

## Stalin's policies – Women

Stalin's first major move came in June 1936 with a decree that reversed much of earlier Bolshevik social policy:

- Unregistered marriages were no longer recognized.
- Divorce was made more difficult.
- The right to abortion was severely restricted.
- The family was declared to be the basis of Soviet society.
- Homosexuality was outlawed.

*(Decree outlawing abortion: 27 June 1936)*

Conscious both of the falling birthrate and of how many Russians were dying in the Great Patriotic-War, the authorities introduced measures in July 1944 re-affirming the importance of the family in Communist Russia and giving incentives to women to have large numbers of children:

- Restrictions on divorce were tightened still further.
- Abortion was totally outlawed.
- Mothers with more than two children were to be made 'heroines of the Soviet Union'.
- Taxes increased on parents with fewer than two children.
- The right to inherit family property was re-established.

*(New family laws introduced 9 July 1944)*

**Source:** Michael Lynch - Bolshevik and Stalinist Russia 1918-56 (Third Edition)