Soviet Women in the Work Force and Professions

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Many excellent and apparently recent studies of this topic are currently available (Dodge, 1966; Field, 1968; Alexandrova, 1967; Bochkaryova and Lyubimova, 1969). Unfortunately, although the dates of publication of the articles make them seem current, the data used by the authors may have been up to a decade old at the time of publication. For instance, Bronfenbrenner's (1970, 1968) discussions of availability of child care facilities for 3-to-6 year olds in the Soviet Union are based on data obtained in 1961. Between 1961 and 1970, year-round accommodations in preschool institutions (nurseries/creches/kindergartens) rose from 5,000,000 to 9,300,000 (USSR Central Statistical Board, 1971: 48), while the number of children in these age groups declined considerably due to the falling birth rate (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1971). The demand for year-round kindergarten facilities in urban centers is largely met, and the demand for facilities in rural centers is met by 5,000,000 additional child care places provided on the farms during the summer period of most intensive work. *The 86% increase in child care facilities between 1961 and 1970 is, in*

itself, four times as large as the total number of places in day care facilities in the United States.

The issue of the recency of data is, therefore, not one of niggling pedantry. The West finds it hard to grasp the pace of change in the Soviet Union, and has been taught to regard it as frozen in patterns established a generation and more ago. Contrary to much popular opinion, abortion, which was first legalized in 1920 (a historical first), was legalized again in 1954-1955 (Millett, 1970: 172, footnote on 174). Information taken from sources published in the interim on that subject (de Beauvoir, 1949; Feeley, 1971: 18) is distinctly misleading.

To argue on the basis of data a decade old that the Soviet Union has ceased to be a revolutionary society–i.e., that *current* changes are no longer revolutionary when compared to the *immediate* past of that country– would seem to be puerile. So the need for current knowledge about the state of things is one major reason for writing this paper. The other is that the works cited in my opening paragraph all seek answers to questions that were being posed prior to the recent development of the women's liberation movement. It is my good fortune to have had close contact with that movement in one of its major and earliest geographic centers, and I write with its point of view very much in mind. As the very recent origin of that movement has not given it the time to put forth a scholar with adequate firsthand knowledge of the Soviet Union and the Russian language, a male will have to be forgiven for presuming to do this study.[1]

PLACE IN WORK FORCE AND PROFESSIONS

The major paid occupations of women in Czarist Russia were farm labor, housework, prostitution. In prerevolutionary Russia, 55% of employed women were urban or rural houseworkers, 25% were farm laborers, 13% worked in

industry (textiles and clothing chiefly), and 4% in education and health (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1969a: 9). These figures do not include prostitutes, of whom there were 40,000 officially registered in St. Petersburg before World War I (Halle, 1933: 221) and 20,000 in Moscow (Winter, 1933: 182), from which a nationwide figure of nearly half a million in urban places may be extrapolated. This would make prostitution the third most numerous income-producing occupation among women.

Several foreign correspondents have reported that there are today prostitutes in and around certain major-city hotels frequented by foreigners. I accept that as fact, although I have never encountered any in four postwar visits and know of male tourists who deliberately walked Leningrad's main street unsuccessfully seeking prostitutes. In the vast literature on the USSR, one recent émigré has a convincing description of a brothel maintained in her apartment by a woman at a vacation resort. Except for these extraordinarily rare exceptions, it seems generally agreed that the Oldest Profession does not exist in the Soviet Union on a scale statistically significant.

Sociologically, but not morally related, is the virtual disappearance of housework as a paid employment in the USSR. It is legal, as prostitution is not. Being a type of work that was traditionally underpaid because of being entered by illiterate women possessing no skill other than that all women learn for the unpaid work expected in the family, no one enters it today, in view of the availability of satisfactory paid employment and the fact that women have the education to qualify. Even in one-industry, male-employment-oriented towns (mining, steel, and the like), where current muckraking Soviet journalism and empirical sociology report local shortages of jobs for the workers' wives, there is no mention of their having recourse to housework to supplement their husbands' incomes. In the value system of Soviet women, work as a housemaid is simply unacceptable. In a recent

survey of 5,418 families in the large city of Riga, *one* had a houseworker (Urlanis, 1971).

Housework is virtually nonexistent not only because it is beneath one's dignity, but also because Soviet incomes are grouped within so narrow a range that there are very few indeed who could pay what a woman could earn even as an unskilled laborer. An article dealing with local shortage of day-nursery facilities[2] ("creches" are for those under three, as distinct from kindergartens for those between 3 and 6, in which the demand has essentially been met) provides indirect confirmation of this by quoting the extraordinarily high rates that must be paid for daytime babysitting by women who do not want to quit their jobs but are still on the waiting lists for accommodation for their young children (Kuznetsova, 1970). That a baby sitter caring for two children commands a monthly fee as high as a factory wage says much about the value placed on "women's work" and about women's earning power. Soviet women earn the same pay as men for equal work. This is not only the law, but also the practice.

