivize, and some officials used frightening tactics to persuade the peasants: "collectivizers" went from house to house with a brass band and called the peasants out onto the street. If they agreed to join the kolkhoz, the orchestra played a lively flourish; if they refused, the conductor waved his baton, and the brass instruments frightened the undecided independent peasant (*edinolichnik*) with the "Funeral March."[38] From these events, prosperous peasants found themselves ostracized by others out of fear of being associated with a kulak. Furthermore, poor peasants collaborated with the local officials to weed out the offenders and were rewarded with "a percentage of what was confiscated."[39] Just like in 1918, poor peasants spied on kulaks and reported them to the local authorities for grain hoarding and were rewarded. These events significantly disrupted rural women's traditional way of life, and those who opposed collectivization were stripped of their livelihoods and faced deportation.

Women as Political Propaganda Tools.

In 1929, collectivization was launched, and for the regime to win over the rural population of independent farmers to their collectivized program, they turned to young attractive hardworking women as their political tool to persuade the masses. The 1930s witnessed the use of the young female form on collectivization posters, one that was no longer representative of socialist idealism but of a new aggressive order under the totalitarian rule of Stalin. One notable collectivization 1930s poster was by Vera Korableva (Figure 3.3), which is titled "Idi, tovarishch, k nam v kolkhoz!" (Come, Comrade, Join Us in the Collective Farm!).[40]

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[37] Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants*, 18-19.
[38] Quoted in Fitzpatrick, 52.
[39] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 41.
[40] Poster in Bonnell, 126.

Figure 3.3. Vera Korableva, "Idi, tovarishch, k nam v kolkhoz!" (Come, Comrade, Join Us in the Collective Farm!), 1930

Korableva's poster depicts a scene of young, attractive male and female farm workers; viewers are automatically drawn to the woman calling out to her fellow countrymen to come join their cause. According to Bonnell, 40,000 copies of this poster were printed in numerous distinct languages.[41] However, other collectivization posters highlighted the regime's anti-religious, anti-kulak, and anti-drunk sentiments. For example, another influential 1930s poster (Figure 3.5) is titled, "Krest'ianka, idi v kolkhoz!" (Peasant Women, Join the Collective Farm!).[42]

[41] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 102.
[42] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 128.

Figure 3.5. "Krest'ianka, idi v kolkhoz!" (Peasant Woman, Join the Collective Farm!), 1930

In the collectivization poster above, one is drawn to the large looming image of a young peasant woman with a defiant look on her face as she resists the smaller-than-life figures of a priest, a drunk, and a kulak tugging at her skirt; she is bravely fighting off the regime's enemies who stand in its way from progressing further into the future of large scale socialist farming and rapid industrialization. Furthermore, her hand points to the future of technological advancement. In the foreground, we see a harvester, a tractor in the field, and in the far-off distance an industrialist city that remind the audience of the regime's drive for an industrialized socialist nation.[43]

The collectivization posters of the 1930s focused on images of peasant women in rural settings, no longer linked to the baba of the past—ignorant, stupid, and greedy—but one of youthfulness, presented as Stalin's rural heroes: hard-working, strong, competitive, and willing to

[43] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 103-104.

be a *kolkhoznitsa*, a collective farm worker.[44] Furthermore, these posters rarely showed peasant women engaging with their children, as most of the focus was placed on "production, not reproduction."[45] Bonnell argued that many of these collectivization posters were intended for the "urban and working-class audience" who viewed them with visual images of attractive young smiling peasant women giving the illusion of their willingness to embrace the collective farm way of life.[46] This was a contradiction in itself, for what was happening in the countryside was an assault on the peasants' traditional way of life and the unwillingness of many to join the collectivization system. For example, Viola argued that the forced closure of the peasants' markets, shops, mills, and land society put an end to their economic independence, making them more reliant on the state.[47]

From 1928 to 1932, millions of peasants left the countryside, leaving behind their independent farm holdings; some feared being associated with a kulak, but many left the countryside and migrated to the cities and towns to earn wages for a better lifestyle. In 1930 alone, 2.5 million peasants abandoned their villages, and in 1931, the number almost doubled. Consequently, the population in cities and towns across the USSR exploded.[48] More men than women left, and it was the "young, strong, and energetic"; some were husbands and other sons leaving behind their families lessened the possibility of "leaders of armed uprising." For some peasants, leaving the countryside was voluntary, taking advantage of the job opportunities in the rapidly expanding industrialization of towns created by the First Five-Year Plan. Many of those who remained in the countryside felt demoralized having to give up their independent holdings

[44] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 81-82, 101-102.
[45] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 105.
[46] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 112.
[47] Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin*, 40.
[48] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 80.

and become part of the collective farm system; for them, "the good life" only existed in the towns and cities.[49] For example, Fitzpatrick quoted one man saying, "the clever ones left the collective farms long ago; all that remain are the fools."[50] Among those who stayed, some resisted passively, while others turned to violent means in defiance of the regime's collectivized program. Some people turned to killing their animals rather than letting the state get its hands on them. Buckley quoted an example from Mikhail Sholokhov's book, *Virgin Soil Upturned*: "Kill, it's not ours now!"; "Kill they'll take it for the meat collection tax if you don't"; "Kill, for you won't taste meant in the collective farm."[51] Furthermore, some collectivization posters highlighted the regime's concern about the massive slaughtering of animals. For example, the 1930 poster (Figure 3.4) by Nikolai Terpsikhorov, "Idi v kolkhoz" (Go and Join the Collective Farm), was created to stop the slaughtering of animals.[52]

Figure 3.4. Nikolai Terpsikhorov, "Idi v kolkhoz" (Go and Join the Collective Farm), 1930

[49] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 81.
[50] Quoted in Fitzpatrick, 82.
[51] Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants*, 21.
[52] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 127.

