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**25p**

SEXUALITY  
AND  
FASCISM

## CONTENTS

1. Women and Nazi Germany
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These three articles are write-ups of speeches given at the Big Flame Day School on *Sexuality and Fascism* in December 1978. They were presented in the morning session to stimulate the workshops and general session that took place in the afternoon.

The Day School was organised to tackle some of the very difficult political problems connected with sexuality and fascism. This second printing is a response to the many requests we've had following the rapid sales of the original 500 copies.

## INTRODUCTION

The first article outlines how Nazism took sexual politics very seriously and explains various policies towards women.

The second follows on with the the particular roles that men, as men, played in Nazi Germany and looks at men today.

The third article examines in detail some statements about women made by the National Front. We print these articles as a response to a very controversial discussion.

It should be clear that fascism is very concerned with sexual politics. To create a 'master race', fascists must, and do, combine their racism with vicious sexism. For us, it should never be a question of *priorities* — of *either* anti-fascism *or* anti-racism *or* anti-sexism, the three aspects are bound up together. Further, fascism doesn't appear suddenly as an unrecognisable monster from nowhere; it breeds in the everyday racism, nationalism, authoritarianism and sexism that are fundamental to today's capitalism.

An important development over the last year or so has been the growth of black women's organisations fighting against such things as the use of 'virginity tests' and Depo Provera and other threats to black women. These organisations, which can challenge the state's racism and cut the ground from under the feet of the fascists, need to offered whatever support they ask for. The Tory's immigration and nationality proposals are openly sexist as well as

racist and it is to be hoped that organisations fighting these proposals will take this into account.

The recent demoralisation of the National Front, caused by their May 1979 election failures, has been taking an anti-gay form within the NF, with attacks on Martin Webster. What should the left's reaction be to this? Certainly not to abuse Webster in the same sexist terms as his fellow fascists. Let's face it, we are badly prepared. The Anti-Nazi League's propaganda, for example, was mostly of the shock-horror variety, casting gays in the role of *victims*. We need to be taking these issues up in a positive way that affirms gay sexuality as *good*, not as something which present society 'tolerates' and fascist society wouldn't. Hopefully, these documents will contribute to that preparation.

Finally, Big Flame argues that not only does the anti-fascist movement fail to take fighting sexism seriously, but neither does it take the fight against *racism* seriously enough. These, and many other questions are examined in a new Big Flame pamphlet 'The Past Against Our Future'. (50p + 10p post.)

## BIG FLAME

There is a Big Flame Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Commission to share information and analysis and develop strategy and tactics in this area of politics. The commission is open to people doing anti-fascist, anti-racist work who are sympathetic to Big Flame. We welcome enquiries about the commission, or Big Flame as a whole. Write to Big Flame, 217 Wavertree Rd., Liverpool 7.

## REFERENCES AND ADDRESSES

Women and the National Front (Searchlight Publications) 30p

Finding a Voice: Asian Women Speak — Amrit Wilson, £2.50

Gay Left — periodical, 38 Chalcot Road, London NW1.

# Women and Nazi Germany

Discussion of the ideology of National Socialism has often underestimated, or ignored, the vast importance of their anti-feminist ideas. Nazi attitudes to women were well worked out, and openly stated - women were needed in the service of the State. Because of this they should be put to no more hardship than was absolutely necessary, provided they adhered to the role which the state demanded of them. In keeping with their whole philosophy, there was no attempt to describe the benefits that women were given in terms of the needs and choices of the individual, but clearly in terms of the needs of the state.

There are three main reasons why anti-feminism was so crucial to the Nazis both in their rise to power, and later in consolidating their position. Firstly, their attitude to women was a major part of their opposition to the 'liberalism' of previous governments, which they claim had 'loosened' traditional moral standards. In contrast, their militarism emphasised the distinction between the sexes.

Secondly, because National Socialism was a racist movement, and women's role in the birth process so important they had to find ways of controlling women in order to carry out their policies on race.

Thirdly, after taking power, their anti-feminism gave them a consensus of opinion with older Conservative and Catholic parties which helped them to broaden their base of support.

Before 1933 changes in women's traditional role were beginning to appear. In 1918 feminists had won the vote. There were some gains in education for girls, and World War 1 gave German women the chance to enter higher paying jobs from which they had previously been excluded. A large women's movement had existed which was, however, divided, and lacked the independence of today's women's movement.

These developments provoked a huge reaction in Catholic and Conservative parties, so much so, that despite other reservations they expressed 'gratitude' to the Nazis for restoring 'morality'.

In fact, many of the gains women had made were being eroded long before the Nazis came to power. For example at the end of the war, women were made redundant in large numbers as the returning soldiers wanted 'their' jobs back; the working class women's groups had lost most of their independence and now did social work for the Socialist Party; whilst the middle class movement was weakened by internal friction.

On the other hand, birth control methods were spreading, and women, particularly in the cities, were choosing to have fewer children. The war had changed many attitudes to traditional morality. Even though very few people were actually taking part in this new permissiveness, the whole of the right, including the Nazis made it a central theme of their campaigns.

