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*Dedicated to my father, mother
and sister for their unconditional love and support*

Abstract

Die Revolution der Bolschewiki war ohne Frage der wichtigste Moment im Kampf um die Emanzipation der Frauen in der sowjetischen Geschichte. Diese Arbeit wird die wichtigsten bolschewikischen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgesetze innerhalb des marxistischen Grundrahmens auswerten und zugleich die historischen Hintergründe berücksichtigen, um herauszufinden wie erfolgreich die Russische Sowjetrepublik, und darauffolgend die Union der sowjet-sozialistischen Republiken, im Hinblick auf die Emanzipation der Frauen war.

Rechtlich gesehen etablierte das sowjet-russische Familiengesetz von 1918 die sowjetischen Frauen als die am meisten emanzipierten Frauen der Welt. Jedoch scheiterte es an der Umsetzung jener Vorhaben und an der Abwendung unerwünschter Effekte auf Frauen. Die Neue Wirtschaftspolitik, zwischen 1922 und 1928 implementiert, schaffte es nicht die Arbeitslosenzahlen der Frauen zu korrigieren und stärkte gar die Geschlechtersegregation in der Industrie. Der nachfolgende 5-Jahresplan minderte die Arbeitslosigkeit zwar, jedoch schaffte es der Staat dann nicht soziale Maßnahmen zu etablieren, um Frauen aus der Hausarbeit zu befreien.

Key Words: Emanzipation, Neue Wirtschaftspolitik, Fünfjahresplan, Sozialismus, Russische Revolutionen, Industrialisierung

The Bolshevik Revolution was arguably the most defining event in the struggle for the emancipation of women in Soviet history. This thesis examines the most important Bolshevik social and economic legislation through the Marxist theoretical framework while considering the historical background to investigate how successful the Russian Soviet Republic and consequent Union of Soviet Socialist Republic was in emancipating women.

Legally, Russian Soviet Republic Family Code of 1918 made Soviet women the most legally emancipated women in the world. However, the state failed to implement its policies and prevent adverse effects on women. The New Economic Policy, implemented between 1922-1928 was unable to rectify high unemployment rates for women and strengthened sex segregation in industry. The subsequent First Five Year Plan

implemented between 1922-1928 raised employment rates but the state failed to provide the social services necessary to relieve women of domestic duties.

Key Words: Emancipation, New Economic Policy, Five Year Plan, socialism, Russian Revolutions, employment, industrialization.

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Introduction

The Information Age, marked by the shift from traditional industry to the adoption of digital electronics has made communication profoundly more efficient and information sharing overwhelmingly easier. This mobility, flexibility and accessibility has been followed by an intense consumption of culture and heightened interaction of people across the globe. The current process of cultural globalization and exposure has enabled the activation of new debates and conversations for millennials with regards to what constitutes a happy, high quality life. The new interconnectedness followed by a disoriented economy has blurred the once focused values of millennials. A successful and fulfilling life is not marked or defined as clearly by previous, seemingly obvious milestones. Researchers have attempted to quantify what constitutes a high quality of life by researching various variables; such as vacation time or parental leave rights. Although the values or even variables of what constitutes a content life have changed over time, the underlying element, which encompasses what all people undeniably strive for, is the state of freedom. In the *Paris Manuscripts of 1844* Karl Marx characterizes how the development of man can be measured:

The direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person is the *relation of man to woman*. In this *natural* relationship of the sexes man's relation to nature is immediately his relation to man ... In this relationship, therefore, is *sensuously manifested*, reduced to an observable *fact*, the extent to which the human essence has become nature to man ... From this relationship one can therefore judge man's whole level of development ... It therefore reveals the extent to which man's *natural* behavior has become *human* ... the extent to which he in his individual existence is at the same time a social being (Marx, 1844).

Marx's view is that the development and progress of society can be determined by the relationship of man to woman in society. In *The Holy Family*, written later in the same year, Marx quotes French thinker Charles Fourier; "The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women toward freedom, because in the relation of woman to man, of the weak to the strong, the victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general

emancipation” (Fourier, 1841). Marx essentially interprets the progress of a society by women’s progress toward freedom.

On November 7th, Vladimir Lenin, leader and founder of the Bolshevik Party led a revolt against the Provisional Government of Russia, replacing it with a communist state. Following Marxist ideology, the basis for all Bolshevik’s policies, the Bolsheviks were committed to promoting the equality of men and women through several laws, policies, and government initiatives. Through a critical analysis of Marxist ideology and contribution of a Western perspective, this thesis investigates how successful the Bolsheviks were in achieving emancipation for women in the Soviet Union after the October Revolution of 1917 through Stalin’s era. Were they successful in emancipating women and creating equality between men and women through their attempts at creating a classless society? My thesis investigates this through a legal, social and economic perspective.

I hypothesize that after the analysis of legislation on both the national and local levels, Soviet women were legally, among the most emancipated women in the world. However, *de jure* emancipation does not necessarily mean *de facto* emancipation and despite this very progressive legislation there were factors that put limits on successful implementation of Bolshevik’s policies, principals and provisions. Due to external and internal factors, such as Civil War, economic difficulties and discrimination, the Bolshevik government failed to implement many of their policies. This thesis demonstrates that the Soviet government was successful in achieving higher employment for women, but was unable to topple the gender discrimination that kept women out of decision making roles and achieving equality. In addition, the obligation to work outside the household created a double-burden or double shift that had a negative impact on the quality of life of Soviet women.

My thesis is divided into three chapters within a chronological framework from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 through Stalin’s First Five Year Plan, 1928-1932. Although organized chronologically, the thesis focuses on both social and economic legislation that had the most profound impact on the lives of women. The first chapter, *Theoretical Framework*, provides a theoretical background, literature review, explores the research question, describes theories and explains the methodology utilized to

investigate the research question. The second chapter, *Role of the Bolshevik Revolution for Women's Emancipation in Russia 1917-1922* gives an understanding of the chaotic climate in Russia leading up to revolution and women's role in these events. The chapter considers how the Bolsheviks ideologically tackled the organization and administration of women into the workforce after the revolution. It examines the impact and consequences of the Bolshevik's revolutionary legislation regarding divorce and abortion. The third and final chapter, *Economic Policies: New Economic Policy (1922-1928) and First Five Year Plan (1928-1932)* focuses on the impact of Lenin's New Economic Policy and Stalin's First Five Year Plan. To give a better understanding of the impact of these policies, it provides a brief overview of the long-term effects of these plans. However, the focus is primarily on these two major economic policies. It provides statistical evidence documenting women's employment across industries as well as the social impact on workingwomen with families.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

The main theory that underpins my research is Marxism, as Marxism-Leninism was the underlying ideology of the Soviet Union. In an effort to gain fuller insight into the emancipation of Soviet women, this thesis includes the theories of Vladimir Lenin, Friedrich Engels, Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai. The writings of Western thinker Arlie Russel Hochschild are utilized to further understand how sweeping changes in institutions like the workplace affect personal and private lives.

The writings of Karl Marx include little about the movement for the emancipation of women. Marx primarily writes about the economic and social struggles associated with class, rather than gender. The second chapter of the *Communist Manifesto*, co-written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, a German philosopher and disciple of Karl Marx, outlines the theory and practice of Communism. Marx confirms, “The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to the other working-class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole” (Marx and Friedrich 1848, 22). This implies that Communists are concerned with the interest of the working class as a whole. However, Marx’s writings and critique of bourgeois society serve as a foundation for socialist feminism and the political agenda of the Bolshevik state. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels sum up their argument in the following quotation:

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and naturally, can come to no other conclusion that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women. He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at by communists is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production (Marx and Friedrich 1848, 25).

Marx did not specifically write on the rights of women as separate from the working class, but rather the conditions that oppressed women. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels argue that women are oppressed by the ruling class and treated as

second-class citizens in society and within the family. The bourgeoisie use their wives as instruments of production, which they exploit. Regarding marriage, Marx pointed out that “Bourgeoisie marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus at the most what the communists might possibly be reproached with is that they want to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women” (Marx and Friedrich 1848, 25). Marx suggests that marriage is basically a legalized form of prostitution, and concludes “the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e, of prostitution both public and private” (Marx and Friedrich 1848, 25). In short, Marx’s theory proposed that the capitalist bourgeoisie exploited the proletariat. The proletariat would one day lead a revolution against the bourgeoisie and overthrow capitalism. Following this defeat, a new classless society would emerge. Thus, even though Marx does not specifically have a theory on women, it can be observed that because the bourgeois exploits women, once the bourgeois are abolished, so would the oppression of women.

Marx wrote more specifically about the emancipation of women in his earlier works. The analysis of Paresh Chattopadhyay, “*Marx on Women’s Question*” published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* journal, interprets the writings of Marx regarding the women’s question from an emancipatory point of view utilizing Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, also known as *The Paris Manuscripts*. In the third manuscript, Marx remarked that ‘marriage’ was a form of ‘exclusive private property’ and that women were treated “as the prey and servant of the social lust...from this behavior one can judge the whole stage of human development” (Marx 1844, 2455). In his subsequent work, *The German Ideology*, Marx remarked that “The first form of the germ of unequal distribution quantitatively and qualitatively of labor and property in the family where the woman and children are man’s slaves” (Marx 1845-46, 2455). Chattopadhyay concludes that Marx recognized the problem of patriarchy and female oppression within a patriarchal society (Chattopadhyay 2001, 2455-457). Feminists have criticized Marx for ignoring the relationship of domestic labor and its relationship to the economy. Prominent political theorists, such as Silvia Federici, have argued that because Marx ignores women’s unpaid reproductive work, he has a limited understanding of the

true extend of the capitalist exploitation of labor (Federici 92-93, 2012). However, Chattopadhyay attempts to dispel this misconception quoting Marx again: “The slavery of the family members by the head of the family who purely and simply uses and exploits them-is at least implied” (Marx 1863-65, 2455). Through his analysis, Chattopadhyay dispels the assertion by feminists that Marx fails to address women’s oppression. According to the previously cited texts, Marx was aware of the gender-division of labor, which contributed to the detriment of women. He holds the modern family responsible for the exploitation of family members. Subsequently, Marx does not ignore women’s labor, but rather acknowledges that women are exploited through the unequal distribution of labor and property, which come from the family. Furthermore, Chattopadhyay notes that Marx sent Elizabeth Dimitrieva to organize the women’s section of the International in Paris. He argues that this shows how Marx valued the existence of women’s independent organizations to defend their specific rights (Chattopadhyay 2001, 2455). Marx’s view on the creation of women’s independent organizations to defend their specific rights is significant as this thesis explores how the Bolshevik leadership was hesitant to support specific women’s organizations. This thesis in part investigates how the Bolshevik leadership viewed separate women’s organizations as bourgeois feminism and a detriment to the class struggle as a whole. Additionally, shortly before his death, in the draft of the *Programme of the French Worker’s Party*, Marx proposed the “Suppression all articles of the Code establishing the inferiority of women in relation to men..equality of wage for equal labor for the works of both sexes (Marx and Jules 1880, 2456). Through the study of Marx’s earlier works, Chattopadhyay demonstrates that Marx challenged domestic slavery and the exploitation of women throughout his life, even though feminists have critiqued Marxist theory as not fully addressing the issue of women’s equality.

