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MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY IN THE U.S.S.R.

by D. ERDE

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I

"LE Nid de Viperes"—the vipers' nest—this is the sensational but nevertheless significant title of a modern French novel which depicts a family whose members, forced by circumstances to live together, try desperately to find refuge from their mutual hatreds in gloomy solitude.

"We lived together for 47 years, without having a single thing in common," explains Piquet's widow—after the death of her eminently respectable lawyer-husband who had the reputation of being an exemplary head of a family—in Pierre-Chappi's play, "The Death of Monsieur Piquet," staged by the Comedy Theatre in Leningrad. It is difficult to imagine worse relations than those which prevailed in that family, a veritable nest of vipers where the very air seemed to be poisoned with hatred. But can it be said that this and similar plays deal with only exceptional cases? Would it not be more correct to say that the talented dramatist has not shrunk from the truth, but has revealed a terrible yet real and existing social phenomenon which is typical under certain circumstances and in certain strata of society?

A definite social order produces a definite mode of family life.

Impossible, in a limited space, to undertake a comprehensive survey of family relations in pre-revolutionary Russia. We must confine ourselves to a few brief remarks which may serve as an introduction to the problem of marriage and the family in the U.S.S.R.

Before the October Revolution, marriage and the family in Russia reflected, in a very striking fashion, all the peculiarities of the country's economic and political regime. The conservative

family law was in tune with the government's general reactionary policy. Russia was one of those countries in which the whole force of the law supported not only the family as an economic nucleus of society, but also the archaic rights of the slave-owning husband and the function of the family as a compulsory and peculiar "organisation of love."

In this respect the notorious tenth volume of the Codex of Laws of the Russian Empire can only be compared to such backward codes as, for instance, the Prussian rural law which granted the husband the right to claim, through the courts, the fulfilment of marital duties by the wife, also the right to employ the police to force a wife to return to the family.

According to the Statutes of the Russian Empire, the husband was obliged to "love his wife," but nothing more. The obligations with which the law saddled the other partner—the wife—were much more varied and concrete. She was obliged to "obey her husband as the head of the family, to love and respect him and show him every mark of affection and compliance." Those guilty of entering the state of marriage without the consent of parents or guardians were imprisoned and deprived of their inheritance. A number of laws forbade or limited marriages with "heretics," heathens and Jews. Special laws regulated the marriages of officers.

Pre-revolutionary Russian law did not recognise civil marriage. Only Church marriage was considered legal. The Church also had the right to divorce married people. The cost of divorce was very high and quite beyond the means of the working people. Proceedings were accompanied by shameful formalities and dragged on for years. There were, of course, even in that dark kingdom, loving and devoted hearts united by strong feelings of love and duty. The poet Nekrasov wrote:

> Fate has three hard lots in store;
> The first lot is to marry a slave;
> The second to be the mother of the son of a slave;
> And the third is to obey a slave all your life.

But in his poem "Russian Women," Nekrasov described the beautiful deeds of those tender yet firm heroines who shared the bitter fate of their husbands, the Decembrists in exile in the mines of Siberia.

The great Russian 19th century critic, Belinsky, in his analysis of family relationships in progressive circles, correctly stressed the moral purity of Russian women and the Russian family. This

social phenomenon was reflected in Pushkin's famous novel in verse, "Euge Onegin," in which Tatiana personifies, for the first time an with remarkable force, the poetic image of the Russian woman. As Belinsky puts it, Pushkin's Tatiana is an example of the Russian woman for whom love can be the greatest happiness or the greatest misfortune—but for whom there can be no in-between stage. It was for this reason that Tatiana refused Onegin's protestations of love. Later Russian literature presented the world with a gallery of charming portraits deriving from Tatiana—that truly "typical Russian woman."

II

1917 was a year of fundamental changes in the realm of marriage and the family. The age-old political, economic and legal inequality between man and woman was abolished. Love, and not material calculations, became the determining factor in marriage.

Soviet law stood up for the defence of women and the family, cemented by affection and mutual attachment. From the very outset it aimed at introducing into the conscience and life of society a high moral level and full equality of both partners.