However, in the case of the Nazis, fears about the results of a declining birthrate were their major concern. To reverse this trend and raise the population level they attempted to promote marriage and the family. This was no longer to be a private matter as it directly affected 'the strength of the nation'. They believed that the government must intervene to 'protect' marriage, and also to direct it in line with their racial policies. The first priority was to stop Aryans and non-Aryans from marrying, and similarly to prevent people with certain illnesses from producing children, in order to produce the 'master race'.

But their desire to increase the birth rate was usually given priority, even when it conflicted with their racial policies. One of the main ways in which they 'persuaded' women to have more children, was to make it financially easier for people to marry and for women to stay at home to look after the children. One tactic was their marriage loan scheme. This was an interest free loan, given to people who wished to marry, providing the woman withdrew from the labour market. It was the equivalent of 4-5 months wages for an industrial worker.

Repayment was at the low rate of 1% per month, and repayment was cut by  $\frac{1}{4}$  for every child that was born - with 3 or 4 children, very little of the money would have to be paid back. This scheme had some effect as people who obtained the loan had twice as many children as those that didn't. The Nazis financed the loan by a tax on those without - another deterrent against remaining childless.

Similarly, tax allowances for children were doubled, maternity benefits were increased, nursing payments introduced for those with young babies, and periods of paid leave from work for those with infants to care for.

Their major incentive, however, was the introduction of family allowances. Large families were given cash grants and later monthly payments. Another scheme was a money grant for those who would agree to have another child. The Nazis saw this as an alternative to giving wage rises - an attempt to keep the population 'happy', whilst pursuing their population policies.

Facilities for women were also improved. The number of maternity clinics increased, and infant and maternal mortality rate fell steadily. 'Mothers Schools' were opened where women were taught 'household skills', which many women attended on a voluntary basis.

All these measures addressed themselves to the real frustration of married women, but in an anti-feminist framework. They offer some explanation of the support that masses of women seem to have given the Nazi regime.

Alongside these material incentives, there were attempts to mould peoples attitudes, by a vast propaganda campaign. Much of this was directed against the popular image of the sophisticated city woman of the Weimar period. The National Socialist Party officially opposed women's smoking, drinking and dressing in an American fashion.

The ideal they wanted to propagate was that of the peasant wife, living a peaceful, wholesome life - devoted to work on the land, and to her family. The Party issued edicts against women who 'shave their eyebrows, use rouge and dye their hair.' In contrast to this, women should demonstrate their wholesomeness by achieving the Reich Sports Medal. In directions to the SS as to who would make a suitable wife, they very seriously advise that 'for good health, the javelin or the pole vault are of more value than the lipstick.'

The other major area of anti-feminist propaganda was concerned with motherhood. Such measures as the Honour Cross of German Motherhood, for women with four children were seen as ways of promoting 'motherhood' without incurring unnecessary government expenditure. It was also hoped that in the war period such measures would prevent unrest among women whose husbands and sons were being killed. However, it is impossible to say whether these propaganda exercises could have been effective, without the financial measures to back them up.

For the women who did not fit into the Nazis anti-feminist framework life became extremely difficult and often dangerous. This side of Nazi policy can be seen in their attitude to birth control. During the 1920's the Communist and Socialist parties had been fighting for abortion and contraception facilities, and had set up their own clinics. By 1926, abortion on medical grounds only, had been legalised, thus the vast number of abortions were still illegal, and it has been estimated that 100,000 cases of serious illness resulted from these abortions.

However, under the Nazis things were to become much worse. In Hitler's words, 'it must be considered as reprehensible conduct to refrain from giving healthy children to the nation.' This attitude was only modified by their racial policies, and abortions were freely available for those with 'birth defects' and 'non-Aryan women'.

Most of the Communist-run birth control centres were closed down once the Nazis came to power, although, surprisingly some of them continued to operate in secret. The number of prosecutions for performing an abortion began to increase - and so did the penalties. In 1933 the penalty for giving an abortion was two years imprisonment. By the war years the penalty was death.

A group of women whose position changed drastically after 1933 were unmarried mothers. Initially they were regarded as a 'waste' from the population point of view, since an unmarried woman would often only have one child. Also, the Nazis at first associated unmarried motherhood with what they termed 'Marxist licentiousness'. In fact, a 1934 Labour Front article said that these women were 'usually psychopaths or mentally deficient in some way.'

But there was great confusion in the party on the issue. The scruples of the puritans in the party conflicted violently with the views of those who wanted to produce more 'racially valuable children' - whatever the circumstances. Gradually the second group began to dominate the party's ideas, and Himmler emerged as 'the champion of the unmarried mother'. In his words, 'she should be given credit for contributing to the population' and hoped that if people would change their puritanical attitudes she would produce even more children.

The Nazis realised that public opinion was conservative on this issue in much of the country, so they moved cautiously, but unmarried mothers were no longer the social outcasts they had once been. The state's 'sponsorship' of these women was seen as a way of avoiding more abortions. During the war Hess announced that the state would assume guardianship of 'illegitimate' children, in particular those fathered by soldiers. Himmler went so far as to say that girls who refused to serve their country in this way, even though unmarried, could be compared with army deserters.