Another important feature of Communism, which the Bolshevik government and subsequent Soviet Union leaders adopted, was the concept of abolishing private property. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx argues, “The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products that is based on class antagonisms, on

the exploitation of the many by the few. In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property” (Marx and Friedrich 1848, 22). Marx argues that wage labor does not create any property for the laborer, but only creates capital, which functions to exploit the worker. This thesis investigates how the economic policies of Lenin and Stalin, namely Lenin’s New Economic Policy and Stalin’s Five Year Plan’s affected the emancipation of women. Immediately after the October Revolution, Vladimir Lenin wrote the *Decree on Land*, which was essentially an abolition of private property and called for the redistribution of estates among peasants. However, in order to save the country from economic collapse after the period of civil war, Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy in 1922. The NEP allowed for the ownership of small and middle-sized properties. Stalin essentially abolished the NEP with the implementation of the First Five Year Plan, which called for rapid industrialization and mass collectivization of agriculture. Stalin was forced to allow peasants to grow private plots so they could meet their basic needs. However, these small patches of land were not considered their private plots and could be recalled from them at any time. The communist leadership perceived private property in Soviet society as a threat that encouraged illegal economic activity and expanded corruption in the party and state apparatus (Shiapentokh, Arutunyan 2013, 18). The Bolsheviks believed that public property and planned economy were essential in achieving a socialist state and aimed to abolish private property, except when absolutely necessary. This thesis investigates the Soviet state’s attempt to transition into a communist society through a planned economy and socialist transformation of society, rooted in the theory of Marxism, through various economic reforms. This thesis analyzes how the most prominent economic reforms affected the quality of women’s lives and their path to emancipation.

Engels’s work, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, written after Marx’s death and reflecting his views, elaborates more extensively on the oppression of women (Weikart, 1994). Engels argues that a crucial aspect of women’s emancipation and establishing social equality between men and women is complete equality before the law as well as waged labor for women. Engels writes,

“Likewise the peculiar character of man's rule over woman in the modern family, the necessity and the manner of accomplishing the real social equality of the two, will appear in broad daylight only then, when both of them will enjoy complete legal equality. It will then be seen that the emancipation of women is primarily dependent on the re-introduction of the whole female sex into the public industries” (Engels 1844, 39).

He also suggests abolishing the individual family as the economic unit of society. Engels compares women in monogamous bourgeois marriages to slaves, saying that the married woman “who only differs from the ordinary courtesan in that she does not let out her body on piece-work as a wage-worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery” (Engels 1844, 33). Engels rooted women’s oppression in their role within the nuclear family in class societies. The woman’s role as a reproducer cemented their subordinate status in the family and society because it bounded them to unpaid domestic labor. Thus, being part of the paid labor force could only liberate women. As result, a socialist transformation of society was necessary and would relieve women of domestic duties. The state sought to socialize all aspects of life in order to free women from wasteful, unpaid domestic labor. This thinking was the root of Bolshevik initiatives. As a result, the revolutionary Bolshevik government engaged in legislation that established full social and political equality for women.

The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, which later became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was founded on Marxism as it was understood and interpreted by Vladimir Lenin, founder of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and first head of the Soviet state from 1917 until his death in 1924 (Resis, 2016). As the ideological figurehead of Marxism-Leninism, Lenin attempted to instill revolutionary socialist politics and strived to develop the Soviet Union into a socialist state. He used the theories of Marx and Engels as a foundation for his leadership. The Bolsheviks saw themselves as the executors of the Marxist program and wanted to transition into a communist society. Lenin delivered a speech at the Fourth Moscow City Conference of Non-Party Working Women on September 23, 1919, which was later published in *Pravda* journal. His speech, *The Tasks of the Working Women’s*

Movement in Soviet Republic addressed the concerns of working women. In his speech, Lenin echoes Engels from many aspects. First, he argues “No other state and no other legislation has ever done for women half of what Soviet power did in the first months of its existence”. He goes on to say, “Owing to her work in the house, the woman is still in a difficult position. To effect her complete emancipation and make her the equal of the man it is necessary for the national economy to be socialized and for women to participate in common productive labor. Then women will occupy the same position as men” (Lenin, 1919). Lenin continues saying “You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain factually downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and most arduous work a woman can do” (Lenin, 1919). Lenin argues that the Soviet Union has legally emancipated women and that women must participate in productive, paid labor in order to be truly emancipated. In his speech he promises that in order to free women from housework, the state will set up dining-rooms, nurseries and other model institutions which will liberate women from household slavery. This thesis investigates the success of the state’s various attempts to achieve women’s equality by attempting to alleviate them from domestic duties through the socialization of domestic tasks and incorporating them into the workforce as paid laborers. The Bolsheviks clearly sought to emancipate women, but faced an ideological dilemma regarding how to do so.

In *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia*, historian Elizabeth Wood argues that the Bolsheviks were ambivalent about creating separate organizing efforts specifically for women, fearing that this did not show solidarity with the workers’ movement as a whole (Wood 1997, 990). Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai, both members of the Bolshevik party played an important role in organizing women after the Bolshevik Revolution and attempting to execute the socialist goals of the state. Despite hesitancy and sometimes, outright rebuttal from the Bolshevik state and party members, they succeeded in establishing the women’s section, or *zhenotdel* in 1919. Through a decree from the Party Central Committee, women’s commissions became upgraded to a full section within the Central Committee (Wood 1997, 1021). It is important to understand the ideological viewpoint of Armand and Kollontai, as they played crucial, leadership roles in organizing women after the

revolution. Armand saw the benefit in having women organize themselves, and address issues that interest all women. In *Inessa Armand: Revolutionary and Feminist*, author Ralph Carter Elwood argues that Armand recognized the woman's female nature determined her oppression and should therefore be reflected in her emancipation (Elwood 2002, 277). Armand also recognized that the revolution had legally put women on an equal footing with men, but that this did not mean equality was in fact achieved. She argued that because women were not involved in political decision-making and economic management, discrimination was perpetuated and unchallenged. She cited that very few women held management positions in industrial production, factory committees or trade union boards (Elwood 2002, 253). She sought to remedy this issue through what would later be called an affirmative action program and serve as the basis of *zhenotdel* activity. Armand encouraged women to seek leadership positions through publicizing elections in *zhenotdel* publications, urged women to run at delegates' meetings and convinced women to attend trade schools so they could qualify for positions on trade-union boards or as delegates to trade-union congresses. Armand hoped women working side by side with men in management positions would break down male prejudice and perpetual discrimination (Elwood 2002, 253-254). Many of her ideas were not implemented until after her death, but she is widely credited for the concept of an affirmative action program for women. Robert McNeal, an American historian and expert on the history of the Soviet Union called this program the "centerpiece of *zhenotdel* feminist activity" (Elwood 2002, 253).

Alexandra Kollontai, one of the most prominent women in the Soviet administration opposed the ideology of liberal feminism and was a Marxist who supported women's equality. Like Marx, she thought that under Communism, the traditional marriage and family would wither away. Like Engels, she saw the family unit and marriage as oppressive and believed that under Communism, children would be wards of the state, raised by society. In her speech, *Communism and the Family*, Kollontai argues that "The worker-mother must learn not to differentiate between yours and mine; she must remember that there are only our children, the children of Russia's communist workers" (Kollontai, 1920). She held various prominent positions and committed herself to class struggle and the emancipation of women. She argued that the

emancipation of women required the end of capitalism but that also personal relations should be transformed. In her last public speech; *On Marriage and Everyday Life*, Kollontai argued that the socialist approach would emancipate women and required that “Every woman has the right to desire and strive to be free from anxieties when bringing up her child, and to be free from the fear that some day she and the child will find themselves in need and without any means of sustenance” (Kollontai, 1926). For women to be free, the state would provide social services that would unburden women from their daily burdens. Women’s emancipation required a political commitment of economic resources to provide for the welfare of women so they could be financially independent of men and patriarchal property relations (Ebert, 2009). Kollontai believed the woman question was one of gender, but believed on securing economic rights for proletarian women rather than political rights for bourgeois women (Elwood 2002, 110).

Kollontai and Armand were in the position of creating separate women’s organizations and recognized that without a separate apparatus for work among women, it would be impossible to draw women into the public sphere. Even though they created a separate women’s organization, ideologically Kollontai and Armand stressed that women’s sections served the greater goals of communism and the state. Women workers could only be emancipated through unity with the general proletariat struggle (Elwood 2002, 1062). Kollontai emphasized that “ In their work the women’s sections must start from the position that the organization and movement of women workers and men is united and undivided...” (Wood 1997, 1076). Kollontai and Armand insisted on an active approach towards emancipating women and acting in the interests of women as representatives. Armand was careful to accentuate that woman’s sections and women workers were “part of the proletariat” and did not have “any goals and tasks separate from the goals and tasks of the working class as a whole” (Wood 1997, 1062). This balancing act between fighting perceived separatism from the revolutionary struggle and maintaining active women’s sections shaped their policies and the movement to organize women workers.

In order to gain a fuller perspective, it is also important to study the writings of Arlie Russel Hochschild. Hochschild is an American sociologist and academic. Her book, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* explores the labor

women perform at home in addition to paid labor performed in the formal sector. Studying families in which men and women both held full time jobs, she found that women are still held responsible for household work and childcare responsibilities despite having a formal, paid job. The concept of the “second shift” is important to explore because many women in the Soviet Union were faced with this double burden. On the one hand, Soviet women in certain periods achieved high employment rates. However, because the government failed to provide social services they promised, women were often faced with working a “double shift”, leading us to question how emancipated they were, regardless of having achieved equal legal status as men and being employed in record numbers in the formal sector.

