

The RUSSIAN WOMAN

The immense mystery of the Russian woman

The *princess Olga* of Kiev was the first christian sovereign of Russia in IXth century. It is beatified and venerated, in spite of a prodigious atrocity towards her enemies. *Catherine II* was a tsarina in the dozens lovers, who corresponded with Voltaire and Diderot but introduced the bondage in Ukraine. *Alexandra Kolontai* was the first woman ambassador of USSR, having been a feminist activist who thought, at the time of revolution, that they could « make love as they had a drink of water », and who made it... The wives of the insurgents Decembrists, these young military noblemen polluted by French Revolution (and who dared to claim a constitution to the tsar Nicolas 1st), were admired by whole epoch by wanting to go with their husbands deported in Siberia. All these head women marked the history of Russia and are far from being forgotten today.

WOMEN IN RUSSIA

In her difficult procession to the bright future the woman proletarian learns to throw off all the virtues imposed on her by slavery; step by step she becomes an autonomous worker, an independent personality, a free lover.

Alexandra Kollontai, feminist and communist heroine

Madame Kollontai's hopes for her Soviet sisters were left largely unfulfilled by communist Russia. Although Soviet women were portrayed in propaganda as superwomen, equally at home with the household chores as they were heaving bricks on a construction site or operating a lathe in an industrial combine, the truth was far more familiar. Women worked out of economic necessity and were relegated to nontechnical factory work, meagre-wage service positions and low-status professions. Traditional gender roles remained firmly fixed in the Soviet home, too.

Post the Soviet break-up, it remains to be seen whether the lot of Russian women has truly improved. There is a general agreement between sociologists that women have better adapted to the changes and succeeded more than men in the last decade. There are career opportunities available to women like never before. Russia's new economy has particularly benefited young, university-educated women, who are gaining valued skills, professional experience and access to information, yielding greater economic independence and self-confidence.

But as Russian women succeed in the workplace, they have found, like their Western sisters, that this has not made their load at home any lighter. Marrying, and divorcing, young is still common, and it's almost always the woman who is left to bring up the children solo (with grandmothers often stepping in to pick up some of the strain). Some young women are rejecting traditional ideas about marriage altogether., ,

Career shifts have not come easily for middle-aged or unskilled women; women represent two-thirds of the unemployed. Some women have survived by finding work in Russia's seamy sex trade, while others have sought to leave the country: marriage agencies, which hook up Russian women with foreign men, do a bustling business.

The impossible aspiration for the endless feminine

The poem of *Anna Akhmatova*, undoubtedly the biggest Russian poetess in the first half of the XXth century, can help to grab the aspiration for the endless feminine, which calls readily "weak sex " but hides badly a passion and a tenacity in loving feeling but also the others, among which few men (Russians?) is able with so much continuity. *Nadejda Mandelsiam*, wife of the poet disappeared in camps in 1920s, waits 50 years to deliver the texts of her husband whom she had learnt by heart and was secretly repeated every day in the worst circumstances. The Russian woman personifies this capacity of endurance and patience which surprises and irritates the Westerner so much at the Russians. And that's true that faced with tests which do not miss, the Russian woman supports and waits. Only, not as Penelope. As this last it resists, but she also gets to work all country. The absence of the men, slaughtered in war or in camps Stalinist or simply decimated and put out of condition to make whatever it is by the abuse of vodka, puts it in the foreground.

It is the women who rebuilt the country, literally, just after the Second World war.

Mother Earth and matriarchy

Russia is assimilated with the small mother (*matouchka Rossia*) in the imagination and collective patriotism. The worship of the Virgin takes there a particular place, which owes mother very undoubtedly to the former worship of the goddess, that they call rather mother Earth. Mostly, they think that Russia lived under the regime of matriarchy. And however, it is often Madam who commands when the guest of passage is gone. The recent history, rich in wars, in massacres and in deportations, distinctly reinforced things. According to the men, often accused of being persons who has resigned, it is this matriarchy of the mothers and especially stepmothers that explains the blasting of the Russian families. The aspiration affirmed by the Russian women for blossoming by the life of family is called into question by the very women. By exercising an extreme power, they remove all sense of responsibility from the man who hastens to resign and to dive into the bottle.

But in fact, why are they so nice?

Difficult not to be aware (with irritation or delight, it is according to!) to the strong specific percentage of very pretty girls on the streets of Moscow, St. Petersburg and besides. Big masculine specialists of bars (*pivnoibarou*) allocate this abundance of beauty in genetics. Variety and wealth of the genes of female beauty was better preserved in Russia, because this country did not know in the Middle Ages Holy Inquisition and systematic charring of the sorceresses. Suddenly, in Occident, the installed spouses, anxious with not letting get their husband away the and to risk squandering deniers dearly acquired, considered it a good idea to report these too well endowed rivals in the condemnation of the inquisitors... On several generations, fire so compromised biodiversity and scattered the ranks of beauties in Western Europe... History will be worth you a certain success, but we do not guarantee its historical reliability nor genetics.