Taking this a stage further, he discreetly gave notice that women anxious to have children could have 'racially pure' men provided as 'conception assistants'.

Any small benefit that accrued to women in all this was purely incidental, their aim was always to survive and strengthen the state.

Another important part of their policy was to remove women from the paid workforce. However, in discussing this we must remember that previous governments had already implemented this policy during the economic crisis, and had been supported by the unions to protect 'mens jobs'. In this respect Nazi ideas coincided with those of most other parties including the Social Democrats, ie. the man should be the guardian of the home and family, but an unemployed man is unable to fulfill this role, or may be unable to afford to marry in the first place, and all this in its turn prevented population growth.

They also complained that unemployment was driving women into unsuitable jobs, and were particularly concerned about young girls working in the tobacco and chemical industries as this might endanger their reproductive capacities. Their intention therefore, was that women should leave the paid workforce, thus leaving more jobs for men who could then marry and father more children.

However, as early as 1934, they had to concede that they could not completely manage without women in the paid workforce, and thus a Womens Section of the German Labour Front was established to take responsibility for women workers. These women were all committed to National Socialism, and had the task of protecting womens 'childbearing capacity' at work and neutralising any unrest felt by the women.

By the late 1930's a huge contradiction had occurred. Womens employment had become essential to rearmament and the war effort. But this was diametrically opposed to all their earlier policies, and to their anti-feminist ideology. By 1938, the labour exchanges had one million vacancies on their books and one might have expected that they would have regarded the 3.5 million childless women, with no job outside the home, as the answer to their problem.

The labour shortage was so severe that it was causing the Nazis to lose control, as workers exploited their own scarcity value, As employers had to compete for labour, wages rose and work discipline and productivity fell. Bitter rivalry broke out for power and economic advantage in both government and business. And yet, despite all this, their attempts to mobilise female labour were hesitant and halfhearted.

Between 1928 and 1938 the proportion of women in regular work outside the home fell quite drastically, despite the growing demand for labour after 1936.

Nazi propaganda fed upon the feelings of women who did not want two jobs. In 1939 for example, 3.5 million women took the decision to stay unpaid at home, even though they had no young children to look after. The main reason seems to have been the extremely low pay for women, at a time when mens wages were rising, and thus money within the family would be less scarce than in previous periods.

These financial factors were reinforced by the Nazis' propaganda. Even knowing that they were going to fight a war, the instructions given to labour exchanges were that 'women should not be given work which calls for special presence of mind, power of decision capacity for swift action'. Not exactly a campaign to get women into the workforce!

One effort they did make, was to give women only a low allowance when their husbands joined the army, thus forcing women to go out and earn a wage. But this policy was dropped for ideological reasons - it contradicted their ideas about women even though it was economically important. The new allowance was set at 85% of the husbands previous income, the highest of any country in World War 2. And this allowance produced the opposite of what the Nazis needed, an increase in the labour force. Many women married a soldier and were able to give up work.

For the women who did agree to go into industry, conditions were harsh. Protective laws were suspended in the munitions factories and women were expected to work a thirteen hour day. Despite the need for female labour, few nurseries were provided. And yet

another disincentive for women to work in the factories was that women who earned a wage had had money deducted from their allowance for being married to a soldier.

Again, there was confusion in the party, and Labour Front representatives were making contradictory statements. The result was that after bitter conflict between that section of the party who were concerned with the labour shortage, and 'idealogues', the ideal of 'womanhood' was put before the need to win the war, and thus their own survival. Although there had been attempts to coerce young girls into domestic service, thus fulfilling a womans role in the service of the State, Hitler refused to conscript women into the factories, which is where from the Nazis viewpoint, they could have been effective. This order was only changed towards the end of the war, when the Red Army was already marching towards Germany.

We can see from this then, the vast importance of anti-feminism in their system of ideas, in that even in times of great crisis for their whole system, they attempted to impose a life-style on women that was completely at odds with their economic, social and political needs.



## Men and Fascism

## INTRODUCTION

What I've tried to do is look at men in terms of the sexual politics of Nazi Germany and the UK today and the problem of fascism. It's argued here that sexual politics is not a 'side issue' or of 'low priority' but something central to understanding and fighting against fascism and its 'master race' theories.

In doing so I've pinched great chunks from a couple of sources. The first is from drafts for a pamphlet on Sexism, Racism and Fascism which a collective (including me) had intended to publish earlier this year. Particularly from our pamphlet I've used Val's 'Family, Fraternity and Fatherland' and a sister from Nottingham's 'Notes on Gay Sexuality, Women and Autonomy'. The second source is a draft of an article, eventually published in the 'men's magazine' Achilles Heel on 'Men and Fascism'. The uncredited quotations come from these sources.

