children often differ greatly from general behaviour in our country. In the Soviet Union older parents and their married children, even with families, often still live together. This can be explained not only by our housing problem — though that is very relevant — but also by the fact that we tend to have much closer relationships. The extended family is still very much alive in our society. Mutual assistance and co-operation between the generations is an everyday set of arrangements.

From what I read, it seems to me that the generations in Canada are far more torn apart, at least physically if not always spiritually. The characters in Alice Munro's stories have mostly abandoned their homes early in life, left to study or begin working, and then face a similar situation with their own children.

Of course, reading Munro, like other authors who write simply and frankly about life, leads you to analyze and contemplate your own lot. Since two cultures are represented in my own family — Canadian and Soviet — I would like to be able to take the best and kindest features of each. This relates to the family as well as life in general. I hope that, thanks to the steadily widening contacts between people of different countries, many of our women will also have the opportunity to learn something from you, to see things in new ways, and perhaps also to make you reconsider some of your views. Time will tell!

IS THE FUTURE FEMALE?

Lynne Segal. London: Virago, 1987.

Denise Russell

Is the future female? Lynne Segal's answer is 'no' — her vision is for a human future in which the balance between the sexes is equalized. Feminism is needed to reach such a future, but it must be a feminism with a socialist bent, a feminism that is tied down to the social practices of women and men, in and out of the home. She criticizes "cultural feminism" that stands aloof from social practices and glorifies the eternal female.

In the course of developing this critique, Segal provides an informative survey of different strands of current feminist thought and practice.

The weaknesses of cultural feminism in the analyses of sexuality, motherhood and peace are fully explored; in particular, she points out how this direction in feminism can lead to a very reactionary politics. Cultural feminism is represented by authors such as Mary Daly and Dale Spender, who claim that there are essential biological differences between the sexes which have a profound effect on our psychologies. Segal links the French feminist Kristeva and Irigaray in with this trend, and accuses them of "psychic essentialism." I find the latter a confusing and perhaps contradictory notion — in that essentialism usually gets its meaning in relation to some type of biological imperative — and hence her critique of French feminism rather poorly developed. Yet in other feminist debates, (e.g. in Australia, where I teach) it is the French feminists rather than Daly and Spender who are more often set in opposition to socialist feminism. The former attempt what they see as a 'higher-level' challenge — a challenge to the structures of thought that we use to give meaning to ourselves and our lives. This is of course very abstract, usually removed from particular social practices. But many believe that if you don't change underlying conceptions, then oppressive social practices will be perpetuated. As this is a complex, long-term project it's a bit unfair to demand that such a feminism have an effect on social practices here and now. I don't believe that this direction in feminism need be incompatible with the socialist feminism that Segal supports, a feminism which

> *stresses the social and economic disadvantages of women and seeks to change and improve women's immediate circumstances, not just in the area of paid work and family life, but by providing funding for women's cultural projects, increasing women's safety in the streets or meeting the special needs of particular groups of women.*

It is true that women rarely support or work in both alternatives, but this may be due more to opportunity and interest rather than any deep theoretical incompatibility. In attempting to promote an exclusively socialist feminism Segal may be restricting the avenues for liberation. Yet I strongly support her emphasis on changing social practices, and the need to form close alliances with men on the left involved in struggles against sexual and non-sexual forms of oppression.

In the end it is more a 'reformist socialism' that Segal supports rather than a 'revolutionary' one, in that she advocates involvement in traditional government structures. Some might see this as defeatist and not really socialist, but as we see in our local struggles, the choice often reduces to either doing nothing outside the structures or achieving a little within them. We don't have time to wait for the revolution.

Is the Future Female? gives us an important warning against certain directions in feminist thought and a reminder that there is still much to be done to make the future human.

MOTHERS IN THE FATHERLAND: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics

Claudia Koonz. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Louise H. Mahood

"The Nazi Revolution will be an entirely male event," Adolf Hitler was fond of saying. While few women were intimately involved in the death-oriented regime, Hitler's policies invaded the private lives of the majority of German women. Claudia Koonz's work has broken the silence of the abuse suffered by women during the Nazi era. Her work is innovative but painful to read. The quality of rigorous feminist scholarship makes her book a worthy addition to our libraries.

