The Image of Motherhood in *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*, 1922-1928

by

Angela Estelle Linhardt

Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies
Duke University

Date: ______________________

Approved:

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Beth Holmgren, Supervisor

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Jehanne Gheith

___________________________

Anna Krylova

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of
Slavic and Eurasian studies in the Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Established in 1922, the Soviet women’s journal *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* (Woman Worker and Peasant Woman) acted as an agent of the Communist Party by supporting its effort to assume the role of mothers and take full responsibility for Soviet children via state-supported institutions. As the nature of the Communist Party’s views of and policies on women and the family changed, so did the journal. By 1925, it became clear that the Party could not sustain the vision of totally socialized childcare. The journal consequently encouraged mothers to become more educated about proper childcare practices and to share with the state the responsibility of caring for and educating children. Although historians have noted the shift in policies regarding motherhood in the 1920s, there has been little to no analysis of how these changes were pragmatically presented to women living in the Soviet Union. This thesis discusses how the two approaches are represented in the articles, short stories, and testimonials of the journal by summarizing and analyzing examples from the primary text.
Dedication

To Mum, may she rest in peace.
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Introduction

The Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Leningrad established the Soviet women’s journal *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* (Woman Worker and Peasant Woman) in 1922. The Communist Party hoped that by reading women’s journals, women would learn about politics and the new laws and regulations passed by the Soviet government. Lenin avidly believed that the success of any political movement required the support of women.\(^1\) He was also well aware of the power of the press to reach the masses effectively and efficiently. As a result, journals like *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* shared many similar attributes with other magazines published by the Communist Party. In this case, *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* very much resembles two contemporary and very popular journals for women in Russia, *Rabotnitsa* and *Krest’ianka*. These three journals functioned as ideological weapons; the Party intended for them to indoctrinate Soviet women and spread the Bolshevik message. Thus, the journals reflect the Communist Party’s intention to recruit and educate women about the goals of the Soviet government and their relevance to women.

*Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* diverges from other women’s journals of its time because of its unique goal to attract the dual audiences of women workers and peasant women, which were in all other cases considered mutually exclusive.\(^2\) The editors and contributors approach women workers and peasant women as two distinct groups. Yet,

\(^2\) In my research I did not find any other journal that attempted to attract two groups of men or women the way this journal does. Like *Rabotnitsa* or *Krest’ianka*, all other journals I encountered were geared towards a single group.
throughout the journal these women are presented as only able to unite through a union in which women workers are superior. The journal includes articles that are clearly intended for either rural or urban readers and further differentiates the intended audience by dividing the journal in half. The demarcation is not explicit, but there is a clear pattern. Articles related to urban events and political topics are located in the front half of the journal, while articles about rural families and agriculture appear in the second half.

It appears as though the journal intends to unite working and peasant women based on its encouragement for such a union. Yet, the journal reinforces the degrading stereotypes of peasant women in relation to the superiority of women workers and tries to foster a union (*smychka*) between them that is hierarchical in nature. Women workers are depicted as educated and politically conscious as a result of their exposure to trade unions and politics in urban areas and factories. Peasant women, in contrast, are represented or implied to be illiterate, religious, and uneducated. In several instances, the journal simply refers to them as backwards. The hierarchy was likely maintained for both practical and prejudiced reasons. The Communist Party could interact with women workers in urban environments in a multitude of ways, and, to a degree, assumed that they will attend Party meetings and events voluntarily. This is not the case with peasant women, who are assumed to be more difficult to reach physically and ideologically. Thus, the journal encourages women workers to build a union with peasant women and presents it as the

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3 Reading huts (*izba chital’nia*) were one of the main methods the Communist Party used to liquidate illiteracy and raise political consciousness among the peasantry. The director of the reading hut, the *izbach*, was expected to provide literature, such as *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* and newspapers, for villagers to read in addition to providing lessons on reading and writing and hold discussion groups. *Izbachs* faced several obstacles as they tried to establish reading huts and build relationships with the villagers, who were known to distrust *izbachs* and refuse to attend lectures or lessons. Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 137-139.
key to raising peasant women to the standard level of intellectual and political
development expected of women workers.⁴

As the decrees and policies of the Communist Party changed throughout the
1920s, Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka was one publication which presented and encouraged the
journal’s readership to adopt new behavioral norms. This essay argues that from 1922 to
1928, the journal Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka reflected the change in policies regarding
motherhood as they shifted in 1924 from an approach that supported total socialized
childcare to one of shared responsibility between mothers and the state. By summarizing
its contents and then analyzing a series of examples from the journal, I will show how
articles, testimonials, and columns in the journal between 1922 to 1924 support a Marxist
feminist approach to childcare and motherhood, but then shifts in 1925 to promote greater
individual responsibility among mothers and more emphasis on traditional family values.
The specific time span of this research is framed first by the establishment of the journal
in 1922, and second, by the start of Stalin’s First Five Year Plan in 1928, which resulted
in a new set of ideological goals that are beyond the scope of this essay.

Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka addresses the trials and tribulations mothers in Russia
experienced throughout the 1920s. Articles and columns support the Communist Party’s
attempt to teach women more hygienic and medically sound childcare practices in order
to ease the birthing process and decrease the chances of child mortality. The Party

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⁴ The union between worker and peasant women was discussed in both Rabotnitsa and Krest’ianka, although these
journals approached it differently. According to the descriptions provided by Lynne Attwood, each journal tried to
focus on the role of its target audience, which contrasts to the way it was presented in Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka because
the journal emphasized the roles of both groups of women and their participation in building and strengthening the
planned to construct a mass network of daycares and nurseries that would serve as the primary source of food, care, and education for all children, and make the role of mothers and nannies moot. The rationale was that socialized childcare in conjunction with the overall socialization of society was a more rational and efficient approach to life and would enable women to fulfill their educational and occupational goals that were previously unattainable due to the patriarchal structure of life in tsarist Russia.\(^5\)

In 1925 *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* decreases the extent to which it encourages socialized childcare due to the lack of funds and necessary infrastructure to support such a plan. The changing approach to motherhood and childcare does not mean that the journal ceased all efforts to promote socialized childcare or collective farms, only that there is a decreased emphasis on these subjects and a great focus on the importance of a broader education and how it can help peasant women raise their children and become better citizens. Articles after 1925 continue to encourage mothers to use communal nurseries and daycares but with an implicit understanding that many villages still lack the necessary resources and funds.