### PART 1

#### BEING A REAL MAN – GERMANY BETWEEN THE WARS – A Crisis of Manhood

You had a hard job, proving yourself a man in Germany after World War 1. Most German cities were littered with 'fighters who could not de-brutalise themselves' (Goehring's description), brooding in beerhalls or strutting around the backstreets in threadbare brown uniforms and jackboots, looking for bother. They had grown to manhood preparing for the war. Most of them were from the middle class which "before 1914 had regarded itself as the backbone of German society, upholding all the traditional values which had come to be regarded as 'normal', 'natural' and 'eternal' – values such as respect for and deference to authority, belief in family, nation and the virtue of patriotism."

The cherished values of these 'little men' were shattered. Imperial Germany was defeated, communism seemed around the corner, and hyper-inflation decimated their savings. It was from these embittered, inward-looking, self-pitying men that the early Nazi party was formed.

#### WOMAN IS MAN'S DEADLY ENEMY

Male comradeship in the brutal conditions of the trenches had a profound effect on a generation. Only masculine companionship was good enough. A set of ideas that had developed in the pre-war youth movements made a lot of sense to many of these men. **MASCULINISM**. This means thinking men are great and women are to be despised.

*Stephan George*, for example, advocated the *Bund* (Communion of Men), praising masculine prowess, purity and perfection. He believed in a Circle of Men, led to a beautiful future by their Fuhrer.

Another masculinist philosopher, Hans Bluher, championed the deep devotion of young boys to each other, seeing this as laying the basis for a new society, built on an elite of men. 'According to Bluher, humanity had failed to maintain itself on a 'heroic level' because men had allowed themselves to succumb to the feminine virtues of human kindness, sympathy and charity'. He saw male love as the 'unique force for creating the State and its Fuhrer. It should not be debased and squandered on woman and the family'.

"What has hitherto been the most frequent cause of Man's failure? Why, his beloved mortal enemy, Woman."

"The Jews have never been able to establish a State because they suffer from male companionship impotency, and at the same time, a morbid enlargement of the family instinct."

Bluher also championed gay rights but was both anti-feminist and anti-Semitic.

Embittered ex-soldiers plus masculinist ideas had a profound effect on the early Nazi Party. Once in power the Nazis offered Stephan George the task of leading Germany's 'cultural regeneration', but he declined, he was hardly the type. In 1930, a Nazi magazine wrote:

"It is our belief that it is the very *masculinity* of National Socialism which will most intimately appeal to every genuine woman, for only this will enable her to become a full woman once more."

#### BRAWLING THEIR WAY TO POWER

However, the road to power (1923-33) was fought over every inch of the way by the Brownshirted Nazi SA. 'Hitler built up a paramilitary movement from a small nucleus of ex-servicemen into a vast organisation of several millions.' He was able to offer the impoverished middle class man, and later the unemployed 'a chance to retrieve their lost masculine self-respect. A free uniform and entry into a strong and powerful brotherhood could work wonders for these men.' At the same time Hitler was able to promise heavy industry in a closed meeting in 1932 that he had the power to smash the trade unions and make strikes illegal. He was the Strong Man they were looking for. Masculinism and disillusioned ex-soldiers served the Nazis well during the 1920s.

#### NAZI MEN IN POWER

At the first general meeting of the Nazi Party it was unanimously agreed that no woman would ever gain prominence – and none ever did. However, after assuming power (1933) another aspect of sexual politics began to become significant. This aspect is well covered in another paper (*Women in Nazi Germany*); it did not despise women, but *put them in their place* as wives and mothers, breeders of the Race.

"The new political reality is so constructed that the German woman will from now now on live in a State formed and led by the masculine spirit . . . a State, on whose being, for a long time, she will not have direct influence as formerly . . . not hostile to women but friendly, since its whole basic position implies the restoration to woman to her own life sphere and the life and security that she needs." (1933)

For a policy of reinforcing the family in this way to take hold, big ructions had to take place. Not surprisingly, a fair number of the masculinist street fighters, including their leader, Rohm, took the philosophy of love between men seriously and some were homosexuals. It needs to be said **LOUDLY** that the homosexuality of some of the Brownshirts was *woman-hating* and different from today's gay liberation movement and from much of the gay movement in pre-Nazi Germany.(1)

Eventually, the homosexuality in the Brownshirts that had been tolerated and was part and parcel of their masculinism became unacceptable as the battle to increase the 'pure-German' birthrate demanded the glorification of the family. Hitler had Rohm put to death along with Strasser (the leader of the 'working class' tendency in the Nazi Party, seeking a 'second revolution') and many others in the Blood Purge (1934). It must be said that whatever the reasons for these murders, they were justified as an action by the 'Party of Decency' dealing with 'notorious homosexual perverts' and marked the end of the usefulness of full blown masculinism to the Nazis.

## RACIAL THEORY

Both the early Nazi brotherhood and the later emphasis on the family, fathers and motherhood can be explained in terms of war, nationalism and racism. The Storm Trooper Brotherhood helped their Fuhrer steer the destiny of the Race and Nation once again, while the birth campaigns demanded the Race's babies for the future of the Fatherland.

Their project was to destroy the evil which they considered had been corrupting the world and weakening their race; that is the fictitious 'International Jewish Conspiracy'.

To talk about *men* in Nazi Germany means talking about *women*, about sexual and racial relationships. I want to finish this part with some quotes on this subject.

