

## CHAPTER 7

Bolshevism and 'sexual revolution':

visualising New Soviet Woman as the eugenic ideal

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In Russia, as elsewhere, late nineteenth and early twentieth-century concerns with population and the regulation of degeneracy led to engagement with eugenic theories, anthropometry, bio-genetics, endocrinology, social hygiene and the promotion of physical fitness. After the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, eugenic and related research continued to be fostered by the state Commissariat of Health. Constructs of the body as a perfectible machine abounded. In pursuit of the ideal mechanized male labouring body, for instance, the Central Institute of Labour under Alexei Gastev and championed by Lenin, undertook 'laboratory' study of the 'psychotechnics' of labour - using methods similar to Paul Richer and Etienne Marey in Paris (see Chapter 4) - to rationalize workers' body movements. Meanwhile, the system of 'Biomechanics' invented by theatre director, Vsevolod Meierkh'old attempted a similar rationalisation for the movements of actors.<sup>1</sup> By contrast with the West, the female body was perceived as a dual-purpose machine, not just for hygienic maternity but also for paid labour within the economy.

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<sup>1</sup> Toby Clark, 'The "new man's" body: a motif in early Soviet culture', in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor (eds), *Art of the Soviets. Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-party State*, (Manchester and New York, 1993), pp. 36-9.

This chapter<sup>2</sup> explores some of the complex and paradoxical implications of the Soviet female *corpus delecti* – the New Woman – as visualized in examples of early Soviet propaganda on ‘sanitary enlightenment’, sanctioned by the Commissariat of Health. My chosen images, which seem to have been primarily addressed to women, relate to authoritative political and medical discourses on the ‘woman’ and ‘sex’ questions during the period of so-called ‘sexual revolution’, 1917-1932. Focal to my argument is a consideration of how these images of the New Woman – which I suggest to be medico-eugenic - may be seen to represent the operations of Communist Party, state and institutional power, in an era during which the party initially had only a very tenuous hold over the mass of the populace, institutions and professions. My angle of inquiry relates partly to current art historical discourse on the interconnections between art and medicine in relation to representations of the gendered body, and partly to recent concerns with issues of sexuality and gender in the field of Slavonic studies. In approaching the question of how these images might be understood in relation to operations of power, I also refer particularly to two possible and mutually contradictory models of interpretation offered, on the one hand by Wilhelm Reich’s Freudo-Marxist critique of the Soviet ‘sexual revolution’, and on the other hand, by Michel Foucault’s concept of the ‘deployment of sexuality’.

The discussion begins by outlining the historical context of the ‘sexual revolution’, emphasising the political importance of the interlinked Bolshevik ideals of the emancipated New Woman and the ‘new everyday life’, and the role of the

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<sup>2</sup> This chapter originated with an eponymous paper given at the Association of Art Historians’ Conference, Bristol, April 2005. The research on which this chapter is based was supported by an AHRB Small Grant in the Creative and Performing Arts, 2003-2004, and by the University of Hertfordshire, Faculty for the Creative and Cultural Industries Research Leave Scheme, Spring 2007.

Commissariat of Health in pursuing their fulfilment through educational propaganda campaigns on 'sanitary enlightenment'. In relation to the main propaganda campaigns directed at women – concerning prostitution, hygienic motherhood, and abortion - I argue that, as Reich asserted, the policies and propaganda campaigns were motivated by medico-eugenic concerns with the birth-rate. The central part of the discussion then analyses examples of medico-eugenic visual propaganda connected to these campaigns, in relation to elements of authoritative, contemporary party and institutional discourse on the 'woman' and 'sex' questions. What emerges from these analyses, I suggest, is a sense in which the New Woman's scientifically disciplined *corpus delecti*, although defined as non-erotic in contrast to the constructed stereotypes of capitalism, was to be perceived as replete with condensed sexual energies, for both socialist construction and hygienic maternity.

The final section of the chapter considers how these implications might be interpreted in light of the operation of party, state and institutional power. While acknowledging the validity of Reich's assessment of the propaganda as a mechanism of social and ideological control, I reject not only the preposterous theoretical basis of his interpretation, but also the simplistic idea that the operation of power in respect of the sexuality of working-class women is merely 'reactionary' and 'repressive'. Instead, I offer a concluding summary of the evidence discussed, with reference to Foucault's concepts of disciplinary bio-power.

Viewed in Foucault's terms, the 'sexual revolution' can be seen as a process of 'sexualisation' - the construction of modern sexuality and production of the sexualized body. In this process, the visual propaganda on 'sanitary enlightenment' can be seen as means to entice women into the emerging networks of surveillance and control within

the new state. The reward offered, I argue, was for women to be incorporated as emancipated New Women: 'real' delectable bodies with access to the secrets of sex. The price to be paid was their complicity with male political and medical authority in submitting to the requisite 'hygienic', 'scientific' body disciplines. I conclude by noting that ironically 'sexualisation', far from emancipating women from patriarchal power, merely transferred its location from family and church, to the institutions of party, state and medical science.

### **The Bolshevik sexual revolution**

The 'sexual revolution' of 1917-32 was characterized overall by an unprecedented proliferation of public and institutional debates on issues relating to sex and sexuality. Perhaps the most fundamental trigger for these debates was the series of legislative changes to the status and rights of women, that occurred immediately after the October Revolution. The Constitution of 1918, for instance, gave women equality with men.<sup>3</sup> The Family Code of 1918 destabilized the power of the patriarchal family by simplifying marriage and divorce.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the legalisation of abortion in 1920 appeared to give women more power over their own bodies.<sup>5</sup> This legislation represented a step towards the Bolsheviks' promise of a new society based on novel

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade. Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1997), p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution. Towards a Self-Regulating Character Structure*, tr. Therese Pol Farrar (New York (1945) 1974), p.170; Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, Feminism, Nihilism and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (New Jersey, (1978) 1990), p. 369.

<sup>5</sup> Fannina Halle, *Woman in Soviet Russia*, tr. Margaret M. Green (London, (1932) 1933), pp. 139-40; Stites, *Women's Liberation Movement*, p. 387.

social and economic relations that would not only generate a new way of everyday life – *novy byt* – but also engender a new genus of humanity, the New Soviet Person.<sup>6</sup>

Trotsky, for instance, declared in semi-Nietzschean terms: ‘Man will make it his purpose to...raise himself to a new plane, to create a higher biologic type, or, if you please, a superman.’<sup>7</sup> Trotsky’s use of ‘man’ to describe human agency was not just a standard patriarchal linguistic device.<sup>8</sup> Paradoxically, it also implicitly referenced a problem that the party, including Trotsky, was actively seeking to resolve.<sup>9</sup>

In pre-revolutionary Russia, particularly among the working and peasant classes, women were not even considered to be human, as indicated by a traditional proverb: ‘A chicken is not a bird and a *baba* (woman) is not a human being’.<sup>10</sup> A key move in creating both the new way of life and the New Person was thus to weaken the traditional power structure of the family and, by raising women up to an equal status with men, to

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<sup>6</sup> Halle, p. 338; N.A. Semashko, *Novyi byt i polovoi vopros* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), pp. 4-7.

<sup>7</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (1924), tr. Rose Strunsky (Ann Arbor, (1960) 1968), pp. 255-7. Compare the use of the term Superman discussed in Koureas’s chapter, with regard to English ideals of masculinity and male sexuality in the inter-War years (eds).

<sup>8</sup> In Russian the masculine nouns *chelovek* and *chelovechestvo* are used in a gender-neutral sense respectively to signify person/man and mankind/humankind. For an excellent account of the nuances of gendered language in Russian, see Valentina Zaitseva, ‘National Cultural and Gender Identity in the Russian Language’, in Helen Gosciljo and Andrea Lanoux (eds), *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture* (DeKalb, 2007), pp. 30-54.

<sup>9</sup> N. Trotskii, *Voprosy byta* (Moscow, 1923), p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power. Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1997), p. 110.

create what Aleksandra Kollontai termed ‘a Woman Human Being’.<sup>11</sup> This aim, fuelled by the ideas of Peter Tkachev, August Bebel and Friedrich Engels, was founded on the belief that the emancipation of women from patriarchal, domestic power, was a means to recruit them into the labour force and into the Communist Party. Fundamental to these aims was the restructuring of everyday life to release women from ‘kitchen slavery’.<sup>12</sup> Grigorii Shegal’s 1931 poster, *Away with kitchen slavery! Let [in] the new everyday life* is a particularly dramatic example of visual propaganda for *novy byt*, using distorted perspective and dramatic diagonals to draw attention to the simplified, symbolic figure of the New Woman (see Figure.7.1). This dynamic-looking figure, coloured red to indicate engagement with the party, is presented as the agent for releasing women from the dark, insanitary (spider-infested) world of domestic drudgery with its washtub, pans and primus stove,<sup>13</sup> into the bright, hygienic world of the modern factory, with its built-in club, dining room, kitchen and crèche. The concept of *novy byt*, as pictured by Shegal, involved the collectivisation of domestic arrangements such as cooking, dining and laundry, and state provision of nursery care and education for children. *Novy byt* also involved state control of maternity, health and sexual hygiene.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Aleksandra Kollontai, ‘Novaia zhenshchina’, [first published in *Sovremennyi Mir*, no.9, 1913] in *Novaia moral i rabochii klas* (Moscow, 1918), p. 29; Grigorii Batkis *The Sexual Revolution in the Soviet Union*, 1923, cited in Reich, p. 190.

<sup>12</sup> August Bebel, *Women and Socialism* [1879], tr. M.L. Stern (New York, 1910); Engels, Frederick, *The Origin of The Family, Private Property and The State* [1884], tr. Alex West (London, (1972) 1977), pp. 137-9, 221; Stites, *Women’s Liberation Movement*, pp. 58-9, 378-9.

<sup>13</sup> V. Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism* (Oxford and New York, 1999), p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, ‘The labour of women in the evolution of the economy’, (lecture at the Sverdlov Communist University 1921, published as a pamphlet 1923), in Alix Holt (ed.), *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai* (London, 1977), pp. 142-9; N. A. Semashko, *Health Protection in the USSR*

[Insert Fig.7.1 near here portrait]

During the years of Civil War 1917-1920, and of the New Economic Policy (NEP) 1921-c.1928, the new state was unable to put these programmes into practice on a large scale. Indeed, the propaganda dream of *novyi byt*, in its most extreme form – the abolition of the domestic ‘hearth’ – was abandoned between 1931 and 1934.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, during the 1920s, the dream not only prompted experiments in communal living, but also added extra fuel to speculations about the nature of the new sexual role of women, and possibilities of new forms of sexual relationships between men and women.<sup>16</sup>

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(London, 1934), p. 74. See also Halle, p. 149; Stites, *Women's Liberation Movement*, pp. 265-7; Barbara Evans Clements, *Daughters of the Revolution. A History of Women in the USSR* (Arlington Heights, Illinois, 1994), p. 41.