Bolshevik policies, rooted in Marxist thought focused on restructuring family life and social relations. Marx and Engels thought that the family would eventually wither away. The woman question would be solved through socialism in both public and private life. In order to achieve the liberation of Soviet women they had to free them from the burdens of housework. The Bolsheviks planned to shift household and childrearing responsibilities into communal responsibilities. The socialist assumption, as understood through Marx and Engels was that women would be freed through participation in the economy with paid, waged labor. This thesis will investigate how external factors, such as war, industrialization and various economic plans affected the Bolshevik’s goals.

Literature Review

A Week Like Any Other Baranskaya, Natalya

Published in one of the most popular Soviet literary magazines, *Novy Mir* (New World) in 1969, the fiction novel written by Natalya Baranskaya attracted a lot of public attention to the largely ignored issue of women struggling with the demands of both domestic and professional duties. It was probably the first Soviet novel to portray everyday difficulties of average Soviet women. The book reflects the lives of workingwomen with children and is told from the perspective of a married mother of two who is a scientist and must also take care of her family household. She narrates her daily schedule through the course of a week. This work of fiction is useful to explain the experience of working women who felt that working produced a feeling of an overwhelming ‘doubleburden’ rather than liberation. The book illustrates how workingwomen

dealt with a double burden, an after-effect of the Bolsheviks failing to socialize the domestic sphere.

Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development and Social Change Lapidus, Gail Warshofsky

Lapidus explores the effects of industrialization spurred by the First Five Year Plan, the collectivization of agriculture and how this impacted economic, political and social roles accessible to women. Lapidus acknowledges that Stalin's economic policies were successful in drawing massive amounts of women into the industrial workforce. She argues that compared to the NEP, women were able to find gainful employment across all industries. However, she criticizes the state for being unable to provide social services at the same pace with which women were entering the workforce. The state failed to socialize the domestic and childcare work, which women performed. As a result, women who were employed felt a "double burden" from the duties stemming from both their personal and private lives.

Babi Bunty and Peasant Women's Protest During Collectivization Viola, Lynn

Lynn investigates the protest of peasant women during collectivization. Her research is based on cases of protest in ethnically Russian and Ukrainian villages. There were a lot of protests by peasants in countryside during the late 1920's and early 1930's. She argues that women played a significant role in the reaction against collectivization and that peasant women suffered the most from this economic legislation. She illustrates that peasants were resistant to the collectivization aspect of Stalin's policies not only because of the brutal way it was implemented, but also because collectivization disrupted the social and economic structure of peasant life. Peasants saw that collectivization threatened the link between private ownership of livestock and women's economic position in the household. Collectivization and other socialist initiatives were seen as an attack on the peasant's belief and interests.

Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life 1917-1936

Goldman, Z Wendy

Goldman argues that although the *Family Code of 1918* legally freed women, the state was not able to implement its policies. She focuses on how peasants were affected and that they viewed the code as intrusive to family life. She offers the perspective that

the breakdown of traditional marriage only resulted in more oppressive conditions for women because the state could not establish the communal facilities that were supposed to relieve women of their traditional burdens. The new revolution only benefited men. Several officials claimed that because the state could not financially support women, they should have encouraged stable marriage. The author argues that lax divorce laws benefited men by allowing them to more quickly and easily abandon women. Regarding abortion, the author argues that even though the Soviet Union was the first in the world to give women a legal, cost-free opportunity to terminate pregnancy it never recognized abortion as a woman's right. She also claims that due to administrative requirements and the application process; women did not have equal access to a cost-free abortion. The high frequency of both legal and illegal abortions indicate that the state was neither able to change the conditions which made women want to limit the size of their families nor make authorized abortions accessible to all women.

The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia Wood,
Elizabeth A

Wood deals with the Bolshevik's initial attempts to organize women. She claims that despite their proclaimed commitment, the Bolshevik's were at best unsure about how to organize women after the revolution. The Bolsheviks wanted to bring women into the workforce as well as draw them into the party. However, they faced a "theoretical conundrum". On the one hand, prominent feminists such as Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand recognized that special women's organs or sections were necessary to organize women. On the other hand, the Bolshevik state as well as the general population felt that organizing women in this way undermined the revolution as a whole. She argues that the general view was that if women had separate women's sections or departments, they would focus too much on bourgeois feminist issues and betray the working class. This would take away from the class struggle of the proletariat and the revolution. As a result, organizers who understood that women had fundamental differences from men, making women's sections necessary, had to insist that although women had special concerns the conditions for their emancipation were not different from the proletariat as a whole. Her research is essential to understanding how the women's emancipation movement faced confusions of identity and ideology.

Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State Engels, Friedrich

Written in 1844 and reflecting Marx's views, Engel's work elaborates extensively on the oppression of women. Engels argues that both equal recognition before the law as well as participation in the economy as paid laborers were necessary in order for women to achieve emancipation. He argues that women's oppression was rooted in their role within the nuclear family in class societies. Women's reproductive roles within the nuclear family assured their subordinate position because it tied them to unpaid domestic labor. As a result, a socialist transformation of society, in which the domestic tasks women performed would be socialized and assumed by the state, was necessary to truly emancipate women. This work was essential to the Bolshevik political agenda, as they strived to achieve a classless society through the socialization of domestic tasks by introducing communal laundries, kitchens and daycares.

The Communist Manifesto. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

In 1847, the Communist League commissioned Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to write a manifesto on its behalf. The work essentially outlined the theory and practice of Communism. Marx and Engels argue that in capitalism, those that owned the means of production oppressed the industrial working class. The oppressed working class, or the proletariat would one day lead a revolution against the oppressive bourgeoisie and a classless society would emerge. The work does not have a specific chapter or theory on the rights of women, as Marx and Engels did not view them as separate from the working class. However, Marx and Engels argue that women are oppressed by the ruling class and treated as second-class citizens in society and within the family. They especially criticize marriage as an oppressive, bourgeois institution, which exploited women and treated them as mere instruments of production. Marx's and Engel's writings and critique of the bourgeois society served as a foundation for socialist feminism and the political agenda of the Bolshevik state.

The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home Arlie Russell Hochschild

Hochschild is credited with coining the term "second shift". In her groundbreaking work, Hochschild studied and interviewed 50 couples throughout the 1970's and 1980's in order to investigate how workingmen and women divided their time between their professional duties and personal lives. She found that often men and

women did not share the burden of domestic work equally. Women would work a full work shift at their professional jobs and a “second shift,” comprising of familial and domestic duties at home. Her work is essential in investigating the emancipation of Soviet women, as the Soviet Union did achieve unprecedented levels of women’s employment. In order to gain a broader perspective, this thesis applies the concept of the “second shift” to more fully investigate women’s emancipation in addition to the employment rates achieved during Stalin’s period.

Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin’s Russia Wendy, Z Goldman.

Goldman explores how Lenin’s New Economic Policy affected women. She argues that the NEP failed to provide employment opportunities for women. The NEP years did not solve the problem of women’s unemployment and actually reinforced sex segregation in the industrial workforce. Goldman argues that the NEP was a failure for the women’s emancipation movement and struggle as it segregated men and women by skill, wage and type of industry. She criticizes the fact that although the number of women employed in industry almost doubled, the proportion of women in the industrial workforce remained the same. The women who were working were held the lowest paid and least skilled jobs in every industry. Goldman illustrates that economic policies such as the NEP actually widened the gender gap in industrial labor and reflected that Soviet women were legally as emancipated as men, but the Bolshevik state failed to solve the issue of sex segregation, discrimination and prejudice.

Methodology

This thesis incorporates the disciplines of history, law and political science to investigate the research question. The main approach is historical and chronological but also utilizes perspectives from political science and law. This thesis investigates various periods in the Soviet history: from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 through Stalin’s First Five Year Plan, 1928-1932. It explores the emancipation and quality of life of Soviet women through these periods from a social and legal perspective. The thesis provides a short historical background of the period and introduces the most pieces of legislation. Then, it analyses the implementation and most relevant impact of this legislation. It relies primarily on secondary sources from a wide variety of literature on the topic, as well as primary resources such as various decrees, laws and speeches. It also

utilizes Western feminist arguments to provide a wider perspective when analyzing the impact on the quality of life and emancipation of women.

Chapter Two

Role of Bolshevik Revolution for Women's Emancipation in Russia 1917-1922

It can be argued that the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the most defining event in the struggle for the emancipation of women in Soviet history. The 1917 Russian Revolution was not one major organized event, but rather a series of events, which entailed two separate revolutions in February and October. It is important to note that the Julian calendar was used in Russia at the time and the revolutions took place in March and November, respectively. Thus, the October Revolution is also known as the November Revolution. For the purposes of this thesis, it will be referred to as the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The February Revolution, removed Tsar Nicholas II and the Bolshevik Revolution overturned the interim provisional government. A four-year civil war between the Communists and anti-Bolshevik groups followed. Following a Communist victory, the Soviet Union was established. It is difficult to summarize the events and details leading up to the Russian Revolutions of 1917, but important to understand the chaotic climate in Russia at the time. The majority of the people were unsatisfied with the Tsar and Russia's disastrous involvement in World War I, which resulted in historic Russian casualties. There was resentment against the treatment of peasants by patricians, poor working conditions for workers in the industrial economy and a general heightened sense of political and social awareness. Food shortages and military failures contributed to the dissatisfaction of the proletarian class (Local Life, 2017).