"The reward which National Socialism bestows on woman in return for her labour is that it once more rears Men, Real Men, decent Men, who stand erect, who are courageous, who love honour . . . And conscription, what marvellous training!! Woman is to be regarded as the eternal Mother of the Nation and the eternal companion of Man in work and battle. We men are ready to fight, but when we are wounded, you must nurse us. Nature has provided for this. Women never favour cowards; they like brave men, and me like a womanly woman."

(Hitler, 1935)

"Do not leave the men idle. Rather take over household management; make free your position for a man who would otherwise have to be supported by your work."

This was part of an attack on women who went out to work; they were told:

'Give your jobs to the Fathers of large families'.

However, during the Purity Campaign (against permissiveness and for putting women back in the home) Hitler remarked on the excesses of his SS (who, by now had replaced the Brownshirts) that he wouldn't have too many restrictions on them.

"My lads are no angels . . . they must let off steam the way they want."

In 1939 Himmler ordered his SS men to procreate at all costs:

"Only he can die peacefully who knows his stock . . . continues in his children . . . it will now be necessary for German women and girls of pure blood to become mothers of children by soldiers leaving for the battlefield. . ."

## PART 2

### 'NORMAL' CAPITALIST RELATIONS AND FASCISM

The Gay Activists Alliance proposed a motion at the June 1978 CARF Conference which was passed; it said:

"One of the most powerful weapons in the fascist arsenal is to take advantage of the *already existing* divisions amongst oppressed people in order to mobilise popular support."

The *Searchlight* pamphlet on 'Women and the National Front' says something similar:

"In fighting fascism we are not just holding off a distant threat of a military state.

We are fighting reactions and prejudices today that, if carried much further, provide the kind of society that fascism aims at."

Without going overboard on this we should be clear that the Nazis built their mass support from the problems of everyday life, not only around the 'crisis of the nation', nor even just around unemployment and inflation, but around intense crises of

people's sexual and personal life. Before going on to consider some of the present crises in post-War UK, and how the National Front (NF) and their allies and other right wing groups (such as the Festival of Light) relate to them I want to make some points about the link up between so-called 'normal' capitalist conditions and fascism.

"We can't hide our lack of understanding of today's situation by referring back to the thirties whenever we talk of fascism, nor does it help to describe fascists as some kind of monster or NF members as mad people". "We need to understand the NF as a symptom of deeper and broader social changes in the organisation of capitalist society."

This means that as communists we need to be fighting for real ways out of everyday problems. It *doesn't* mean, however, that we shouldn't be hounding the NF. The fascist organisations need to be attacked, weakened and given no platform.

### CRISIS OF MANHOOD – UK after 1945

For 20 years following World War 2, capitalism promised many things to working class people. Jobs for every man, and many women too. Promotion was possible, especially where immigrants or women took the lower down jobs. State housing. A chance to send your son (or even your daughter) to college. For working class people, this all depended on *working hard*, making sacrifices now and believing in a better future. Promotion, home ownership and education all offered a way out of the working class. Later, when the crisis hit, these were no longer certainties.

### DOING A MAN'S WORK – changes in the organisation of work

A major change, starting with Taylorism and Fordism, in the workplace has been the introduction of the assembly line, *deskilling*, measured day work and the like.(2)

"Men are traditionally brought up to believe in work. It is one of the ways men prove themselves and maintain a sense of identity." This is usually apparent when it comes to taking the piss out of apprentices, who 'aren't grown men yet'. It becomes increasingly difficult to believe in 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay' when the work itself is deskilled, meaningless, repetitive and beyond your control. Where blacks and young workers are less prepared to be responsible about work (they're 'only in it for the money') tensions can arise between them and older workers.

Added to this, inflation and unemployment in the 1970s has 'vanished' a lot of people's savings (although not on the same scale as the thirties – this is a different kind of crisis) and, for many men, undermined their sense of security about always being able to be the breadwinner.

More still! Groups such as dockers who could consider themselves indispensable to capitalism at one stage and, because of this had tremendous power, have been automated almost out of existence by containerisation. Powerful to powerless. Is it so surprising that dockers took part in a pro-Enoch Powell march a few years ago?

While the organisation of the workplace and society changes, slowly but surely, and completely beyond your control, it's easy to find attractive the ideas of the right, including the fascists, which want to place the 'dignity of labour' back on the pedestal, honour an 'honest man's toil' and blame the immigrants who arrived at about the same time as the large scale deskilling, and who are still around now while the crisis is gripping.

Of course, things are nothing like as simple as this. We need to know what's happening in different parts of industry, as well as among the self-employed who are a traditional backbone of fascism. Further, there are many differences among the immigrant workforce in terms to their commitment to the ideology of work . . . .

## WHO'S WEARING THE TROUSERS — Men and the Home

"As production has become more and more capital intensive, capitalists have had to find ways of keeping their expensive machinery working for more time." They have demanded *shifts*, including the very disruptive *night* shift. Disruptive, that is, in terms of a stable sex and social life. Nights have obviously caused tensions . . . and suspicion. Of a different order though, has been the challenge to men's role as a breadwinner, provider and protector through women going out to work. At home, many men have found that not only have they lost their 'natural' place of authority in the family which perhaps their father had, but also they are 'wearing the apron', cooking the kids' tea while their wife's on twilight shift. Unemployment is, of course, immensely important, particularly at the moment, undermining many a man's traditional identity.