The third traditional occupation for women in Czarist Russia was as farm laborers, perhaps the most miserably paid of all. The essential disappearance of this type of employment (as distinct from membership in a collective farm, or regular work on a state farm at approximately industrial wages) is evidenced by the fact that, at harvest time, higher educational institutions, research institutes, and other types of offices virtually close down for a few days so that every able-bodied person can be trucked out to nearby farms to bring in the crops that, in other societies, migratory or other casual workers harvest. In 1970, I personally encountered this at the Minsk Institute of Technology near the Polish border and at the Kazakh Academy of Science near the Chinese.

In other words, the educating of and opening of employment to women in essentially every industrial, office, professional, and steady agricultural occupation has brought

a social mobility in which they have removed themselves entirely from their major paid occupations in Czarist Russia. The military, underground work, and employment on small seagoing fishing vessels are the only occupations closed to women.

The occupational distribution of women before the Revolution was closely related to the availability of education for them, the level of education they attained, and attitudes toward education for women. The view of old Russia as a country overwhelmingly illiterate is correct, but to leave it at that is to fail to see the special oppression of women in this regard. It is also to miss the special problem faced by the Soviet government and to overlook in the statistics of change its consistent adherence to its initial commitment to the liberation of women. Without the addition of the historical approach to the sociological and anthropological-psychological, the occupational distribution of Soviet women today can only lead–and has–to rather stupid conclusions about alleged "channeling" of Soviet women into "women's role" occupations.

In a word, Czarist Russia was 80% rural. Only 12.5% of rural women were literate–i.e., one in eight. *The figure for rural men was three times as high.* At least in European Russia and among its more advanced Western border peoples, the notion was already widespread that a peasant should be able to do sums and read simple farming and business information. But why teach a girl, whose destiny was, hopefully, marriage and housework?

A decade after the Revolution, women were still only one-fourth of the persons appearing as earning entities. But by that date girls were already 40% of school enrollment, although education was not yet compulsory for want of sufficient facilities and teachers. It was this generation of women that was the first to enter nonhousework employment on a large scale. Just prior to this, because of the economic dislocation in the immediate postrevolutionary

years and the release of men from the army that had won out against foreign intervention, the Communist Party Congress of 1924 had taken note of the "ousting of women workers from industry" and made the point that "the preservation of female labor power in industry is of political significance." It instructed the Party "to intensify the work of improving the qualification of female labor and, where possible, to draw women into industries where they have either never been employed or employed in inadequate numbers" (VKP(b) v resoliutsiiakh, 1954: 89). The resolution continued, "it is necessary to combat conservatism in the attitude toward women inherited from capitalist society."

Due to these attitudes and to their illiteracy, women were the blacks of Russia. "At factories people were accustomed to seeing women only with a broom or shovel, washing floors or sweeping the courtyard" (Bochkaryova and Lyubimova, 1969: 129). Women's lack of self-confidence was a serious problem and had a great deal to do with their preferential entry into occupations which were extensions of those to which they were accustomed. Women themselves discussed seriously whether they were capable of operating machine tools; the working woman's magazine, *Rabotnitsa,* published what reports it could get proving that they could do so.

The same problem arose with respect to managerial posts at the very lowest level. Even in textiles, workers discussed whether a woman could handle the job of assistant foreperson or head of a shop. In pursuit of the Party resolution of 1924, the press publicized widely the promotion of a young woman to such a position in a textile town. By International Women's Day, 1924, 33 women were assistant forepersons in one mill, 75 in another textile town, and one became manager of a mill. "At first the men were jeering, but now they respect them," it was reported. But the fact remained that while quotas of admissions were reserved for girls in vocational schools, it took special effort to get them to enroll.

As recently as 1961, I saw an article by a woman complaining that farm women share persistent rural male attitudes that office work in agriculture is "too hard" for women, while manual labor is not (Mandel, 1967: 224).

This reflected both prejudice and a real inability to cope, fostered by an inadequate education. By 1939, three-quarters of all rural women could read and write, as could nine-tenths of urban women; but only one of every 25 women working in the countryside had had as much as seven years of schooling. ("Working" now included peasant wives and daughters, who were full members of the collective farms along with husbands and fathers.) However, by 1961, three out of ten employed rural women had seven or more years of schooling, and the educational gap between men and women had been largely eliminated in the younger and middle generations. Yet prejudice (usually in unconscious "protective" forms) remained one of the main obstacles to full equality for women in managerial and executive posts. The other, more important obstacle, was the conviction among both sexes, unchanged to this day, that child-rearing is and should be the mother's function.