<sup>15</sup> Buchli, pp. 60-61.

<sup>16</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, ‘From the Commissariat of Social Welfare’, Document no.1247, 31 January 1918, in *Selected Writings*, pp. 140-41; Kollontai, ‘The Labour of Women in the Evolution of the Economy’, in *ibid.* pp. 142-9; A. Kollontai, *Sem'ia i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo* (Moscow and Petrograd, 1918), pp. 10, 18-19; M. Liadov, *Voprosy byt* (Moscow, 1925), pp. 9, 25; Olga Matich, ‘Remaking the bed’, in John E. Bowlt and Olga Matich (eds), *Laboratory of Dreams. The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 59-78. One of the most extreme possibilities, the use of healthy men as mere studs prefiguring the use of artificial insemination, with the resultant child becoming the property of the state, was raised in Segei Tret'iakovskii's ultimately unperformed ‘discussional’ play, *I Want a Child!* (1926), written for Meierkhol'd's theatre with set designs by the Constructivist, El Lissitzky. See Christina Kaier, ‘Delivered from Capitalism: Nostalgia, Alienation and the Future of Reproduction in Tret'iakov's *I Want a Child!*’, in Christina Kaier and Eric Naiman (eds), *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia. Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 183-216.

The novel relationships envisaged by the Communist party involved serious, monogamous comradesly love, in which sex itself was a private event for the purpose of procreation. It was not to be excessively indulged in for its own sake, since most of the couple's energies were to be orientated to work.<sup>17</sup> This was endorsed in 1923 by Grigorii Batkis, Director of the Institute for Social Hygiene attached to the Commissariat of Health and inventor of the phrase 'sexual revolution'.<sup>18</sup>

Contemporary literature gave more emphasis to sexual liberation. During the early to mid-1920s, for example, the imaginative writings of Boris Pil'niak, Fedor Gladkov and Aleksandra Kollontai emphasized and celebrated the new status of emancipated women as free to indulge in erotic behaviour beyond the confines of the traditional family.<sup>19</sup> Yet Kollontai's writings on 'winged eros' and 'free love', despite their notoriety after 1923, did not advocate excessive sexual indulgence or the sorts of libertinism and cruel behaviour that affected numbers of real women in the early 1920s.<sup>20</sup> The chaotic and often appalling conditions of the Civil War encouraged

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<sup>17</sup> N. Semashko, 'Polovoe vospitanie i zdorov'e', *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 15 August, 1925, p. 5; V. Gorinevskii, 'Polovoi vopros', *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 29 January, 1926, p. 3; Akademik V. Bekhterev, *Znachenie polovogo vlecheniia v zhiznediatel'nosti organizma* (Moscow, 1928), pp. 16-17; A.V. Lunacharskii, *O byte* (Moscow, 1927), pp. 21-2, 37.

<sup>18</sup> Batkis in Reich, p. 191.

<sup>19</sup> Boris Pil'niak, *Mat' syra-zemlia* (Moscow & Petrograd, 1923); Fedor Gladkov, 'Tsement', *Krasnaia nov'*, 1,(1925):.66-110; .2 (1925):.73-109; 3 (1925): 47-81; 4 (1925): 57-87; 5 (1925): 75-111; 6 (1925): 39-74; Aleksandra Kollontai, 'Vasilisa Malyagina', *Liubov' pchël trudovikh*, Moscow, 1923, republished as *Svobodnaia liubov'* (Riga, 1925), pp. 67-303; Halle, pp. 172-3

<sup>20</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, 'Make Way for Winged Eros. A Letter to Working Youth', (*Molodaia gvardiia*, 3, 1923) in *Selected Writings*, pp. 289, 291; P. Vinogradskaia, 'Voprosy morali, pola, byta, i tov.

extreme forms of sexual behaviour: rape, temporary liaisons, desertions of wives by husbands and husbands by wives, abortions or unwanted pregnancies and, as a result, abandonment or murder of babies. These conditions continued beyond the end of the Civil War. Hordes of delinquent and abandoned children continued to wander the streets until the mid-1930s. Prostitution increased and venereal disease proliferated.<sup>21</sup>

In the context of the shift in Bolshevik policy from internationalism to ‘socialism in one country’ and towards greater centralisation of power under Stalin,<sup>22</sup> the debates around both the positive and negative aspects of the ‘woman’ and ‘sex’ questions intensified from 1925 onwards. They were orchestrated by the party in the media, and through agit-plays in the workplace.<sup>23</sup> Enmeshed with this debate was the visual propaganda on ‘sanitary enlightenment’ (acronym, *sanprosvet*) generated by or under the auspices of the Commissariat of Health (*Narkomzdrav*) and the Communist Party. While artists in this period were still relatively free to choose the forms, styles and devices through which the propaganda was conveyed,<sup>24</sup> the commissioning institutions had ultimate control over the message. In the case of the ‘sanitary

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Kollontai’, *Krasnaia nov’*, vol.6, no.16, October-November 1923, pp. 213-14; M. Liadov, pp. 16-18, 34-7.

<sup>21</sup> Reich, pp. 225-47, 267-73; Stites, *Women’s Liberation Movement*, pp. 258, 381, 366-7, 370-75.

<sup>22</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union 1917-1991* (London, (1985) 1992), pp. 135-7.

<sup>23</sup> See for example: Dr. E.B. Demidovich, *Sud nad raspushchenost’iu* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927); A.E. Kanevskii, *Sud Annoi Gorbovoi, po obvineniiu v proizvodstve sebe vykidysha (aborta)* (Odessa, 1925); ‘Juridical proceedings concerning a prostitute’, *Rabochaia gazeta*, 25 February 1925 cited in Halle, pp. 228-31.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art. The State and Society: The Peredvizhniki and Their Tradition* (New York, 1989), pp. 157-9.

enlightenment' posters, the message represented the particular concerns and policies of *Narkomzdrav*.

### ***Narkomzdrav*, eugenics and the call for sanitary enlightenment**

*Narkomzdrav* was set up in July 1918 under the direction of Nikolai Semashko, Commissar for Health, in a context marked by depopulation, widespread epidemic diseases, and a disastrous birth to death rate.<sup>25</sup> The Commissariat's remit was to improve public health in ways that would fulfil the healthy, hygienic aspects of the promised 'new everyday life' and engage with the task of 'engineering' the New Soviet Person.<sup>26</sup> Semashko was a 'social hygienist' committed to improving the population through health education and an increase in public hygiene. His approach to the task included the promotion of sport and physical culture, but on a number of propaganda 'fronts' he laid particular stress on the reduction of infant mortality and an increase in the birth rate.<sup>27</sup> The principal 'sanitary enlightenment' propaganda campaigns were: against prostitution and the spread of VD; for the professionalization of maternity and infant care; and against abortion, both illegal and legal.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time *Narkomzdrav* also supported eugenics and related medical, biological and genetic research as part of the broad scientific base of investigations

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<sup>25</sup> Frances Bernstein, 'Envisioning health in revolutionary Russia: the politics of gender in sexual enlightenment posters of the 1920s', *The Russian Review*, 57 (1998): 191.

<sup>26</sup> Halle, p.338; Semashko, *Novyi byt i polovoi vopros*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>27</sup> Bernstein, 'Envisioning health', p. 193.

<sup>28</sup> Semashko, *Health Protection in the USSR*, pp. 80-3, 93-5, 104-14.

informing its ‘social hygienist’ policies.<sup>29</sup> Semashko himself viewed such policies as a path to the establishment of: ‘eugenics, the science of making the human race healthy’,<sup>30</sup> in the distant future, when communism had been achieved. Semashko’s colleague Grigorii Batkis, Director of the Institute of Social Hygiene, was more closely involved with eugenics. Batkis, a member of the working committee of the World League for Sexual Reform in 1930,<sup>31</sup> linked eugenics directly with the promotion of ‘scientific’ sex education and hygienic maternity.<sup>32</sup>

*Narkomzdrav’s* focal concern with the sanitisation and control of women’s sexuality and maternity had parallels with similar concerns expressed by Western eugenic theorists, for example, Havelock Ellis,<sup>33</sup> but without the emphasis on ‘negative’ eugenics and racial purity that often accompanied such theories in the West.<sup>34</sup> Such

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<sup>29</sup> M.B. Adams, ‘The Politics of Human Heredity in the USSR’, *Genome*, 31/2 (1989): 880; M.B. Adams, ‘Eugenics as a Social Medicine in Revolutionary Russia’, in S.G. Solomon and J. Hutchinson (eds), *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990), pp. 207-8.

<sup>30</sup> N.A. Semashko, *Nauka o zdorov’e, Obshchestva sotsial’naia gigiena* (Moscow, (1922) 1926), pp. 53-4.

<sup>31</sup> Ralph Dose, ‘The World League for Sexual Reform, Some Possible Approaches’, in F.X. Eder, L. Hall and G. Hekma (eds), *Sexual Culture in Europe. National Histories* (Manchester and New York, 1999), p. 247.

<sup>32</sup> G. Batkiss, ‘Soderzhanie i metody vneshkol’noi raboty po polovomu prosveshcheniiu’, *Sotsial’naia gigiena*, 6 (1925): 146-8.

<sup>33</sup> Havelock Ellis, ‘Introduction’, *The Task of Social Hygiene* (London, (1912) 1927), pp. 1-48; C. W. Saleeby, *Woman and Womanhood. A Search for Principles* (London, 1912), pp. 7-25; Diane Paul, ‘Eugenics and the Left’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 45/4 (1984): 568.

<sup>34</sup> *Vestnik kommunisticheskii akademii*, 20 (1927): 212-545; V.N. Slepko, *Evgenika, uluchshenie chelovecheskoi prirody* (Moscow, 1927), pp. 164-5; Boris Zavadovsky, ‘The Physical and the Biological in the Process of Evolution’, *Science at the Crossroads* (Second International Conference on the History

emphases were ultimately incompatible with the ostensibly egalitarian aims of the party, within a multi-ethnic state dedicated to the empowerment and improvement of the working classes.