In a situation like this, where (white) men's traditional privilege and power within the working class is no longer a certainty, where the dignity of work (or even having a job at all) is threatened and where his authority is challenged then right wing ideas become attractive. The 'solution' is to turn the clock back, make Britain great again; their plan of action is to re-assert men's authority over women, kick out the blacks, 'restore the incentive to work' . . . .

White men taking out their frustration by attacks on black people, on women and gays ('paki-bashing, wife-beating, queer-bashing') probably increase at a time like this, *alongside the rise of fascist parties like the NF and British Movement.*

## STITCHING UP THE FAMILY

The family is the institution which most people hang their dreams on, yet divorce and violence in marriage are but one indication of the widespread dissatisfaction with it. It remains the seat of the most intimate relationships yet the scene of the most intense conflicts, to which there seems little alternative.

I don't want to go into much of a discussion of the family here as others are doing it elsewhere in this pamphlet, but I do want to say something about heterosexual (man/woman) relationships and gay sexuality.

Although, with the decline of the large family, producing *lots* of babies isn't as important as it was, *sex for reproduction* remains the cornerstone of sex roles. Women's position in society is still defined as *wife and mother*. Heterosexual relationships are what 'real men' and 'real women' are supposed to be engaged in. Gay sexuality is a threat to all this:

"In my opinion, in the general run, the homosexual is a dirty minded danger to the virile manhood of this country." (G. Landau, MP. June 1960)

Gay men and lesbians pose a tremendous threat to the family and are oppressed for it. (More of this later.) It is fairly well known that thousands of gays perished in the Nazi gas chambers.

## PART 3

### THE NATIONAL FRONT ON MEN

There is little doubt that the National Front has the usual ideas on men's and women's 'natural place'.

"The complementarity of the sexes is fundamental. Man has need of woman as much as woman has need of man. . . ."

"Power, resistance, energy, combativity, the hunting instinct, the itch to conquer and dominate are masculine characteristics, opposed to such feminine instincts as submission, passivity, sensibility, tenderness and intuition."

"This implies that man, in whatever degree he predominates, never deprives woman of her natural power, as long as she understands her role as a woman."

— various quotes from NF's Spearhead Jan '78.

"For there is no party on the scene that is, for instance, more dedicated to the preservation of family life as the basis for a sound social order."

— John Tyndall, Spearhead, Dec. 1977.

The NF role for men means *leadership* — Tyndall has commented, for example, that the Conservative Party is reflecting its poor state in being led by a woman.

Predictably, men should be *soldiers*: "there should be a number of hours during the week set aside for activities which should bring the young child into contact with military processes." (Tyndall 1976)

Tyndall's attitude to manhood is well illustrated by his article in the National Socialist in the '60s on 'Beatlemania: a Study in Degeneracy.'

"Is this not the age of effeminacy and weirdness in the male type? . . . in order to be 'with it' our young manhood should ape the outer appearance of the queer. I could not help but recall the picture of another youth, belonging to another age, standard bearers of another spirit. . . I imagined them marching, as one day their counterparts shall march again. . . the virile splendour of a new British and Nordic young manhood under National Socialism!"

The NF also publish masculinist ideas, but as far as I'm aware there's no masculinist movement in this country comparable to that in pre-war Germany, although male chauvinism is everywhere to be found.

"The predominance in the US of the feminine element, as demonstrated by the marked feminine characteristics of American society . . . all this is directly linked to the inhibition of the masculine spirit."

## WHO'S IN THE NATIONAL FRONT

On the other hand, male-inspired thuggery is one of the hallmarks of the NF and BM. It's very difficult to know who is in the fascist movement and very important to know what kind of people are joining the Front. At the recent ANL Working Council meeting (26th Nov. '78) the editor of the anti-fascist magazine Searchlight argued that the failure of the NF's election strategy and the massive presence of an anti-fascist movement meant that many of the older men were renouncing the NF in favour of the British Movement (presumably because of their open Nazism) while the NF were recruiting a lot of young lads, *looking for bother*.

## WHAT CONCLUSIONS?

## PART 4

### SEX—RACE—NATION—WORK—FASCISM

Firstly, I hope it's been established clearly that there's an intimate connection between sexism, racism and fascism. Most obviously, the glorification of the family and motherhood for the reproduction of the 'master race' needs men in the role of provider and protector (soldier, leader etc.) There is a *crisis in sexual relationships* (men's relation to work, to the family is one example of this) and when this crisis is intense fascism seeks to offer the worst kind of 'solution' to this crisis. Further, the 'brotherly thuggery' — one way to prove your manliness towards other men and over women — is traditionally the backbone of fascist paramilitary organisations.

## CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

Secondly, even though these problems are central to understanding and combatting the rise of fascism, they are rarely taken seriously.