Historians have noted that the Communist Party adopted a less extreme approach to the performance of motherhood and the family in the mid-1920s. In her article on motherhood, Elizabeth Waters commented on the new emphasis on the individual family in 1924 to 1925.

The family was recognized to be, for the time being, [as] the safest and best environment for the child, and with the relegalization of fostering and

adoption in the mid-1920s the children’s home became the last resort, even for the orphan.6

It is no coincidence that the same period saw a similar shift in the Party’s policy regarding orphaned children (bezprizorniki). Just as the state initially planned to socialize the care of children who were not orphans, it also planned to provide room, board, and education for bezprizorniki in children’s homes (detskii dom). By 1924, the state realized that it did not have the funds to build and support the necessary infrastructure to house, feed, and educate the massive numbers of bezprizorniki in Russia. The state subsequently re-legalized adoption and encouraged individual families to become foster or adoptive parents.7 Wendy Goldman called this change in policy the first retreat, referring to the Great Retreat Stalin implemented in 1936 that called for a return to conservative family values. Building on the comments and observations of Waters and Goldman, this essay aims to expand on their theses by showing precisely how these changes were envisioned and executed in Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka.


7 Wendy Goldman, Women, the State and Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 90.
Transforming Motherhood

Motherhood after the Revolution

When *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* first appeared on the newsstands in the northwestern regions of Russia in 1922, the economy was in transition and the nation devastated. Women were disproportionately affected by Lenin’s attempt to change from a war to peacetime economy and the famine and fuel crisis that ensued. The resources that had been available to mothers during the Civil War were dissipating. The number of daycares and public cafeterias decreased in the first years of the 1920s, which made it difficult for the few mothers still working to fulfill their duties as mothers and workers. As the birth rate significantly decreased, the rate of child abandonment increased. The Soviet government established *Okhrana Materinstva i Mladenchestva* (OMM), the Society for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy, which provided much needed resources for mothers. With the Bolshevik feminist Aleksandra Kollontai at its head, OMM intended to fulfill the following three functions:

1) To save the mother for the child – the best ‘drop of milk’ for the infant is from the mother’s breast.
2) To train the child in an atmosphere of wide understanding for membership in the socialist family.
3) To create conditions for the child which will lay the foundations for sound mental and physical development and a joyous attitude toward life.

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9 Wood (1991): 158-9. Wood notes that complaints were lodged against NEP and the fact that women were disproportionately affected by the transition to a peacetime economy in the Soviet women’s political journal *Kommunistka*.
Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka demonstrates its support for OMM’s mission by introducing the organization to its readers in the journal’s very first issue and continues to encourage them to make use of the organization’s services in subsequent issues.\textsuperscript{11}

The Communist Party’s endeavor to transform the performance of motherhood responded to the centuries old traditions that prevailed among peasant mothers, most of whom had not received even the most rudimentary education. In Village Mothers, David Ransel provides an in-depth description of the practices of peasant mothers and how doctors had aimed to improve them with limited success. Due to the lack of education and limited access to medical care, these well-intended doctors did not always succeed. There were still many problems regarding motherhood to be solved in 1918 when the Soviet government was established. For example, child mortality was high and a serious cause for concern among government authorities and health officials.\textsuperscript{12} Furthermore, in the event of pregnancy or labor women were not excused from their work in the fields or permitted to rest. They were expected to return to work immediately after giving birth. Mothers often gave birth in the barn, on the way to work, or while working in the fields. The concept of maternity leave simply did not exist.

Given such expectations, it is not surprising that as many as 80\% of the babies born during the summer months in the countryside died within their first year of life. During the day, infants remained home alone while their mothers worked long hours unless there was a grandparent too old to work or an older sibling not yet old enough to

\textsuperscript{11} Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 1 (1922): 15.
\textsuperscript{12} For a more in-depth reading of the problems of childbirth in the villages see Ransel (2000): 20-80. He discusses problems prevalent in the pre-revolutionary years and the Soviet efforts to ameliorate them.
work. The rate of child mortality in the villages was linked to the need for better childcare during the day. Further compromising a child’s chance of survival was the fact that deadly epidemics of diarrhea and dysentery occurred in the summer months. Access to and the availability of proper nutrition for infants were additional problems. Some mothers chose not to breastfeed their infants and immediately started them on solid food. Babies were often given a chaw (zhvachka), which consisted of rag wrapped around moistened bread or kasha. The chaw served as the primary method of feeding and pacifying children while women worked long hours. Many of the articles published in *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* respond directly to these problems and encourage mothers to take advantage of state-run nurseries and daycares so that their infants and young children can stay happy and healthy throughout the summer months. The early issues of the journal reflect a sense of urgency within the Soviet government to transform the performance of motherhood in early Soviet Union.

**Introducing the New Life**

The short stories, testimonials, columns and articles in the early issues of *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* are straightforward. In many cases they provide minimalistic

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13 Ransel (2000): 28-30. Although much of David Ransel’s research deals with the 19th century, there is evidence that many of these practices he described continued well into the 1920s.

14 Smith (1928): 161. Also see Ransel (2000): 27. Ransel’s research shows that this problem of children being left without breast milk or supervision during the summer months had long been present in Russian society. Smith’s observations reveal that it had not been fully resolved by the late 1920s.


17 I define columns as the features are titled and appear regularly in each issue of the journal, and articles as those which do not.
descriptions of the characters and settings of short stories and divulge little if any information about the authors. The early issues of the journal place a great deal of emphasis on the need to eliminate any and all traits of the old life (старый быт) defined by its worst traits: the oppression of the peasantry, speculation that manipulated and took advantage of the working class, and the bourgeois nature of the highest socio-economic classes. In contrast, the new life (новый быт) would bring freedom and equality to all. Especially in the case of women, the new life would not only enfranchise them as full citizens of Soviet Union but also emancipate them from the bondage of motherhood that prevented them receiving an education and fulfilling their personal and professional dreams.

*Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* instructed its readers to emulate the real-life and fictitious characters it presented who integrate Bolshevik ideology into their daily lives. The journal emphasized the benefits of the Soviet government and described how women’s lives change for the better once they cease to observe their traditional practices and adopt the new life. Many short stories and testimonials follow a standardized pattern in which women are first described in a state of misery, bound by the burdens of motherhood. Then, when they attend a meeting of Bolshevik activists and join the Communist Party, they become enlightened and begin to live freely. Once these women begin to work in professions that were predominantly male, they are presented as not

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18 In many instances, authors were only identified by their initials, which were not always legible.
having to worry about feeding their children because they are in the trustworthy hands of state-run nurseries and daycares.

Two testimonials printed in a 1923 issue of the journal describe the transformation of peasant women from ignorant to enlightened and show how the journal portrayed this theme differently based on its audience and placement in the journal itself. In the first testimonial, “The Zhenotdel Came” (Zhenotdel Priekhal), the author describes how the Zhenotdel, the women’s organ of the Communist Party, organized a meeting among peasant women. The testimonial is organized so that the author recounts the events leading up to the meeting, quotes from the speech given, and describes the activities in which the peasant women participated. An elderly woman, who remains unnamed throughout the testimonial, gives a speech entitled, “What the Babas Will Discuss” (O Chem Tut Baby Tolkovat’ Budut). The author notes that everyone was silent and listened attentively as the speaker described her horrible life before the revolution. Now that the Soviet Union has formed, she continues, it is imperative that peasant women drive out of themselves the past ghosts of slavery and show peasant men that they can do more than sew and reap the fields. Peasant women can read books and newspapers, discuss politics, and understand questions about taxes! After a short break the peasant women joined with the activists to read from the journal Krest’ianka, another publication of the Communist Party. After discussing the journal with a great deal of interest, the peasant women collectively decide to subscribe to Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka.

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19 Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 4 (1923): 10.
In the last paragraph, the author quotes one peasant woman who asked the delegates not to forget about them and to return so that they could continue to dispel ignorance and darkness among peasant women.\textsuperscript{20}

The second testimonial is by E. Belova of Ul’ianovskii. She describes her transformation from a stereotypically ignorant and religious peasant woman into a woman worker as a result of her job at a dynamite factory. She explains that when she first began work at the factory everything seemed wild (dikii) to her; she did not even understand what dynamite was. After her boss gave her the chance to use a machine, everything began to make sense. Nowhere in the text is the machine described. Belova simply explains that after learn to use the machine, she managed to become quite a skilled (umelyi) worker.\textsuperscript{21} As Belova continues to discuss the factory, she repeatedly uses the first person plural possessive pronoun, stating that it is ‘our’ (nash) factory, solidifying her identity with the other workers in the factory and her status as a woman worker.

True to the aforementioned pattern, Belova describes her life before and after the Bolshevik Revolution. She claims that the tsar repressed (pritesniat’) the peasantry, but since the formation of the Soviet Union, peasants have been able to live freely (svobodno). Belova correlates the freedom in her own life to when she started her work at the factory. She notes all of the benefits she has been able to take advantage of since she

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 4 (1923): 10-11.
\textsuperscript{21} She provides no explanation for what type of machine this is or its role in the production of dynamite. This could be due to the need to shorten testimonials so that they fit in the allotted space on the page or a literary tool to generalize the role of machinery as a symbol of industrialization and modernization of Russia.
started work at the factory. For example, she can eat at the factory cafeteria and continue her personal education by reading the journals and newspapers that are always readily available. She also describes how women workers and their children benefit from the new life. Mothers can send their children to daycare and not worry about them during the day. Furthermore, the mothers have noticed positive improvements in their children’s development.

Although it is not possible to know whether Belova or the editors of the journal decided to use the first person plural possessive pronoun (nash) when referring to the factory, the choice remains significant. It represents a sense of allegiance to the factory and solidarity with other women workers. The solidarity among the factory women is exemplified by the fact that they take it upon themselves to organize women’s meetings that discuss their needs and interests. Furthermore, Belova’s comment about realizing what interests her highlights the very self-actualization that the Communist Party believed women would be able to experience after they were emancipated.

These two testimonials used the negative stereotypes of peasant women and the equally stereotypical and presumed positive influence of the Communist Party on women’s daily lives to encourage readers to adopt Party ideology. Notably, the testimonials are placed in different sections of the journal in order to capitalize on the presumed wants and needs of the intended audience. The first testimonial, which is located in the front half of the journal, focuses on the role of the Zhenotdel and the

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22 Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 4 (1923): 19.
importance of Zhenotdel activists in the transformation of peasant women into enlightened individuals. Given the location of the testimonial, the likely goal of the testimonial is to encourage women workers to go to the villages, educate peasant women, and help build a union between them. The extent to which the peasant women at the meeting express thanks and appreciation for the efforts of the Zhenotdel activists is an example of how the journal wants them to receive activists and portrays the entire experience as one that is not only worthwhile but gratifying.

The elderly and unnamed peasant woman who speaks at the meeting manages to universalize her experiences and legitimize the Soviet government. Throughout the testimonial she is only referred to as the “(female) speaker” (dokladchitsa). The fact that her identity remains unknown conveys to the audience that many, if not all, peasant women experienced similar repression under the tsar. The speaker’s reference to slavery could be a device to remind readers of the oppression of the peasantry in addition to the misogynistic nature of laws under the tsarist government. Consequently, the speaker functions as a maternal figure who has learned from the mistakes of regimes past and can guide young women and tell them that they ought to take advantage of the new laws that benefit women. On the one hand, the testimonial reinforces the notion that peasant women are illiterate and backwards and that they need to be educated by politically conscious women who are not necessarily educated in agriculture and the best methods to increase production. On the other hand, it clearly makes an attempt to relate to peasant women, albeit from the point of view of someone who has learned from the past.
Furthermore, as a result of working with the *Zhenotdel*, the peasant women become aware of their ignorance and the consequent need to read and learn more about the Communist Party. The journal provides examples of women achieving their goals so that readers might imitate their actions and become Party members or activists. The implication is that any peasant woman who chooses not to adopt the new life will remain ignorant and is considered to have done so by choice. The peasant women discussed here, however, voluntarily attend the meeting and interact with the *Zhenotdel* workers, demonstrating that they are either already somewhat politically conscious or express a desire to become politically conscious.