The February Revolution began on March 8, 1917, International Women's Day. Socialist feminist Clara Zetkin initially recommended a socialist women's holiday at the women's conference of the Second International In Copenhagen in 1910. Soviet feminist Alexandra Kollontai was the only Russian delegate to the conference and represented St. Petersburg textile workers. The goal of the holiday was to demand universal suffrage. Journals backed by various political parties such as *Pravda* and *Luch* produced special issues with articles about women workers and the importance of the socialist movement for the holiday (Ruthchild 2010, 186). In her book, *Equality and Revolution*, historian Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild uses several primary sources to describe the events on that day. She describes a report the governor of Petrograd, A.P. Balk received regarding

gatherings of “Many ladies, and even more poor women, students, and fewer workers compared to previous demonstrations.” to cite his confusion and note the general unawareness of authorities. (Ruthchild 2010, 211). The crowds of women formed at several locations, including in the center of city, on Znamenskaya Square, near the headquarters of the League for Women’s Equal Rights and at the City Duma as well as in the workers’ districts. In the beginning, the crowds were generally peacefully. However, later on, women began to cry for bread, demanded peace, an end to the war and to overthrow the tsar. The women shouted: “It’s our holiday! Let us be the standard bearers!”. Other banners read: “If woman is a slave there will be no freedom. Long live equal rights for women” (Ruthchild 2010, 211-212). In order to understand why women were protesting for an end to the war, the overthrowing of the tsar and other demands it is important to comprehend the effects of World War I and the many changes it brought about in Russia. On the one hand, labor shortages created an opportunity for more women to enter the work force and women’s participation in the war effort unified them. On the other, the devastating effects of the war caused women to protest and spark the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Soon after the war started, Russians saw some early military successes. However, soon after, corruption and bureaucratic inability to organize successfully led to a chaotic situation, making the lives of Russians difficult. As a consequence of the war, Russia was faced with a food supply crisis and public unrest. Women from both urban and countryside Russia began to feel frustrated as they found it more and more difficult to feed their families. Women’s riots began to happen more and more often. Women from all spheres of society were affected. Soldier’s wives could only depend on minimal payments from the government. Women in rural areas had no additional aid and depended on whatever they could grow to survive and also began to emigrate to the cities to look for paid work. Working-class men and women were affected by price increases for staple products, such as the per pound price of rye bread and soap. Rye bread prices rose from 3 to 18 kopecks from 1913 to 1916. The cost of soap rose by 245% in the city of Petrograd. Riots for food and substance by women increased. The combination of food shortages, long lines and inflation further provoked the masses (Kaplan and David, 2017). Some leaders underrated the frustration of women, but the police understood its

significance and began to become wearier of what the riots might bear fruit to. A January 1917 police report read, “The mothers of families, exhausted from the endless standing in line at the stores, tormented by the look of their half-starving and sick children are very likely closer now to revolution...they are more dangerous because they represent that store of inflammable material, for which one spark will set off a fire”. (Ruthchild 2010, 218). The combination of food shortages and dissatisfaction in the workplace fueled the riot that became a revolution.

During the years of the World War, women’s employment began to rise in various industries. World War I created a shortage of male laborers, which created more opportunities for women to enter the workforce. The combination of a shortage of male laborers along with the need for industrial laborers to match the defense needs of the war created a huge demand for labor. From 1914-1917 the proportion of females in Russian industry increased from 26.6% to 43.2%. The proportion of women in the city’s labor force also significantly increased from 25.7% to 33.3% between 1913 and 1917 (Ruthchild 2010, 213). However, it is important to note that these achievements were short-lived and that after the war ended and new economic policies were instituted, women’s unemployment went up again. As well as employment in industry, the war also created opportunities in the medical profession. Soon after war was declared, women enrolled as Red Cross Medical Assistants and ‘sisters of mercy’ and were dispatched to the war front. Before the start of the war, the number of “sisters of mercy” in the Russian Red Cross and associated organizations was less than 4,000 (Stoff, 2014). The Russian Red Cross, the All-Russian Union of *Zemstvos* and the All-Russian Union of Towns recruited and trained nurses under the umbrella of the Red Cross. In order to recruit more women, the Red Cross shortened year-long training courses to two months. Women who completed the training courses were official sisters of mercy of the Red Cross. This gave them the right to wear the Red Cross uniform and receive compensation. Women were also able to simply volunteer into the medical service without prior formal training. By 1916, the number of women who served as sisters of mercy in the Russian Society of the Red Cross was estimated to be 25,000 (Stoff, 2014). Some groups believed that women’s wartime efforts were an opportunity to demonstrate how women could be productive members of society and that this would therefore expand their political rights, or at least

prove that they could contribute to society as much as men and should therefore be treated equally (Stoff, 2014).

In her work *Equality and Revolution*, historian Rochelle Ruthchild utilizes excerpts from leading feminist journals to establish the connection between the war and women's rights. Major feminist publications defended the war and expressed that the conflict would contribute to the fight for equal rights. The leading feminist journal, *Zhenskoe Delo* argued that women's war efforts would help them achieve equality. Excerpts from the journal stated that women would contribute to the war effort in a way that is suited to their gender role, "not with death-dealing weapons, but with works of love and mercy". Women would "reduce to the minimum our needs, abandon luxury, and sacrifice all on the altar of society" (Ruthchild 2010, 213-214). The journal associated success in the war with a victory for women's rights stating that women would be rewarded with "the success of that equality which progressive women all over the world hope to achieve" (Ruthchild 2010, 214). Women showed that they could meaningfully contribute to the war effort in various spheres. New journals, which reported women's contributions to the war effort emerged. *Zhenschina I Voina* (Woman and War), published in 1915 and *Zhenskaia Zhizn* (Woman's Life) appeared in 1914 and reported on women's war efforts. Edited by A.V Lobanov, the purpose of the journal was to provide "information about the events of the war and activity of women in connection with the war" (Ruthchild 2010, 217). Lobanov, former publisher of *Zhurnal Dlia Khoziaek* (The Housewives' Journal) and hoped that women's contributions to the war would "eliminate all barriers to their equal rights" (Ruthchild 2010, 217). The journal stopped being published in 1916 when the magnitude and losses of the war became clear (Ruthchild 2010, 217). The labor shortages and shortage of nurses created a sense of urgency to train and employ women. However, this sense of urgency ended with the war and a controversial debate regarding how women should be organized ensued.

In her book, *Baba and the Comrade*, historian Elizabeth Wood explores initial attempts to organize women after the Bolshevik takeover. As much as the Bolshevik's were committed to the emancipation of women and saw the necessity to organize the women workers, they faced a theoretical conundrum. Within the Marxist school of

thought, feminists' main concerns were "bourgeois issues" and supporting them would mean betraying the working class. The Bolsheviks were concerned that women workers would focus on the "bourgeois feminist" movement and this would take away from the class struggle of the proletariat (Wood 1997, 418). Would creating women's sections, organs or commissions of the Communist Party undermine constructing a new Communist order? Would creating women's commissions or working groups assert that women have specifically female differences and therefore not the same conditions as the emancipation of the proletariat as a whole? (Wood 1997, 988). Both men and women resisted organizing women by initiating special work among women at the local level (Wood 1997, 1097). This divisive thinking on the question of organizing women contributed to the Bolshevik's early struggles to emancipate women beyond a legislative level. In 1917, Kollontai's idea to have a special bureau run by women to deal with women's issues was rejected at the 1917 Party Conference. In 1918, Kollontai and Armand set up the First All-Russian Congress of Working and Peasant Women (Tomai 1999, 707) The understanding that it would be necessary to have separate organs, working groups or sections for women to successfully transition into a new socialist society, but emphasize that these initiatives were not separate organizations of Communist women eventually prevailed. After the 1918 National Congress, the party issued instructions for creating new women's commissions. All committees of the party were instructed, on all levels, to create commissions on agitation and propaganda among women workers. They would have 2-5 party members per committee, either men or women but preferably women. These instructions put new commissions under the control of the local party committees. Wood argues that these new instructions did not prioritize improving the lives of women. Rather, their primary tasks were "the political upbringing of women workers, awakening their consciousness, drawing them into the Communist Party, enlisting them in the revolutionary struggle in all its forms, including the military front" and "drawing women workers into the business of constructing a new life" (Wood 1997, 1008). These goals focused on pulling women into the party and into the government. It can be argued that by being more involved in political life in this way, women would become more emancipated. However, Wood found that the instructions were unclear regarding how they would improve women's daily lives (Wood 1997,

1008). Nevertheless, through a 1919 decree of the Party Central Committee, these initial women's commissions became a full-fledged department within the Central Committee itself. After some controversy and much debate on how to achieve the task of mobilizing women workers, the women's department, or *Zhenotdel* was created (Wood 1997, 1017).

Lenin, Kollontai and Armand understood that in order to achieve women's emancipation and successfully incorporate all women into a new socialist society, a women's department was necessary. Without specific initiatives to target women, it would be difficult to draw them into the party. In her speech, *The Woman Worker and the Peasant in Soviet Russia*, Kollontai argued "In the interests of communism it was necessary to win over the women workers and turn them into defenders of Soviet power. General propaganda of the ideas of Soviet power and communism proved insufficient to draw women into the movement (Kollontai, 1921). Wood found that women leaders such as Armand and Kollontai emphasized that departments for women contributed to the revolution as a whole, that they were necessary and without them "women would not come to public meetings; they would not be drawn into the public sphere; they would not become full-fledged members of the body politic" (Wood 1997, 1067). Wood argues that supporters of the *zhenotdel* were always on the defensive and walked a fine line between supporting a women's department that would address questions which specifically concerned women, which in turn would aided the proletarian socialist revolution and acknowledging that the women's department was a separate organization. They had to emphasize the importance and necessity of a women's department and simultaneously highlight that not only was this not a separate movement, but would also contribute to the revolution as a whole (Wood 1997, 1067). Kollontai stressed that in order to "build the new society of working people" and ensure the unity of proletarian men and women in their fight against the dictatorship of the proletariat "The Communist Party had to include among its tasks the special task of involving women actively in the construction of a new future.." (Kollontai, 1921). Kollontai drew attention to the fact that it was necessary to involve women through special work not only to benefit women workers, but rather, that raising women's consciousness would contribute to the revolution as a whole. She was careful to begin the speech with the statement "In Soviet Russia, there is no independent movement of women workers" (Kollontai, 1921). In this way she clarifies and

emphasizes that the efforts of women leaders to organize women through special tasks is not a separate movement, but rather a necessity which helps sustain the struggle of the proletariat against dictatorship.

Regarding party work among women, Lenin also emphasized that there should be no special organizations for women, but that it was the duty of the Party to involve women workers and keep them under the influence of the Party. In an interview with Clara Zetkin regarding party work among women, Lenin replied,

“We want no separate organizations of Communist Women! She who is a Communist belongs as a member to the party just as *he* who is a Communist, and has the same rights and duties. But the party must have organs - working groups, commissions, sections - with the specific purpose of rousing the broad mass of women, bringing them into contact with the party and keeping them under its influence; special methods of agitation and forms of organization. This is not bourgeois feminism but a practical revolutionary expediency" (Lenin, 1920)

Lenin recognized that special groups for work among women were required in order to organize the very necessary women workers. Like Kollontai, he had to clearly reinforce the idea that organizing women in this way was a necessity, a duty of the party and not an exercise of bourgeois feminism which many people confused it with. Wood argues that women leaders had to emphasize that women workers were a “constituent part of the proletariat” and as “not having any goals and tasks separate from the goals and tasks of the working class as a whole” (Wood 1997, 1059). Leaders such as Lenin and Armand who emphasized the importance of organizing women through special groups had to convince the public that there were specific issues which only concerned women and addressing them would draw the woman worker into supporting the communist party, rather than isolating them from the revolution. This made initial efforts to organize women chaotic and confusing.