Within *Narkomzdrav*'s eugenics and biological research institutes, and particularly in the medical propaganda, Soviet eugenicist discourse tended to blur the boundaries between eugenics in the strict genetic sense, and eugenics – the improvement of human life by environmental means.<sup>35</sup> This blurring was facilitated by the circulation of French Lamarckian ideas on the inheritability of acquired characteristics. Such ideas gained some support from the party, as was shown by Soviet heroization of Kammerer even after he had been denounced in the West as a charlatan. These ideas continued to be attractive beyond the 1920s, as exemplified by the eventual abolition of Soviet genetic research in favour of Lysenkoism, between 1948 and c.1964.<sup>36</sup> By contrast with the extended and chancy process of evolution theorized by

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of Science), 1931 (reprinted London, 1971), 46: 5; David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair*, (Cambridge Mass., 1970), p. 260. In the realm of 'sanitary enlightenment' propaganda in the 1920s there were few manifestations of concern with negative eugenics – for example sterilisations of the 'unfit'. See Frances, Lee Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses* (DeKalb, 2007), p. 173; Kaier, pp. 190-92.

<sup>35</sup> See for example T.I. Iudin, *Evegenika* (Moscow, 1925), p. 6; Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex*, pp. 171-5.

<sup>36</sup> Adams, 'The Politics of Human Heredity in the USSR', pp. 880-81; Zavadovsky, 'The Physical and the Biological in the Process of Evolution', pp. 3-4, 9; A.E. Gaissinovitch, 'The Origins of Soviet Genetics and the Struggle with Lamarckism', tr. M.B. Adams, *Journal of the History of Biology*, 13/1 (1980): 1-51; Adams, 'Eugenics as a Social Medicine in Revolutionary Russia', pp. 213-214; David Joravsky, 'Soviet Marxism and Biology before Lysenko', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20/1 (1959): 91-2, 94-5, 98; Paul, p. 579.

Darwinian biologists, Lamarckian and Lysenkoist ‘sciences’ promised speedier results by means of direct intervention and control through education.<sup>37</sup> In the 1920s such ideas arguably lent greater potency to the social hygienist, medico-eugenic belief in ‘sanitary enlightenment’ propaganda as a practical route to engineering the New Person’s body.

**The true and false *corpus delecti*: the *delegatka* vs. the prostitute**

*Stop!* (see Figure.7.2) is an anti-prostitution *sanprosvet* poster, commissioned from the Society of Realist Artists (OKhR) between c.1927 and 1930.<sup>38</sup> What is significant about the poster in relation to my exploration, is that it clearly juxtaposes two potential sorts of contemporary female *corpus delecti* – the politically incorrect prostitute, and the female agitator, an embodiment of the communist party’s current ideal of the politically active, urban New Woman.

[Insert Fig. 7.2 near here portrait]

The two images were legible as representing these incompatible types through certain pre-established conventions. The ‘flapper’ image of the prostitute referred to ‘bourgeois’ styles in the West that were sometimes copied from foreign fashion magazines by young working women.<sup>39</sup> In a context where the lack of industrial textile

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<sup>37</sup> T.D. Lysenko, ‘O dvukh napravleniakh v genetike’, Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, December 23, 1936, in T.D. Lysenko, *Agrobiologiya: raboty po voprosam genetiki, seleksii i semenovodstva* (Moscow, 1946), pp. 164-5.

<sup>38</sup> Published by OKhR - Ob’edineniia khudozhnikov realistov, Moskva, B. Dmitrovka, no.23 -, commissioned by Leningradskii oblastlit. in an edition of 15,000, price 50 kopeks.

<sup>39</sup> Barbara Alpern Engel, *Women in Russia 1700-2000* (Cambridge and New York, 2004), p. 158.

production made any sort of clothing expensive and hard to obtain,<sup>40</sup> however, fashionable clothes were particularly associated with prostitutes.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, the prostitute's adversary wears plain, practical clothing and, crucially, the red kerchief tied back in the 'proletarian' style identified the image as that of a female agitator or *delegatka*.<sup>42</sup>

The *delegatka* was one of the first really pervasive images of the politically active New Woman to arise in Bolshevik propaganda and visual art. Nataliia Dan'ko's ceramic figurine *Woman Worker Making a Speech* from 1923, (see Figure.7.3) is one of the earliest examples that explicitly links the plainly dressed, slender female figure with its tied-back red headscarf, to the act of agitational speechifying. There were, however, many other examples including the kerchiefed image of the symbolic New Woman in Shegal's 1931 poster (see Figure.7.1).

The image had its roots in the *delegatka* system instituted by Inessa Armand within the Women's Department of the Communist party (*Zhenotdel*) between 1919 and 1920, in order to pursue agitational work more successfully among proletarian and peasant women. *Delegatki* were elected by individual factories and agricultural communities to serve internships within state departments, and to report critically back to both the *Zhenotdel* and their own constituents. They were expected to attend lectures on literacy and hygiene, and to assist voluntarily in mobilising women to organize

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<sup>40</sup> Alex Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR 1917-1991* (London (1969) 1992), pp. 69, 89; Hosking, p. 519.

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Waters, 'Victim or villain: prostitution in post-revolutionary Russia' in Linda Edmonson, ed. *Women and Society in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge and New York, (1992) 1998), p. 170.

<sup>42</sup> Stites, *Women's Liberation Movement*, pp. 337-8.

crèches, communal canteens, literacy groups, and infant and mother-care clinics.<sup>43</sup>

Although both the *Zhenotdel* and the *delegatki* were targets for resentment from rural men and from within the party, and abolished in the early 1930s,<sup>44</sup> until c.1934 the *delegatka*'s red kerchief signified promotion to the ranks of 'enlightened' proletarian women, with the task of spreading 'enlightenment' to other women – albeit under the watchful male eye of the party.<sup>45</sup>

Within *Stop!*, the demarcations between the 'bad' (prostitute) and 'good' (*delegatka*) bodies seem to be created by the differing modes of representation. While both are slender, the prostitute's body is unnaturally elongated and distorted, like a *Vogue* fashion plate, whereas the proportions of the agitator's body seem more normal. Although, like Shegal's New Woman (see Figure.7.1), the image of the agitator is mainly depicted in red to emphasize the party connections, unlike Shegal's image, she is represented not as the symbolic ideal but as rooted in actuality. In this poster, she is represented more naturalistically, in stronger colours, and as occupying a different sort of space from the prostitute, as if to emphasize that she represents solid reality, whereas the prostitute exists in some illusory world.<sup>46</sup> That this world is drunken and

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<sup>43</sup> Vera Golubeva, 'Rabota zhenotdelov v novykh usloviakh', *Pravda*, 1 February, 1923, p. 3; Stites, *Women's Liberation Movement*, p. 337; Susan Bridger, *Women in the Soviet Countryside. Women's Roles in Rural Development in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge and New York, 1987), pp. 9-10.

<sup>44</sup> Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, pp. 127-9, 181-93; Stites, *Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, pp. 342-3, 345; Clements, *Daughters of the Revolution*, pp. 46, 56; Alpern Engel, p. 157.

<sup>45</sup> Evans Clements, *Daughters of the Revolution*, pp. 53, 56, 59; Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, pp. 76-7, 180-81, 212.

<sup>46</sup> It is interesting that Bernstein also argues that the prostitute was not seen as a 'real' woman: Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex*, p. 171.

nightmarish is signified by the geometrical stylisation of the background street scene, with its depictions of toppling buildings, target-like lights, and a frieze of caricatured prostitutes and pimps.

This stylistic variation is interesting in relation to the formation of OKhR, a breakaway group from the Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR). OKhR was founded in 1927 by Nikolai Kasatkin, Sergei Malyutin and others. While still firmly rooted in the realist camp,<sup>47</sup> it is evident that like other splinter groups critical of AKhRR's descriptive naturalism and indeed artists such as Shegal within AKhRR, OKhR were prepared to adapt elements of abstract visual languages. These had been developed by the pre- and post- revolutionary avant-garde in pursuit of a 'proletarian' art capable of a more active, mobilizing impact on the masses.<sup>48</sup>

*Stop!* was in effect a recruiting poster for women, especially prostitutes, to join the ranks of the urban New Woman. For those who could read the message, it was elaborated at the bottom of the poster, in the poem 'Night Pavement' by Dem'ian Bednyi. A self-consciously 'proletarian' writer, Dem'ian Bednyi worked closely with the party Central Committee until his fall from grace in 1932.<sup>49</sup>

Here's what must be ended,  
Here's what needs to be fought:  
A belch of the old system  
On the pavement in front of you!

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<sup>47</sup> Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven and London, 1998), p. 77.

<sup>48</sup> Valkenier, pp. 156-9

<sup>49</sup> Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture. Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (Cambridge and New York, (1992) 1995), p. 41; Cullerne Bown, pp. 67, 74.

Feathers, powder, make-up, 'spanish fly',<sup>50</sup>

The lustre of counterfeit beauty,

'Little darlings' up for sale

Disgraceful 'tomcats' [pimps]

Contagious delights,

The squeal of debauchery 'till morning.

This evil frenzy of sexual passion

Should have been stopped long ago.

It is necessary to end this suppurating scuffle,

To sanitize cities

By the proletarian tempering

Of women's will and labour.

Bednyi's poem, while hard-hitting, followed the official party line on prostitution.

Within the new Bolshevik state, the initial thinking was that under the new socio-economic system prostitution – as a form of capitalist economic exploitation – would simply disappear.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the reintroduction of limited capitalist enterprise under NEP created massive unemployment for female workers, and prostitution

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<sup>50</sup> 'Per'ia, pudra, kraski, mushki'. The Russian word *mushki* can be translated as 'beauty spots' and also as 'Spanish fly/cantharides', a substance supposed to induce insatiable sexual cravings and pleasure. As Bernstein notes, however Spanish Fly was also an abortant. Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex*, p. 170.

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth A. Wood, 'Prostitution Unbound: Representations of Sexual and Political Anxieties in Postrevolutionary Russia', in Jane T. Costlow, Stephanie Sandler and Judith Vowles (eds) *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture* (Stanford, 1993), p. 127; Waters, 'Victim or villain', p. 160.

increased.<sup>52</sup> Until 1929 prostitution in itself was not treated as a criminal activity but rather as ‘labour desertion’.<sup>53</sup> Thus prostitutes could be redeemed or redeem themselves by voluntarily entering the ‘proletarian’ sphere of labour and by the late 1920s, when *Stop!* was produced, ‘prophylactoria’ (see Figure. 7.4) were being set up to facilitate this transition.

[Insert Fig. 7.4 near here portrait]

Briefly given high profile, *prophylactoria* provided institutionalized means for the state to control and sanitize prostitutes’ sexuality through education and training, and redirect their energies towards socially useful work.<sup>54</sup> It seemed that some women were prepared to accept this as the price for a guarantee of employment. In 1928, for instance, the opening of a new hundred-place *prophylactorium* in Leningrad attracted 700 applicants, some of whom were apparently merely posing as prostitutes.<sup>55</sup> Such women might be described in relation to Bednyi’s poetic punch-line, as willing to submit to the ‘proletarian tempering’ of their ‘will and labour’.