Despite that, a major thesis of this paper is that *women have advanced in the Soviet labor force and professions in approximately direct proportion to the elimination of handicaps inherited by the Soviet regime* (i.e., the education gap), *and that a principal basis for residual differences in the status of men and women is the time lag in this regard.* For example, having reached 40% of the school enrollment a decade after the Revolution, women attained approximately that percentage of employment for wages and salaries (38%) in 1940, the eve of World War II (the USSR was attacked in 1941). This represented approximately the time necessary for the school population of the earlier date to pass through that system and enter employment, plus retirement of an older generation in which men predominated as wage and salary earners.

During World War II, women predominated in employment, as men were drafted in the tens of millions. After the war, although some women simply and literally wished to rest after their prodigious labors in wartime (an eleven-hour day plus incredible hardships in simply living), and some men, after isolation from women and family for years, demanded that wives quit work, the overall statistical effect was small. Women did not drop below 46% of the total number of wage and salary earners. They rose again to 47% in 1960, 49% in 1965, and 50.5% in 1969, and have remained at that level since. The 1970 census showed them to be 54.3% of the population, although much of that numerical difference by sex is in groups above the working age.

Sex differentials were very much wider in individual fields of employment. Women entered first fields in which they felt at home. Women who found the heat of a steel mill unbearable did not react similarly to that of a restaurant kitchen. When essentially prerevolutionary patterns of employment and attitudes were still dominant (1929+) and women were only 27% of wage and salary earners, they were 65% in health (chiefly nurses and unskilled personnel), 54% in education, and 46% in the restaurant trades. Percentages of employment below the general average for women were found in construction (7%), transport and communication (11%), retail and wholesale trade (16%), and offices (19%; Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, 1956: 191).

These differences reflected not "channeling," but women's own initial patterns of interest. The society wanted higher education for women and entry into all professions was both a proclaimed right and encouraged in actuality. If there is a very much higher percentage of women physicians today than engineers, it is because there were more nurses at an earlier date than plasterers and painters. Soviet physicians today are not yesterday's children of middle-class families, but yesterday's nurses.

Women continue today to value most highly the humanistic professions and the sciences deriving from them–i.e.,

medical doctor and medical scientist–followed by education; men rate engineering at the top of their preferences. This emerges from a recent mass-scale survey of school graduates (Yanowitch and Dodge, 1969: 642). However, compared with the figures given above, the rise of women in professions is actually more impressive in the fields *not* associated with traditional women's roles. Women had been 10% of doctors and dentists in 1913. They rose to 77% in 1950 (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1969a: 103), but then declined to 72% in 1969, when they were also down to 55% among medical students, pointing to an equalized sex ratio in medicine a generation hence.

The myth that the USSR has turned reactionary in the matter of women's rights in the past generation is supported by the peculiar argument that women have allegedly been channeled into professions. The "channeling" argument is reinforced by reference to the fact that only half as large a percentage of engineers (a "male" calling) are women as the percentage of doctors (a calling growing out of the role of healer within the family–although why that has not happened in other societies is not explained). The picture is entirely different when the ratio of women engineers to the field of employment is examined. In the immediate post-revolutionary years in which the structure of employment had been little affected, and women were 6% of those employed in construction, they were 2% of the country's infinitesimal number of engineers. By 1967, they were 28% of those working in construction, but 41% of the engineers in that field (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, 1969a: 71, 102).

Although remuneration in the Soviet professions shows nothing remotely like the spread in the United States between the teacher at the bottom of the heap, the engineer somewhat better off, and the doctor way out in front, there is a differential there as well. The Soviet government, always economically pinched, has raised wages and salaries in a

manner to attract people into fields which would not otherwise be entered by enough candidates to meet the need. Engineering is the best remunerated. Law is the lowest paid of the professions in the Soviet Union, and in it women are precisely the same proportion (one-third) as in engineering, the highest paid. Women had been 5% of the lawyers in 1926. At present there are 2,500 women judges. So women are majorities in the two professions in the middle of the pay scale–medicine and teaching–and minorities in the two at the extremes–engineering and law. However, the 1971-1975 Five-Year Plan provides sharp salary increases for the two professions of medicine and teaching. Those seeking signs of discrimination no matter what are faced with the fact that, in numbers as distinct from percentages, there are more women engineers than physicians, and more physicians than librarians. The 775,000 women engineers in the USSR (1969) is almost equal to the total number of engineers in the United States (870,000), of whom only 1% are women.

