



**WOMEN  
IN THE  
SOVIET  
UNION**

*by* **ELLA REEVE BLOOR**

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## Preface

**I**N PRESENTING this pamphlet, *Women in the Soviet Union*, we want to call attention to the phenomenal growth of child care and the protection of motherhood in a land where *human life comes first* in the consideration of its lawmakers and its citizens.

It is absolutely shocking to turn from the facts of conditions in the Soviet Union—maternity hospitals, rest homes for the expectant mothers, special care, both before and after childbirth—to consideration of the facts of the lack of care for mothers in a country where profit is the main concern—the U.S.A.

On January 17 and 18, 1938, hundreds of scientific men and women assembled in a conference on "Better Care for Mothers and Babies," in Washington, D. C. The conference issued a "fact finding" report. Some of the startling facts are as follows:

"Each year more than 14,000 women in the United States die from causes connected with childbirth, leaving at least 35,000 motherless children. . . .

"More than 75,000 infants are still-born and more than 69,000 infants die during the first month of life.

"An uncounted number are injured in health, and children are handicapped in growth and development as a result of conditions associated with maternity."

The report, full of such statements, gives the cause of the terrible death rate of mothers and children in the United States, namely, "lack of scientific care," "lack of nourishment," etc., etc.—which all boils down to lack of "*Social Security*."

Comparing then the status of women in capitalist America, now suffering from the effects of another economic crisis, which brings poverty, unemployment and insecurity to millions of men, women and children, we realize more than ever before the success of the Soviet power, developed after only twenty years, affecting as it does the health and happiness of the people of one-sixth of the world's surface.

Article 122 of the fundamental law of this great country, its Constitution, declares:

"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." \*

Way down in Baku, the oil region of Russia, we saw the most modern pre-natal care of the young

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\* *Constitution of the U.S.S.R.*, p. 42, International Publishers, New York.

expectant mother in beautiful palaces of "Culture and Rest," built in beautiful gardens near the Caspian Sea, a remarkable preparation of mind and body for motherhood. Only a few short years ago these women wore heavy veils; now they walk erect, beautiful and strong.

Our women in America are growing in the realization of their social and political responsibility for the advancement of the cultural, physical and political development of the women of the United States. In all their activity they are recognizing that the protection of motherhood is of most vital importance. As a first step toward this end, the conference on "Better Care for Mothers and Babies" Finding Committee, after stating necessary methods to be used in communities for the saving of lives of mothers and children, concludes as follows:

"The committee finds that if this plan of action is to be carried out, federal participation would be necessary, as follows:

" 'Amendment to Title V, Section 502, of the Social Security Act to authorize a larger sum to be appropriated annually to the states for maternal and child-health services with provision that the increased payments to the states should be used for the improvement of maternal care and care of newborn infants.'

" 'The authorization should provide for gradual development of the program, in both its educational and its administrative aspects, and for necessary increases in



CLAUDIA NIRONOVA, STATION MASTER AT THE KUTOZOVO STATION OF THE MOSCOW CIRCUIT RAILWAY. EVERY WORKER AT THE KUTOZOVO STATION IS A WOMAN.

appropriation until a sum is reached that will insure care for all women who are unable to obtain care otherwise, either because of economic reasons or because of inaccessibility of care in the communities in which they live.' ”

These are the first steps that we can take with women of all other groups—the building of a united movement for the protection of women and children.

E. R. B.



# Women in the Soviet Union

By ELLA REEVE BLOOR

*[The following is the text of a radio address which was broadcast from Moscow to England and the United States on the night of November 2, 1937]*

THE great victory celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution is marked by the participation of women from the remotest corners of the Soviet Union. Everywhere the women have developed into real leaders. Women are everywhere—in factories, fields, schools, and are engaged in cultural work. The influence of truly great women is being respected in the communities in which they live. More and more women are being drawn into the social and political life of the country.

During the First and Second Five-Year plans over four and one half million women were drawn into industry. The Soviet professional women are now an important factor in the country. Thus, before the revolution there were in Russia only two thousand women physicians. Now their number has increased

TATIANA FIODOROVA,  
22-YEAR OLD WORKER  
ON THE MOSCOW SUB-  
WAY, WAS ELECTED TO  
THE SUPREME SOVIET  
OF THE U.S.S.R. SHE IS  
SEEN CASTING HER  
BALLOT.



over twenty times. There are over 11,000 Soviet women scientists, and 90 per cent of the teachers in the city schools are women. This in a land in which, before the Revolution, woman was by law recognized to be inferior to man.

In the nominating of deputies for election to the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities, hundreds of women have been nominated. The nominating speeches made by the women of collective farms, factories and schools are remarkable for their eloquence. As an example, Chernyck, a woman Stakhanovite from the Sverdlov factory, said





THESE ARE TWO  
WORKERS OF THE  
LENINGRAD ELEC-  
TROSILA PLANT,  
TRAINING FOR A  
REGATTA AT THE  
ELECTRICIANS'  
UNION WATER  
STATION.

the following in a conference discussion on the candidates proposed for the elections:

“Who knows of a more radiant life than our? Our youth is most brave and gifted. It is our aviators who soar the skies, our musicians who charm the world with their playing. We know that *whatever field* we choose we shall always be able to apply our knowledge and strength.”