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine* (London, (1986) 2002), pp. 58-60, 92-100; Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public. The Incarnation of Early Soviet Society* (New Jersey, 1997), pp. 6-7, 9, 212; Aleksandra Kollontai, ‘Novaia ugroza’, pp. 5-9; Alpern Engel, p. 153.

<sup>53</sup> A.V. Mol’kov, *Sanitarnoe prosveshchenie, ego zadachi i metody* (Moscow, 1923), pp. 40-42; ‘Pogoriachym sledam’, *Delegatka*, 17 (1929): 12; L.E. Motylev, ‘Ob otrazhenii bor’by s prostitutsiei v piatlenem plane’, *Venerologiiia i dermatologiiia*, 7 (1929): 87-95; Halle, pp. 225-7, 232; Waters, ‘Victim or villain’, pp. 167-8, 170-71; Wood, ‘Prostitution Unbound’, p. 131.

<sup>54</sup> Halle, pp. 233-44; Waters, ‘Victim or villain’, p. 171; Wood, ‘Prostitution Unbound’, p. 132.

<sup>55</sup> Frances Bernstein, ‘Prostitutes and Proletarians: The Soviet Labour Clinic as Revolutionary Laboratory’, in William Husband (ed.). *The Human Tradition in Modern Russia* (Wilmington, Del., 2000), p. 17.

The image of the ‘tempered’ proletarian woman in *Stop!*, viewed in relation to Bednyi’s poem, suggests that ‘real’ female beauty was to be understood as being partly indicated by certain attributes of dress and appearance, such as practical non-revealing work clothing, stout sensible shoes and absence of make-up. Implicitly these attributes also indicated that ‘real’ beauty was signified by a lack of indulgence in sexual excess, and thus total emancipation from the last vestiges of capitalism. The links made by Bednyi’s poem between prostitution, fashion, make-up, excessive sexuality and capitalism were also present in aspects of contemporary authoritative ‘scientific’ discourse on female sexuality.

In 1925, for instance, in the newspaper of communist youth, *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, a Dr Kallistov published an attack on tendencies towards fashionable women’s dress and make-up. He argued these attributes to be incitements to sexual activity and called for the invention of ‘simple hygienic dress’ for women.<sup>56</sup> Kallistov was neither the first nor the last to reject ‘bourgeois’ fashion styles or to make a link between ‘hygiene’ and clothing suitable for the *novyi byt* in the years between 1919 and c.1928. It was a topic that engaged artist-designers of the avant-garde such as Varvara Stepanova, Liubov Popova and Nadezhda Lamanova, as well as members of the *komsomol*.<sup>57</sup> However, Kallistov made a direct link between the apeing of ‘bourgeois’ fashion and unfettered female sexuality, implying that if women’s appearance was sanitized and de-sexualized, this would prevent excessive sexuality in both men and

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<sup>56</sup> Dr I. Kallistov, ‘Polovoi vopros i fizkul’tura’, *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 29 July, 1925, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> ‘How should we dress? A discussion – let us have your views on the subject’, *Komsomolskaia pravda*, June 30, 1928, in David Elliott and James Ryan (eds), *Art into Production* (Oxford, 1984), p. 93; Nadezhda Lamanova, ‘Project for a Clothing Design Workshop’ (1919), in *Ibid*, p. 92; Tatiana Strizhenova, ‘Textile and Clothes Design in the Twenties and Early Thirties’, in *Ibid*, p. 87

women. His view was reinforced by A. Stratonitskii's 1925 book *Everyday Life in the Komsomol*, which blamed men's praise of women's beauty as leading firstly to excessive care for appearance, and then to coquettish behaviour and prostitution.<sup>58</sup>

Apparently underlying these concerns was a biological discourse on woman's 'femininity' as a product of capitalism, which surfaced in 1924-5 in, for example, the book *Questions of Everyday Life* by Martyn Liadov, Rector of the Sverdlov Communist University in Moscow. Liadov argued that under capitalism the exploitative demands of men had formed what were commonly understood to be the feminine characteristics of women – care for appearance, use of make-up, flirtatiousness and so on.<sup>59</sup> While this accorded with Bebel's idea of women's role and function within capitalism as being socially constructed,<sup>60</sup> Liadov went further. Apparently building on the Lamarckian idea that physiologically beneficial effects of environmental change could produce inheritable genetic changes in the population, he suggested that the new socio-economic environment could reverse the genetic changes wrought by capitalism. Liadov argued, therefore, that menstruation itself was a response to the exploitative demands of capitalism that demanded women's constant sexual availability whereas, like the animals, women originally had only been sexually available once a year.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> A. Stratonitskii, *Voprosy byta v komsomole* (Leningrad, 1926), p. 58. This aspect of the 'sex question' was also raised in Sergei Tret'iakov's play *I Want a Child!* (1926): Kaier, p. 194. Bernstein argues that medical educators were most worried by what they saw as the unnaturally 'masculine' role of sexual predator assumed by coquettes: Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex*, pp. 67-72.

<sup>59</sup> Liadov, p. 31.

<sup>60</sup> Bebel, pp. 101-2, 145.

<sup>61</sup> Liadov, p. 30.

The implications here were that first, given the new socio-economic system, women ought to revert back to this pattern, and second, that this reversion would occur if women stopped using the traditional triggers to sexual attraction. Following this line of reasoning, the sober dress of the *delegatka* in *Stop!* (see Figure.7.2) exemplified the preferred ‘hygienic’ style of dress for the New Woman, which was in itself understood to signify the *corpus delecti* of the urban New Woman: an anti-erotic *corpus delecti* – at least in the sense that was associated with capitalism.

On 1 January, 1925 Liadov was severely rebuked for bad science by Health Commissar Semashko in the party newspaper *Izvestiia*.<sup>62</sup> Liadov’s book was nevertheless indicative of concerns within the party for reducing and controlling women’s sexuality as a means also to curtail men’s sexual activity. Some of his ideas were shared by Professor Aaron Zalkind, appointed Director of the Clinical Psychoneurological Institute, Petrograd in 1919, a lecturer at the Sverdlov Communist University, and author of articles on sex for *komsomol* publications.<sup>63</sup> Zalkind, who also came under criticism in Semashko’s article, believed that capitalism had ‘sexualized the universe’<sup>64</sup> and in doing so had ‘disorganized’<sup>65</sup> the human body, weakening the proletariat by channelling its energies into sex.<sup>66</sup> Zalkind’s authoritative book, *The Sexual Question in Terms of Soviet Society* (1926), was one of a number of

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<sup>62</sup> N.A. Semashko, ‘Kak ne nado pisat’ o polovom voprose’, *Izvestiia*, 1 January, 1925, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> M. and A. Stern, *Sex in the Soviet Union*, tr. M. E (London, 1981), p. 55; Stites, *Women’s Liberation Movement in Russia*, p. 381; Naiman, p. 126, fn. 9.

<sup>64</sup> A. B. Zalkind, *Polovoi vopros v usloviakh sovetskoi obshchestvennosti* (Leningrad, 1926), p. 28; K. Tsetkin, *O Lenine. Vospominaniia i vstrechi* (Moscow, 1925), p. 15.

<sup>65</sup> Zalkind, *Polovoi vopros*, p. 28.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 47-59.

attempts to resolve the issue of a moral code for politically active women.<sup>67</sup> Aimed particularly at the *komsomol* Zalkind's book offered twelve 'commandments' for correct sexual behaviour; elsewhere he identified sex with 'class enemies' as a perversion: like having sex with 'a crocodile or an orang-utan'.<sup>68</sup> In his view, sex should be limited to a more modest place in life so that the 'stolen' energies could be re-diverted back into social action.<sup>69</sup>

This idea of the redirection or storage of sexual energies was pervasive in authoritative discourse,<sup>70</sup> and prominent in Semashko's own writing. The idea seemed to derive from the theories of those eugenic researchers concerned with endocrinology who, following Steinach,<sup>71</sup> believed that the 'internal secretions' of sex hormones brought on by vasectomy (for men) or sexual abstinence (both sexes) energized the body. Hence the apparent concern projected in advice to the *komsomol* that sexual relations should not happen too early.<sup>72</sup> It was believed that the sexual energies thus

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<sup>67</sup> 'Plenum TsKK. O partetkie', *Pravda*, 9 October, 1924, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> A. B. Zalkind 'Polovaia zhizn i sovremennaia molodezh', *Molodaia gvardiia*, 6 (1923): 249.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. ; M. and A. Stern, p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> K. Tsetkin, *O Lenine*, p.16; Alexandra Kollontai, 'Make Way for Winged Eros', pp. 289, 291.

<sup>71</sup> E. Steinach, *Verjüngung durch experimentelle Neubelebung der alternden Pubertätsdrüsen* (Berlin, 1920).

<sup>72</sup> Semashko, 'Kak ne nado pisat' o polovom voprose', p. 5; A.V. Nemilov, *Biologicheskaiia tragediia zhenshchiny* (Leningrad, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1927), pp. 16, 33; Batkis, 'Soderzhanie i metody', pp. 146-8. Professor I.V. Ariamov, 'Znachenie sokhraneniia polovoi energii dlia molodezhi', *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 7 February, 1926, p. 5; Ia. D. Golumb, *Polovoe vozderzhanie (Za i protiv). Chto dolzhen znat' kazhdyi o sovremennom sostoianii voprosa* (Odessa, 2d edn, 1927), pp. 24, 30-31; Dr L.M. Vasilevskii, *K zdorovomu polovomu bytu* (Moscow, 1926), p. 4; Professor E. M. Kurbinovskii (Moscow), 'Konstitusional'naia i professional'naia patalogiia zhenshchiny v svete sovremennoi profilaktiki',

conserved could then be directed not only towards productive work for the collective, but also towards making the body stronger and healthier in order, eventually, to produce healthier children.<sup>73</sup> Thus the overwhelming advice from Semashko and other authority figures particularly to the *komsomol*, and despite disavowals of preaching asceticism,<sup>74</sup> was to practice sexual abstinence. This was to be assisted by engagement in physical culture as a means to avoid not only premarital sex but also masturbation and prostitution.<sup>75</sup> In the view of Boris Zavadovskii, an eminent biologist at the Sverdlov Communist University, this would require training in ‘the reaction of inhibition’ to keep ‘biological impulses and interests’ under control where they might ‘conflict with the interests of the collective’.<sup>76</sup>

Prostitution, clearly, was an instance of biology in conflict with the interests of the collective, not just for its connotations of ‘labour desertion’, or for its potential to transmit VD, a criminal offence that endangered the profligate man’s family,<sup>77</sup> but also for its wastage of both male and female sexual energies. Submission to ‘proletarian tempering’, meant entering into new disciplines of the body including ‘the reaction of inhibition’, not just to control and divert sexual energies into the task of building

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*Klinicheskaia meditsina*, 5/13-14 (1927): 715-26; Professor V.A. Opiel, ‘Endokrinologiya, kak osnova sovremennoi meditsiny’, *Leningradskii meditsinskii zhurnal*, 3 (1926): 3-18.