Consideration in this paper of categories of female employment jumped from entry into the general labor force (as distinct from paid housework, farmhand labor, and prostitution) to the mass-scale professions because readers of scholarly journals are naturally best able to judge a society by the position of their own counterparts in it. (The status of women in academic pursuits will be dealt with later on.) But in terms of the actual number of jobs available in an industrial society, access to skilled physical labor continues to be more significant than openings in the professions and academia. At the end of World War II, American women were forced out of shipbuilding, bus-driving, and the like to a vastly greater degree than out of the professions, however small was their participation in the latter.

In the Soviet Union, the most rapid *rate* of increase of employment of women in recent years has been in the most highly skilled of mechanical trades. In 1926, women were still only 1% of mechanics and machine adjusters. By 1939,

that is, in the 13 years when the USSR attracted most attention in the world for its unprecedented opening of new doors to women, they had risen to 4%. In the next 20 years, despite the wartime holocaust suffered by males, the percentage climbed only to 6%. But in the succeeding *five years,* 1959-1964, the figure rose to 9%, the most rapid rate at any time in Soviet history. In a similar field, women were 57% of subway, trolley-bus, and streetcar drivers by 1959, having been 3% in 1926. (Their safety record is better than that of men, incidentally [Sonin, 1971].)

Translated into actual numbers, this becomes vastly more impressive, because of the enormous expansion of this kind of work with industrialization and increasing complexity of equipment. While the percentage rose from 1% to 6%, 1926-1959, the numbers of women doing this work multiplied 331 *times,* from 100 individuals to an army of 33,100 (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1969a: 69; Voprosy statistiki, 1964). An even more striking increase occurred in female operators of cranes, fork lifts, and so on, from 1% to 32% 1926-1959, and from 1,800 to 557,400 individuals, or 411 times. Yet one still finds letters in the Soviet press from women complaining that they lift by hand and men by machine; there is statistical support for this. Women are 46% of all persons holding manual jobs, but 32% of those operating mechanical lifting equipment. These data illustrate one of my general conclusions: *on the one hand, the very rapid rate at which women have entered nearly any field one examines is evidence of the regime's sincerity in seeking to eliminate all barriers and its high degree of success in overcoming male prejudice,* which has particularly marked in the skilled mechanical trades and the field of engineering. (In 1929, when women in numbers began to see themselves as potential engineers, the Communist Party pressured the prestigious Bauman Institute of Technology in Moscow to open its doors to them on a mass scale.) *On the other hand, so long as women do not hold positions in full accord with*

their numbers, some of them will believe, with some degree of validity, that this reflects male prejudice.

One finds direct evidence of this in such things as a story in *Rabotnitsa* (The Woman Worker–the largest-circulation magazine in the USSR) of a woman sent out to operate the Diesels running a deep exploratory oil rig–one of the most skilled mechanical jobs imaginable, for failure means fantastic economic loss. When she failed to make them start, under conditions of extreme subzero cold, the foreman ordered the helicopter pilot, "Get her out of here, and send me a dependable 'muzhik'." Later she made it in that capacity, after years running a powerful Diesel tractor in tractor trains hauling supplies through roadless Arctic and sub-Arctic areas, in which men were glad to have her in the lead machine as the best of them all. Both her failure, accompanied by the male supremacist remark, and her later success, occurred in the years since World War II.

Prejudice is least and women's role greatest in new fields, while traditional fields are the stronghold of traditional attitudes. For example, there are virtually no women operating railway locomotives, which is certainly a very fatiguing and demanding job, but women are a very high proportion of the country's field permafrost scientists (Izvestia, 1970a), an occupation that ranks second in physical hardship in the sciences only to that of the tiny handful who have flown in space.

In light of the objection of women's liberationists in the West to special protective legislation for women on the grounds that it bars them from fields of employment, it is interesting to note that the subject has a similar history in the USSR. In the 1920s, when there was still unemployment in the USSR, not only women but male union and particularly Party leaders urged a lowering of restrictions on women's employment in occupations particularly strenuous for their physiques, on the argument that the real alternative in many cases was prostitution. Today, when the authorities are

seeking more actively than at any previous time to induce women to enter mechanical operations in agriculture and to break male grassroots opposition to this, women are given preferential access to more comfortable machines. One reason is that, even in Central Asia where by cultural choice there are large numbers of children for each family to support, increasing prosperity has reduced the pressure upon women to work outside the home (Akhunova, 1970). As a consequence, women who take the pain of childbirth and abortion and the burdens of family housework, household garden farming, and hauling water from the well in winter as facts of life are unwilling to run tractors, trucks, and harvester combines under the conditions of exposure to wind, weather, dirt, and noise which has been men's lot.