This supreme confidence and responsibility are characteristic of all these women leaders.

From the collective farms many young Stakhanovite tractor operators were nominated. As one reso-

grade. While eating dinner, she told us of her great plans for the future of the city.

That day was "free day" in the Soviet Union. One works five days and the sixth day is "free day." I told her I was sorry to encroach upon her "free" time. She answered:

"I work in my free time by taking walks; I go to the market places, to parks, etc., and see what is needed. I get ideas," she said smilingly. Driving us to the boat, she invited me to come back in two or three years and see her plans fulfilled.

It is only in the Soviet Union where the people, the workers, and the farmers have established their own government that woman can enjoy her "right to motherhood." Where in the world but in this beautiful Land of Socialism does a prospective mother receive two months' vacation with pay before and after birth—in all four months' vacation with pay. This, besides all the other privileges that a nursing mother receives.

So this woman, Maria Petrova, the head of the Kalinin Soviet, the Mayor of the town as we would call her in America, like thousands of other mothers in the Soviet Union, enjoys to the full her "right to motherhood," at the same time fulfilling her responsibility to the women and children of her city, and to the country which is really "her country."

With such wonderfully developed mothers, what



VALYA BELYANINA, ASSEMBLER OF GEODETIC  
PRECISION INSTRUMENTS IN MOSCOW. SHE  
EARNS 500 RUBLES A MONTH.

can we say to express our impressions of the youth, of the happy children?

I visited homes, schools, creches and kindergartens—in country villages and in cities—and the entire government is concerned with the building of human beings, and is creating material comfort—mental, physical and cultural—to surround them with.

This twentieth anniversary is being celebrated in every part of the nation. In far-off Georgia, for instance, where before the Revolution 80 per cent of the population were unable to read and write, they now are *completely* literate. There are now 20,000

teachers, 4,250 schools, and 700,000 children study in their own native language. As one of the great speakers of the Soviet Union said, "Georgia is one of the happiest corners of the world, abundant in natural riches and, what is particularly important, rich in people whose talents shine in Georgia, in Transcaucasia, and in the entire Soviet Union."

Just the other night, as I walked down the street, I saw a group of these happy Georgians laughing and talking together—delegates to participate in the great holiday rejoicing on November 7. A beautiful woman seemed to be the leader of the group.

No longer do the women of the far-off provinces hide their faces. Now, erect and beautiful, they accept their absolutely equal rights; they also accept their equal responsibility. They form a great free, happy womanhood, such as the world has never seen before. It has been said that a country could not rise above the status of its motherhood. Now we see motherhood rising to a status never dreamed of before, and the Soviet Union is realizing this great power set free in the entire country. It inspires the womanhood of the entire working class of the world.

The complete unity of all sectors of the citizens of the Soviet Union is particularly noticeable in all the gatherings now taking place. Men and women from the factories and fields meet with artists, musi-

cians and actors to discuss freely their pre-election problems, the candidates, etc. This unity also includes the wonderful Red Army—and this unity, now such a truly remarkable accomplishment, will not allow any fascist warmongers to encroach upon it.

As this mighty army surges through the Red Square on November 7, thousands upon thousands of workers, men and women, farmers, soldiers, shoulder to shoulder, with the sky full of all kinds of airplanes; this army marching past the tomb of Lenin, with the reviewing stand filled with those who have guided the workers' state so successfully—Stalin, and his closest co-workers, Molotov, Kalinin, Voroshilov, and others—it will be recorded by those who view these masses and the millions they represent that this is the greatest *peace force* in the world.

The radio will carry the songs and the speeches all over the Soviet Union and throughout the world, and the workers and farmers of the world will take courage and inspiration.

#### NOTE

Since my return from the Soviet Union I have learned that 184 women were elected to the Soviet of the Union, and the Council of Nationalities. Among them are many of those mentioned in the broadcast included in this pamphlet.

*To Understand*

# WOMAN'S ROLE IN SOCIETY

## READ AND DISTRIBUTE

LENIN ON THE WOMAN QUESTION, by <i>Clara Zetkin</i>	.05
HEROINES, by <i>Sasha Small</i>	.10
MOTHER BLOOD: THE SPIRIT OF '76, by <i>Ann Barton</i>	.05
MOTHER BLOOD, by <i>Ann Barton</i>	.03
WOMEN AND EQUALITY, by <i>Margaret Cowl</i>	.02
WOMEN IN STEEL, by <i>Jenny Elizabeth Johnstone</i>	.05
WOMEN, WAR AND FASCISM, by <i>Dorothy McConnell</i>	.05
WOMEN WHO WORK, by <i>Grace Hutchins</i>	.05
WHAT EVERY WORKING WOMAN WANTS, by <i>Grace Hutchins</i>	.02
THE POSITION OF NEGRO WOMEN, by <i>E. Gordon and C. Briggs</i>	.02
THE HIGH COST OF LIVING, by <i>Margaret Cowl</i>	.01
MISS U.S.S.R., by <i>G. Frederick</i>	.05
NATASHA, A BOLSHEVIK WOMAN ORGANIZER, by <i>L. Katasheva</i>	.10
MOTHER BLOOD CALENDAR, 1938	.10

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