

inism, this collection of Lydia Maria Child's letters is required reading.

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**Female Soldiers—Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.** Edited by Nancy Loring Goldman. Contributions in Women's Studies, Number 33. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982. Pp. xix, 307.

To read *Female Soldiers—Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical Female Soldiers-Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* immediately after Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, as I have just done, is to suffer a wrenching of the mind. From Woolf's feminist pacifist position, whether female soldiers should take part in combat is the wrong question: in her view women should not be soldiers at all. And neither should men. The authors of the papers edited by Nancy Loring Goldman, however, all take for granted the necessity, past, present and future, for militaries; they disagree only over the extent to which women should be involved in them as combatants. In the minds of the contributors to this volume, that question turns on two major considerations: whether social justice and equal rights for women require the inclusion of women in combat; and how the combat effectiveness of a given military will be or has been affected by such integration.

This perspective is not surprising, given the fact that the papers were originally prepared for a 1980 international symposium on the role of women in the armed forces which was sponsored by the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, an association on good terms with the militaries of the U.S.A. and other western nations, including Canada. The volume is dedicated to the Fellows of the Inter-University

Seminar; its founding chairman, Morris Janowitz, has written the Foreword, and its current Secretary/Treasurer, Nancy Goldman, is co-author of one of the pieces as well as author of the Introduction and editor of the whole collection. Research for two of the papers was funded in part by grants from IUS; and six others were sponsored by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. The remaining six do not acknowledge support from a funding agency.

Divided into three parts, the collection ranges in time principally over the last two centuries, and in space over Europe, Africa, Asia and North America, although the focus is clearly on the United States and its allies and enemies. The case studies on Algeria, Yugoslavia and Sweden are the exceptions. The first two of these are contained in "Part I: The Experience of War" along with pieces on Great Britain and Israel, both allies of the U.S., on Russia, long-standing cold-war enemy, on Vietnam, enemy in one of the recent and nastiest wars in U.S. history, and on Germany, enemy in the two world wars of this century but currently, as divided, part friend and part foe.

The four papers in "Part II: The Threat of War" deal with U.S.-allied Greece, Japan and Denmark plus neutral Sweden, all countries which have had little experience with women in their armed forces until very recently.

Taken together, the eleven papers in Parts I and II all ultimately serve as background discussion to the real debate of the book: whether or not the U.S. military should proceed further in the direction of admitting women to combat roles. This question is set forth in "Part III: American Dilemmas and Options" in the manner of a scholastic disputation with one paper stating the problem, one making the argument against female combatants, and a final one, the argument for. Despite the fact that this debate is being waged today in very similar terms within the Canadian Defence Forces, Canada, one of the

U.S.'s closest allies, is nowhere represented in this collection.

This U.S. focus notwithstanding, the book provides a great deal of information on the history of women's involvement in militaries up to and including combat as well as on contemporary policies on women in the armed forces of various countries around the world. The book's scope encompasses revolutionary civil wars and wars of national liberation as well as international hostilities in order to ensure the broadest possible consideration of women's relation, in the past and in the present, to armed conflict. Thus the case study on Russia includes reference to the female bomb throwers and assassins of the anti-tsarist struggle as well as discussion of the approximately one-million-strong participation by Russian women in the Soviet forces of the Second World War.

More than half of these women were directly engaged in combat, either with the regular Soviet troops at the front or with partisan forces fighting in the German-occupied territories. Female fighter pilots flew missions against German bombers; indeed three Soviet combat aviation regiments were all-female. The Russian forces also made use of hundreds of skilled female shooters, "mortarwomen, heavy machine gunners, light machine gunners, automatic riflewomen, snipers, and riflewomen" who by the end of the war were credited with killing 11,280 enemy troops (p. 69).

Less well-known, perhaps, is the fact that some Russian women volunteered to serve in the armed forces of the Tsar during the First World War, disguising themselves as males if necessary in order to gain acceptance. At the time of the disintegration of the Russian army under the pressures of war exhaustion and revolution, one famous woman combat soldier received permission from the Kerensky government "to organize a women's shock battalion, or 'Battalion of Death'" to shame if not shoot deserting men (p.

64). In the civil war following the October Revolution, the newly organized Red Army also made use of female combatants.

The Russian example would appear to indicate that there is little correlation between the traditional left/right split in politics and opposition to or acceptance of women in combat. Nor does the "hawkish" or "dovish" stance of American military men reliably predict their attitude on this question. Indeed within the array of conflicting and contrasting detail cited in these papers it is difficult to discern any clear patterns.