Belova’s testimonial portrays the negative stereotype of peasant women and shows how a peasant woman can overcome the stereotype through factory work. This testimonial is strategically located in the latter half of the journal to function as a source of motivation for a presumably peasant readership. As a result, it does not focus on the interaction between peasant women and women workers in a way that expresses appreciation for women workers’s involvement. Rather, it tries to inspire a mass of peasant women through the success of one.

It is unlikely that many peasant women worked in a dynamite factory, and so it is understandable that the author did not know how the machinery worked when she first began at the factory. Her ignorance is revealed, however, when she describes it as wild. Rather than seeing the machine as a product of modern technology, she simply cannot understand what it is or how it works. Despite her ignorance, Belova is able to prevail when she learns how to work the machine and eventually becomes a skilled worker. Her
advancement from a peasant woman shocked by machinery to a skilled worker serves as a metaphor for the intellectual and economic development of Soviet society. Her role as a worker parallels that of a Communist Party member, who understands the rational and pragmatic logic of Bolshevik ideology and how it is intended to create a socialist Soviet Union just as the machine creates dynamite.

*Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* provides such different depictions of peasant women’s transformation to show that women can change as a result of their interaction with activists or their work at a factory. It is notable, however, that peasant women are never described as being self-motivated in educating themselves and becoming politically conscious. There is always a catalyst, be it an activist or a factory. Either way, the journal uses the different approaches to relate to both of its audiences, worker and peasant women, and encourages them to take part in the greater intellectual and political development of peasant women.

**Health and Education**

The testimonial and short story discussed in the next section exemplify how *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* used agitation to encourage mothers to meet the health and educational needs of their children. The journal emphasizes the need for mothers to take advantage of the resources provided by the state to ensure that their children are born into healthy environments and are raised to become independent and educated individuals.

In an early issue from 1923 the journal describes one woman’s impression of an exhibit at the Museum of Public Health in Leningrad. The exhibit, “Improving Children’s
Health” (Ozdorovlenie Rebenka) focuses on matters of health and hygiene in the early stages of a child’s development. The article is located in the latter half of the journal, making its target audience more likely to be peasant women. The author, V.T., begins by recalling her conversation with her daughter just before entering the exhibit. She and her daughter were enticed by the exhibit’s window display. V.T. describes the configuration of the exhibit and her impressions. She notes her surprise that an organization like OMM exists because no such organization had ever existed under the tsars. Doctors are present at the museum to answer any questions and explain anything that did not make sense to the visitors. The exhibit strongly emphasized the importance of breastfeeding infants and that women should only breastfeed for the first six months. V.T. also describes the other groups of people who attended the exhibit: mothers with their children on an excursion from the Toddlers’ Home (Dom Maliutki) and a group of children who stood together and read aloud from one of the posters. In the last paragraph V.T. explains that the exhibit was very interesting and informative, though it would only be open for a few more days. In the event that there are more equally informative and valuable exhibits, she notes that the museum is open to the public every day and free of charge.23

V.T’s description of the exhibit shows how the journal uses testimonials as a more detailed and personal way of advertising events. V.T. is not presented as any sort of authority. Instead, she writes as an everyday woman who lives in Leningrad and just happened upon the exhibit. Yet even she is surprised when she compares the lack of

23 Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 2 (1923): 19-20.
government resources for women under the tsars and the abundance of such resources under the Soviet government. She implicitly urges her readers to go to the exhibit and learn about proper childcare techniques when she notes the street name of the museum and that there would be doctors ready to answer any questions. V.T. serves as a model for this call to action, even if her visit to the museum was accidental. She did not intend to go to the exhibit, but her description shows she was pleasantly surprised by it and that she and her daughter left the exhibit having learned something.

Although *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* did encourage mothers to learn about basic health needs, it also devalued the role of the mother once children reached a certain age. In the last pages of one 1924 issue of the journal the short story, “How Vaniutka Became an Octobrist” (*Kak Vaniutka Popal v Oktiabriaty*), describes a young boy who wants to become a Pioneer. One day, the Pioneers come through the village where he is staying with his aunt, Malan’ia. Vaniutka is very interested in the drums the Pioneers play and tells his aunt that he wants to become a Pioneer. Malan’ia scolds him for wanting to be godless like the Pioneers, but Vaniutka pays no attention. He likes the Pioneers because they are articulate and educated, unlike Vaniutka, who is still unable to read or write. He sees joining the Pioneers as a means to becoming a member of an educated group.

When Vaniutka returns to Leningrad, where he lives with his mother, he devises a plan to join the Pioneers. After his mother leaves for work he goes to find the district committee, where he can register for the Pioneers. On the way he gets lost and has to ask for directions. The first man he asks for directions is a Nepman who simply responds that
he does not understand the question.\textsuperscript{24} The second man, who is older and friendlier, shows him the way. He asks how old Vaniutka is, and Vaniutka tells him that he is 8 years old. The man explains to him that he is not yet old enough to be a Pioneer; he must become an Octobrist first.\textsuperscript{25} Regardless of whether it is the Octobrists or the Pioneers, Vaniutka is excited to become a member of a youth organization. He feels as though he is well on his way to becoming an important member of society. When Vaniutka’s mother returns from work to find that he is not there, she runs through the city in search of him. Unable to find him, she curses herself for not having signed him up for the Pioneers sooner like the old woman (\textit{baba}) at the factory had told her to do. In the end, she sees Vaniutka marching past her with other Octobrists. He is so engaged in what he is doing that he does not even notice his mother.\textsuperscript{26}

Vaniutka’s endeavor to become a Pioneer exhibits certain stereotypes and expectations of the Communist Party that permeate the issues of \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}. First, Malan’ia is a peasant woman and is consequently described as someone who dislikes the Pioneers because they are an atheist organization and discourages Vaniutka from becoming a Pioneer solely for that reason. Second, the mother is a woman worker who still has ties with her peasant sister, Malan’ia, and does not sign Vaniutka up for the Pioneers when it is suggested the first time. But when she sees how content her son is walking with the other Octobrists, she realizes her mistake. She

\textsuperscript{24} A Nepman is someone who took advantage of the economic freedoms during the New Economic Policy and made money by exploiting others. In Soviet culture such men were looked down upon as the scum of society.