<sup>73</sup> Naiman, p. 134-5.

<sup>74</sup> See for example, N. Bukharin, ‘Uchitel’stvo i komsomol’, *Izvestiia*, 4 February, 1925, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> K. Tsetkin, p. 85; N.I. Podvoiskii, *Rabotnitsa i fizicheskaia kul’tura* (Moscow, 1938), p. 3; N.I. Podvoiskii, ‘Lenin i fizicheskoe vospitanie’, *Krasnyi sport*, no.4, 21 January 1948, pp. 3-4; Semashko, *Nauka o zdorov’e*, pp. 30-31; N.A. Semashko, *Puti razvitiia sovetskii fizkul’tury* (Moscow, 1926), p. 57; Bernstein, ‘Envisioning Health’, p. 199.

<sup>76</sup> B. Zavadovskii, ‘Otvety na anketa o khuliganstve’, *Molodaia gvardiia*, 11 (1926): 215.

<sup>77</sup> Bernstein, ‘Envisioning Health’, pp. 207-8; Halle, p. 232.

socialism, but also, eventually, to engage with procreation in the interests of the collective. In this sense, while freed from the devices of capitalist eroticism, the ‘real’ *corpus delecti* of the urban New Woman as represented in *Stop!* might be argued to hold a new type of erotic charge: the potential for hygienic maternity.

### **Hygienic maternity and the docile female body**

Hygienic maternity was an aspect of *Narkomzdrav*’s concerns within the remit of the Department for the Protection of Mothers and Infants (acronym *Okhrmatmlad*). Initially under the direction of Vera Lebedeva, *Okhrmatmlad* was set up by Aleksandra Kollontai during her brief spell as Commissar for Social Welfare.<sup>78</sup> Following funding cuts in 1922, as the Department recovered in the mid-1920s one of the main trajectories of its visual propaganda was to promote care of pregnancy and birth by qualified doctors rather than traditional wise-women and midwives, known as *babki*.<sup>79</sup> Many of these posters were directed at peasant women upon whose sexuality *Narkomzdrav* seemed to place a very particular construction: Health Commissar *Semashko* for example appeared to regard the transmission of VD and syphilis in the countryside as done by non-sexual means, such as kissing icons and eating from communal bowls.<sup>80</sup> Within *Narkomzdrav*’s propaganda campaigns, reference to peasant women’s sexuality was

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<sup>78</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, ‘The First Steps Towards the Protection of Motherhood’, Alexandra Kollontai, *My Life and Work*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 336-340 reprinted in *Alexandra Kollontai: Selected Articles and Speeches*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, and available on <http://www.marxists.org/archive/kollontai/works/steps.htm>, 31/03/05. See also Halle, p. 151; Elizabeth Waters, ‘Teaching Mothercraft in Post-Revolutionary Russia’, *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, 1/2 (1987): .29, 30, 47.

<sup>79</sup> Waters, ‘Teaching Mothercraft’, pp. 43-7.

<sup>80</sup> Semashko, *Health Protection in the USSR*, pp. 11-12.

mainly limited to their reproductive capacities. Maternity hygiene posters commonly imaged the peasant mother as plump, traditionally costumed and passive.

Figures 7.5 and 7.6 provide examples from a series of *sanprosvet* posters aimed at peasant mothers in the mid-1920s. The posters, produced in a print-run of 20,000 disclose assumptions made from a literate urban perspective about the sorts of visual communication peasants would best understand. The use of black and white line-drawing and juxtaposed scenarios separated by a decorative border, with a text below, deliberately referenced traditional *lubki*: illustrated broadsheets that were produced in towns for circulation to peasants between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. *Lubki* and other folk artefacts and designs had been appropriated by elements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century avant-gardes, as resources from which to build a national visual high culture.<sup>81</sup> The idea of reviving the *lubok* as a vehicle for national propaganda was first taken up by the Tsarist government in relation to the 1914-18 war and then retained under the Bolsheviks.<sup>82</sup> The modes of representation used in the maternal hygiene posters replicated the *lubok*'s welter of anecdotal detail but, unlike Mayakovsky's famous ROSTA posters,<sup>83</sup> replaced characteristic distortions of form and space with more conventional use of perspective. Nevertheless, apparently it was assumed that the posters were speaking to peasants in their own visual language, accompanied by stentorian commands from the Party.

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<sup>81</sup> Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922* (London, (1962) revised ed. 1986), pp. 11, 18, 20-21, 25, 97, 134.

<sup>82</sup> Mikhail Anikst and Elena Chernevich, *Russian Graphic Design 1880-1917* (London, 1990), pp. 139-54; Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, p. 80.

<sup>83</sup> Edward Wright, 'The idiom of the revolutionary poster', *Art in Revolution. Soviet Art and Design since 1917*, Hayward Gallery, London, 1971, pp. 50-53.

[Insert Fig. 7.5 and 7.6 near here landscape]

*No.10 Give birth in hospital. The babka will cripple your health* (see Figure.7.5) contrasts the ignorance and squalor of the home birth conducted by the witchlike *babka*, with the neat sanitary conditions of the hospital birth presided over by the male doctor. The first frame in which the new mother is represented sprawling miserably in a rumpled bed after a traditional birth, is replete with visual references to behaviours and practices individually addressed by other *sanprosvet* posters and propaganda materials. Thus the icon shelf in the corner and the icon over the bed signify backwardness, ignorance and superstition. On the one hand, the presence of icons carries connotations of the complicity of the mother and the *babka* in condoning wife-beating and supporting the anti-revolutionary idea of woman as not even human.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand they connote antipathy to modern ‘scientific’ knowledge. The proof of this is exemplified in three different ways. First, it represents the insanitary conditions of the birth in the presence of livestock and where crumbs of food remain on the table, in contravention of the *Narkomzdrav* hygiene code that stressed basic cleanliness to avoid attracting flies, since flies spread disease.<sup>85</sup> Secondly, the baby held by the *babka* is shown tightly swaddled. This was an anathema to the medical experts within *Nakomzdav*, whose propaganda even included designs for baby clothes. Their aim was to project the message that swaddling might damage infant limbs, and babies should be allowed to

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<sup>84</sup> See M. Cheremnii, *Let the wife fear the husband*, Moscow 1931, M. Cheremnii, *Thus teaches the church*, Moscow 1931, Swarthmore Soviet Poster Collection, <http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2FSoviet>, nos 72, 129.

<sup>85</sup> A. Komarov, *Anihilate flies*, Moscow early 1920s, Swarthmore, no.4.

move freely. Thirdly, these experts rejected hanging cradles on the grounds that their movement ‘stupefied’ the baby.<sup>86</sup>

The second frame of the narrative shows the woman in a more passive pose, apparently gazing beatifically at the ceiling while lying in a neatly arranged bed; this emphasized both male medical authority and properly hygienic conditions for childbirth. Hygiene was symbolized by the white gowns worn by the doctor and midwife and the stress on washing and the display of equipment for this.

*No.18 Don't go to the babka. Bring your child to the clinic* (see Figure.7.6) demonstrates the unhygienic practices of the same scrawny *babka*: she blows something into the baby's face while the mother sits passively under the icon. This is contrasted with the ‘scientific’ approach to infant care in the clinic, where the mother sits passively watching her baby being weighed by the ‘hygienically’ dressed nurse. In this pairing, the second image is richest in symbolism. In contrast to the icons depicted in the first frame, the clinic wall displays the iconography of scientific medical knowledge relating to the diet of mothers and infants, and to the necessity of regulating the feeding of infants by the clock.<sup>87</sup> This was a new kind of ‘women's knowledge’ devised, tacitly overseen and sanctioned by the, in this case visually absent, male medical authority.<sup>88</sup> The reward for the peasant woman's compliance was the crowning, as it were, of her docile *corpus delecti* with a new ‘proletarian’ style of tying her still traditionally flowery kerchief.

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<sup>86</sup> S. Iaguzhinskii, *How to care for a baby*, Leningrad 1925, Swarthmore no.61; *Baby clothes*, Moscow early 1920s, *ibid.*, no.10.

<sup>87</sup> O. Gryun, *Breast feeding schedule to 3 months, Breast feeding schedule 5 to 6 months*, Swarthmore nos 14, 15.

<sup>88</sup> Waters, ‘Teaching Mothercraft’, pp. 43, 47.

In the ‘new knowledge’ the breast-feeding of babies was reinvented for all mothers as the ‘scientifically’ regulated path to reduce infant mortality, which was often blamed on bottle-feeding infants with cow’s milk. Breast-feeding was the means to create a healthy new generation of workers and peasants.<sup>89</sup> Sergei Iaguzhinskii’s large poster *How to breast-feed a baby* (see Figure.7.7), produced in 1925 for the Leningrad branch of *Okhrmatmlad*, offers a fairly comprehensive compendium of topics also covered individually by other posters produced in Leningrad and elsewhere. The central vignette of a decoratively dressed peasant woman breast-feeding her baby out in the fields identified both the topic and target audience. The proletarian-style red kerchief announced her political correctness. The pictures and information in the surrounding boxes stated why and how this level of correctness was to be achieved. While tenuously linked to the idea of the *lubok*, the poster introduced an abstract scientific language of quantifications, statistics, weights, measures and regulations, to create maternity as a strict regime of bodily discipline for both mother and baby.