"The left is very often part of a conspiracy of silence on these questions. Very little consideration is given to the strains and difficulties people are feeling in coping with their every day lives."

## WHAT IS THE SITUATION TODAY – Some Points for the Anti-Fascist Movement

1. The need to support women's struggles *now* . . . . not only against racism and fascism, but also for women's autonomy within the working class. This is the surest way of preventing fascism from putting women in what they consider 'their place'. Within the anti-fascist movement women's issues must be given a high priority.

2. The need to support gay liberation *now*.

The challenge which the gay movement can present to the man/woman couple and its glorification in 'master race' theory is important. *The crux of the gay struggle seems to me to be its relationship to feminism.* It was because so much of the gay movement in Germany was woman-hating that the Nazis could recruit.

Today's gay movement is very different. There is a great deal of respect for feminism amongst gay men (although this is far from universal) and lesbian organisation is very strong. The Tom Robinson Band song 'Glad to be Gay', by the way, changed its pre-occupation with just gay men (under pressure) slightly to include a mention of lesbian mums.

If we see the crunch issue for gay liberation as its relationship to feminism then we can understand the position of Martin Webster, NF Activities Organiser who is a homosexual. But, of course, a *woman-hater*.

3. Men against Sexism.

Again I believe its relation to feminism is what counts.

4. Struggle in the Workplace.

I don't feel competent to go into this in any detail, but obviously we don't want to turn the clock back and must build a strategy from present conditions . . .

5. The anti-fascist movement. . . .

. . . . especially now the ANL has brought out a lot of people contains a lot of bravado. (I remember some anti-fascists who hammered the NF chanting 'They were like *women*'). There's no such thing as an anti-fascist male chauvinism – it always comes back on us.

(1) It's interesting to note that Rohm, the Brownshirt leader, often said they shared a 'common activist attitude' with the Communist fighters and, in fact, turned to the paramilitary Social Democrat Reichsbanner organisation for sanctuary when his life was threatened in a plot in 1932.

(2) Other Big Flame publications give a lot of information on this and on its extent extension into social life in the *social factory*.

## Women and the NF

The following information is taken either from National Front publications directly, or is reproduced from anti-fascist, feminist or socialist publications. I've put the information in points to try and make it clearer.

**1. THE WHOLE IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF THE NF IS ANTI-FEMINIST.** They want to maintain and strengthen the family, with women as housewives and mothers. This is central to their vision of building up and strengthening the white race.

'We would wish to see a society that respected and cherished the feminine role as principally one of wife and mother and homemaker ..... There are few greater symptoms of our national decadence than the contemporary derision of maternity and domesticity, part of the same rebellion against nature as egalitarianism and other fashionable delusions of liberalism.'

– Spearhead Jan 1977.

**2. THE NF ARE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT** or any attempt by women to break away from repressive stereotypes which limit women's horizons and straightjacket their creativity solely to childcare and housework. John Tyndall said in August 1977

'I would like to see real manhood and womanhood once again valued and the current trend to unisex reversed.'

Their contempt for women who want the right to some kind of control over their own lives and bodies is shown very clearly in their attitude to abortion.

'Many women declare that the right to abortion is an essential part of women's liberation, and so it certainly is – just as bogus and debasing as the rest of the lib movement, and ultimately just as defeminising'.

– Spearhead August 1978.

**3. THE NF ATTITUDE TO WOMEN IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO THEIR NOTIONS OF THE RACIAL SUPREMACY OF THE BRITISH RACE.** They think that white women should breed as fast as possible to stop the white race being swamped by blacks and jews.

'The world picture today is of a small boat in which the white race is slowly sinking as the rising tide of the world coloured population threatens to swamp it.'

– Spearhead Jan 1977

**4. THE NF WOULD LIMIT THE USE AND AVAILABILITY OF CONTRACEPTIVES FOR WHITE WOMEN** since they believe that women choosing not to have children is leading to a declining number of 'good quality' whites. How they define quality is not clear ..... it may have something to do with being an NF member.

**5. AS AN INDICATION OF WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE** they would scrap the Abortion Act.

'It goes without saying that the present Abortion Act would be scrapped. Indeed there is a case to say that abortion be made altogether illegal.'

This, combined with a decline in the availability of contraception would give white women little choice but to be housewives and mothers who the NF so idolise, or else return to the dangers of illegal backstreet abortions and possible death. However unappealing this future is for white women, the future for black or 'racially unpure'

women would be far worse. *If they hadn't already been kicked out of the country, they would be forced to abort or be sterilised.* Look at these horrendous quotes from Martin Webster and secondly from Spearhead August 1978.

'For the protection of British blood, racial laws would be enacted forbidding marriage between Britons and non-Aryans. *Medical measures would be taken to prevent procreation on the part of those who have hereditary defects, either racial, mental or physical.*' (Emphasis mine)

'A race which makes a habit of aborting its progeny is a race of lemmings, driven by a death wish. The number of coloured abortions in this country is significantly small. Add to this the already disproportionately high coloured birth-rate and the scales are tilting ever more ominously against the survival of our race.'

