

Women in stalins russia



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Marriage as an institution did not at first win the favour of all Bolsheviks. During the 1920s the Soviet government had tried to weaken the family as a unit of society because it believed it exploited women. Government propaganda, as early as the 1920's emphasised the role of woman workers as well as homemakers. Wedding rings were abolished. Abortion became available on demand. Marriages were performed in brief ceremonies only in register offices. Divorce could be obtained simply by one partner in the marriage requesting it. By 1934 there were 37 divorces for every 100 marriages, while there were 154, 000 abortions for every 57, 000 live births in Moscow. In 1936, in the face of growing trends of abortion, family desertion and juvenile crime, the government introduced new measures to strengthen family life. Divorce was made more difficult, abortion became a criminal offence except when it was necessary on medical grounds, and wedding rings were restored. And to try to increase the birth rate, tax exemptions were given to families with large numbers of children. Homosexuality was also banned. Families received a range of new benefits under Stalin. There was a free health service for all, there were holidays with pay for many workers, and an insurance scheme against accidents at work. To encourage women to go back to work after giving birth, almost all factories set up crÄches to care for their children. However, women still faced discrimination in the workplace, usually occupying the lower positions Soviet women under Stalin were the first generation of women able to give birth in the safety of a hospital, with access to prenatal care.[75] Education was also an example of an increase in standard of living after economic development. The generation born during Stalin's rule was the first near-universally literate generation. Millions benefitted from mass literacy

campaigns in the 1930s, and from workers training schemes.[76] Engineers were sent abroad to learn industrial technology, and hundreds of foreign engineers were brought to Russia on contract.[75] Transport links were improved and many new railways built. Workers who exceeded their quotas, Stakhanovites, received many incentives for their work;[76] they could afford to buy the goods that were mass-produced by the rapidly expanding Soviet economy. The increase in demand due to industrialization and the decrease in the workforce due to World War II and repressions generated a major expansion in job opportunities for the survivors, especially for women.[76] -

The 1926 census showed a deficit of males after the First world war, the revolution that was in process and the civil war. This deficit was only furthered by the collectivization that was introduced by Stalin, the great purges and the second world war. In the period between 1932 and 1937 women constituted 82 percent of all newly employed workers. Because the USSR was so poor, both husbands and wives often had to work. Despite many new responsibilities for women at the work place, nothing changed for women at home. All of the child rearing and household duties women had always performed remained for them to take care of when they were not on the job. Women served as much time on the job as did men, but at home they devoted at least two and a half times the amount that men did to household duties:

- Laundry — In the 1930s, 2/3 of urban families had to obtain water from a communal tap. Running water itself was rare in the rural areas.
- Shopping — Women traveled far to shop since there were so many shortages on basic necessities, and they waited huge amounts of time in line.

And so as a result, women had less time for leisure and for education which created a lack of education and career interruptions due to childbirth.

prevented them from being promoted in the society. The population levels of the country had dropped and the Party was desperately trying to find a solution to the issue of family disintegration which had become one of the major issues. Social services to women were not in great supply despite the fact that by the mid 1930s Stalin was very intent on restoring family stability: Hence to come up with the family problems in Stalinist Russia additional allowances were made to mothers in the 1930s who bore more children like : The number of pre-schools increased. Very limited amounts of adoption and foster care were allowed as well. The use of birth control was not allowed. Abortions were banned. Estimates of the number of people killed in the Great Terror remain a point of contention. Stalin himself admitted to Churchill that he liquidated 20 million. This is probably an accurate number if you count all those deliberately starved, shot, worked to death, beaten to death, driven to the point of suicide, or killed by neglect or exposure. On 8 November Stalin's second wife, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, committed suicide following an argument with Stalin during a party at the Kremlin. Her suicide also reportedly comes after a group of students she is teaching are arrested for sedition after attempting to inform Stalin of the plight of the peasants. Nadezhda Alliluyeva's suicide, and the scathing personal note she leaves him, are believed to have had a shattering effect on Stalin. Under the Soviet government people benefited from some social liberalization. Girls were given an adequate, equal education and women had equal rights in employment, improving lives for women and families. Stalinist development also contributed to advances in health care, which significantly increased the lifespan and quality of life of the typical Soviet citizen. Stalin's policies granted the Soviet people universal access to healthcare and

education, effectively creating the first generation free from the fear of typhus, cholera, and malaria. The occurrences of these diseases dropped to record low numbers, increasing life spans by decades. ** The positive side of Stalin's policies included universal access to quality education and health care. Technical education was promoted and transport links across the Soviet Union were improved. Industrialization created many job opportunities. Women were given equal treatment in education and employment. * A very suitable example to show the condition of women in early Russia is of a documentary clearly showing the condition and life of women reflecting the flaws in Stalin's Society and how they were neglected for greed and interests . The movie, A Woman In Berlin, is based on the diary of the German journalist Marta Hillers and depicts the horror of the Red Army's capture of the capital of the Third Reich in April and May 1945. Marta was one of two million German women who were raped by soldiers of the Red Army - in her case, as in so many others, several times over. It was a feature of Russia's 'liberation' and occupation of eastern Germany at the end of World War II that is familiar enough to historians, but which neither country cares to acknowledge took place on anything like the scale it did. For Russia, the episode besmirches the fine name of the Red Army that had fought so hard and suffered so much in its four-year campaign against the Wehrmacht. The courage and resilience of the ordinary Russian in what they called the Great Patriotic War is incontestable, and for every five German soldiers killed in action in the whole of World War II, four died on the Eastern Front. Yet the knowledge that the victorious Red Army committed mass rape across Prussia and eastern Germany as they closed in on Berlin degrades its reputation, which is unacceptable to many Russians today. When the

historian Antony Beevor wrote about it in his book *Berlin: The Downfall*, the Russian ambassador to London, Grigory Karasin, accused him of 'an act of blasphemy', saying: 'It is a slander against the people who saved the world from Nazism.' Similarly, living Germans do not want the events that humiliated and violated them, their mothers and grandmothers to be held up to public examination, as this movie promises to do.