In the U.S.S.R., as in other progressive countries, Church marriage became the "personal affair of both parties." From now on, those desiring to enter the state of marriage had to advise, orally or in writing, the Registry Office of the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers Deputy (ZAGS) accordingly, and make a statement in writing affirming that there was no obstacle to their entering the married state and that they mutually agreed to it; after which bridegroom and bride were pronounced husband and wife.

According to Soviet law, a second marriage without a preliminary divorce is punished as a criminal offence. Persons who marry may choose either the husband's or the wife's names, or a combination of both names. The law considers as obstacles to marriage the following: direct family relationships—brothers and sisters, etc.—and also certain physical diseases. Under no conditions does a difference of nationality between husband and wife serve as an obstacle to marriage.

The marriage registration ceremony is of a suitably solemn character, and the premises and decoration of registry offices are in keeping with this. Scrupulous attention is paid to the registration act by the employees of the Soviet apparatus. Certain formalities are observed. The couple is congratulated by

the registrar, who shakes hands with them. Friend and relations are usually present at the ceremony, which is geneally followed by some family celebration, either in a restaurant o in the home of the newly married couple.

The Soviet Government, which introduced civil marriage, does not limit itself to half measures. It lends the utnost possible material support to the newly formed family relation and is especially solicitous for the welfare of the weaker lartner—the woman who is to be the mother of the future generation.

Care for the welfare of mother and child has become the corner-stone of the Soviet social edifice, of the material, moral and cultural care of the individual manifested by the State—care for man's present and for his future, for the future of the people and the country as represented by its children and youth.

At the height of the civil war, on May 17th, 1919, Lenin, the head of the Soviet Government, signed a decree instituting the feeding of children free of charge—at first up to the age of 14, and later, according to the law of June 13th, up to the age of 16. Lenin ordered that food should be distributed free to all children irrespective of origin. He made every effort to extend this assistance for children in the fateful days when the Finnish White Guards invaded the Republic from the north, when Yudenitch was threatening Petrograd, and Denikin's White Guard bandits were advancing from the south.

In old Russia, up to the year 1902, no official or legal bond or responsibility existed between either parent and any children born "outside wedlock." After 1902 this situation changed only in so far as children born out of wedlock, but who could prove their origin beyond dispute, received the right to a pittance from their father.

This inequality in the children's position was abolished by the Soviet Government once and for all. The Soviet legal code of 1918 dealing with marriage and the family constituted a remarkable change in one of the most complex spheres of life—a change which took place from the inception of the October Revolution. The other fraternal Republics followed this example and introduced similar legislation. (In the Ukrainian Republic such legislation was introduced on two occasions, in 1919 and in 1920, and in Byelorussia after the Byelorussian S.S.R. had been proclaimed for the second time.) On January 1st, 1927, a new legal code regulating marriage and the family came into operation. This codified the results of the social changes that had taken place and the experience that had been gained during

the first decade of the Soviet system. The basic principles remained unchanged.

The adoption of the new code was preceded by a wide discussion, both at the sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and, outside it, at public meetings in towns and villages throughout the U.S.S.R. The equalisation of actual and registered marriages in the eyes of the law was an important supplement introduced by the new code. Marriage relations were considered to be in full force whenever evidence of corresponding circumstances was present —when the facts of a joint life were established by a common household, mutual material support, education of children, manifestation of marital relations before third parties, exchange of personal letters.

III.

The idea of the humaneness and purity of love, the idea of Soviet marriage, has been best expressed in two letters addressed by V. I. Lenin to Inessa Armand, which were published in 1939. These letters were written in 1915 in reply to a plan for a pamphlet written by Armand for women workers and submitted to Lenin.

Despite the exceptional gravity of the situation in Europe, where the first world war was then raging, Lenin found time to communicate to Armand his views on love, marriage and the family. In so doing he emphasised the importance which he attached to the problems raised by Armand.

