

Individual essay contest

**“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World.  
Time for Equal Opportunities”**

**«Быть первой леди. Общественная деятельность Надежды Крупской  
и Клементины Черчилль»**

**«What being the First Lady is like. Social activities of Nadezhda  
Krupskaya and Clementine Churchill»**

**"THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES"**



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## **Theses**

- The First Lady as the personification of the president's politics.
- The government model in comparison with the family-building model.
- The First Lady's sphere of activity.
- What is it to be «the First Lady».
- Nadezhda Krupskaya and Clementine Churchill as the distinguished First Ladies of the early 20th century.
- Early and married life of Nadezhda Krupskaya.
- Political career of Nadezhda Krupskaya.
- Social and political activity of Nadezhda Krupskaya after Lenin's death.
- Clementine Churchill as a driving force behind the great statesman.
- The person who dared openly oppose the opinion of Winston Churchill.
- Mrs. Churchill as the chairperson of the Red Cross Aid to Russia Fund creating cooperation the UK and the USSR.
- Clementine Churchill as her husband's support at most trying times.
- Nadezhda Krupskaya and Clementine Churchill, so outstanding and powerful but different.

## **What being the First Lady is like. Social activities of Nadezhda Krupskaya and Clementine Churchill**

### **The image of the First Lady is the image of an entire state.**

The First Lady is the personification of the president's politics, so she is monitored as much as the president himself. She cannot refuse to perform duties if the reasons are not related to health. Every action she takes must demonstrate support for her spouse's decisions and reflect the core values and rules in the country.

The First Lady has to demonstrate excellent diplomatic skills, which may help her in organizing political activities. In fact, the government model is similar to the family-building model. The President/husband is engaged in foreign policy, protecting borders, increasing influence and improving the well-being of the country/family. The First Lady/wife deals with domestic politics. She is the personification of care of, attention to and understanding of those who need it. She protects interests of women and children, lives by what is happening within the country/family. If the woman in family is the keeper of the hearth, then by right the First Lady is the keeper of the hearth of the State.

As the First Lady, each woman deals with various issues, considered by her the most important for the state. These are usually education and healthy lifestyle, women's rights and children's health insurance, contributions to the arts and the preservation of historical architecture, social reforms and environmental protection, volunteering, helping people with mental or physical disorders and supporting military families, fighting childhood obesity and the campaign against cyberbullying.

The First Lady of a particular country chooses a social charity project, the implementation of which will engage governmental organizations as well as private businesses in solving its problems. However, all First Ladies are united in one thing: to be the closest advisor and assistant to the husband, to support him in

actively pursuing his career, helping in writing speeches, organizing events and making key decisions in difficult situations.

Originally the concept of «the First Lady» was born in the United States in the middle of the 19th century. Over the time, this unspoken status has been assigned to the spouses of presidents around the world.

The lives of the First Ladies of the UK and the USSR have never been easy. They could not enjoy the benefits of their status. They were limited in movement and communication. Some of them have been completely deleted from history for a debatable reason. However, in my opinion, all wives of the world leaders are worthy of attention.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the roles of the First Lady were performed by two distinguished women Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya and Clementine Churchill (Appendix 1). What were they like for their husbands at difficult times for their states? What contribution did they make to the development of the country? What could they have sacrificed?

**Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya**  
**(The First Lady from 12/22/1922 to 01/21/1924)**

In response to articles in the Western press about the "First Lady", Vladimir Ilyich Lenin once said: "She is the first ragamuffin."

Nadezhda was born into a metropolitan noble family and received an excellent education. In youth she was carried away by the ideas of Marxism and subsequently met her future husband in this environment (Appendix 2). As a real friend, Krupskaya decided to follow Vladimir Ulyanov (aka Lenin) in his Siberian exile. Since then, they never parted again (Appendix 3).

She was his personal secretary, typist, stenographer, counselor, nurse. She participated in the creation of the party and preparation of the revolution. "She stood in the center of all organizational work, received comrades who came, instructed them, established contacts, gave attendance, wrote letters, encrypted," Leon Trotsky wrote in his book "My Life".

By the way, Krupskaya's party pseudonyms were "Lenina", "Sablina", "Ryba" (fish), "Artamonova". Lenin, lovingly, called Krupskaya "Seledka" (herring).

After 1917, Nadezhda Konstantinovna was in charge of state education, becoming the first doctor of pedagogical sciences in the history of the country. Also, she was engaged in the creation of the pioneer organization, thus becoming one of the most respected and beloved figures in the country (Appendix 4). At the same time, she couldn't devote herself to her maternal instincts. Health problems and the revolutionary rejection of the idea of domesticity made her sacrifice motherhood for political activism.