Women agricultural equipment operators, speaking at the Collective Farm Congress and writing in the press, have demanded improved machinery. A decree effective in January 1970 required the farm machinery industry to install adjustable and padded seats, automatic shifts, cabs, heaters, and the like, to give women preference in assignment to such machines as they become available, and to grant female farm equipment operators longer vacations than men (Komsomol'skaia pravda, 1969). This is not chivalry, but a recognition of cultural, psychological, and physiological realities. The longer vacations for women equipment operators are an attempt to balance in some measure the extra burden of their work at home when the day in the field is done, a cultural phenomenon beyond the power of government to change by law.

The psychological reason for the preference to women is clear: human beings in the mass do not willingly undertake new discomforts and strains on a permanent basis even though, objectively, the ones to which they are accustomed may be as great or greater. The physiological difficulty is that, while women may be just as capable of manhandling (an excellent term) a piece of farm machinery or a truck (up to a

certain weight in the absence of power brakes and steering), they are shorter than men on the average, and their bodily proportions are different, so that machinery traditionally designed to suit the male anatomy must either be redesigned or made adjustable.

Women's conduct at their jobs differs from that of men. It is virtually unheard of for a woman to show up drunk for work. Among men, that occurs often enough for it to be a matter for discussion in the press. Only one-third as many Soviet women quit their jobs as do men, and, when they do, it is for family or personal reasons: the husband has been transferred to a different locality, or an unmarried woman wishes to go to a place where there are more single men (Smirnov, 1970). Similarly, the percentage of young women who wish to go to pioneering construction projects is considerably smaller than that of young men: 14.4% as against 21.6%. Likewise, 33.8% of women and 52.8% of men expressed a desire to upgrade their present work skills (Kon, 1970). The survey did not inquire as to whether or not this last difference related to the significantly smaller amount of free time the Soviet married woman has after the day's work than does her husband, due to persisting sex-role attitudes about housekeeping, almost universal in both sexes. On the other hand, neither did it inquire as to the degree to which the Soviet employed woman (i.e., 90% of all urban and 83% of all rural women below retirement age) finds some part of her life-goal satisfaction in raising a child, while the very sex-role attitudes of which we speak cause more men to look elsewhere. This point has been made to me very strongly by a friend who is able to see things very much through the eyes of the Soviet women with whom she has had unsurpassed contact because, as a mechanical engineer and businesswoman who has raised children to adulthood and maintained her marriage, she shares their other values as well.

I have not seen data telling us to what degree this last fact—that three women wish to upgrade their skills for each

five men who wish to do so, in a labor force equally divided between men and women—affects the discrepancy between men and women in executive and administrative positions. In manufacturing industry and other technical fields, executive posts in the USSR are held by graduate engineers, as business administration has only come to be a recognized field of study in the past two years. The rise of women to managerial posts relates reasonably closely to their ratio in engineering at a sufficiently earlier date to allow for the time needed to climb to given levels of responsibility. In 1939, women were 13% of all engineers. Twenty years later, they were 12% of "managers, heads, and chiefs of enterprises" in "industry, construction, agriculture, lumbering, transportation, and communications" (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1969a: 75).

If all lower categories of management in these fields are included, the figure for 1959 rises to 24%, which agrees closely with the percentage of women in the engineering profession a decade earlier. Unfortunately, I have not seen data indicating exactly how many years it takes, on average, to proceed from receipt of an engineering diploma to such a post. I do have personal evidence suggesting that women do not rise as rapidly as men. In a conversation with two women in a small industrial city in 1970, one an executive and the other an engineer, it was remarked that it was hard for women to be executives because business is conducted in a male atmosphere, accompanied by a good deal of drinking. If the carafe of vodka they had ordered with their meal in the restaurant where we met was any indication, they, like similar women in the West, had adjusted somewhat to the mores of the milieu in which they worked.

An occasional man voices himself even more strongly in print, as did an older professor who comes from the first postrevolutionary generation:

> Managerial positions are as a rule held by representatives of the stronger sex. How does one explain that while men are 15% of

> medical personnel, they are 50% of all chief physicians and executives of medical institutions? . . . In the overwhelming majority of cases, men head departments, enterprises and administrative agencies. Why is this so? Because women have many other obligations? They then should be relieved of these obligations and men should take a very active part in this process. . . . Women can and must hold a far more significant place in managerial work than they do now [Sonin, 1969].

At the other extreme, there are men who think that women have taken over most of Soviet society already and will take over the rest in the years to come. They employ the term "female supremacy." To this, one man, the Party chairman on an Uzbek collective farm (Central Asia) where women outnumber men in all posts of collective responsibility, and a women heads it, responded heatedly, "This is the kind of society for which our fathers fought, and this is one of the very greatest achievements of Soviet power." He was referring not to an alleged "female supremacy" but to the opening of all doors to women. On that farm, seven of the thirteen members of the directing board are women, as are five of the nine members of the Party committee. So is the chief agriculturalist. The head of the farm, aged 52, refused to be married off in childhood by her desperately poor farm-laborer father.