\textsuperscript{25} The Pioneers were for children aged 10-14.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 9 (1924): 25-6.
represents the midpoint on the continuum between her backwards sister and her progressive son. Third, Vaniutka fulfills the hopes and expectations of the Communist Party; as a youth surrounded by Bolshevik ideology he acts as the catalyst who forces his mother to realize the importance of youth organizations. He embodies the new generation of Soviet children who do not need their mothers to educate them and instinctively know that to join the Octobrists or the Pioneers is the right thing to do. It will help him become a good Soviet citizen and a future member of the Communist Party.
Putting Control in the Hands of Peasant Women

In 1925, the journal began to instruct peasant mothers to use it as an educational source and to take responsibility for the care and education of their children in order to decrease pressure on the Soviet government to provide childcare and health institutions. The Soviet government implemented its new approach to the family through the new marriage code enacted in 1926 and its greater emphasis on education. Policy makers realized that “talk of emancipating women through the transformation of the family and socialization of the childcare was seen as increasingly inappropriate.”

The state downsized children’s homes for the bezprizorniki and encouraged urban and rural families to adopt them. Popular opinion seems to have reflected and supported the Communist Party’s decision to establish shared responsibility between the state and individual families. The members of OMM wanted to put greater emphasis on the ability of women to care for their own children properly. Since OMM was responsible for the creation of nurseries and educational campaigns to teach women about proper childcare, it wanted to ensure that it could have a profound and lasting influence in the villages. Since there were only 1,853 summer nurseries in 1925, and no permanent village day nurseries, it was imperative that peasant mothers be able to care for their

30 Jessica Smith notes that the original plan for the state to take over the responsibility of raising children became impossible at one point. She does not, however, provide an exact date or reason for stating this. She is clearly, however, writing after 1924 and refers to a conversation she had with Lebedeva, the head of OMM, in which she cited the lack of resources as a serious problem. Smith (1928): 175-178.
children and work towards lowering the high rates of child mortality during the summer months.\textsuperscript{31}

Wendy Goldman’s characterization of 1924 as the government’s first retreat from the state-centered approach to child rearing and the elimination of the family is supported by an analysis of family law in the Soviet Union by Becky Glass and Margaret Stolee. They refer to the new strategy in which the state and the family share responsibility.\textsuperscript{32}

When asked about the discrepancy between the ideals of the Communist Party and the reality of the mid-1920s, the head of OMM, Vera Lebedeva, explained:

At the present time, the principle of collective education can only be partially applied, first, because of lack of funds, second, because the methods of social training have not been properly worked out, and, third, because of the character and psychology of the population who are not yet ready for collective training. We use, and will continue to use, whatever method proves best for the child in actual practice.\textsuperscript{33}

Recognizing the impossibility of applying the principle of the collective education completely, \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka} emphasized the role of the family in lieu of the promised state-run institutions. Columns such as “Mother and Child” (\textit{Mat’ i Ditia}) explained to the reader how to do simple tasks, including laundry, sewing, cooking nutritious meals, and providing basic medical care. The column was added in the mid-1920s and generally placed in the last pages of the journal.\textsuperscript{34} The goal of these instructions was two fold: the state wanted to eliminate all aspects of traditional peasant

\textsuperscript{31} Smith (1928): 177.
\textsuperscript{33} Smith (1928): 179.
\textsuperscript{34} In the few instances when the “Mother and Child” was not in the last pages of the journal it was closer to the center, but still in the latter half of the journal.
culture that were considered backwards, such as using village healers rather than professionally trained doctors, and it also wished to provide concrete instructions for peasant women.\footnote{In 1925 the Commissariat of Health tried to ameliorate the overcrowding of orphanages by encouraging the placement of infants with urban, wage-earning families. Even though few families seemed to want to take in the bezprizorniki, the very suggestion reveals the extent to which the state could not provide for even the most downtrodden of Russian society and the way it had moved away from the idea of taking responsibility for raising children in a socialized and communal manner. Wendy Goldman, \textit{Women, the State and Revolution} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 97.}

In 1926 the state passed a new marriage code that legislated a new approach to marriage and the needs of families. The code’s most well known facet was the recognition of de-facto marriages. This meant that when a man and woman cohabited and announced their cohabitation to a third party their relationship would be considered a legal marriage in the eyes of the law. The code also allowed divorce upon the petition of one spouse and specified alimony requirements after divorce. Although the length of time for which the male was responsible for paying alimony to his ex-wife decreased with the new code, he was required to pay alimony for a year in the event that his ex-wife could not work. If she was simply unemployed, he was still required to pay alimony, but only for six months. Furthermore, ex-wives were entitled to half of all property acquired since the couple married. Beatrice Farnsworth describes the law as evidence that “the switch in Communist rhetoric signaling that the family would not wither away, and that the institution of marriage and the mother’s role in it would remain essentially unchanged, coincided with the consolidation of the Stalin revolution in the 1930’s.”\footnote{Atkinson, Dallin, and Lapidus, \textit{Women in Russia} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977): 162-5. In the event that parents were unable to support their children, grandparents were expected to do so. It appears that the goal was to reassert that the state was not going to assume total responsibility for children and try to encourage families to do so, even if it meant extended family.} She argues that
all of the new regulations were part of an effort to expand on the duties of relatives to care for each other.

*Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* responded to the change in the Communist Party’s rhetoric by including more educational articles and columns that discuss nutrition, hygiene, and childcare, and also answer relevant questions from peasant women. The articles encourage women to learn about their rights as women and mothers, and that they take it upon themselves to learn medically sound methods of childcare. The journal included more self-help or how-to articles that cast a clear emphasis on the mother as the primary caretaker of the children. Lastly, it continued to support the use of state-run daycares, cafeterias, and OMM, but also discussed their absence.

**Knowing Their Rights**

Many women workers and peasant women were not well-informed about their rights as women, mothers, and ex-wives. *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* lamented this reality and published articles specifically to explain marriage and divorce laws and how women could take advantage of them in order to protect themselves and their children in the event of a divorce. The article “Our Right” (*Nashe Pravo*) appears in a 1925 issue. The article discusses problems regarding alimony and child support, which were often more applicable to urban women workers than rural peasant women. Most peasant women at the time continued to rely on large families to work the land. The article does consistently refer to women workers and peasant women and the need for both of them to use the laws enacted to protect themselves and their children, but the placement of the article suggests
that it is intended for a more rural audience; it appeared in the last pages of the journal’s issue between “Village Economy” and “Mother and Child.” Nevertheless, the discussions of divorce, alimony, and child support laws were an important aspect of the broader discussion of mothers at the time, and their ability to financially provide for their children. The family had not been replaced by the state, but had remained the main source of support for children.

“Our Right” acknowledged that many husbands were choosing to abandon their families and that mothers, consequently, were unable to provide for their children. Fathers were expected to provide financial support for their children after divorcing their wives or even abandoning whole families. The article expresses disappointment (k sozhaleniiu) that many women do not know they are able to sue their ex-husbands for alimony and child support. In response, the author, Nakhimson, tells her readers to make use of Soviet laws and sue for alimony and child support. She states that mothers have the right to go to the People’s Court (Narodnyi Sud) with a petition to receive child support, which could be half of the father’s monthly salary. If a judge decides that a father must pay child support, it is supposed to be paid until the child is 18 years old.\(^{37}\)

Nakhimson attempts to relate to her readers in the last paragraph of the article by using similar language to other articles that discuss the union between worker and peasant women. She uses the phrase u nas, meaning in our [country] in contrast to the laws in the rest of the world (ves’ mir). The sentence serves two functions. First, it makes

a positive association between laws instituted to benefit women and the Soviet government specifically. Second, it detaches the reader from the rest of the world saying that, “Women workers and peasant women should remember that our law[s] protect the interests of mothers and children more than all the laws in the world.” These two functions help a reader assume a superior attitude toward other nations and/or develop a sense of national pride. The paragraph’s last sentence emphasizes the need to spread education by stating that it is necessary for readers to promote (propagandirovat’) knowledge and use of these laws, particularly among more backward women.

**Strengthening the Union**

The campaign to unite worker and peasant women faced severe obstacles and setbacks. In a 1927 article entitled, “Why it is necessary to strengthen the union between the workers and the peasants?” the author, A.K. directs women workers to come to the aid of their peasant sisters. Like “The Zhenotdel Came” testimonial discussed earlier, this article is located in the earlier pages of the journal and focuses on the actions of women workers in relation to peasant women. The article explains that the union is essential for economic improvement of the nation and the defeat of all capitalists and gentry who impede the Soviet people's struggle to build a socialist nation. Since a woman worker is more likely to be politically conscious, it is her duty to go to the village and “help the

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38 *Rabotnitsa i Krest'ianka*, no. 5 (1925): 28. «Работницы и крестьянки должны помнить, что если наш закон охраняет интересы матери и ребенка больше, чем все законы мира...»

backward (*otstal’naia*) peasant woman in the practical implementation of the construction in the village.”\(^\text{40}\) The article continues to call on the “literate and intellectual Woman worker” to encourage peasant women to read newspapers and journals; to discuss methods to improve local agriculture; and to explain the importance of the union between workers and peasants. Workers are described as those who build machines, which can increase the economic production of the peasants if the two groups worked together.

The article’s emphasis on the importance of a strong union between worker and peasant women implies that resistance and a lack of communication between worker and peasant women were significant problems. Even though the journal changed its approach to motherhood and the way it encouraged women to care for their children, it is clear that the journal has not changed its opinion of peasant women.\(^\text{41}\) The fact that articles in the front half of the journal literally refer to peasant women as backwards assumes that peasant women do not read these statements and that they are not offended attests to the lack of respect and consideration the editors show towards peasant women. Peasant women are continually portrayed as uneducated and in desperate need of guidance and erudition about the Communist Party, economics, and the construction of socialism.

The union that *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* tries to build between worker and peasant women does not ever seem to come to fruition. For the most part, the journal continues to

\(^{40}\) *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*, no. 9 (1927): 6.

\(^{41}\) The rhetoric used in this article is very similar to a call on women workers to go to the villages during their holidays in 1925. *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*, no. 5 (1925): 6. The example from 1925 is titled *Chto dolzhno delat’ v otpeuske v derevne*. 

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talk about the need to build or strengthen the union, but does not announce its successful formation. Despite these setbacks, the journal use the letters it receives letters from women who want to take part in the reading huts and attend club meetings, but cannot because there are none in their village or region.\textsuperscript{42} For these women there are no positive answers. Perhaps the editors still publish the calls for help from Zhenotdel delegates to encourage women to organize amongst themselves and raise money through shows and appeals to the cooperative.\textsuperscript{43} The journal does have clear instructions for women workers, such as becoming more involved in shop production of the Pioneers, but whatever the instructions, women workers remain superior to peasant women.\textsuperscript{44}

**Pregnancy and Birth**

The Soviet government was seriously concerned about the birthrate and the high mortality rates that plagued rural Russia. In order to ameliorate the situation, \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka} published a vast number of articles that discuss pre-natal care, birthing methods, and overall hygiene so that peasant women could take care of themselves as well as possible in the villages where there were no proper medical facilities. In an issue from 1928, the column \textit{“In Our Village”} published a feature, \textit{“The Struggle for a

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 6 (1928): 24. A peasant woman in Iablonovo wrote to the journal and said that the committee for peasant understanding organized and there were still no reading huts, no money. There was nothing in general.