[Insert Fig.7.7 near here landscape]

On the left-hand side of the poster, the top box contrasts the weight-gain of bottle-fed (poor) with breast-fed babies (good), and asserts that breast-fed babies are seven times less likely to die than their bottle-fed counterparts.<sup>90</sup> The box below charts the ideal weight-gain in babies, starting with an ideal birth weight of 8lb, increasing to 18lb at 6 months, and 25lb at 12 months. On the right hand side, the top box offers the slightly contradictory messages that a baby’s stomach is empty three hours after

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<sup>89</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, ‘From the Commissariat of Social Welfare’, Document no.1247, 31 January 1918, in Holt, ed. *Selected Writings*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>90</sup> *Mothers breastfeed your babies. Babies are stronger and die seven times less frequently*, Moscow early 1920s, Swarthmore no.87.

feeding<sup>91</sup> but that the baby should not be fed more than 7 times daily and never at night, so that mother and baby might rest. The next box provides an illustrated chart of suitable foods for babies aged 6 months, 7 months, 9 months and 12 months. The two boxes at the bottom of the poster depict, on the left, suitable foods for the nursing mother, and on the right, the forbidden foods and alcoholic drinks. To pursue this new, scientific maternal regime meant that women would still be breastfeeding when they returned to work after the eight weeks' maternity leave guaranteed by the Labour Code of 1918.<sup>92</sup> The poster's central image referred to the rural reality of feeding the baby while at work in the fields, although other *sanprosvet* posters indicated *Narkomzdrav*'s preference for the idea of hygienically organized crèches in rural, as well as urban workplaces.<sup>93</sup>

One solution to the problem of synchronising the demands of work with the strict timing of feeds required by the new regime of maternity, was to bottle-feed infants with milk previously expressed by their mothers in hygienic 'milk kitchens'. A few of these were apparently set up in advisory centres attached to factories in the late 1920s.<sup>94</sup> Figure 7.8 is a photograph of one such 'milk kitchen' that appeared in Fannina Halle's book *Woman in Soviet Russia*, published in German in 1932 and in English translation in 1933. Halle was a German pro-Soviet Marxist. In the propaganda context of her book, the image was supposed to represent a positive and hygienic solution to the

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<sup>91</sup> *A baby's stomach is empty three hours after feeding*, Moscow early 1920s, Swarthmore no.11.

<sup>92</sup> Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, pp. 50-51, 110.

<sup>93</sup> S. Iaguzhinskii, *The protection of motherhood and infancy is in the hands of the peasant woman*, Leningrad 1925, Swarthmore no.106; *To all wise women. You must know how to bring up a child*, Moscow 1920s, *ibid.*, no.130.

<sup>94</sup> Halle, pp. 154-5.

problems of combining work and motherhood faced by emancipated Soviet women. Assumptions about photography as an index of the real encourages the viewer to believe not only that this represents a specific group of real Soviet women but also, despite Halle's protestations to the contrary, that it is representative of Soviet women as a whole. Unlike drawn and coloured posters, the photograph is not an exhortation to maternal self-discipline, but an apparent 'proof' of its existence. Here, then, are twenty examples of New Woman, plump and robust, elbow to elbow, engaged in their collective task. Almost identical to each other in their hygienic white smocks and white kerchiefs tied back in the 'proletarian' style and seated on identical white chairs, they seem serious and intent, with no hint of embarrassment, coquetry or humour about the exposure of their ample breasts. In the absence of any signifiers of class identity, the image is of a generic New Woman-as-mother.

[Insert Fig.7.8 near here portrait]

Motherhood was an extremely important aspect of the contemporary construct of New Woman, because motherhood was generally perceived within the party as a duty to the social collective.<sup>95</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, for instance, a prime mover in establishing state protection for mothers and children, wrote in 1918 that the pregnant woman 'no longer belongs to herself; she is serving the collective and "is producing" from her own flesh and blood, a new unit of labour, a new member of the labour republic'.<sup>96</sup>

Narkomzdrav's policy on birth control was tacitly pro-natalist. This is not surprising given the reduction in population and disastrous death to birth ratio by 1920.

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<sup>95</sup> Stites, *Women's Liberation Movement*, pp. 258, 260-64.

<sup>96</sup> Aleksandra Kollontai, *Rabotitsa za god revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1918), p. 28.

Between 1917 and 1920 Moscow lost 46% of its population and Petrograd 71%, not all by migration. In 1920, deaths exceeded births in Moscow by 243 in 10,000, and in Petrograd by 484 in 10,000. This contrasts with figures for 1910 when births exceeded deaths in Moscow by 101 in 10,000, and in Petrograd by 47 in 10,000.<sup>97</sup> Although Lenin insisted on the legal right to abortion and contraceptive devices,<sup>98</sup> and abortion and the sale of contraceptives were legalized in 1920 and 1923 respectively, health professionals, including Vera Lebedeva, Director of *Okhrmatmlad*, were opposed to their use.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, by the late 1920s to early 1930s, it seems that women were not permitted to abort their first child since medical opinion claimed that it was physiologically damaging for women not to bear a child;<sup>100</sup> this view chimed neatly with the party's notion of the duty of motherhood as 'a social function of women'.<sup>101</sup>

Abortion nevertheless remained the main form of birth control, and many abortions continued to be done by back-street abortionists or local wise-women. Legal abortions involved a complicated bureaucratic process during which the woman would be strongly urged not to have the abortion and reminded that all abortions were

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<sup>97</sup> A. V. Gorbunov, 'Vliianie mirovoi voiny na dvizhenie naseleniia Evropy', *Russkaia evgeicheskaiia zhurnal*, 1/1 (1922), pp. 39-63; Adams, 'The politics of human heredity in the USSR', p. 880; Semashko, *Health Protection in the USSR*, p. 93.

<sup>98</sup> V.I Lenin, 'O osvobozhdenii zheshchin' (*Pravda*, 1913 in response to the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Pirogov Society of Russian Physicians, St Petersburg) in V.L. Bilshai, ed. *O zhenskom voprose: K. Marks, F. Engels i V.I Lenin* (Moscow 1971), pp. 77-9.

<sup>99</sup> Naiman, pp. 55, 111, 130; Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, pp.106-10; Engel, *Women in Russia*, pp. 161-2; Reich, pp. 193-7.

<sup>100</sup> Halle, p. 140; Kurbinovskii, pp. 722-3.

<sup>101</sup> Kollontai, *Rabotnitsa za god revoliutsii*, p. 28; Halle, pp. 148-9.

damaging to women's health.<sup>102</sup> In 1925, Iaguzhinskii designed a poster for the Leningrad *Okhrmatmlad* (see Figure.7.9) that not only declared: *Abortions performed by a wise-woman or midwife not only injure the woman but often lead to death* – but also emphasized that any kind of abortion was dangerous. Aimed at peasant women, this highly coloured and decorative poster is interesting for a number of reasons. In both the style and content of its three vignettes, it was closer to the idea of a *lubok* than Iaguzhinskii's breast-feeding poster (see Figure.7.7), in that it sets out to tell a narrative story within its three captioned frames. While there were no caricatures as such, even of the 'bad' *babka*, all the images referenced pre-established stereotypes. The male doctor with his modern haircut and pointed beard was perhaps the most recent stereotype, recognisable from Figure 4.

[Insert Fig. 7.9 near here landscape]

The images of peasant men and women with their bright flat colouring, the black outlining of images, the decorative patterning of the spaces between vignettes, and the choice of text font resembling a curvaceous decorative form of Orthodox Church Slavonic, all refer back to pre-Revolutionary Neo-Russian graphics. This archaized style, particularly prominent in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century work of artists such as Ivan Bilibin and Viktor Vasnetsov, had been particularly popular in pre-revolutionary graphic design, from advertisements for perfumes down to restaurant menus. Ironically perhaps, Iaguzhinskii himself had produced at least two such menu

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<sup>102</sup> Semashko, *Health Protection in the USSR*, pp. 80-81; Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, p. 106-9; Engel, *Women in Russia*, p. 161.

designs in 1913 for dinners celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romanov dynasty; the red capital letters and cursive font appear to have been his signature style.<sup>103</sup>

More crucial within the Soviet context, perhaps, was that, by contrast with other *sanprosvet* posters, Iaguzhinskii's anti-abortion poster did not offer a juxtaposition of good/bad. The cautionary tale - peasant woman goes to the *babka* for an abortion, is eventually referred to hospital, but dies and is buried in a woodland cemetery - does not offer a happy ending, or a vision of a politically correct legal abortion. Even the new scientific medical knowledge is, by implication, unable to preserve women from death if they chose to have abortions. Motherhood was paramount.

There was a strong sense that this physiological and political duty had to be carefully managed by the medical profession. To some extent this emphasis might be seen as a logical corollary to Kollontai's construct of the pregnant woman (and infant) as state property.<sup>104</sup> It may also be linked to Bebel's concern that ordinary women were not trained in childcare and to the Bolshevik view of women as the most 'backward' element within the nascent Soviet state.<sup>105</sup> In part, however, the perceived need for professional management of maternity and infant care also appeared to derive from notions of women's bodies as inherently pathological.<sup>106</sup> One of the most extreme and

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<sup>103</sup> Anikst and Chernevich, figs 16, 32, pp. 25, 31.

<sup>104</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, *Sem'ia i kommunicheskoe gosudarstvo*, p. 18; Liadov, *Voprosy byta*, pp. 25, 27.

<sup>105</sup> Bebel, pp. 150-51; Clements, *Daughters of the Revolution*, p. 159; Anne Gorsuch, ' "A woman is not a man": the culture of gender and generation in Soviet Russia 1921-1928', *Slavic Review*, 55/3 (1996): 660.

<sup>106</sup> Kurbinovskii, pp. 715-26; P.G. Bondarev, *Vliianie iskusstvennogo vykidyssha na zhenshchinu. (Abort i vnutrenniaia sekretiia matki)* (Simferopol, 1925), p. 3.

popular publications expressing this view in the mid to late 1920s was *The Biological Tragedy of Women*, first published by Anton Nemilov in 1925.

Nemilov was a Professor at the St Petersburg Agricultural Institute and Vice-Rector for Scholarly Affairs at St Petersburg University 1925-1929; his research specialized in the hormonal operation of the sexual organs. His work and views engaged with Soviet eugenics discourse at both a professional and popular level. *The Biological Tragedy* claimed to offer an ‘ABC of sexual enlightenment’<sup>107</sup> yet painted a horrifying picture of women’s lives as constantly tormented and diseased due to their biological structure, as a result of which they could never achieve genuine equality with men. Nemilov saw women in mechanical terms as a ‘biological incubators’<sup>108</sup> whose every sexual act was important due to the unknown and potentially disastrous genetic heritage that might be perpetuated by the outcome.<sup>109</sup> While Nemilov’s assertion of the inescapability of women’s ‘biological tragedy’ was contested, his mechanical-eugenic view of women was not. Critics such as Zalkind and Professor Kurbinovskii implied that equality was possible if women’s bodies and sexuality became disciplined.<sup>110</sup> The path to such discipline as projected by *sanprosvet* posters and associated propaganda lay in submitting on the one hand to ‘proletarian tempering’ in the interests of employment and, on the other hand, to the scientific regime of medicalized maternity.

### **Repression, ‘sexualisation’ and the translocation of patriarchal power**

How then might we interpret the operation of party, state and institutional power through such propaganda? One possible model is offered by the critique of the Soviet

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<sup>107</sup> Nemilov, *Biologicheskaiia tragediia zhenshchiny*, p. 145.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153-4.

<sup>110</sup> Halle, p. 194; Kurbinovskii, p. 722.