While there is extremely vigorous discussion by Soviet women in the press about problems outside this paper's concern with the work force and professions, I have seen no complaint from women about their relatively small numbers in top management comparable to that quoted from a man. Perhaps one more statistic might help to explain women's apparent satisfaction in this regard. While one has to go back 45 years to find women comprising only 1% in any sphere of mechanical labor or the engineering profession, they were still only that percentage of industrial plant managers thirty years later, in 1956. But the next seven years brought a multiplication to 6%, in 1963 (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe

Upravlenie, 1969a: 102). So one might well deduce that women believe they are getting into the very highest levels of responsibility and competence in proportion to their accumulation of necessary experience, and to their interest in such careers. In any case, this figure indicates the very opposite of the common Western view that the Soviet situation with regard to the position of women is static if not worse.

Women were 21% of all salaried heads of Communist Party, Communist Youth League, labor union, cooperative, and other civic bodies, and 28% of the heads of all government agencies, at all levels, in 1959. The absolute numbers of women executives at that time were 35,600 managers of nonservice businesses, 30,800 paid heads of voluntary organizations, and 69,600 heads of government offices (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1969a: 74, 75). In fields in which women's experience is greatest because of traditionally sex-linked roles, they had attained approximate parity in managerial posts by 1959: 49% of store managers and heads of commercial organizations (165,700 women) and 48% of housing managers (usually the equivalent of a U.S. housing project in scale–29,200 women). Similarly, women were 49% of managers of municipal utilities and services (urban transport, water, gas, sewage, street-cleaning, street greenery, hotels, bathhouses, barber shops and beauty parlors, laundries, shoe repair, tailor shops, appliance repair, furniture repair, dry cleaning, rental services, photographers, apartment construction and maintenance organizations–11,900 women). The number of entities in these fields and their volume of business increased between two- and threefold from 1959 to 1967 (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1968: 771-773), and has risen at an even more rapid rate since then, according to Premier Kosygin's report on the Five-Year Plan ending in 1970. The absolute figures on women may be assumed to have increased accordingly, as all evidence indicates that there has been no noteworthy change in their percentage

ratio in either direction. None of the figures above duplicate each other or overlap. Also in 1959, women managed 53% of the places serving meals (30,500 women). In the realm in which women were first admitted to the business world, clerical work, they were in 1959 78% of the heads of typing, stenography, and clerical pools (13,600), but also 39% of the heads of planning, financial, and statistical departments of enterprises and institutions (18,700). They are majorities not only among bookkeepers but also among accountants and economists.

The pattern we observed earlier of the ratio of women engineers to women executives a decade or two later at middle and top management positions also holds in the academic world. The fact that women in 1967 were only 9% of the very highest academic ranks (full professor, or member of a USSR or republic Academy of Sciences or of a particular science) does not correlate badly at all with their having been only 7% of those with the degree of *doktor* seventeen years earlier. (The degree in question presently requires five to ten years of work beyond that of *kandidat,* which corresponds to our Ph.D. A decade ago it required ten to twenty years, the work being done alongside one's teaching or whatever.)

Women were 20% of associate professors *(dotsent)* by 1967, which relates reasonably well to their having been 29% of all Ph.D.s *(kandidaty)* in 1950. And while women were 7% of the *doktora* (above Ph.D.) in 1950, they had risen to 12.5% of the total eighteen years later and 13.3% in 1969. The figure will continue to rise, for in 1968 they received 17.6% of all these degrees awarded, while receiving 31% of the kandidat (Ph.D.) degrees. Further, the number of women promoted to full professor in 1968 was twice as great as in the immediately preceding year (or any year). They were also 25% of the promotions to associate professor that year, as against 20% of the total holding that rank the previous year. The trend is unmistakable. The reservoir for promotion is indicated by the fact that women were 38% of all college teachers by 1959.

For those who might still ask why the figures were so low, say, twenty years ago, it is worthy of repetition that women were only 2% of the diplomaed engineers and 5% of the lawyers nine years after the Revolution, and that in 1929 the Central Committee of the Communist Party had to reserve 20% of admissions to higher educational institutions for women. In straight competitive exams they would not have won that 20% of the places, due to the very small proportion who had previously been motivated or permitted by their families to finish high school (Bochkaryova and Lyubimova, 1969: 169).

In the United States, a doubling of appointments of women to full professor in a single year would be regarded as a breakthrough. Such an advance occurred in the USSR in 1968, when the number of doktor degrees awarded to women was as great as in the five years 1960-1965 combined. That was no freak occurrence—the awards in 1969 were one-third more numerous than in 1968. A doubling of our total of women physicians in three years would be deemed revolutionary. But the USSR does add as many women physicians every three years as there are female doctors in the United States. What adjective would be applied if the total of American women engineers were trebled in a single year? The Soviet Union does actually add three times as many women engineers annually as there are female practitioners of that profession here.