In Terpsikhorov's poster, the center of attention is the larger-than-life young peasant woman staring out at her audience in defiance as she leads a cow and a horse to safety away from the farm.[53] In the lower right corner, viewers are drawn to a male farmer falling backward with a knife falling from his hand, giving one the sense that he had just slaughtered some animals, and in the opposite corner, many cows are held up in their stalls.[54]

Though these collectivization posters used the image of young, energetic women to promote collectivization, the reality of the lives of such women was one of resistance against collectivization with many refusing to take part.[55] Rural women blatantly refused to be part of the collective farm system where their animals would be shared that would otherwise have been under their supervision.[56] Some women participated in the burning down of houses and farm buildings and the destruction of farm equipment. Rumors were rampant that collective farms would mean communal ownership of their children and their husbands. Moreover, peasant women who participated in this resistance were labeled by the regime as "bab'I bunty," which highlighted the regime's sentiment that these peasant women were stupid and ignorant for getting caught up in these unjustifiable protests."[57]

For rural society, both parents and their children recognized that education was key, a way out of the countryside and easy access to the passport system. In the early 1930s, the younger generation took advantage of the "six-week" training courses for operating machines, driving tractors, and accountancy.[58] Those who joined the military forces received a free education and trained as technicians. Many of these young people preferred a good-paying job in the industrialist

[53] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 127.
[54] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 103.
[55] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 107.
[56] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 108.
[57] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 109.
[58] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 99-100.

towns and cities, where there was a high demand for "machine operators" rather than collective farmers.[59]

As the First Five-Year Plan ended, the country suffered a devastating famine, which led to the death of millions of people in the countryside.[60] Especially the largest producing grain regions, where thousands of emaciated peasants fled to the towns in search of food, the countryside was hit with famine brought on by the harsh winters of 1932 to 1933. From immigration of previous years, towns and cities had become overcrowded, and with the latest influx of immigrants, local officials could not handle it; they were concerned with the collapse of their food and ration system and went so far as to stem the flow of outsiders coming in. Furthermore, new laws were passed to stem the flow of peasants abandoning their collective farms; for example, there was a law that mandated peasants to work on the farm during the "spring sowing season."[61] From the early to mid-1930s, the regime's push for mass production of agricultural goods witnessed an explosion of young, energetic, hardworking women only too eager to commit themselves to exceeding their target goals in the production of agricultural produce.

Towards the end of 1935, the Stakhanovism movement of young women became Stalin's rural heroes and highlighted the regime's campaign for mass production of agricultural goods.[62] One notable poster is the 1935 poster by Iurii Tsishevskii (Figure 3.12), titled "Shire riady stakhanovtsev sotsialisticheski polei!" (Expand the Ranks of the Stakhanovites of the Socialist Fields!).[63]

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[59] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 99-100.
[60] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 109.
[61] Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, 92.
[62] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 120.
[63] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 135.

Figure 3.12. Iurii Tsishevskii, "Shire riady stakhanovtsev sotsialisticheskikh polei!" (Expand the Ranks of the Stakhanovites of the Socialist Fields!), 1935

The woman in Tsishevskii's poster is Mariia Demchenko, a Stakhanovite *kolkhoznitsa* who had written a letter to Stalin and pledged to him she was going to exceed her goal in the harvesting of her beetroots. The post depicts the large, looming form of Mariia holding out her hand and gesturing towards Stalin, who is engrossed in her letter. In the right-hand corner is a group of young Stakhanovites, eager to follow in Mariia's footsteps. The poster is designed to convey that collective farmer women like Mariia would not have accomplishments without Stalin's help.[64]

In the mid-1930s the regime also focused its attention on the reinforcement of a woman's capabilities in restoring the traditional family. For example, in 1936, a decree was issued by the Soviet Central Executive Committee (TsIK) and Sovnarkom that made abortions illegal.[65] A woman caught having an abortion would be fined, and the person performing the abortion would go to prison. Moreover, the regime passed a new law offering women an incentive to have children instead of abortions; for example, new mothers were compensated, and the more children they had, they received bonuses.[66] For many women, this incentive did not deter them from seeking

[64] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 120.
[65] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 291.
[66] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 291.

abortion illegally; as for many, the notion of reverting to the old traditional practices of a patriarchal peasant society in the rearing of many children was not an attractive option. The decline in the birthrate in 1938 highlighted that the demand for illegal abortion was high.[67]

Conclusion

This essay provided valuable information regarding the lives of women in Soviet society as they struggled with the state's policies under the leadership of both Lenin (1918-1924), who led a quest for a future of mass industrialization and gender equality, and Stalin (1924-1953) in his aggressive drive toward collectivization and rapid industrialization. This essay has highlighted the negative impact the regime's policies had on urban and rural women, the assault on rural women's way of life with the closure of churches and markets, and the regime's use of young women as a political propaganda tool in their drive to collectivization. These women represented a society that, first under the Bolsheviks' rule and later under Stalin's dictatorship, learned to navigate an environment that was constantly changing. Many women of Soviet society struggled with the regime's policies throughout the 1920s and early 1930s; however, by the late 1930s, many did gain their much-awaited emancipation and independence freeing them up from the old traditional practices of a patriarchal peasant society.

[67] Goldman, *The State & Revolution*, 293 and 295.