Koonz does not relieve women Nazis of their part in Hitler's master plan. She tells stories of how female Nazi guards were more cruel to the women than the male SS guards. Yet, her work does focus on the stories of a few women and the cost of Hitler's policies to all women. Nazism was one reaction to the Weimar Republic.

The Weimar Republic had welcomed women as citizens though not equals in work or wages. The "New Woman" earned her keep but was a target too. To Nazis the "New Woman" was either the "girl" type who seduced men or the "third sex" who competed with them. They blamed this

woman for causing the depression and chaos in Germany. Women Nazis were in reaction to the "New Woman" and accepted their second sex status, provided their lives were free of male interference.

Women's membership in the Nazi party remained low except for the few enamoured with Hitler. Early women Nazi leaders studied Hitler's ideology, wrote their own tracts and tried to defend the Party's policy of misogyny to non-Nazi women's groups. The results were disastrous. They were ridiculed by German women and scorned by male Nazis, who would not tolerate powerful women. Only women who could be used were given a role. In 1933, one woman, a female eugenics expert, but not a Nazi, was coopted by the Nazis to subvert, then integrate Germany's civic and women's groups into the new Reich.

By December 1933, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink was appointed the National Women's leader for the Third Reich. She was outside Hitler's inner circle, but promoted the Nazi myth of the sturdy peasant family unit becoming the backbone of German society. Woman was most valued for her docility. Still, she was expected to protect her home from modern influences. Scholtz-Klink supported the idea of the strong happy family, but Nazi policy strove for producing racially pure babies. Women were valued only as producers of Aryan children: sons for the local Nazi Youth groups and daughters trained to be mothers of the masters.

The last domestic conquest of the Nazis against women was organized religion. Protestant women gave only conditional support to the Nazis. Scholtz-Klink used the Protestant church models to organize youth projects, eugenics and motherhood groups and then outlawed the church groups. The Catholic women's situation was different because of the Concordat that protected Hitler from Vatican criticism in exchange for protecting German Catholics from Nazi take over. The Concordat rendered women helpless to act until Church opinion was made clear. Catholic mothers were upset with indoctrination and "Political Catholicism" began and continued underground. Catholic women continued their influence over Catholic teachers, mothers, welfare and health care workers. Christian women did not so much undermine Nazi rule as keep a distance from it.

As for the women who said no to Nazism, there remained few resources. Women's "gifts" of deception, manipulation and "innocuous appearance" allowed the exchange of information, moved the "paper lifeline" of resistance along in baby buggies and "Kaffee and Kuchen" (Coffee & Cakes) visits. Nazi misogyny said women were *beneath* suspicion and less risk to the Third Reich. In fact, women were arrested more often for offensive comments and ideological crimes than as *de facto* resisters.

From the outset Jewish women linked the Nazi misogyny to anti-Semitism — but to no avail. Their attempts to seek support from non-Jewish women's groups resulted in the dissolution of the umbrella women's group, the Federation of German Women's Associations. They abandoned all women rather than resist the Nazi demand to expel Jewish women. Jewish women knew disaster was impending as they walked the streets and their children came home rejected by schoolfriends and telling stories of brutality.

Nazi rule had serious consequences for all women. Women participated in the genocide although they never planned the policy. Nazi policy understood woman as the incubator — a policy that affected woman's private life. The elite's wives kept the home as a refuge from the horrors that their husbands saw every day in the camps. Only a few wives of the SS participated in recycling Jewish property; SS officers were told to keep their camp-related work a secret from their wives and children.

There are several aspects of the book that I personally found fascinating. Koonz has researched her topic thoroughly. Where she is short of information, or encounters methodology problems she says so — a mark of sound feminist scholarship. In her reconstruction of the hidden story, she considers the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in the face of Nazi misogyny. My only disappointment was that there is little about Nazi treatment of lesbians; this information, though scarce, does exist in two German books. That lesbians were not traditionally understood as potential mothers may account for the lack of propagandistic material on either side concerning them. I would encourage women to read *Mothers in the Fatherland* for information, academic excellence — and a painful reminder that the struggle to liberate women often results in a powerful right wing reaction.

Unfortunately Daphne Read's review of *Balancing Acts* (Helena Goscilo, ed. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989), did not arrive in time to be published in "Soviet Women." The review will be published in the forthcoming issue of *CWS/cf.*

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