On one hand it was important to acknowledge women had special concerns, which had to be addressed. On the other hand, by acknowledging these issues leaders risked isolating women from the movement and being accused of practicing bourgeois

feminism and separatism. The leadership of the women's movement understood that it would be impossible to mobilize women without separate organizations, and in an effort to avoid being accused of bourgeois feminism attempted to stress the "sameness" of women's and men's tasks (Wood 1997, 1065). As a result, the leaders of organizing women workers sent mixed and confusing messages. They stressed that there were specific issues, which only concerned women, yet at the assembled National Congress of Women Workers and Peasants in November 1918 Kollontai remarked, "The Party Central Committee says that the key task now is to create a united Red Front. But we set ourselves another task as well: to raise women's consciousness to the level of men's and to destroy the need for convoking a separate women's congress" (Kollontai 1918, 1065). Wood argues that this statement acknowledged that they had called a separate meeting of women so that one-day separate women's meetings would be unnecessary (Wood 1997, 1065). It can also be argued that if stressing the purpose of calling a separate women's congress is to raise the consciousness of women to the level of men, it indirectly suggests that women are more backward than men and that this is the purpose of organizing them through special initiatives and tasks rather than to address issues specific to their gender. However, taking into consideration the general hostile atmosphere against organizing women through special initiatives, organs etc one can understand why women leaders imposed a sort of self-limitation in their rhetoric.

Like with many Bolshevik decrees, much more than simple legislative support was needed to sustain the goals of the *zhenotdel*. The department had broad goals but lacked financial and jurisdictional autonomy. It operated mostly on volunteers and still faced party ambivalence and hostility. The *zhenotdel* faced resistance from local comrades in the provincial committees; local women's own resistance and shortage and overwork for the existing staffs (Patterson 2011, 3). Despite the seemingly progressive emancipation upgrading the initial women's commissions to a full-fledged department, there was little cooperation between the *zhenotdel* and local party committees, which considered the department too feminist and generally unnecessary (Wood 1997, 1143). Even though the Central Committee's instructions granted the directors of women's sections the right to be on the board of the local provincial committees, local parties actively attempted to prevent them from doing so (Wood 1997, 1151). It was difficult to

actually implement the instructions and legislation from the Bolshevik party. The fear of organizing women workers in this way being too “feminist” and undermining the social aspect of the revolution was an important aspect of resistance. It was especially difficult to organize women in the country-side. On the one hand, women themselves did not see the importance of going to the local meetings because they took time away from their work. On the other, village assemblies did not allow women to go to meetings in Moscow to discuss “female matters” (Wood 1997, 1147). Rather than accusing the Bolshevik’s of bourgeois feminism, both peasant men and women resisted the efforts of the *zhenotdel* and rejected the Bolshevik’s plan for the emancipation of women as a whole because they feared it would undermine or destroy the peasant way of life.

In her essay, *The Effects of the Civil War on Women and the Family*, historian Barbara Evans Clements argues that the Russian Civil War “Seemed to have shaken the very foundations of Russian society, the war produced a reaction that played a part in conserving, perhaps even strengthening, altered but still powerful institutions of marriage and family” (Clements 1989, 106-107). The devastating effects of the civil war had a profound impact on peasant life that made peasants particularly resistant to the Bolshevik’s policies and proposals. The Russian Civil War began right after the Russian Revolutions of 1917. The Bolsheviks led by Vladimir Lenin struggled to gain power against multiple other parties and eventually prevailed in 1922, but by 1921, the economy was in ruins. Industrial production was only 10% of the level it was in 1913. Between 1917-1921, agricultural production had fallen 16% (Pickard, 1988). In her 1982 essay *Working-Class and Peasant Women in the Russian Revolution*, Clements illustrates that peasants found Bolshevik policies threatening to their social structure and therefore, their existence. In 1918 a group of peasant men addressed a letter to Maxim Gorky, Russian and Soviet writer, founder of socialist realism literary method and political activist. They asked the writer to explain that “The undersigned peasants are alarmed by this law from which lawlessness may increase, and the village now is supported by the woman. The family is abolished, and because of this the destruction of farming will follow” (Gorky, 1918, 218-219). Bolshevik proposals, such as instituting civil marriage and no-fault divorce threatened the structure of the family as an institution. Because World War One had cost millions of Russian men their lives, women were left to tend farmland either on

their own or with their children. The Civil War also destroyed a lot of farmland, causing famine and disease. There are not precise statistics regarding how many women were left to tend the farms alone during the Civil War, but there are figures from the 1920's. In 1929, three million peasant households (15% of the total) were still headed by women (Clements 1989, 105-107) The peasant men's letter to Gorky reflected their acknowledgment of the increased necessity of women's labor following the devastating effects of World War I. The peasants associated the family structure as an institution with economic organization of peasant society (Clements 1982, 219). Bolshevik lax divorce laws were a threat and possible disruption of the family structure so tied to their economic survival. Clements argues that the Revolutions of 1917 and Civil War actually strengthened the belief that the traditional family structure was essential to their survival. As a result, the peasants met Bolshevik proposals that threatened the existence of the family structure, such as marriage reforms, with resistance.

In the years of 1919, 1920 and 1921 very few peasant women attended the meetings organized by the *zhenotdel*. In 1921, only 14,709 peasant women attended the *zhenotdel* meetings in 15 of the central provinces of Russia, where the population numbered in the millions (Clements 1982, 219). Wood quotes a woman in the village saying "Hurry up, we didn't come to listen to a song and dance. Our cows are waiting for us" (Wood 1997, 1158). It shows that women in the countryside did not have much free time and had to be convinced that the local meetings were worth the time it would take away from the work they needed to do. Organizers found it difficult to reach women. As a result, they attempted to talk to women in villages ahead of time, in small groups and then later invite to meetings once they were prepared. Organizers acquired sewing machines and organized sewing circles to attract younger, unmarried women whose parents would not allow them to come otherwise. Activists for women's sections also approached peasant women at parent's meetings at schools, where they used the situation to talk about other issues (Wood 1997, 1159). Despite their efforts, *zhenotdel* workers active in the countryside expressed that they were unable to involve peasant women in their work and persuade them to come to meetings. They acknowledged that women either did not want to participate or commonly ostracized women who did attend the meetings (Clements 1982, 219).

This inability to implement seemingly progressive legislation plagued many of the Bolshevik's early legislative efforts. The Bolsheviks passed so much legislation the first few months after the October Revolution that both Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik commentators criticized them as only pieces of paper (Wood 1997, 649). In his speech, *Soviet Power and the Status of Women*, Lenin argued that "In the course of two years Soviet power in one of the most backward countries of Europe did more to emancipate women and to make their status equal to that of the "strong" sex than all the advanced, enlightened, "democratic" republics of the world did in the course of 130 years" (Lenin, 1919). A series of decrees passed between 1918-1920 made Russian women politically and legally equal to men. All adult women had the right to own property, own or manage a business and the right to vote. The Bolshevik *Family Code of 1918* also known as the *Family Code on Marriage, the Family and Guardianship* made divorce much easier, especially if women were abused or abandoned by their husbands. It instituted civil marriage, making marriage a civil contract rather than a religious ceremony. The *Code of Labor Laws* initiated in 1918 banned pregnant women from working overtime and nightshifts. Working mothers had eight weeks paid leave and nursing mothers had to be given a 30-minute breast-feeding break every three hours. *Matmlad*, a government department for the "Protection of Mothers and Infants" was set up and provided maternity clinics and homes for single mothers. In response to illegal abortions, complications and deaths, the Soviet decree on abortion was passed in 1920. Abortions were free and legal in any Soviet hospital. In 1919, the Soviet government issued the *Decree on Eradication of Illiteracy*, which mandated all Russians between the ages of 8-50 to learn how to read and write (Soviet Social Reforms, 2014). The Bolsheviks attempted to grant women equal legal rights to men. However, the Bolshevik's inability to neither implement these laws nor prevent the inadvertently reverse effects of these laws made them impractical and had an ineffective impact on the lives of women.

In response to illegal abortions and the complications and deaths resulting from them, the *Decree on Women's Healthcare* was passed in 1920. The decree decriminalized abortions, made abortions in Soviet hospitals free, forbade anyone other than a doctor to carry out the operation including nurses and made doctors carrying abortions for profit accountable to the People's court (Decree on Women's Healthcare,

1920). The Soviet Union was the first country in the world to offer women cost-free abortions (Goldman 1993, 256). However, the frequency of women being hospitalized as a result from unauthorized abortions after the decree was passed and the decree's failure to recognize abortion as a health right for women, contests its success. It is difficult to know the frequency of illegal abortions, but the number of women hospitalized or treated for complications resulting from an abortion confirms that illegal abortions were still happening. In rural areas in the early 1920's illegal abortions outnumbered the number of legal abortions. Between 1922-1924 rural doctors performed 40,828 legal abortions and treated 41,684 women for complications resulting from illegal abortions. By the late 1920's the percentage of illegal abortions treated had dropped, but was still high. By 1926, out of all 121,978 women in abortion wards, 20,240 were treated for complications resulting from illegal abortions (Goldman, 1991, 260). Decriminalizing abortion was the state's way of attempting to prevent women from harming themselves from illegal abortions. In her essay, *The Demographic Argument in Soviet Debates Over the Legalization of Abortion in the 1920's*, Susan Gross Solomon argues that the state did not view legal abortions as a right, but the only way to prevent women from harming themselves. She criticizes the complex administration of the abortion system and the state's failure to provide contraceptive education (Solomon 1992, 60-61).