‘sexual revolution’ by Wilhelm Reich, a German Freudian-Marxist who visited the USSR in 1929 and whose book *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, which was probably written in the mid to late 1930s, contains valuable data on the period. Reich validly identified this propaganda as a means of social and ideological control<sup>111</sup> springing from medico-eugenic concerns within party and state apparatuses over the birth-rate.<sup>112</sup> However, in his view the process was merely ‘reactionary’ and ‘repressive’.<sup>113</sup> Reich’s characterisation of Soviet power structures as ‘reactionary’ appears to have been based on the reinstatement of what he called the ‘compulsory family’.<sup>114</sup> What his account ignored was that when this occurred, in a 1936 revision of the Family Code removing previously liberalising elements and abolishing legal abortions, the family had been reconstituted as subject to party and medical surveillance.<sup>115</sup> It was, in effect, a completely new entity. His notion of ‘repression’ was even more flawed.

In contrast to the more standard Marxist critiques of the family offered by Bebel, Engels or Lenin, Reich believed that the subjugation of sexuality within capitalism by means of the patriarchal and authoritarian structure of the bourgeois family was the root cause of all mental illness and anti-social behaviour.<sup>116</sup> His hypothesis re-worked

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<sup>111</sup> Reich, pp. 157, 206, 217-18.

<sup>112</sup> Reich, pp. 193-7, 261-7.

<sup>113</sup> Reich, pp. 157, 161, 187, 189-97, 199, 210-12, 215, 217-18, 223-4, 235-47, 254-60; Halle, pp. 174-5;

<sup>114</sup> Reich, pp. 157, 167, 182-3.

<sup>115</sup> S. Fitzpatrick, ‘Sex and Revolution’ in S. Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 65-9; N.S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat. The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York, 1948), pp. 192-203; S. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times; Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford and New York, 1999), pp. 142-3.

<sup>116</sup> Reich, pp. 161, 170, 221, 249-50, 267, 271.

Freud's idea (the 'reality principle') that the 'natural' human libidinous instincts had to be repressed or sublimated in the interests of civilisation; for Reich this was, wholly or in part, historically contextualisable to capitalism.<sup>117</sup> By simplistically viewing the sexual instincts, if allowed free play, as inherently good, heterosexual and genital, he believed that the abolition of the Tsarist marriage laws should have led to free expression of the sexual drive which, in turn, would have cured all mental and social disorders.<sup>118</sup> Hence his dissatisfaction with the propaganda, from Batkis's 1923 statement onwards, that characterized the Soviet state's approach to 'sexual revolution'. Even notwithstanding his utopian theoretical position, Reich's interpretation seems ultimately inadequate to address the explicitly constructed and formative aspects of the 'sexual revolution's' contribution to engineering the New Person's body. However, certain of Foucault's theories of the 'deployment of sexuality' do appear to have interpretive potential.

Foucault, while acknowledging Reich as instigator of 'the historico-political critique of sexual repression',<sup>119</sup> rejected the Freudian 'repressive hypothesis'.<sup>120</sup> Instead of assuming that 'sexualities' pre-existed society, Foucault suggested that sexuality, alongside sex and the body, were socially constructed by the operation of

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<sup>117</sup> Robert Young, 'Evolution, Biology and Psychology from a Marxist Point of View', in Ian Parker and Russell Spears (eds), *Psychology and Society: Radical Theory and Practice* (London, 1996), pp. 35-49.

<sup>118</sup> Reich, pp. 161, 170, 221, 249-50, 267, 271.

<sup>119</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol.1, *The Will to Knowledge*, tr. R. Hurley (London, (1976/1978) 1998), p. 131.

<sup>120</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, pp. 17-49.

disciplinary, 'bio' power/knowledge discourses of 'scientia sexualis'.<sup>121</sup> In his view, the discursive 'deployment of sexuality' created 'sex' as something to be desired - a secret to be uncovered and known - the key to which lay within the sphere of power/knowledge and promised the pleasure of knowing and access to 'truths'.<sup>122</sup> According to Foucault, the process of 'sexualisation', complete with its political, legal, medico-scientific and educational mechanisms of enticement, limitation, prohibition and surveillance, served to create, affirm and intensify rather than diminish the body thereby increasing its energies for production and reproduction.<sup>123</sup>

From this vantage point the Soviet 'sexual revolution', especially after 1924, might be seen as a very particular and partly self-conscious instance of the construction of sexuality and the production of the sexualized body. The explicit goal was to produce a new and unprecedented type of working-class body, a 'party body' dedicated to the advancement of Bolshevik ideas and policies, and capable of putting them into action. This new body, in contrast to that of the worker under capitalism, had to have to the high value ascribed in the pre-Revolutionary period to that of the bourgeoisie. It needed to be protected, nurtured, intensified, affirmed and, of course, disciplined by the new 'scientific,' political and medico-eugenic 'regimes of truth' so that it might function effectively both productively and reproductively.

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<sup>121</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 155. This has been challenged by a number of critics see for example: Judith Butler, 'Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily inscriptions', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86/11 (1989): 601-7; Joel Whitebook, 'Michel Foucault: A Marcusean in Structuralist Clothing', *Thesis Eleven*, no.71, November 2002, pp. 50-70.

<sup>122</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, pp. 18, 54, 69, 127; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (ed.) Colin Gordon (New York, 1980), pp. 131-2.

<sup>123</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, pp. 77-80, 106, 116, 120-24, 127, 145, 154-7.

Arguably the *prophylactoria*, the debates on woman, sex and *novyi byt*, and the *sanprosvet* propaganda, might all be seen as ‘mechanisms of enticement’<sup>124</sup> to draw people into the emerging networks of Soviet control and surveillance.<sup>125</sup> Among these, the visual propaganda relating to *novyi byt* and ‘sanitary enlightenment’ had an important role in the potential recruitment of women. The posters’ strong dramatic graphics, often bold bright colours, peremptory admonitions and cautionary tales, invited spectators to engage with the contents. The reward promised for such engagement was incorporation as a ‘new biologic type’: the New Woman and mother of the New Soviet Person. To achieve this, women was enabled to cast off the last vestiges of capitalism, enter into the new everyday life and become integrated as emancipated and equal into the new labour collective in the project of building socialism. It also promised a healthy, affirmed, intensified and fully ‘human’ body: a ‘real’ *corpus delecti* with access to secret scientific ‘truths’ about sex and sexuality that were hygienically veiled behind apparently ascetic conventions of dress and appearance.

There were, however, certain conditions attached to this incorporation and access. It was dependent upon acceptance of two combined duties - entry into paid employment, and motherhood. Both duties involved submission to new body disciplines. One of these was ‘proletarian tempering’, with its hygienic dress codes and ‘reaction of inhibition’, as exemplified by the image of the slim active urban *delegatka* in *Stop!*, whose body I have argued to be implicitly supercharged with sexual energies

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<sup>124</sup> Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby, ‘Introduction’, in Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby, eds, *Feminism and Foucault. Reflections on Resistance* (Boston, 1988), p. xiv.

<sup>125</sup> Bukharin certainly saw the debates in this way: N.I. Bukharin, ‘O rabote RLKSM. Tezisy tov. N.I. Bukharina, odobrennye Politbiuro TsK RKP (b), *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, 28 November, 1925, p. 3; Reich, p. 225. See also Naiman, pp. 4, 101-102, 119.

for socialist construction as well as hygienic maternity. The duty of motherhood demanded the rejection of traditional ‘women’s knowledge’, symbolized by the *babka*, and docile passive submission to the new ‘scientific’ maternal regime prescribed by medico-eugenic discourse. This was necessary in order to ensure the robustness and fecundity of the woman’s inherently pathological body in its transition from ‘biological incubator’ to breast-milk machine, as exemplified both in the posters aimed at peasant women and the more generic photographic image of New Woman-as-mother published in Halle’s book.

Such images did not necessarily represent Soviet actuality. Shortages of trained medical and health professionals in the 1920s make it likely that viewing a *sanprosvet* poster was the closest that some peasant women got to a hospital birth or mother and infant clinic,<sup>126</sup> and Halle herself emphasized the scarcity of factory ‘milk kitchens’ and *prophylactoria*. What the images did represent, however, was a set of disciplines to which Soviet women could aspire. Implicitly the images also represented the sort of women that Soviet men should desire, less for their physiological characteristics and depicted costume, than for their embodiment of intensified sexual energy and fecundity associated with the body-disciplines these pictorial attributes signified. Perhaps above all, implicitly these images represented the type of women that the party/state desired as its property.

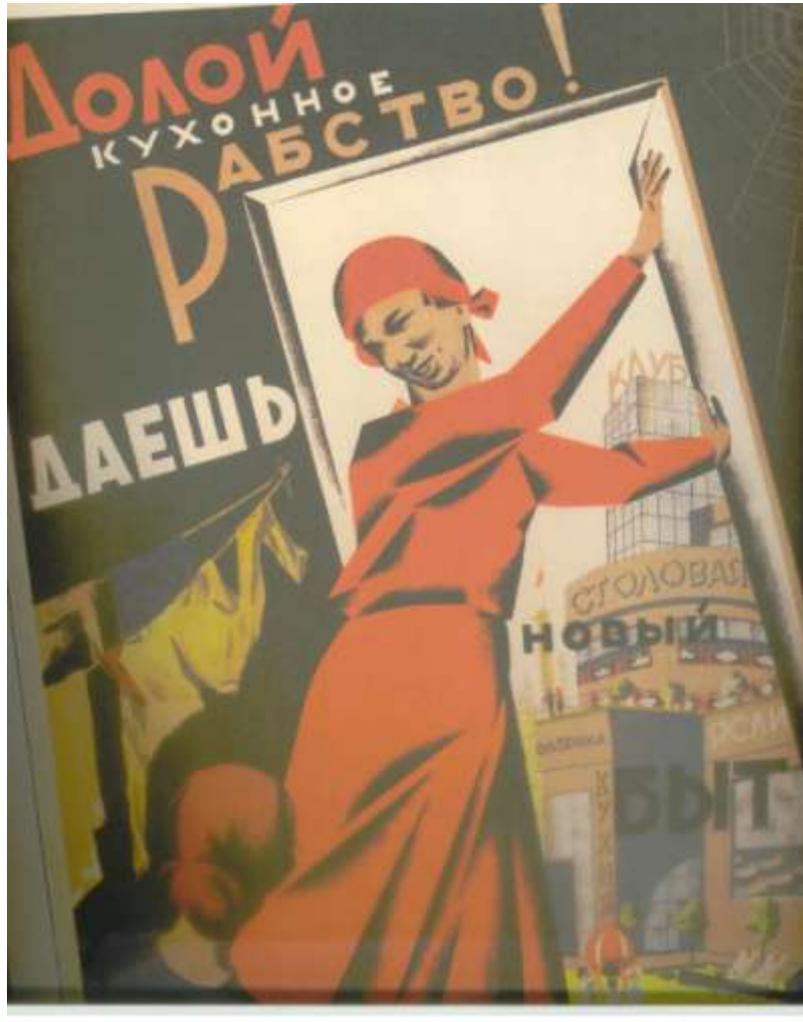
Herein lay one of the greatest ironies of the Soviet ‘sexual revolution’. While Soviet women were afforded the legal rights, access to health care and maternity leave that many western women would struggle to achieve for a further fifty years, they were not exactly emancipated from patriarchal power. It would seem that the whole process of

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<sup>126</sup> Bernstein, ‘Envisioning health’, p. 197.