Armand had fallen under the influence of the modern decadent theory of "free love," as covered by this vociferous phrase. Lenin sent her a short but clear explanation of the fallacy of her views. Lenin enumerated the possible meanings of "free love" as follows:

1. Freedom from material (financial) calculations in love.
2. Freedom from material worries.
3. From religious prejudices.
4. From father's prohibitions, etc.
5. From "society's" prejudices.
6. From narrow surroundings (peasant or petit bourgeois or bourgeois intellectual environment).
7. From the fetters of law, courts and police.
8. From the serious aspect of love.
9. From childbirth.
10. Freedom for adultery, etc.

Points 1 to 7 Lenin considered right, but he pointed out that the phrase "freedom of love" was insufficient to express these requirements. By "free love" readers of the pamphlet would invariably understand something like points 8 to 10, and therefore Lenin advises Armand to omit the "requirements for freedom of love" from the pamphlet altogether. Points 1 and 2 are the most important, and after them 3 to 7, but this, Lenin explained, is not "freedom of love."

Lenin went on to give a severe rebuke to those inclined to support and praise superficial sexual relations. He upheld marriage on the basis of love as opposed to the vulgarity of marriage without love.

Armand, however, hesitated to accept Lenin's arguments. She even reproached him for having compared "free love" to "free adultery." Rejecting modern marriage, Armand wrote that "even a fleeting passion and relation" are more poetical and clearer than "the loveless kisses exchanged by (vulgar) husband and wife." To this Lenin retorted: "Is the comparison logical? A kiss without love exchanged between vulgar husband and wife is dirty. Agreed. What should it be contrasted with? One would say, with a kiss with love. But you contrast it with 'fleeting' (why fleeting?) 'passion'; (why not love?). It follows logically that kisses without love (fleeting ones) are contrasted with kisses without love exchanged between husband and wife. . . Strange."

Lenin pointed out that fleeting relations are nothing but "incidents," i.e., individual cases which do not count. This theme, Lenin continued, was one to be worked out in a novel which should show the individual environment together with an analysis of the characters and the psychology of the given types. The pamphlet should not deal with "incidents." Lenin's words give a clear idea of the view of the family and marriage held by Soviet people. Family ties must be strong. At the same time, marriage is essentially the union of two persons resulting in a third—i.e., children, without which the existence of any society is impossible.

IV

Is Soviet society—we shall now speak of it as such—interested in the stability and the solidity of the family? Yes, of course it is. The so-called "theory" which maintained that in a socialist society the family would disintegrate, and that the State would

have to take care of the children, was never a Soviet theory. It was never shared by the true theorists of the new regime; on the contrary it was sharply opposed by them. The monogamous family not only does not die out, but grows stronger and becomes the only possible and necessary one.

The view of marriage as a union of hearts strengthened by a community of ideas has been universally recognised. On this question, social opinion is in full harmony with the law which does not give the husband the right to impose his will on his wife, to spy on her and her friends, to examine her letters, etc. The wife needs no permission from her husband to attend classes or go to work. Very often the husband himself suggests that she should take up some study and, if he has the necessary knowledge, helps her in her studies as a comrade and friend. Both public moral consciousness and Soviet law consider as normal those relations which are based on emotion and a reliable intimacy between husband and wife, on their mutual assistance in their united lives warmed by mutual affection.

In order to introduce such a lofty idea of family life, it was necessary to establish complete equality of men and women in the eyes of the law, to cut the ground from under the feet of reactionaries and vulgarians and to create the necessary conditions which would make the family strong and free from acquisitive calculations and enable it to satisfy both personal and social interest. From its very first days, the Soviet Government sincerely undertook to achieve the necessary conditions for the equality of women.

According to Lenin, in order that women should be completely emancipated and enjoy full equality with men, it was necessary that they should take part in general productive work. This, in turn, required the establishment of restaurants, nurseries, kindergartens, etc., which would relieve women of housework. "Notwithstanding all the liberating laws that have been passed, woman continues to be a domestic slave because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies, and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery and wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery."

These demands of Lenin's have found realisation in actual life. A huge network of public enterprises, constructed at the expense of the State, has been set up throughout the U.S.S.R. It

includes laundries, nurseries, kindergartens, milk bars, etc., which relieve women of household drudgery. For instance, the number of children accommodated in Soviet nurseries during 1937 showed an increase of 1,141.5 per cent. over the corresponding period for 1914. A comparison of the number of children in playground groups and kindergartens for the same two years showed an increase of from 7,000 to 4,271,000.