The continuation of illegal abortions did not mean women did not want or seek authorized abortions. In January 1924, an increasing number of women sought cost-free abortions. As a result, a priority list for access to a cost-free abortion was created. In November, regional abortion commissions were set up to give permissions for free abortions and supervise that the priority list was being followed. The commissions were staffed by a gynecologist, specialist in maternity and infant care, and representative of the *zhenotdel* (Solomon 1992, 60). Varied statistics across regions on rates of illegal abortions and the percentage of rejections by the abortion commissions partly explain why illegal abortions were still being practiced. In 1926, industrialized regions around Moscow, Leningrad and the Urals region displayed high rates of illegal abortions along with a high percentage of rejections by abortion commissions. However, in other provinces, such as Nizhnii Novgorod Province, the abortion commissions only rejected 6 percent of applicants by 30% of the beds in abortion ward were occupied by women who

had illegal abortions. Nationwide, the percentage of beds occupied by women with illegal abortions was twice the rejection rate, 14% and 7% respectively. Rejection by abortion commissions was not the only reason to opt for an illegal abortion, but is significant enough to be taken into account (Goldman, 1991, 262). Women living in rural areas faced even more obstacles. First, many hospitals in rural areas did not perform abortions. Second, traveling to the commission and then to the hospital were significant obstacles. The commissions required paperwork such as proof of pregnancy, marital status, family size and workplace. The woman would have to go the necessary documents from a doctor and local soviet. Acquiring the paperwork and her prolonged absence could expose her to the village, making an illegal abortion more accessible than a state authorized one (Goldman, 1991, 261).

Historian Wendy Goldman acknowledges that the decree made the Soviet Union the first state to offer cost-free abortions but criticizes the state for not recognizing abortion as a woman's right (Goldman 1993, 256). Rather, in the decree, abortions are referred to it as a "serious evil" which the state would compel, through socialism and protection for mothers and infants to fade away. The state's perspective was that women resorted to abortions because of the "the moral survivals of the past and the difficult economic conditions of the present" (Decree on Women's Healthcare, 1920). Goldman suggests that patriarchal rhetoric in the decree reflects the state's unawareness of how children limited a woman's ability to enter public life. She cites a researcher on abortion who expressed the official view; 'We hope that in the future, with the increase in the material wealth of our Union, in the standard of living, and in the cultural level of the working people, that women will lose their fear of maternity' (Goldman 1993, 256).

In some aspects, the state was right. In 1926, poverty was the single most important reason cited for abortion. In Moscow and Leningrad 57 percent of women cited poverty as the reason for terminating their pregnancies. Babies required materials such as food, clothing, diapers and living space, none of which were in large supply (Goldman 1991, 254). However, The type of women who opted to terminate their pregnancies were not what the abortion commissions and state expected. The typical abortion patient was a woman in her twenties, early thirties, married and usually the mother of one child. This indicates that women's motives for an abortion were to limit

the size of their families and because they lacked other means to do so (Goldman 1991, 259).

In 1927, the Kiev Conference of Midwives and Gynecologists declared that contraception was “a vital, moral measure at the present time” (Goldman 1991, 246). *Zhenotdel* representatives reported that women in rural villages had a “thirst for lectures on abortion and contraception” (Clements, Engel, Worobec 1991, 254). By the late 1920’s abortions were outnumbering births in many cities and the birthrate was falling (Clements, Engel, Worobec 1991, 263). The continuation of illegal abortions illustrates the state’s failure to make cost-free, authorized abortions equally accessible to women. Also, high abortion rates in the 1920’s reflect that the state did not provide women with proper contraception, education and conditions for bearing more children, leading them to want to limit the size of their families. The state cited economic hardship as the reason for why women wanted to terminate a pregnancy and legalized it to protect the health of women from unauthorized abortions performed by unqualified people. It did not recognize abortion as a medical health right and growing abortions rates reflect the state’s inability to improve conditions that would make women want to expand their family size. They failed to improve the circumstances that made women want to seek to terminate pregnancies.

Before the revolution, married woman had to live with her husband, take his name and assume his social status. Limited reform laws in 1914 allowed a woman to separate from her husband and obtain her own passport. However, she was still unable to get a job, education, receive a passport for work or execute a bill of exchange without her husband’s consent. The *Family Code of 1918* was instrumental in emancipating women and essentially gave them equal legal status to men. It “swept away centuries of property law and male privilege”(Goldman 1993, 51). Only civil marriages were recognized, no grounds for divorce were necessary and men and women had the same guarantees of alimony. Also, children born within or outside of registered marriages had equal rights. New lax divorce laws were monumental as marriage was almost impossible to obtain before. (Goldman 1993, 51). The courts generally granted women the alimony they requested, but the court had difficulty collecting money from men who refused to pay. Only half the men listed on court orders were seized (Goldman 1993, 142). Goldman

argues that although this was a progressive law, the state did not solve larger social problems that drive women to court. Social problems such as unemployment, low skills, poverty and lack of social services prevented women from being truly independent from the family unit. The Chairman of the Moscow Provincial Courts heeded that “The liberation of women, without an economic base guaranteeing every worker full material independence, is a myth” (Goldman 1993, 143). The state simplified divorce, but did not improve the conditions for the liberation of women.

The new lax divorce laws made it simpler for women to leave their husbands, but it did not provide any social welfare benefits such as children’s home, employment opportunities for women or contraception more available. The decree did little to lessen women’s dependence on the traditional family. Goldman illustrates that although the decree made women equal under the law, it actually created conditions and social freedoms that favored men and made life more difficult for women. Even though the courts often favored women, it was difficult to collect alimony. People who were extremely poor had no alimony to give. Kollontai argued that the divorce law benefited women who had husbands wealthy enough to support them financially. The decree simplified divorce but did not improve social conditions for women such as providing them with increased employment opportunities. The state had difficulty enforcing payments and did not resolve the issue of what happened with divorced women whose husbands could not afford alimony. Women’s groups argued that lax divorce laws, because they did not provide any means of support for women, only benefitted men and caused increased sexual and social freedom (Goldman 1993, 250).

Chapter Three

Economic Policies: New Economic Policy 1922-1928 and First Five Year Plan 1928-1932

Lenin's various economic plans affected women's roles in industry, gender segregation and emancipation. As the Civil War ended and the Party adopted the New Economic Policy, women were faced with unemployment. The NEP instituted "wages in place of rations, introduced a new system of cost accounting in the factories, and sharply decreased state spending on social services such as child care and communal dining halls" (Goldman 2002, 11). The NEP allowed for smaller privately owned industries and businesses, limited foreign invested and allowed people to keep or trade their surplus. It can be argued that the NEP was a mixed-economy approach. It was instituted by Lenin in 1921 until his successor; Stalin essentially abolished it in 1928. Goldman relies on materials from the 1918 consensus to claim that more than a quarter of the industrial workforce were fired and replaced by workers returning from the army or the countryside after the Civil War. Most of the people who found themselves unemployed were women (Goldman 2002, 11). Throughout the NEP years, unemployment was a serious problem for women. Even when the Bolsheviks successfully returned women to the workforce, their employment did not end gender separation in the industry. Lenin himself recognized and criticized that even though women were legally emancipated, prejudice against female employment was prevalent. The combination of prejudice against women as well as sex segregation in the industry prevented women from benefitting from the NEP.

Lenin criticized men for their prejudice and discrimination against women. In his 1920 interview with Clara Zetkin, Lenin responds, "Our communist work among the masses of women, and our political work in general, involves considerable educational work among the men. We must root out the old slave-owner's point of view, both in the Party and among the masses" (Lenin, 1920). Lenin understood that it was important to implement not only legislation which advanced women's legal and political rights, but that it was also important (for men) to ideologically understand and support women's emancipation. However, there was never any programmatic reform concerning this issue (Vogel 2013, 128). This lack of ideological reform became clear during the NEP years, when gender segregation in industry became clear.

In her work, *Women at the Gates*, Goldman explores women workers in large-scale industry in the USSR during the NEP years. She criticizes women's high unemployment during the NEP years but also acknowledges that reconstruction of industry in the 1920's drew larger numbers of women into the labor force. However, there were still limited opportunities for women in traditionally "male industries". Even though the number of women workers in large-scale industry more than doubled from 1923-1930 (423,200-885,000) women's share in the industry as a whole remained mostly unchanged (29.5%-28.4%) (Goldman 2002,12). Between 1923-1928, women's overall share in industries except for cotton, linen, sewing, shoes and food fell. The greatest losses for women workers were in traditionally "male" industries such as coal mining, iron ore and ferrous metallurgy. There were fewer women in heavy industry and more women in "lighter" industries. The NEP had done little for the number of women in large-scale industries in the USSR. In 1929, the number of women in large-scale industry was almost the same as in 1913 (725,900, 723,900). The NEP actually strengthened traditional patterns of gender segregation. The NEP years were plagued by female unemployment and women who were employed, were so in traditionally female industries such as textiles and sewing. These industries had both a majority of women in the workforce but also employed the majority of women overall. In 1928, almost two-thirds of 609,800 women working in industry worked in textiles. Between 1923-1928, the percentage of women working in traditionally male industries, such as coal mining, oil extraction, chemicals etc decreased. At the same time, the percentage of women working in the cotton industry rose from 39%-49.2% reflecting an uneven distribution of women across branches of industry and a concentration in traditionally female sector (Goldman 2002, 14-15). Goldman argues that the distribution pattern of women across industries represents job opportunities available to them and that the years, 1923-1928 reflect a decrease in opportunity. The NEP reasserted women's traditional roles in textiles and "light industries" and men's participation in metal and heavy industry. Due to external factors, such as the consequences from War World One, women's participation in heavy industry actually increased after 1900 and accelerated during the war years. The following NEP years were plagued by high unemployment rates for women, reflecting

their limited opportunities and actually strengthened gender divisions in industry, despite the Bolshevik's commitment to gender equality (Goldman 2002, 15).

