

USSR under Stalin

A Social Revolution?

Before Stalin:

The Arts:

- Bolshhevik set up the Commissariat of Popular Enlightenment, which moved the focus from 'high art' directed towards the bourgeois and elitist to "pop culture", which encouraged workers and peasants to produce their own art.
- Extreme members of the Proletkult movement wanted to get rid of the existing libraries and galleries.
- By 1920, there was $\approx 400,000$ Proletkult members, including 80k art studios
- Bolshheviks wanted to keep well-known artists on their side and many artists were encouraged by ending the tsarist censorship.
- Bolshheviks believed in artistic freedom.
- IDOOT ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) posters were created over a two year period.

Religion:

- Bolshheviks were aggressively anti-religious
- Lenin wanted to 'destroy the ties between the exploiting classes and the organization of religious propaganda' and replace it w/ scientific education
- Bolshheviks issued the Decree of separation of church and state which declared that the church could not own property.

Education:

- each child received 9yrs of free universal education
- the aim was to combine political propaganda and education
- between 1919 and 1920, schools were encouraged to follow a more liberal line focusing on the development of Women: the child's personality.

- With easy divorce available women were abandoned when they became pregnant.
- In 1919, the USSR had the highest marriage rate and by the mid-1920s the highest divorce rate in Europe 25x higher than in Britain.
- women should be able to have a job outside of the crushing drudgery of looking after a home and family.
- laws were passed in 1920 to allow abortion on demand.
- The end of 1920s 70% of divorce cases were initiated by men.

After Stalin:

The Arts:

- Art:
 - the major art association was the Russian Association of Proletarian Artists
 - realist painters were attacked
 - emphasis was on the proletariat as the ground of artists.
- Literature:
 - praises industrialization and collectivization
 - RAPP controlled soviet writers
- Cinema:
 - realistic films w/ simple story and plot
 - every film must be useful and familiar

Religion:

- priest (church) were part of old world
- By 1930, churches (80%) were closed
- Komsomol led campaign against religion

Education:

- textbooks, homework and testing deteriorated
- curriculum focused on socially useful work
- math deemed unuseful
- people believed school should be directly linked to factories

Women:

- great retreat is marriage taken seriously and children encouraged to respect parents
- abortion outlawed
- divorce was made harder
- more kids = more money
- illegitimate children were stigmatized
- homosexuals, and prostitution was illegal