‘sexualisation’ merely transferred the locus of such power from the traditional triad of father, husband and church, to a new triad comprising party, state and male medical profession.

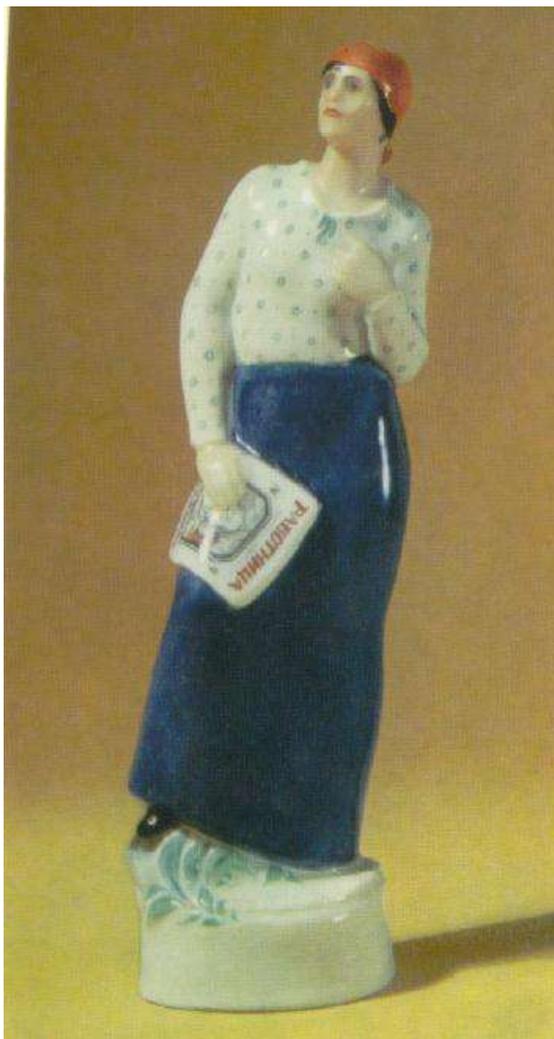
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



- 7.1 Grigoriy Shegal, *Away with kitchen slavery! Let [in] the new everyday life*, 103 x 70.5 cm, chromolithograph poster, Moscow, 1931, Russian State Library, Moscow.



7.2 Unknown artist (OKhR), *Stop!*, 69.5 x 52 cm, chromolithograph poster, Leningrad, c.1927-30, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Soviet Poster Collection, Pennsylvania.

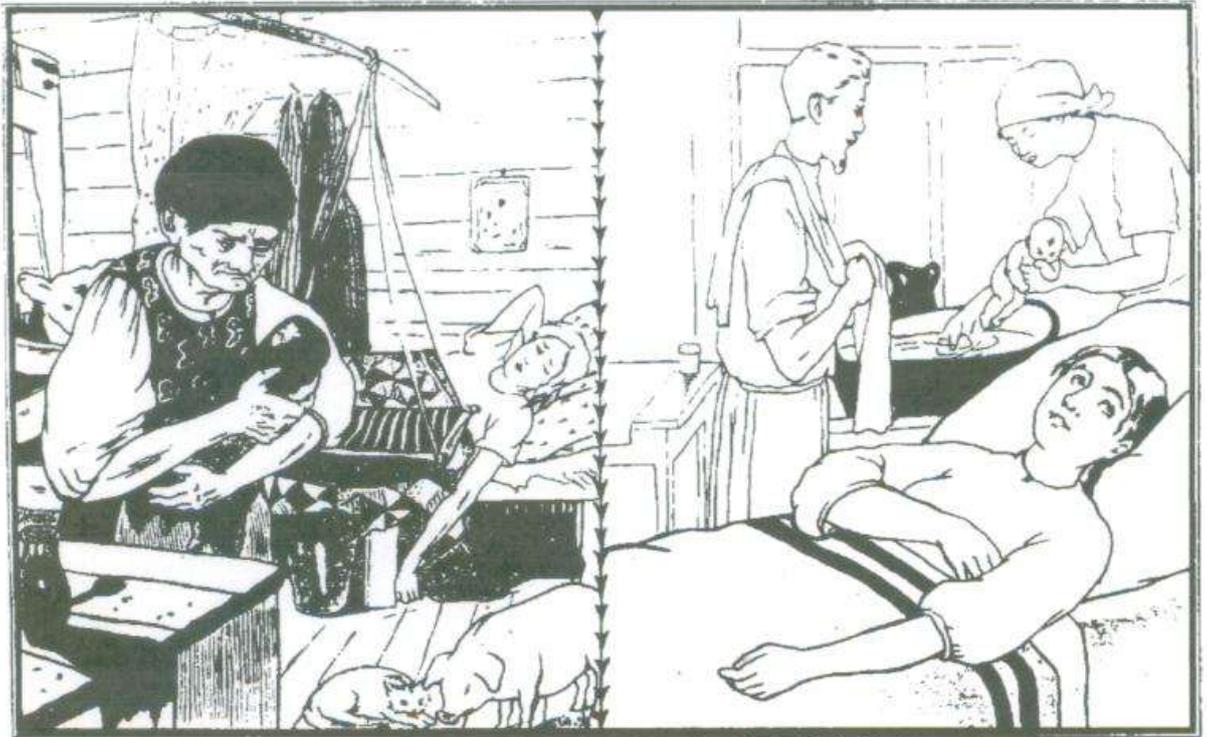


7.3 Nataliia Dan'ko, *Woman Worker Making a Speech*, 17.8 x 6.1 x 4.3 cm, porcelain, State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, 1923, State Russian Museum, St Petersburg.



7.4 *Women workers in a Moscow prophyllactorium*, photograph, late 1920s, in Fannina Halle, *Woman in Soviet Russia*, tr. Margaret M. Green (London, 1933), plate 10, facing p.237.

# 10. РОДИ В БОЛЬНИЦЕ,



**БАБКА КАЛЕЧИТ ТВОЕ ЗДОРОВЬЕ.**

- 7.5 *No.10. Give birth in hospital. The babka will cripple your health, poster, Moszdravotdel, Moscow, 1920s, Archive of the RAMS Research Institute of Occupational Health, Moscow.*



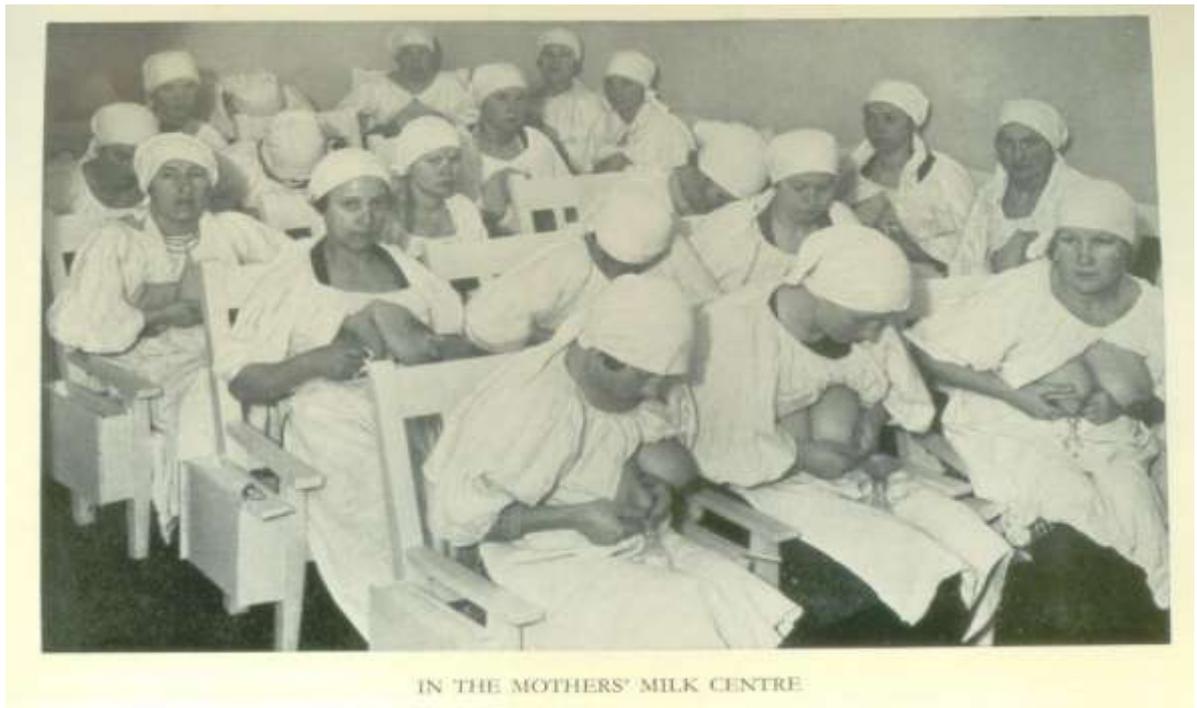
**18. НЕ ХОДИ  
К БАБКАМ**

**НЕСИ РЕБЕНКА  
В КОНСУЛЬТАЦИЮ**

- 7.6 No.18. *Don't go to the babka. Bring your child to the clinic*, poster, edition of 20,000, *Moszdravotdel*, Moscow, 1920s, Archive of the Archive of the RAMS Research Institute of Occupational Health, Moscow.



7.7 Sergei Iaguzhinskii, *How to breast-feed a baby*, 108 x 71 cm, chromolithograph poster, *Okhrmatmlad*, Leningrad, 1925, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Soviet Poster Collection, Pennsylvania.



7.8 *In the mother's milk centre*, photograph, late 1920s, in Fannina Halle, *Woman in Soviet Russia*, plate 7, facing p.138.



7.9 Sergei Iaguzhinskii, *Abortions performed by a wise-woman or midwife not only injure the woman but often lead to death*, 69.5 x 54.5 cm, chromolithograph poster, *Okhrmatmlad*, Leningrad, 1925, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Soviet Poster Collection, Pennsylvania.

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