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 20 (1927): 30. The journal published a couple of testimonials from women who had managed to organize enough women and raise enough money to open a nursery.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 1 (1928): 13-15.
“Cultured Village,” in which the author seeks to teach peasant women the need for maternal self-care during pregnancy.

The author describes the unequal advantages between women workers and peasant women when it comes to maternity leave. She explains that peasant women do not have the ability to take maternity leave and are expected to work throughout their pregnancy. The physically arduous work in the fields sometimes causes them to grow sick and miscarry. The author also discusses the problems that arise when women carry their pregnancies to term. Most peasant women do not deliver their children in their homes, let alone in medical clinics. Rather, they gave birth in barns, storage rooms, or out on the fields. There are few midwives in the villages to help them through labor. To rectify this, the author suggests that more lectures and discussions be held in villages so that women can be better prepared for pregnancy and childbirth, and to ensure that they can give birth in clean environments and have healthy babies.45

It is curious that the topics of personal care and hygiene during pregnancy and childbirth would appear in issues only after so much discussion of appropriate ways of raising children. Whether this is a government response to an increased number of spontaneous abortions or high infant mortality is unclear. It appears that peasant women continued to abide by their old traditions and cultural practices into 1928, ten years after the establishment of the Soviet government. In response, *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*

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45 *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*, no. 10 (1928): 27.
continued the struggle to transform and thus control the way in which children were born and raised by insisting that their way is not just the better way but the right way.

In addition to providing expectant mothers with advice about to give birth to healthy babies, the journal also endeavors to help mothers maintain the health of their newborn babies. The column “Mother and Child” addresses common issues such as diarrhea in the summer and steps that mothers could take to minimize or prevent the illness. The column recommends that mothers should keep the house clean and well ventilated, open the windows, watch what they feed their children, and not swaddle their children. Doctors cited bad air and heavy swaddling as detrimental to the health of children for almost a century.46

The articles regarding women’s health issues urge women to use modern medicine and avoid the unsanitary and traditional practices that cause complications and even the death of mothers and their children. At times the articles specifically note that women should stay away from traditional healers and go to doctors to ensure that their children were well taken care of by means of modern medicine. In one issue of the column “Doctor’s Conversations” (Besedy Vracha), which was introduced to the journal in the latter half of the 1920s, there are clear instructions on how to use medical help.47

Generally located in the back of the journal, the column is written by a doctor, who discusses basic medical issues. The example discussed here, from a 1926 issue of the journal, provides a set of five steps to demarcate what to do in certain situations.

47 Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 23 (1927): 29.
Unfortunately, peasant women who read the article would soon realize that it was not possible to follow the instructions. The steps involve seeking help from medical professionals and visiting clinics that were unavailable in most villages. In other instances the column provides information useful for everyone, such as how to identify and treat the flu.\footnote{Rabotnitsa i Krest'ianka, no. 22 (1926): 24.} The different approaches to giving advice show how some contributors to the journal try to cater more to the logistical obstacles that make it difficult for peasant women to receive proper or modern medical attention, whereas others ignore them.

**A Proper Upbringing**

In the first decade of Soviet Union’s existence, it became clear that one of the most important duties of women was to bear children and ensure that they received a proper upbringing (vospitanie). By 1926 most peasant women still did not receive maternity leave, financial subsidies, or the help of nurseries and daycares.\footnote{Atkinson, Dalin, and Lapidus, *Women in Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977): 172.} Peasant women were forced to balance the responsibilities of work and motherhood without assistance from the state. To counter the problems faced by village activists who struggled to teach peasant women how to raise their children, the journal added the column, “Mother and Child” (*Mat' i Ditia*). The column consistently provided information about proper ways to care for infants and to prepare the next generation of Soviet citizens for their respective duties as men and women. It strongly emphasized hygiene and instructed mothers to make that their children’s toys were not decorated with
paint (assuming that it was toxic) and that they were easy to clean because children often put toys in their mouths.\textsuperscript{50} For mothers of children who were past the breastfeeding stage of development, “Mother and Child” also provided recipes for soft foods that were easy for children to swallow, such as carrot puree.\textsuperscript{51}

In 1926, two issues devote more than the usual number of pages of \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka} to proper methods of raising children. The articles included discuss the extent to which children should be required to help around the house and what to do when children are sick. The column “We Discuss” (\textit{Obsuzhdaem}), which was generally located in the middle to latter pages of the journal, includes a number of excerpts from letters sent to the journal.\textsuperscript{52} In one of the letters, a peasant woman asks how she should raise her child since there are no daycares in her village. She expresses concern because there are no playgrounds and the children exhibit serious behavioral problems. They follow the examples of their drunken parents and fight with others. The editor who compiled the excerpts of letters offers no advice to help this poor worried mother. Instead, the editor simply comments below the excerpt that the letter writer’s concerns are not the concerns of peasant women alone, but also the concerns of thousands of women workers.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka} did not completely abandon the notion of state-run nurseries and daycares in the second half of the 1920s. In lieu of urging mothers to use

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 3 (1925): 46.
\item \textsuperscript{51} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 4 (1925): 32.
\item \textsuperscript{52} This column started in the mid-1920s and is generally in the middle section of the journal where articles and columns that could relate to both peasant and women workers are located.
\item \textsuperscript{53} \textit{Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka}, no. 22 (1926): 18.
\end{itemize}
them, the journal decided to discuss daycare in general, emphasizing the benefits for the children and their mothers. One “Mother and Child” column tries to assuage mothers’ concerns by ensuring readers that in daycares children will receive nutritious meals and participate in daily activities, including games, naptime and even story time. The article on the page immediately following describes how a daycare should be run in the village, implying that there are still many to be built.\(^5^4\) Perhaps the goal here was to encourage women to create daycares in their own communities. The article explains that there needs to be an appropriate ratio between the number of rooms and children, which the author presumes to be high. The article also identifies different types of food that children should eat, including milk, eggs, bread, vegetables and berries. The article also suggests that from 3 to 4 o’clock in the afternoon mothers come to the centers to breastfeed their children.\(^5^5\)