One which does seem to emerge, however, lies in the relation between the extremity and fluidity of a situation and the willingness of a society's leaders to use female combatants. Women's participation in combat has been highest when societies have been involved in social revolutionary struggles against repressive regimes, colonial or indigenous, as in wars of national liberation or "people's wars", or when countries have been invaded and conquered by a foreign enemy. Thus women have been used in life-endangering missions and as armed warriors in irregular forces much more readily than in regular armies. So, for example, there was a high proportion of Yugoslavian women fighting with Tito's partisan forces in the resistance against both the Nazi invader and the native right-wing collaborators as well as against the non-Communist guerrillas. But immediately after the war, the all-male High Command of Yugoslavia decided to exclude women from the regular military service. Similarly in Israel, while some women served as combatants in the defence of Jewish pioneer settlements before, during and after the First World War, in the anti-British struggle during and immediately after the Second World War, as well as in the war of independence of 1948-49, once the state of Israel came into existence and the Israeli Defence Forces were unified and regularized, women were excluded from "all jobs involving combat, jobs that have to be filled under bad conditions, and jobs where

physical demands are regarded as too great for females" (p. 155).

And in one final example, that of Vietnam, we can see that, while women made up a large proportion of the overall forces of the Communist "people's war" against first French and then American imperialism, women tended to be used at the lower levels of the Maoist "three-tiered approach". Women, that is, were most in evidence at the local level as members of village militia units providing home defence as well as "logistical assistance to main force troops operating in the area" and at the regional level as "lightly-armed full-time guerrillas" (p. 112). Women's contribution to the struggle was enormous: in the North female units were celebrated for their successes in shooting down American planes and the work of women in transport units supplying the troops in the South earned them the sobriquet of "water buffalo of the revolution" (p. 145). During the famous Tet offensive of 1968 an all-women guerrilla squad held off for several days the American troops advancing to restore Saigon's control of one city. Nonetheless, the fighting shifted thereafter more and more to the all-male regular forces, the top of the Maoist three tiers, and it was the success of these on the battlefield which is credited with finally bringing down the Saigon regime.

Another cross-cultural commonality which would appear to be present in these examples is the phenomenon which colleague Shirley Wigmore has labeled the "in-place heroine." Accordingly, while men become heroes going out in search of adventure or to confront danger, women become heroines when they, like Madeleine de Verchères, surmount a dangerous threat which reaches them at home. Certainly in the changing definitions of combat and in the gradual "erosion" of "combat exclusion restrictions on servicewomen" (p. 237), there would appear to be a hierarchy starting from self-defence and home defence, through supplying support services to combat troops in a combat zone, to operation of

"offensive line-of-sight weapons" on the front line (p. 268). Resistance to women in combat increases the more they advance from the "tail" to the "tooth" end.

Is there a connection between patriarchy and women's exclusion from combat? Some of the contributors to this volume definitely think so. Jeff M. Tuten, the spokesman of U.S. military opposition to female combatants, when writing about Germany, identifies the Nazis as vociferous opponents of women's emancipation and locates in their ideological commitment to separate feminine and masculine spheres Hitler's refusal to okay creation of a women's combat battalion until so late in the game that it could never be organized. The strength of the German Armed Forces' will to preserve the military as an exclusively male caste resulted in the non-militarization of the women's uniformed service auxiliaries and the prohibition against their use of firearms even if capture by the enemy was imminent. Similarly, Karl L. Wiegand links the total absence of women from Japan's military establishment of the Second World War to the "stereotypically male-dominated" nature of Japanese society (p. 179). Anne Bloom, author of the paper on Israel, quotes the words of feminist Aviva Cantor Zuckoff to sum up that nation's record on women and combat: "If we go through the Bible and legends carefully we see that whenever Jewish survival is at stake, Jewish women are called upon to be strong and aggressive. When the crisis is over, it's back to patriarchy" (p. 157).

The U.S. spokeswoman for female combatants, Mary Wechsler Segal, argues that women's exclusion from combat has occurred in societies in which "Men have been the rulers and the property holders" and "have had power over women, in some cases absolute power" (p. 282). And in her own culture she points to the important role the armed forces have played in the social construction of the ideal American male. "The military in general, and combat in particu-

lar, is a masculine proving ground”, she writes. “If women are fully integrated into the military, then this arena loses this function. A young man cannot prove he is a man by doing something that young women can do” (p. 283). Meanwhile, the stereotype of the strong man as protector of the weak women is belied in male-dominated society by the prevalence and tolerance of violence against women as in rape and wife battering.

As if deliberately demonstrating the male chauvinism of opposition to female combatants, the paper which makes the U.S. military case against women in combat has a swaggering he-man tone, so blatant one wonders whether parody was the intent. Tuten argues that women’s inferior “strength, stamina and speed”, as well as their lower aggressiveness, militate against their effective employment in combat (pp. 251, 255). He even conjures up “the spectre of intentional pregnancies by servicewomen” as an “easier” escape from combat duty “than desertion to Sweden” (p. 251).