This emancipation from household tasks has enabled women to take an active part in production work. Many millions of women have been drawn into active work in economic construction and into the management of the State.

While in Czarist Russia, according to the census of 1897, 55 per cent. of the women working as hired labourers were engaged in domestic housework and 25 per cent. were farm hands, under Soviet power the statistics for 1936 showed that, of the entire number of women workers, 39 per cent. were employed in industry and construction, 20 per cent. in education and health protection, 15 per cent. on transport, trade and public catering, 7 per cent. in agricultural enterprises, 7 per cent. in State offices, and only 2 per cent. as domestic helps. Tens of thousands of women are leaders of industry—engineers, technicians and foremen. In 1936 women comprised 15 per cent. of the total number of engineering and technical workers. Thousands of women are working as economists, agricultural specialists, teachers and doctors.

In 1938 Soviet hospitals and out-patients' clinics employed over 62,000 women doctors as compared with 2,000 in Czarist Russia. Four hundred and nineteen women took part in the seventh extraordinary session of the Soviets. There are 187 women deputies to the Supreme Soviet.

Together with the growth of women's active participation in the political and economic life of the country, there is also a marked increase in the interest displayed and the part played by them in higher education, research work, etc. In 1936 women formed 30.2 per cent. of the scientific workers in the research institutes of the U.S.S.R. Thus, the necessary conditions for a family based on companionship, respect and the independence of women, exist in the mutual relations between men and women even before they enter into marriage.

While still at school the Soviet schoolboy grows accustomed to dealing as an equal with the schoolgirl who is his comrade

in the classroom. On leaving school he meets her again in the university lecture room or technical college laboratory where she is training for her chosen profession on an absolutely equal footing with him. Whether a woman drives a tractor or works a machine tool, she receives the same wages as her men fellow workers. And tomorrow, perhaps, she may be elected deputy to the Rural District or Regional Soviet or even to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

This applies not only to Russia in Europe, but also to the eastern Republics of the U.S.S.R. Today, when one reads Article 100 of the Constitution of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, which states: "Women in the Kazakh S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, State, cultural and social-political life," one cannot immediately appreciate to the full the tremendous work accomplished by the Soviet power in these regions. It should be remembered that less than 25 years have passed since women in these regions were downtrodden slaves in the full sense of the words. Women were bought and sold like mere goods and chattels. The giving of very young girls in marriage, and also polygamy, was a normal state of affairs. Before the establishment of Soviet power in the whole of Kazakhstan there was not one single Kazakh woman doctor, agricultural specialist or engineer, let alone actress or artist. So tenacious were these dark traditions that even in the first years of Soviet power women who removed the veil did so at the risk of their lives.

However, in 1937 a Kazakh woman, Salikha Ongarbaeva, a former milk-maid, was elected deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. No less than 5,000 women were elected to the local Soviet of the Kazakh Republic. In 1937 the Kazakh towns and villages counted 178 maternity homes as well as 80 ante- and post-natal consultation centres and 300 children's nurseries.

In this respect the Stalin Constitution, guaranteeing the rights of women and supported by the whole weight of the State laws and State power, only reflects the actual state of affairs. According to Article 122 of the Constitution, the realisation of women's rights is made possible by granting to women equal rights with men, to work, equal pay for work done, equal holidays, social insurance and education, as well as State protection of the rights of mothers and children, special vacations with pay for pregnant women and a wide network of maternity homes, children's creches and kindergartens.

Special mention must be made of the new stage in the development of protection for mother and child, which followed the decree issued by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. on June 27th, 1936, prohibiting abortions, increasing State help for expectant mothers, enlarging the network of maternity hospitals, creches, etc.