None of this represents concessions to a women's liberation movement there. It constitutes implementation of a social outlook adopted before the Revolution by the party now in power, and carried out with high consistency for half a century. In the field with which this paper is concerned, the role of women in the work force and professions, there has been no significant deviation from that policy in all that time.

CONCLUSIONS

The moral responsibility of the intellectual is a matter very much to the fore in our country today. Is it not appropriate to ask whether the conscience of the American intellectual community is clear in terms of the matters dealt with in these pages? Why the endless efforts to denigrate an accomplishment without parallel in human history in terms of making it possible for women to achieve economic independence and creating the basis for equality in personal relations and otherwise? (What's wrong with superlatives if the record supports them?)

Yet a respected colleague and dear friend writes, "Women in the USSR represent a depressed caste" (Dunn, 1971: 358). Is it not significant that, in a country where women's depressed educational and occupational level was as we have documented, the number of women with seven years or more of schooling now nearly equals that of men (452 against 522 per 1,000 in 1970) while the number educated to that level *fully* equals that of men in the employed population (651 to 654), and women are an absolute majority, 52% of the employed people with higher education (Antonova and Vadeeva, 1971)? Because the USSR universalized equal pay to women for equal work, they earn 50 to 100% more than in any non-Communist country relative to the general wage and salary scale in each. The increase in women's earnings since the Revolution has been at least twice as high as that of men. It is on this broad social scale that the Soviet system is profoundly egalitarian, and the very opposite of one in which castes of any kind may be held to exist.

Another American scholar writes, "Soviet women have achieved just about what might have happened anyway because of industrialization and urbanization" (Madison, 1971: 24). Then why do not women professors, doctors, engineers, managers, or executives in any other country compare remotely to their percentage and level in the USSR?

There is a myth in this country that such is the case in Scandinavia. Scandinavians make no such claim, nor that the difference in pay for equal work has been abolished there. The Swedish woman "still faces discrimination in pay in some jobs, earning less than a man in the same position," says a news dispatch in 1970. "The Swedish woman . . . has gained more freedom and rights than women in most other countries except the Communist nations" (Bystrom, 1969).

Hitherto I have deliberately confined myself to mass-scale data. But with that well established, may I ask where but in the USSR one can find a woman surgeon heading the country's major eye hospital and research facility, with 605 physicians, ophthalmologists, opticians, and engineers, of whom 130 hold the highest ranks in their respective professions (Repond, 1969: 12)? Her predecessor was male. Or heading the best psychiatric hospital in the country? Or another in charge of all the country's centrally run medical schools, not only the world's largest system of medical education, but a position of vastly higher responsibility and prestige than, say, the presidency of the nine-campus University of California? Or captaining a 20,000-ton ship on the high seas? Or an astronomer directing the 100+ space-tracking stations? Or conductor of a major, full-time orchestra (*not* a women's orchestra, but the Moscow symphony)? The United States is vastly more industrialized and urbanized than the Soviet Union, but it has nothing like this.

In addition is an attempt to equalize by governmental action what the inherited culture makes unequal in the home (woman's "second shift" of housework after her paid job is done). Soviet retirement law permits women to leave the labor force long before their physical capacity is exhausted. The maximum pension age for women is 55, with 19 years of life expectancy remaining; for men it is 60, with 10 remaining. Women need have worked only 20 years (including all jobs and employing organizations) to qualify for old-age benefits; men, 25. The 1970 census showed the

number of women in the labor force to have reached a demographic maximum; there is no reserve to be drawn into it by the bait of a further improved pension system. The retirement age, which had already been only 50 years for women (55 for men) in textiles and some heavily "male" industries, was cut in 1971 to 45 for women (50 for men; Zharov, 1971: 159). Dancers are pensioned at 35.

The minimum pension was raised 50% as of July 1, 1971, primarily benefiting women because, due to their far lower level of education when the presently retired generations entered the labor force, it was overwhelmingly they who earned only the minimum wage. People who have earned only the minimum wage are pensioned at 100% of earnings. The maximum pension, which equals the average industrial wage, has not been raised as part of a move to reduce income differentials built up under Stalin. This disadvantages men much more than women, because the sharp difference in higher education and high industrial skill in that generation permitted few of its women to go above that level.

For those who wish to remain in the labor force, *full* pensions (between 50 and 75% of one's *highest* earning level) plus full earnings are paid in the fields in which women predominate: doctors and nurses, rural teachers, workers and forepersons in communications, trade, the restaurant industry, and the service industries.