With Lenin's death, the situation changed. Krupskaya was gradually removed from her counselling position. However, although she no longer had authority among the new country's leadership, she tried to fight for the old Bolsheviks, wrote social and political articles, spoke out at the party's Central Committee meetings. Work became the only meaning of life for Nadezhda Krupskaya. When Stalin came to power, Krupskaya was not afraid of him and condemned the policy of terror. Unfortunately, she faced political oblivion after Lenin's death.

Was Nadezhda Konstantinovna, the "First Lady of the USSR", in whose life there were only two loves - Lenin and Marxism - happy? This question is still at issue.

### **Clementine Churchill, the First Lady in the shadow**

**(1940-1945, 1951-1955)**

The First Lady of England and the wife of Winston Churchill was an extraordinary lady. She was always in shadow, but her foresight and diplomacy formed the basis of her husband's success (Appendix 5). Clementine Churchill saved the fate of England and had been friends with the Soviet Union long before Winston Churchill followed her example.

It is well known that Clementine was ambitious, but she projected her ambitions onto a capable and successful husband, skillfully guiding him from behind. She steadfastly supported him as he risked everything to become the country's prime minister. She advised him on difficult political issues and provided support to his allies. It is also curious that, Clementine did not always agree with his political views. For example, she was a staunch liberal and more than once condemned the Conservative Party, whose leader was her husband. She was the only person who dared openly oppose the opinion of Winston Churchill. Under her influence, the British Prime Minister embarked on a series of social reforms (Appendix 6).

For 57 years of their marriage, she constantly helped her husband get out of unpleasant situations - whether it was a tense political situation or personal problems (Appendix 7). Despite her outward restraint, Clementine had a strong-willed character and was a driving force in the fate of the British Prime Minister.

Actually, Clementine Churchill played a role in the relationship between Britain and the Soviet Union. When World War II raged, Clementine Churchill founded the Red Cross Aid to Russia Fund, which operated from 1941 to 1946 (Appendix 8). Thanks to the persistence and persuasiveness of the British Prime Minister's wife, the Fund raised a huge amount of money for that time (about £ 8 million).

Also, Clementine came to the USSR, visited several cities, military hospitals, talked with the wounded and doctors (Appendix 9). The Soviets awarded the British Prime Minister's wife the Order of the Red Banner of Labor and the Badge of Honor. She met the victory on May 9, 1945 in Moscow, and soon wrote a book about her visit to the USSR. After the war, Clementine continued her charitable work, for which she got numerous honorary titles. She was even given the right to take part in parliamentary sessions. However, Clementine rarely used this opportunity. Most of all, she worried about caring for her husband and their family, being a happy mother of five children.

Winston trusted his wife with the most important state secrets. She became his main adviser in military and state issues. At the same time, she never allowed others to criticize or discredit her husband, even knowing his complex character.

Being a man of great authority, feared by entire countries and continents, with a typically English sense of humor, Winston Churchill once said that if he had not become who he was, he would gladly have become the second husband of Mrs. Churchill.

### **Conclusion**

The current status of the First Lady is a sand castle that can be washed away by the first wave of public discontent. The role of the First Lady is not spelled out anywhere, and every woman creates this role for herself. Women are often forced to sacrifice something (from privacy and motherhood to their professional careers) so that their husbands can fulfill their political ambitions.

Nadezhda Krupskaya managed to find her way in life. She never dissolved in her husband; she did not become his shadow. She managed to make a significant contribution to the development of the Soviet state and society.

Clementine Churchill considered herself the political conscience of her husband. Being in his shadow, throughout her life she discovered his advantages. Churchill's chief of staff, General Ismay, wrote in his memoirs: "Without Clementine, the story of Winston Churchill and the whole world would have been different." Also, the youngest daughter Mary wrote the biography of her mother, in which she admitted: «For the mother, father's needs and interests were always in the first place. And in the second. And in the third».

To sum up, the result of many years of labor of these two unique women cannot be erased, just as it is impossible to erase their all-encompassing love, endless loyalty and dedication to the cause of their spouses. In any circumstances, they strove to be better, making a choice in favor of love over hate, peace over violence, and, first of all, thinking not about themselves, but about others.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1



**The First Ladies are Nadezhda Krupskaya and Clementine Churchill**

### Appendix 2



**Nadezhda Krupskaya in youth**



Appendix 3



**Vladimir Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaya**

Appendix 4



**Nadezhda Krupskaya among pioneers**

Appendix 5



**Clementine Churchill in youth, 1915**

Appendix 6



**Mrs. Clementine Churchill and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill  
at Chigwell, England, during his election campaign, May 27, 1945**

Appendix 7



**Winston Churchill and Clementine Churchill with their children at the Chartwell home, Kent, 1951**

Appendix 8



**Clementine Churchill, chairperson of the Red Cross Russian Relief Fund, arrived in Stalingrad, April 1945**

Appendix 9



**Clementine Churchill is in hospital in the USSR, 1945**

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