The draft of this law was discussed at numerous public meetings and unanimously approved. The new law changed the position of mother and child. In the first place it prohibited any abortions which were not necessary for medical reasons. After the years of the Civil War and armed intervention, owing to the economic chaos in the country and to moral prejudices inherited from the pre-revolutionary period, women still did not have all the conditions necessary for fulfilling their duties as citizens and mothers. In its decree dated November 18th, 1920, the Soviet Government, via the People's Commissar for Health and the People's Commissariat of Justice, ordered that "as long as the moral survivals of the past and the economic difficulties of the present prevail, it is necessary for women to make use of this operation in part." Thus the right to abortion was only a temporary and forced measure. Clearly, as soon as the conditions which gave rise to the above necessity had changed and the living and cultural standard of women had risen, the problem of abortion could be approached from a different angle.

Simultaneously with the prohibition of abortion, the construction of new maternity hospitals, milk supply centres and kindergartens was put in hand. Sufficient to mention that in 1937, in the Orekhovo-Zuyevo district of the Moscow region, there were more creches than in the whole of Czarist Russia in 1913. Nikitayeva, a woman worker at the Trekhgorny Textile Mills in Moscow, brought up all her six children in creches. A special law also provided considerable material grants for large families. On January 1st, 1938, there were more than 250,000 such families.

In 1941 the State spent 3,500 million rubles to protect the health of the children and on grants paid to mothers of large families. In pursuance of former legislation, the State issued a new decree, dated December 28th, 1938, confirming the right to pregnancy leave 35 days before giving birth and 28 days after birth, with pay at the Government's expense.

In addition to the new abortion legislation, the collective farm statutes also played an important role in the protection of mother and child; the law granted pregnancy leave to collective farm women also—four weeks before and after birth—with a 50 per cent. payment for the work days of that period.

The beneficial results of this care for mother and child were not long in making their appearance. During the first six months after the announcement of the decree, the number of abortions dropped to one-twentieth and even lower, while the birth rate arose sharply. Soviet society had achieved a great deal in its efforts to solidify the family and guarantee a happy childhood to the new generation.

V

Social and moral changes on such a gigantic scale have contributed to a considerable increase in the number of marriages. A sharp drop in the number of divorces, especially during the last few years, illustrates the process of development of the Soviet family.

The emancipation of women from petty household cares, their participation in social production and the management of the State, the legislation on alimony, maternity, vacations, the guaranteed employment after childbirth, together with material State aid for the mothers of large families—all these measures have made Soviet women independent and free of all petty mercenary aims in entering the marriage relation and have therefore made marital unions much more stable.

Despite the fact that husband and wife retain the right to divorce each other, the number of divorces is diminishing each year. Thus, in 1937 in Moscow only 8,000 divorces were registered as compared with 16,000 in 1936—a drop of 50 per cent. In Leningrad the number of divorces declined by 64 per cent. in the same period, and in Kalinin 86 per cent. In 1938 the total number of divorces declined by 35.8 per cent. as compared with 1936.

The State endeavours to reduce the number of divorces to a minimum. It tries to free the woman, who suffers more than the man from unstable marriages, from a feeling of moral desertion and neglect. The moral consciousness of the workers, collective farmers and intellectuals, has nothing but condemnation for

loose marital relations, for early marriages which bring nothing but suffering to both parties, and for vulgar adultery. They sharply criticise any irresponsibility of the parents towards the interests and fate of their own children.

The legal code "on marriage, the family and guardianship" states: "The parents' rights are granted exclusively in the interests of the children, and when such rights are not properly realised, the Courts are empowered to deprive the parents of these rights." The State places responsibility for the care of the children first on the parents, and then on the schools. These requirements are fully compatible with the interests of society and the children. The people of the U.S.S.R. are convinced that not only in a socialist, but even in a perfect communist society nobody will be able to replace the parents—the loving mother and father. These convictions form the basis of the Soviet family as a strong and morally solid nucleus of society.

This nucleus has already given birth to its own traditions. Children very often feel an urge to follow in the footsteps of their father and to carry on his work for the cause. In this manner there have arisen our "Soviet dynasties," to quote the name given by Stalin to the Korobov family in which four sons, following the example of their father, devoted themselves to the task of developing metallurgy in the Soviet Union. The son of Mikhail Frunze, who was one of the founders of the Red Army, has received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for valour and heroism displayed in military action against German Fascism. The son of the famous Polar flier, Hero of the Soviet Union Vodopyanov, is today serving together with his father in the Red Air Force. The spirit of those legendary Soviet heroes, Chapaev and Parkhomenko, lives today in the valorous deeds of their sons, both of whom are Red Army commanders.