At the opposite end of the wage scale, the nursing mother who chooses to work (her job is held for her for a year) or must do so out of economic necessity, gets thirty minutes off every 3½ hours to breast-feed her child, and more if the distance from work place to the place where nursing occurs requires it. (Large enterprises have nurseries on their grounds.) Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women with children under 12 may not be required to be on duty (this applies chiefly to medical personnel, long-hour or week-round child care center staffs, and so on) after their workday, or on weekends or holidays (Izvestia, 1970b).

Such regulations and provisions could be quoted for pages on end. In the Russian Republic, with half the population of the USSR, their enforcement is in the hands of a woman cabinet minister. Taken as a whole, they constitute a corpus unsurpassed for its humanism and its thoughtfulness in removing the real (as distinct from legal) obstacles to women's full participation in life outside the home. What justification, therefore, is there for statements such as this in a recent American work,

> the Russian woman's freedom of occupational choice is restricted, with consequent narrowing of the opportunities for self-development which would free her for creativity and the opportunity to make the particular sort of social contribution of which she is most capable. . . . Doubtless, because of the lack of a truly liberal approach, which we in this country prize so highly, many individual talents are never discovered or developed [in the Soviet Union]. Over and above the unfortunate consequences to the individuals, we may well ask whether in the long run such limitations on personal development are not extremely wasteful of the nation's human resources. . . . But the American woman's basic problem is one . . . *of selecting from her great abundance of opportunities the direction of participation suited to her special aptitudes*. . . . It is in meeting this challenge that American women can exercise international leadership in women's affairs [Harbeson, 1967: 135-316; italics in original].

She must be kidding! No, she is not. She is participating in the Cold War, an occupation not reserved to men, and one in which truth is the least of considerations. Recall that the policies and deceptions revealed in the Pentagon Papers were primarily a consequence of "the post-World-War rivalry against the Soviet Union" (Frankel, 1971), and that the profession of Sovietology was founded in 1946 to dig up data and develop a public frame of mind to serve that purpose.

This is why I spoke of the moral responsibility of the intellectual. It is not easy to follow truth to the conclusion that, in a given area, another, competing society is superior to our own.

Soviet women and those of the other economically developed Communist countries have serious unsolved problems. "Emancipation has given birth to acute problems" (Pavlova, 1970). I deal with them currently elsewhere (Mandel, 1971). But they are not in the realm of participation in the work force and the professions.

NOTES

1. As I understand fully the mistrust of members of any oppressed group toward others seeking to deal with its problems, it is pertinent to say that I personally know (or have known; two are now deceased) every woman who has ever had a book on Soviet women published in this country that was based on personal observation during more than a quick tour (Smith, 1927; Halle, 1933; Winter, 1933, and so on). At the opposite end of the age spectrum, I am on close terms with two of the very small number of women who have been year-long U.S. graduate exchange students in the USSR; a young American woman (under 25) permanently resident in Moscow and with a child by a Soviet father; and with the founder of the Women's History Research Library, who has visited the USSR several times, corresponds with Soviet people, and stimulated the thought that led to the writing of this paper, as well as providing information otherwise unavailable. As the paper rests upon anthropological research techniques as well as a sociological approach, a historical overview and use of published sources, I should add that informants include young Soviet women resident in the United States and Canada; a former worker for the Communist International (female) who has had seven periods of residence in the USSR in forty years, one of them quite recent; a graduate of Smolny Institute for Young Ladies in St. Petersburg, later a Hoover Institute researcher, who compared for me the status of women in the USSR revisited in the mid-1960s to the Russia of her girlhood; dozens of Soviet hitchhikers, chiefly female and in all age groups; and my wife, who has both visited the USSR and worked with me on Soviet problems for over thirty years. I myself have been there five times, 1931-1970. Since the paper from which this article has been extracted and updated was drafted, it has been polished against the questions of faculty and students in women's studies courses at Stanford, U.C.-Berkeley, and elsewhere.

2. Enrollment in creches has declined by 229,000, 1965 to 1969, due to the dropping birth rate (Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, 1970: 590).

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SOCIAL WORK

The Case of a Semi-Profession

by NINA TOREN, Hebrew University (Jerusalem)

The author examines the meanings of "social work"—its meaning to the system which supports it, its meaning to the social caseworker, and its meaning to clients. The established aims of social work, and ways in which these aims may better be achieved, are discussed.

The relative ineffectiveness of social caseworkers in the spheres of psychological and sociological "rehabilitation" of their clients is examined, and traced to three sets of factors: (1) the undeveloped theoretical knowledge-base of social work practice; (2) the relative low professional autonomy and authority of social workers; (3) the dyadic structure of the practitioner-client relationship and its insulation from the client's social milieu.

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