The NEP also reinforced segregation by skill and wage. Throughout the 1920's women held the lowest paid and least skilled jobs in every industry. By 1925, half of male industrial workers held skilled jobs while only 13% of women had skilled jobs. Women in traditionally female industries such as textiles had some chances of advancement, but women in traditionally male industries such as metal and mining held no skilled positions and had no chance for advancement. For example, in the rubber and matches industry 5% of men were engaged in skilled work compared to .1% of women (Goldman 2002, 15). In the chemical industry, men held 7% of skilled positions compared to .3% of women. Because women held less skilled positions, they also earned less money than men. In 1927, women earned 64% of the male wage. In 1926, 21% of male workers were paid less than 40 rubles a month compared to 65% of women. Wage disparities were most extreme in the metal industry where 22% of women earned less than 40 rubles a month compared to 3% of men. However, women with the same skill level as men were also paid less. Unskilled women earned less than unskilled men in every industry. Goldman argues that these statistics suggest women received lower wages just because they were women (Goldman 2002, 16). Women were also hired more slowly than men. Between 1929 and 1930, the number of unemployed women dropped by 36% compared to 53% of men. Women's unemployment rose from 44.5% in 1928, to 47.1% in 1929 and 54.6% in 1930 (Goldman 2002, 17). Industry was growing but female unemployment continued to rise. Stalin noted that women and teens made up the "great majority" of unemployed registered in the labor exchanges. Labor analysts argued that women's unemployment was growing due to women's lack of skill, and industrialization demanded skilled and semiskilled workers. It is true that between 1927-1929 the majority of unemployed women registered in the labor exchanges had no skills. This is because many unskilled women had never worked for wages before. In Moscow in 1930, almost half of the unemployed women never held a waged job (Goldman 2002, 19). However, further statistics show that lack of skill only accounted for part of the growth of unemployed women. Goldman's research shows that skilled and semiskilled women were not hired as quickly as men. Also, between 1927-1930 skilled and semiskilled

unemployed women' increased from 35% to 42% while the number of unemployed skilled and semiskilled men dropped by 25% (Goldman 2002,19). In conclusion, even though Bolshevik legislation called for equal rights it failed to address sex segregation and prejudice in the industry. This is significant because women were the fastest-growing group in the labor force and by 1914 more than half a million women constituted almost 1/3 of the total number of factory workers (Goldman 2002, 10).

In addition, the NEP failed to prevent women from being discriminated against when hired. Goldman claims that initial reports discounted prejudice and discrimination against female labor. She argues that the labor exchanges often cooperated with managers to make sure that men were sent to fill the positions rather than women. This was most extreme in the Staliniskii region where women represented 30% of the unemployed but only 4% of the workers from the labor exchanges sent to fill positions were women. Goldman cites a Party member and worker in the Vetka mine said that "Not only is it not necessary to promote women to skilled jobs, in general, they should not work as long as there are men without work". He also went on to say that, "When there are no more unemployed men, then (women) can begin to work". The NKT officials argued that "the sluggishness of managers and technical personnel and bad attitudes toward female labor motivated by women's maternity" also contributed to women's unemployment (Goldman 2002,20). Between 1922-1932, the number of women employed in the national economy increased from 1.5 million (25% of the total) to 6 million (27.4% of the total). The NEP largely failed to draw women into the workforce, strengthened the gender divide in industry and failed to prevent discrimination against women. By the 1940's female employment peaked at 56% of the total work force (Buckley, 79). According to historian Mary Buckley, women suffered massive unemployment during the New Economic Policy and were only drawn back into the labor force in the subsequent Five Year Plans instituted by Joseph Stalin (Buckley 1989, 83).

The first few years of Stalin's rule, Lenin's successor and leader of the Soviet Union from 1929-1952, were marked with drastic changes in political, economic and social legislation that severely diverged from Lenin's. Stalin's First Five Year Plan, implemented between 1928-1932 achieved high levels of female employment while the

Family Laws of 1936 reversed a decade of progressive legislation which made Soviet women legally some of the most emancipated women in the world (Holmgren 1993, 5)

In *Food and Conflict in Europe*, historian Mark. B Tauger argues that the collectivization of agriculture in the 1930's was the most significant and traumatic transformation the Communist regime subjected the people of the former Russian Empire (Tauger 2006, 109). The First Five Year Plan, implemented between 1928-1932 was Stalin's initial economic policy, which attempted to bring modernization to agriculture through the policy of collectivization. At the First Conference of Workers in 1931, Stalin delivered a speech where he argued, "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make up this gap in ten years. Either we do it or they will crush us" (Stalin, 1931). The view that the purpose of collectivization was to modernize soviet agriculture of increase it's productivity has been debated by historians. The other dominating view is that collectivization was essentially a tactic used to "squeeze out the peasants" and was a reaction to their resistant tendencies (Taguer 2006, 110). Regardless of genuine motivation, the official policy was that collectivization would increase productivity, marketing and modernize Soviet agriculture. This policy was implemented with the backdrop of a grain crisis from 1928-1929 following a famine from 1931-1933 (Tauger 2006, 110). This thesis investigates the effects of the First Five Year Plan as a whole on women and refrains from commenting on the controversial debate regarding the famine, in which collectivization undoubtedly played a factor.

Under the NEP, the government essentially bought grain from peasants on the free market. However, poor harvests made the prices of grain rise and the state faced a grain procurement crisis in early 1928, which threatened to starve major cities in the Soviet Union. The wealthier peasants (kulaks) withheld grain, which made the prices rise even more. Stalin labeled this as the "Kulak Grain Strike" and as a result revived the policy of grain requisitioning. Stalin felt that peasants withholding grain gave them the ability to essentially hold the government ransom that peasant ideology was essentially capitalist and was therefore in conflict with the government. In 1929, the 'liquidation of kulaks as a class' was announced (Hayes 2003, 116). Stalin viewed the kulaks as counterrevolutionary, attempted to liquidate them as a class and use their elimination to bring socialism in the countryside with the collectivization of agriculture. Stalin invoked

violent methods to achieve the goals of collectivization, which led to many peasant protests. However, there are several interpretations to Stalin's to collectivization of agriculture, and although his disdain for Kulaks is one of them, it is a narrow interpretation. Other historians argue that Stalin's goal in collectivization was to facilitate extraction of food from the villages, modernize agriculture to maximize production and increase the share of marketed grain (Tauger 2006, 108-109). Historian Douglas Bell describes collectivization; "Peasants and villages were organized either into state farm administrations, known as *sovkhozy*, which were owned outright by the state and paid peasant farmers as hired labor, or volunteer co-operative collective farms called *kolkhozy*" (Bell, 2013). The collectivization of Soviet agriculture led to waves of protests throughout the countryside and in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Peasant unrest began during the brutal, often violent and forced requisitions of grain and continued until the end of the First Five Year Plan by which collectivization was largely completed. By the end of 1931, about 60% of peasant households were collectivized (Lynn 1986, 25). In *Bab'I Bunty*, Viola Lynn attributes the violence and protests (which most heavily occurred in the second half of 1929 and 1930-31) to forced grain requisitions, collectivization and *dekulakization*.

She argues that the *bab'I bunty*, or "women's riots" were a huge part of the collectivization years and were recognized by speakers at the Sixteenth Party Congress. One of the speakers at the congress noted 'We know that in connection with the excesses in the collective farm movement, women in the countryside in many cases played the most "advanced" role in the reaction against the collective farm' (Lynn 1986, 26). This is unsurprising as during the years of 1932-1933, women comprised about 58% of collective farm workers and supplied two-thirds of the labor on collective farms (Engel 2004, 171). Peasant women were primarily affected by collectivization through the socialization of livestock, which affected the women's economic position in the household (Lynn 1986, 32. Collectivization was carried out as a gender neutral policy, but had gender implications (Jacobs 2013, 59). In her essay Lynn argues that peasant women led protests against collectivization and the state's attempts to socialize domestic livestock because it was "generally the basis and justification of the woman's economic position within the household". Women saw a connection between private ownership of

livestock and their economic position and role within the family. Women rejected other aspects of collectivization, such as the introduction of nurseries. Lynn refers to the argument Maurice Hindus, a Ukrainian-born American reporter who found that because losing a child in infancy was common for women in a village he visited, women were naturally uneasy about entrusting the care of their children to nurseries (Lynn 1986, 33). Peasant women associated communist policies with attacks against their beliefs and domestic interests. As a result, women had legitimate concerns against collectivization and organized protests against policies and practices (Lynn 1986, 31-33).

Stalin had extremely high goals for Soviet domestic policy. The purpose of the First Five Year Plan was rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. He wanted to erase all traces of capitalism that remained from the NEP and completely transform the Soviet Union into an industrialized and socialist state. He emphasized the industrialization and modernization of heavy industry and proposed an unrealistic goal of a 250% increase in overall industrial development and a 330% expansion in heavy industry alone. All industry and services were nationalized; managers were given output quota by central planners and trade unions became mechanisms to increase worker productivity. The First Five Year Plan called for the collectivization of 20% of peasant households, but by 1940 about 97% of all peasant households had been collectivized and private ownership of property was almost completely eliminated (Library of Congress, 2016). Stalin's intense plan required the complete engagement of all workers in society. In an effort to solely focus on industrialization, Stalin claimed that other issues, such as unemployment and women's emancipation had been achieved. Policies to train and engage women were considered "superfluous". As a result, Stalin announced that the Soviet Union had solved the woman question, that the *zhenotdel* had achieved its goals and had it abolished (Rule, Noonan 1996, 80). In the same year, the USSR officially declared to have completely eradicated joblessness in 1930. The Soviet Union claimed that there was no unemployment in the Soviet Union, and the payment of unemployment benefits stopped (Porket 1989, 53).

How successful was the Five Year Plan in increasing employment opportunities for women, a hallmark of women's emancipation under communism? Regarding women, the plan proposed an unpretentious increase in the proportion of women

employed in the public sector, from 27% of the socialized labor force in 1927-1928 to 32.5% in 1932-1933. The government was unable to foresee the labor shortage created by demographic and economic factors. As a result, the Party central Committee actively tried to draw the women into the workforce through several government decrees. State quotas were established for various industries and educational institutions were required to admit a fixed proportion of women for training in different fields. Between 1930-1937 a massive amount of women entered the industrial workforce. By 1932, the number of women employed rose from three to six million, far exceeding any expectations. However, the proportion of women from 1927-1928, an estimated 27.4% remained almost unchanged (Lapidus, 1978, 98-99). More gains were made in the Second Five Year Plan period between 1933-1937 where a total of 3,350,000 women entered the labor force, making up almost 82% of all newly employed workers. By 1937, almost 9.4 million women were employed and the proportion of women in the labor force rose to 34%. By 1939, the proportion of women in industry had reached 41.6% (Lapidus 1997, 99). In later years, women rose to 47% in 1960, 49% in 1965 and 50.5% of the total number of wage and salary earners (Mandel, 1971, 262). Unlike the NEP, which strengthened sex segregation in industry, women saw higher rates of unemployment in non-traditional female roles. By 1926, women composed only 1% of mechanics and machine adjusters but by 1939 this number had risen to 4%. In 1926, women were only 3% of public transportation drivers, but this percentage rose to 57% by 1959 (Mandel, 1971 270-273). Women formed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the manual workers in iron ore mining, coal mining, and the iron and steel industry (Lapidus 1978, 99). Statistically, the First Five Year Plan and subsequent Five Year Plans did not reinforce the sex segregation strengthened by the NEP and women made gains across all industries. However, the rise in female employment cannot only be attributed to government initiatives. The devastating effects of collectivization, mass mobilization of men for military service and decline in real wages also contributed to the massive entry of women into the labor force (Lapidus 1997, 102-103). Not investigated in this chapter, but compulsory to mention are the *Family Laws of 1936*, which made abortion illegal and divorce harder to obtain, reversing the progressive legislation Lenin enacted. Despite making unprecedented advances across various industries, advances made in women's employment in the USSR were

overshadowed by the state's failure to provide women with enough services to keep up with their pace in industry and oppressive legislation. (Lapidus 1971, 103). In *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* historian Gail Warshofsky Lapidus investigates to what extent the massive entry of women into social production proved liberating when taking into consideration the wider social context, specifically the state's failure to develop public services at the necessary quality and frequency with which women were entering the workforce.