The family in the Soviet State differs from the old family by virtue of the relations which it forms between people devoted to the lofty problem of building a new life.

This idea was stressed in an article in Pravda of June 9th, 1936, which referred to the sacred duty of the parents, of the father and mother, the first natural educators and teachers of their own children. The article stated: "Social education is widely developed in our country. The State assists the family, but it does not release the parents from taking care of their children. Under Soviet conditions the father is a social educator.

He is obliged to bring up good Soviet citizens. This is his pride and duty. The Soviet child has the right to have a real father, a friend and educator. A father who does not hesitate to leave his children is guilty both before them and before the Soviet State."

A family, a domestic hearth, is something which every Soviet person needs. Life outside of a family circle is very difficult. In 1933 the famous Polar flier, the late N. Babushkin, Hero of the Soviet Union, was one of those who took part in the "Chelyushkin" expedition. This ship, after almost having reached its destination, was caught in the pack-ice and crushed. Its passengers and crew were eventually rescued and removed to the mainland by plane. All this time Babushkin kept in regular contact with his wife by radio. He did not conceal his chagrin when he told her, "We are stuck in the ice and, it seems, stuck fast," but he went on to say, "But don't you worry. I am homesick enough, but it will be much harder for me if I feel that you too are in low spirits." (Message dated November 16th, 1923.) This theme recurred again and again in other letters. On December 22nd, Babushkin wrote: "There is no longer any doubt about our spending the winter here. I am very lonely, my dear! I hope we shall see each other this summer and have a good holiday together. How are the kids getting along at school? I am sure they will not disappoint me. Kiss them for me. Tell them to send me a telegram about how their studies are getting on."

Several years later, in 1937, Babushkin took off on a flight in search of Levanevsky's plane. He flew off into the Polar night, and again his thoughts went back to his wife and children. "Just talked to you by phone, but it was so short," he complained. "I hope that when we get back from the search we shall have time for a good long chat." He adds a few lines for the children: ". . . . Do what mother tells you and don't offend her. . . ." Another year passed. In the spring of 1938 Babushkin radioed to his wife from Rudolph Island: "There is so much I want to tell you . . . I'll tell you one thing—I miss you all terribly . . . ."

The Soviet school helps parents to bring up their children. Parents' Unions have been organised in Soviet schools, and these act exclusively in the interests of the children. In these unions the parents share their experience, receive advice on complicated educational problems and come to the best teachers for help.

The same applies to the Soviet village. For instance, at the "Pioneer" collective farm in the Kalinin region, the peasants were told by Boitsov, one of their fellow villagers, about how he was bringing up his daughter Nyura and his son Vasya; how he saw to it that his children prepared their lessons properly. Boitsov described how he created the necessary conditions for the children so that they were able to study well and not be disturbed when preparing their lessons. He told how he had flowers put on the table on which the children did their home-work and saw that they adhered to a regime of work and rest and always finished their day by 9 o'clock. Both children had skis and skates.

Boitsov is an ordinary peasant, a member of the "Pioneer" collective farm. Here are some more stories about family education as told by other parents:—

A. Gavrilov of Moscow says: "My son was an only child. Before he went to school I had graduated at the university and obtained my P.H.V. while working at the institute. . . . The child lived according to a correctly regulated system and spent several hours a day in the open air no matter what the weather was like. Generally we spent an hour playing with him before he went to bed, but sometimes when we got back he was already fast asleep. Our free days were given up almost exclusively to Vadin. Owing to the circumstances of our family life, Vadin has learned the difference between working and free days and usually has many little demands and wishes ready in advance for the free days. Often he wants to be taken to see something or to play. We used to take him to the railway station, buy a platform ticket and go and see the engines, which were then exclusively occupying his attention. He would only draw railway engines, and all his games were connected with trains. Other times he liked us to stand with him on the street corner and watch the militia man regulating the traffic. Later Vadin became greatly interested in the Red Army and we used to stand for hours on the Square near the Red Army barracks watching the men drilling, or we would go to their army museum and look at photographs and weapons of all kinds. In the spring Petrovsky Park was his favourite playground, as he could watch the planes there. All these impressions found expression in Vadin's games, in his drawings and his attempts at modelling and in everything he did in his free time. In the summer, which we always spent in

the country or at the seaside, he took a keen interest in natural history."