Religion was a particular point of contention between the Communist Party and peasant women. The column “Page about Religion” (Stranitsa o Religii) discusses the relationship between superstitious beliefs and health. Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka maintained that religious beliefs prevent peasant men and women from being able to take care of themselves and their children properly when they became ill.\(^5^6\) In order to prevent the harm religion and superstitious beliefs can cause, the journal advocates that parents make sure to raise their children according to the principles of the Communist Party, which blatantly abhors all religions and superstitions. Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka instructed

\(^5^4\) Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 6 (1925): 30.
\(^5^5\) Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 6 (1925): 28-29.
\(^5^6\) Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka, no. 14 (1926): 16.
mothers to talk with their children about their fears and superstitions so that children could see how irrational their fears and superstitions really were. One of the main methods used by the Soviet government and discussed in *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* was to create parallel holidays that were in accord with Bolshevik ideology. For example, the Soviet government encouraged families to celebrate New Year instead of Christmas and have Octoberings instead of baptisms.

Two issues in October and November of 1927 used the regular column “Mother and Child” to discuss the effects of superstitions on children and the importance of doing away with them. In one issue, the column tells the story of an eight-year-old boy named Sergei. He is normal in all regards except for the fact that he is afraid to stay in his room alone. The author describes one time when Sergei is alone and becomes paralyzed by fear when he hears a knock on the door. He is afraid that the boogeyman (*buka*) is going to eat him. When nothing happens, however, he realizes that there is no reason to believe in the boogeyman and overcomes his fear through rational and logical deduction.

An article following the short story instructs mothers not to read stories about monsters to their children. It reiterates that such stories make children afraid of the dark and cause them undue anxiety. Then, the article discusses different methods of preventing or ameliorating children’s fears. It emphasizes that fighting with and cursing at children are not helpful parenting techniques. Mothers should talk with their children and discuss why they are scared and provide skills to help them overcome their fears. The argument

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behind this more communicative method is that to ignore children’s fears would only increase their anxiety, whereas talking about their fears decreases their anxiety and enables them to see that they have no reason to be afraid.\(^{58}\)

The article seems to have been published not only to give mothers the skills to teach their children, but the skills to teach themselves. Superstitions were a part of Russian peasant culture and associated with backward peasant women who were uneducated. Since a large part of the journal’s anti-religion articles and discussions are to educate exactly these women, it makes sense that this article also functions as a means to teach those women who still believe in Orthodox Christianity and various superstitions. This is not to stay that Orthodoxy, or any religion, are one and the same as superstitions. Rather, that the *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* treated both as equally harmful to individual and intellectual development and wanted to rid all persons of irrational beliefs not based on scientific inquiry.

In another issue, the contributing author for “We Discuss” focuses on family problems and potential solutions. The column is appropriately subtitled, “More about Children’s Upbringing by the Family” (*Eshe o Semeinom Vospitanii Detei*). The title includes “more” because it is a continuation of the previous issue’s discussion of familial topics. The problems discussed are fighting, alcoholism, and proper ways to reprimand children. After elaborating on the potential problems, the column encourages parents to understand that when children make mistakes it is not because they intend to, but because

\(^{58}\) *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*, no. 22 (1927): 24-5; no. 23 (1927): 26.
they are still developing and accidents happen. The example given is that children are unable to sit quietly (sidi smirnom) for an extended period of time and it is illogical to expect children to be able to do so. Thus, parents should not punish children for something that they cannot do. The column goes on to discuss that it is better to explain to children why they are not supposed to do something the first time they err and only punish them if the action is repeated. Then, if punishment is warranted, it is not necessary to be cruel.  

The journal tries to include children by publishing a page that specifically engages them. The “Little Ones,” (Stranichka Malisha) begins in issues from 1926 and is located in the latter half of the journal. Written either for (peasant) mothers to read to their children or for children old enough to read, the feature is comprised of simple language, often rhymes, and pictures or drawings related to the subject of the story or rhyme. The journal used this column to encourage children to learn about new things and take part in socially sanctioned activities, such as joining the Octobrists or going to school. One issue’s “Little Ones” page printed a poem entitled “To School!” (V Shkolu!). The rhyme describes Shura on his first day of school and makes note of his new uniform and the notebook in his bag. There is no ending, only the expectation that Shura will go to school and enjoy himself while he is there. The goal is simply to put the idea of school into the minds of children and foster a sense of enthusiasm about the new school year.

59 Rabotnitsa i Krest'ianka, no. 23 (1926): 22-3.
60 The journal also sometimes included boardgames (although they were actually made of paper and not boards) that children could cut out from the magazine and play. As one might expect, they were Communist themed.
61 Rabotnitsa i Krest'ianka, no. 19 (1926): 27.
Other editions of the page discussed seasonally relevant issues, such as why the leaves fall off the trees and the days get shorter in the fall and why children should celebrate the October Revolution.\footnote{Rabotnitsa i Krest'ianka, no. 20 (1927): 29; no. 21 (1926): 27.}
Conclusion

*Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka* was just one small part of a larger campaign to transform life in Soviet Union in the 1920s. From the very first issue published, the journal supported Bolshevik ideology and encouraged women to become active members of the Party. Through the publication of agitational articles, short stories, and testimonials, the journal intended to provoke women to act, to join the Communist Party and adopt the new life. When the Soviet government realized that their efforts had come to naught and that they did not have the funds to construct the necessary infrastructure to socialize childcare and eliminate the need for traditional family settings, the Party adopted a new approach that was clearly reflected in the articles of *Rabotnitsa i Krest’ianka*. The initiative to socialize childcare was not totally abandoned, but the initiative’s intensity was decreased so that mothers and the state shared responsibility for children. As a result, it is possible to build on the work of Goldman and Waters and use the journal to show how these changes in family policy in the 1920s were implemented and presented to the public. Furthermore, the transition to a “shared” responsibility begs the question about the extent to which Stalin’s Great Retreat in 1936 was truly *great* and if the regression to a more conservative style of upbringing and family life was not already in the making a decade earlier.
References