Echoing previous Bolshevik goals based on Marxism, Lapidus argues that if women were to truly be emancipated in the Soviet Union, massive investments in public services that would relieve women from domestic duties such as preschool institutions, after-school programs, communal laundries, dining rooms and other social services were needed. The state's failure to provide these services at the rate they were needed along with social policies designed to strengthen women's reproductive roles created a "double burden" for women who had to fulfill both domestic and professional roles. In his essay *The Five-Year Plan for Women's Labour* "Constructing Socialism and the 'Double Burden, 1930-1932", historian Thomas G. Schrand found that through the 1920's the Bolshevik regime had largely failed to provide the day care centers, cafeterias and other communal services considered fundamental to emancipate women from traditional household burdens (Schrand 1999, 1455). He further argues that by the end of 1932, a working Soviet woman's experience was characterized by a double burden from a combination of private household labor in addition to their paid work, resulting from the lack of social services (Schrand 1999, 1356). It is difficult to numerically represent the lack of services compared to the need, but historians Lapidus and Schrand have concluded that public services have generally not matched the women's entry into the workforce (Schrand 1999, 1456, Lapidus 1971, 103). However, Schrand cites an example which he thinks is characteristic of the first five-year plan: In 1931, there was a plan to employ 300,000 housewives and expand nursery services nation-wide by 250,000. However, nursery construction could not keep up with the mobilization of women workers. For example, in Leningrad, 74,000 housewives were recruited in 1931, but only one nursery was constructed (Schrand 1999, 1472). The gap between the services

needed and the services provided can be attributed many reasons. However, examining the legislation itself reflects the priorities of the state regarding women labor.

A decree in 1930 issued to encourage the increased hiring of women only mentioned the need to reduce female unemployment. A few months later, the Central Committee called for the recruitment of workers' wives into the production to fulfill the third year of the First Five Year Plan, essentially establishing a link between women's employment and the First Five Year Plan. The fact that a link between the plan and women's employment was established two years after the First Five Year plan was implemented reflects female labor was merely an afterthought and consequence of unexpected labor shortages, and that a plan for women's labor was desired (Schrand 1999 1460-1461). The first draft of the plan for women's labor, proposed by Narkomtrud, the Commissariat of Labor, was rejected. Schrand argues that the most revealing aspect of the draft of the plan reflects the state's recognition that social service would be inadequate for the foreseeable future: 'The further socialization of everyday life will proceed according to the growth of the industrialization of the social economy and on the basis of the rise of the material circumstances of the nation..it is impossible to throw more than a fixed minimum of resources into the completion of the socialization of everyday life' (Narkomtrud,1930 from Schrand 1460). The draft essentially recognizes that the state's provision of social services would be inadequate. Subsequent plans or incorporations into the original FYP for female labor that appeared in 1931 had inconsistent target figures, reflecting the chaotic planning process (Schrand 1999, 1462). It can be argued that the consequences of inadequate social services eclipsed the breakthrough women made in gaining employment across various non-traditionally female industries.

The lack of social services, which would assist women with domestic duties, such as childcare both limited women's social mobility and created a double burden for women who participated in the paid labor force. In 1931, the shortage of skilled worker prompted the state to respond with a campaign to increase the training of women workers. The Central Executive Committee passed a resolution, which included plans to raise the target for women's enrolment in technical training to 50% of all incoming students. The 50% was not met, but there was a temporary increase in the rates of

women's technical training. However, after a temporary dramatic increase, female enrolment declined and many women who were recruited did not complete their courses. Schrand cites a 1933 report from Ukraine that holds inadequate daily-life services responsible;

“Without question, one of the main reasons for women's drop outs..is the absence of daily-life services to provide them with children's institutions during studies, since nurseries and kindergartens serve the female worker only during the time of her work in production, and thus the woman worker frequently cannot raise her skill level owing to the unfavorable daily-life conditions”(Schrand 1999, 1465-1565)

The report only refers to women with children, as only women with child-care responsibilities would be affected by the lack of childcare facilities. Nevertheless, the report acknowledges that lack of public services that would ease women's childcare responsibilities limit the time women have to devote to improving their skill levels, which would in turn give them higher wages, job flexibility and social mobility.

Arlie Hochschild, a sociologist at Berkley studied how families in the United States were affected by the massive influx of women and mothers entering the workforce. Hochschild interviewed and observed 50 couples and documented in her book, *The Second Shift*. She found that often when women completed their paid full day of work, they still had the responsibilities of unpaid housework, childcare and other domestic duties. Hochschild argues that various factors have contributed to what she has coined as the “second shift” for women. Longer work hours; inadequate parental leave and inadequate childcare contribute to what she calls the ‘second shift’. She found that more often than not, women in the same family had less free time than men and spent more hours per week performing domestic chores. Hochschild's book, published in 1989 was revolutionary in investigating the double burden experienced by working mothers in the second half of the 20th century and can be applied to what Soviet women experienced when they entered the workforce.

Another aspect where the lack of public services overshadowed the increased employment for women was the unprecedented affect on social and family life. Natalya Baranskaya's novel, *A Week Like Any Other* is a work of fiction reflects the lives of employed women with children. It is told from the perspective of a married mother with children who work as a scientist. She narrates her busy schedule through the course of a week. The work of fiction characterizes the experience of working women as an overwhelming double burden of both domestic and professional duties. In the beginning of the novel, Olga, the main character arrives to work late and is questioned by her boss about a deadline for lab test results. At the end of the novel, Olga has a near breakdown when she thinks she lost the results. After her friend finds it for her, she admits that she was actually the one who invented fiberglass plastic for the lab. She gave the idea to her boss because she was pregnant and wouldn't be able to stay at work much longer. Even though the novel was initially published in 1969, it's characterization of the daily obstacles a working woman in Moscow goes through is as relevant now, 48 years later, as it was when it was first published. The novel was published in 1969, but reflects the earlier, unfavorable conditions created by Soviet society. The most important aspects of the novel describe the chaotic life of the main character who is overburdened by domestic and childcare duties as well as her professional work. Her constant reproach for her shortcoming from male colleagues throughout the novel reflect that even though women in the Soviet Union had been emancipated, men's attitude and prejudice about women were still prevalent. Olga's decision to get an abortion after she gives her boss the idea about the fiberglass reflects the state's ability to create conditions for women to they can expand their family size. Also, it reflects how the state was unable to curb not only the manual labor, but also the intellectual labor lost when women felt overburdened by their simultaneous reproductive roles.

Conclusion

Measuring the emancipation of Soviet women is easy to do from just one perspective. It is simple to look at progressive legislative policy or statistical figures documenting women's advances in employment or education and compare the figures to previous years. However, this is too narrow of an analysis. This thesis scrutinized the implementation and impact of what I argue were the most prominent features of legislation that affected women's path to liberalization

Following the thoughts of Marx, Engels and Lenin, this thesis examined the two most prominent features of women's emancipation: legal rights and participation in the paid labor workforce. Specifically, this thesis inspected the most prominent Bolshevik legislation affecting women's rights as well as the economic policies instituted by Lenin and Stalin. More time was devoted to the Bolshevik's cornerstone emancipatory legislation than Stalin's oppressive legislation, as the implementation and administration of emancipatory legislation leaves much to be investigated. The New Economic Policy and First Five Year Plan were the primary focus as they were the cornerstone economic policies of both Lenin and Stalin.

I found that initial Bolshevik legislation; especially regarding women's health rights and marital status did make Soviet women the most emancipated women in the world, as no other state had managed to provide cost-free termination of pregnancy. However, state resources limited the services available to women and although abortion was legal and cost-free, women still faced obstacles and loopholes, which prevented them from accessing it. The lax divorce laws that were introduced made ending a marriage easier, but failed to provide divorced women with means of support, as the state was largely unable to enforce alimony and child support rulings. Also, initial efforts to organize women were chaotic as the state faced a theoretical conundrum and had to balance between providing women needed support and resembling bourgeois feminism. Initiating women's organization with ideological uncertainty rather than strong support led to poor cooperation between the women's department and local party committees; reflecting the state's failure to eradicate prejudice against women and the activist approach to mobilizing them.

I also found that the New Economic Policy and First Five Year plan had extremely contrasting results. The NEP was marked by high unemployment rates for women and unchanged proportion of women employed in large-scale industry. The NEP actually strengthened gender segregation in industry and failed to employ women in non-traditional roles. The plan essentially stagnated women's advancement in the workforce. Stalin's First Five Year Plan increased employment for women, but the collectivization policy of the plan seriously affected the lives of peasant women. Also, the state was unable to provide social services at the pace women were entering the workforce, leaving them with the so called 'double shift' of both unpaid domestic work and paid professional work, leaving them feeling exhausted rather than emancipated.

I conclude that after an analysis of Soviet legislation, for a period of time, Soviet women were legally, among the most emancipated women in the world. However, despite this very progressive legislation there were factors that put limits on the successful implementation of Bolshevik's policies, principals and provisions. Due to external and internal factors, such as Civil War, economic difficulties and discrimination, the Bolshevik government failed to implement many of their policies. This thesis demonstrated that the Soviet government was successful in achieving legal equality and higher employment for women, but was unable to topple the gender discrimination that kept women out of decision making roles and achieving equality. In addition, the obligation to work outside the household created a double-burden or double shift that had a negative impact on the quality of life of Soviet women.

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Pledge of Honesty

“On my honor as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it”

Andjela Radovanovic