Another typical account comes from Ostrovskaya, a mother of three children: "I am with my children now in my thoughts. One of them is serving with the Black Sea Fleet, where he makes use of the knowledge he gained studying at the Frunze Naval College. The other is working with his comrades measuring the course of the old Volga, changing it into a network of lakes linked by beautiful canals, and deepening the old river bed. My third son is in the Far East, guarding the Soviet frontier. Every line I get from them from the various corners of our vast country is a source of great joy to me. It seems a little time ago since the three little brothers started going to school. There was a difference of a year between each of them. The three grew up, played and worked together. I tried to foster a love of nature in them, while their father developed their interest in technical science."

These recollections are typical of thousands on thousands of Soviet fathers and mothers.

VI

The Hitlerites, who have attacked the independence and integrity of the democratic states, seek to break up the family hearth, honour and happiness of the Soviet people. In their wake they leave charred ruins of places where only a short while ago peaceful life was going on, where new values were being created, and families lived happily together. They have strewn their bloodstained path with the bodies of innocent victims.

For these vile deeds the Soviet family is taking vengeance. Mothers and fathers, sons and daughters are giving all their strength to destroy Hitlerism, which has deprived millions of men of their lives, children of their childhood, youth of its joy, women of their families and peaceful work and old people of their rest.

Husbands and brothers who leave for the front are replaced by women and girls working in the fields and at lathes. These women are mastering all jobs. In May, 1942, in the Moscow region women led 83 out of 178 collective farm brigades which were formerly headed by men. Sixteen-year-old Ana Manyushenko came to the Urals machine engineering works during

the war, and a few months later she fulfilled her production norm by 500 to 800 per cent. Driving locomotives, working at oil derricks, in mines, research laboratories and on river boats, Soviet women are proving that their hands are able not only to caress children, but also to strike the enemy. Not only behind the lines are women active in the name of victory; they are also in action at the front. Nurses, women doctors and women signals workers are fighting the Hitlerites shoulder to shoulder with their relatives in the Red Army. Those who find themselves temporarily under the Hitlerite yoke join guerilla groups and exterminate the Hitler blackguards day and night.

In the ranks of the Crimean guerillas there is a collective farmer who is fighting side by side with his wife, his two sons aged 16 and 14, and his two daughters, the younger of whom is a girl of 12. Stepan, the 14-year-old son, is a first-class scout and has been awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

There is no force so powerful, no atrocities so horrible that they can break down the stability of the Soviet family. Children whose parents have been shot and tortured by Hitlerites are being adopted by Soviet people throughout the U.S.S.R. On the initiative of Ovchimnikova, a mother of three children who works at the Krasny Bogatyr Textile Factory in Moscow, thousands of Soviet men and women are anxious to adopt children whose parents have been the victims of Hitlerite atrocities. Large numbers of Red Army men at the front are now defraying all the expenses of maintaining war orphans in children's homes, with the intention of adopting these children and taking them into their families on their return home after victory has been won.

All the millions of the multi-national Soviet people have become one militant family whose only care is to rout the German Fascist armies as soon as possible in conjunction with the British, American and other allies, to liberate the Soviet land and the whole world from the Fascist scum.

APPENDIX

Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life.

The possibility of exercising these rights of women is ensured by affording women equally with men the right to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, maternity leave with pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens. (Stalin Constitution—Article 122.)

Women have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with men. (Stalin Constitution—Article 137.)

Soviet law punishes any citizen who refuses work to a woman simply because she is a woman, or because she is pregnant. In the oriental Soviet republics, where woman was most rigidly enslaved, there are heavy penalties for forcing under-age girls or boys into marriage, for trading in brides (very prevalent before the Soviet Revolution), and for in any way hindering the entry of women into the schools, agriculture, industry, and social and political life generally. ("The Stalin Constitution," by Professor I. Trainin.)

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