Looked at in one way, the obverse of the possible connection between male dominance and male monopoly of arms bearing is to postulate a connection between feminism and women’s admission to combat. Most of the contributors to this volume also assume this link exists. To account for why the question of women in combat has surfaced at this time in most industrialized countries, authors point to the women’s rights movement of the last two decades. The other frequently cited factor is demographic: the manpower shortages resulting from a lower birthrate. This can also be linked to feminism, if gaining control of one’s fertility is regarded as a sign of feminist consciousness. Editor Nancy Goldman asserts that “the stronger the emphasis on ideology of social equality, the greater the potential for utilization of women in military combat” (p. 5). That correlation is most evident in the example of the Soviet Union. Had the social revolution not introduced women in the

’20s and ’30s “to the rigors of machinery, industrial discipline, and ‘modern’ notions of order, routine, punctuality, and responsibility” (p. 76) as well as educating hundreds of thousands of women to be engineers, scientists, doctors, technologists and industrial managers, Soviet women’s participation in the armed defence of Russia during World War II could not have been as great as it was. But, Goldman warns, even very high levels of involvement of women in combat, as in Russia, Yugoslavia and Vietnam, did not guarantee equality in the armed services at the time, in other fields of human endeavour, or in the postwar society. Patriarchal power persisted and the fact remains that the “political and military decisions to put women into combat have almost always been made by men” (p. 11).

It is also true that the cross-cultural “resistance to full equality for women in society—civil or military—is powerful” (p. 16). But under the impact of the movement for equality between the sexes, attitudes in some societies have undergone tremendous change. In the United States, for example, the subject of women in combat was rarely raised publicly during the Second World War, but whenever it was, it aroused in Congress “protestations of deep aversion to the idea” (p. 219), whereas a recent Gallup poll of 560 Americans aged eighteen to twenty-four showed a majority of the young men and women in favour of including women in combat roles on a voluntary basis (pp. 284-5).

Throughout this collection, with one notable exception, the women’s movement is equated with equal rights feminism and, in the words of Goldman, “the issue of women in combat” is seen as supplying “a test of the logic of full equality” (p. 17). The one exception is Tuten who quotes from feminists divided on the issue of women and combat to corroborate his view of women’s lower aggressiveness. Otherwise the authors seem unaware of the fact that there are varieties of feminism and in particular a pacifist feminism which seeks equality between the sexes

not through admission of women to combat but rather through liberating men from militarism. That brings me back to Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* and why it was such a jolt to turn from it to this book. The authors' perspective is too restrictedly military and hence blinkered against some other crucial considerations. Nowhere is it acknowledged, for instance, that the menace of thermonuclear holocaust might affect women's attitudes toward participation in militaries committed to the testing and deployment of nuclear arms. Nor is there any recognition that American women might resist full integration into military forces whose duty it could be to overthrow the legitimate government of Nicaragua or to assist the Guatemalan government in genocidal counter-revolution. The contributors to this volume would all agree, I am sure, that *Female Soldiers—Combatants or Noncombatants?* is not an abstract philosophical question; but they do seem to think it is an apolitical one. Many contemporary feminists would heartily disagree.

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**Getting There. Producing Photostories with Immigrant Women.** Deborah Barndt, Ferne Cris-tall and dian marino. *Toronto: Between the Lines, 1982. Pp. 110.*

The last five years have witnessed increasing numbers of works on the experiences and situations of immigrant women in western capitalist societies, a social group whose contributions to the economy had been profoundly underrated (eg. Guyot *et al.*, 1978; Ng and Ramirez, 1981; Seller, 1981). *Getting There* is a welcome addition to the burgeoning body of literature which addresses immigrant women's experiences from their own perspectives. But there is a difference: *Getting There* is not a book of words; it is a collection of photographs with inserts of texts which display visually the stories of how immigrant women survive in a metropolis.

The book begins with a statement on the history of the project, its objective (photostories, the images of which are created by women themselves rather than by others), and the kinds of materials and methodology used in producing the book. In addition to the two photostories about immigrant women, it includes textual information on how the stories were made, on immigrant women and work, on advertising, and a final section on how the stories can be used for consciousness-raising. The book underscores the importance of starting from women's experiences. The philosophy of the book is summarized as follows:

We are not supporting the telling of personal stories only for self-expression or therapy; we are supporting the sharing of daily experiences, which can lead to a clearer understanding of social structures, a critical analysis and a readiness to act collectively. (p. 15)

On the whole, the book is very well put together. The visual display is interesting and direct; the text is simple, easy to read and lucid. The photostories, in particular, arrest the reader's interest right away, and is an effective way of teaching about immigrant women's struggle for survival in an urban setting. I would like to use this book as a benchmark to critically reflect on our work with and about immigrant women up to now. Thus, the comments I am going to make should be seen as constructive criticisms directed more generally at activists working with immigrants (as educators, social services workers, researchers, etc.) rather than simply at the producers of the book.

Given the producers' emphasis on the learning process and the reciprocal relationship between teachers and other participants, I would like to have seen a lengthier discussion on the production of the photostories. Although the procedures of putting the stories together are useful information, more importantly, I would want to know how the production of these sto-