So abortion would be impossible for white women and having children would be impossible for non-white women. White and non-white women would not be able to have relationships or marry men of a different colour or race. For white women the NF future would be that of being a mother, or to be a mother again ..... so long as the kids were the right colour. The future for non-white women would be non-existent.

**6. THE NF WOULD GIVE THE OFFICIAL STAMP OF APPROVAL TO THE REPRODUCTION OF LARGE FAMILIES,** much in the same way that Hitler and the Nazis encouraged rapid and prolific Aryan breeding.

'Government should positively encourage by every means possible the raising of large families.'

— Spearhead Jan 1977

But don't end up thinking that the NF are particularly hot on children as children. They are very clear that they want to see this increased reproduction taking place in the context of the white *family*, and the traditional 'virtues' of the family as the upholder of morality are central to NF thought. Their vision of 'happy families' is of the woman at home, revelling in childcare and housework, while the men take on the outside world of work, beating up Marxist degenerates and forcibly repatriating blacks. The family for them is the central pillar of traditional morality and white supremacy. (see point 1.)

'Have you any idea of the frightening facts pointing to the breakdown of family life in Britain today ..... your churches are loud with appeals to help one parent families. Much less loud is the denunciation of the irresponsible human behaviour out of which such 'families' come to exist in the first place.'

—Spearhead Dec 1977

Its unlikely that the NF would place the blame equally on the man and the woman for this 'irresponsible' behaviour. They have said that there would be no state aid to help women bring up kids on their own, and in other places they have complained about the welfare state, so probably the already inadequate nursery provision would be abolished. Women would not be able to choose whether to have kids or not, whether to have them outside marriage, and women who got pregnant against their will or by mistake would be unable to get an abortion; and if they had the kid outside of marriage would be severely ostracised. Many more women than now would end up in a marriage from financial and social pressure, not choice.

**7. ALTHOUGH THE NF HAVEN'T MADE ANY STATEMENTS ABOUT LESBIANISM AS SUCH,** they are certainly opposed to male homosexuality which they see as gross degeneracy, and they want to see the laws against homosexuality tightened up and made more

repressive. Given their attitude to women outlined above, any woman who wasn't married and producing kids and loving every minute of it is not a 'real woman' revelling in her 'femininity'. So women living and loving together independent of men would be too much of a threat to the NF's ideal of stereotyped sex roles and happy families. Certainly in practice the NF have shown what their attitude to lesbians is. In various parts of the country gay women have been beaten up, had bricks thrown through their windows, and have to put up with a barrage of obscenity on the streets. Gay bookshops and meeting places are smashed up and fascist slogans and death threats scrawled on the walls.

**8. THE NF'S ATTITUDE TO NON-WHITE WOMEN IS,** in some ways, the reverse of their attitude to white women. Whereas white women would be encouraged to do nothing but

breed the master race, non white women would be *forcibly* stopped from having children. White women would be encouraged to marry and settled down in domestic bliss while non-white women would be kicked out of the country. The NF haven't been very explicit on how their policy of repatriation would work in practice, but since the majority of the people who they would like to see repatriated either wouldn't want to go, or don't have anywhere to go, since they are not recent immigrants and have been born and brought up here, there would have to be a great deal of violence and force used to even begin to implement it. If this were bad enough, would escalate to appalling proportions. The way that non-white women are treated *now* is an indication of how a combination of racism and sexism lead white men to treat non-white women as sub-humans and to subject them to all kinds of humiliating questions, examination and abuse. One pregnant Asian woman was refused all medical care by immigration officials who were so busy trying to find a reason why she shouldn't be allowed to enter the country, that they couldn't be bothered to let her explain that her labour pains had started. Her husband was not allowed to be with her, and she was dumped in a room on her own to give birth to a baby that consequently died. No doubt this made the immigration officials feel that they had done their job very well in not letting too many young dependents into the country. Both this country, and the country of origin of non-white immigrants, particularly the Indian sub-continent, force prospective immi/emigrants to undergo lengthy and degrading interviews to 'prove' that a married couple really are married, and not just married on paper. Proof of consummation and continuing sexual relations is asked for. The case this year over these 'virginity tests' hit the headlines and many protests were made to the various authorities who threw up their hands in mock horror as if they didn't really know it was going on. American soldiers in Vietnam were encouraged and indoctrinated into thinking that the Vietnamese were only 'gooks' 'wogs' 'the yellow peril' in fact, anything except human beings like themselves; so, they did not think twice about raping, torturing and sexually abusing as many Vietnamese women as possible in an officially encouraged policy of exterminating the enemy. In fact, rape was so much part of the American way of life that it became part of the 'search and destroy' missions. Soldiers were ordered to 'search' women's vaginas with their penises and then kill them. A combination of believing women to be inferior and merely there to service men, coupled with the belief that non-whites are scum, is a lethal combination for non-white women. At present the NF set fire to Asian women's saris, post excrement through letter boxes, and beat up non-white men and women, petrol bomb their houses and even kill them. Mothers of non-white kids are abused, called whores, are tormented in the middle of the night by gangs shouting abuse, have their windows smashed, their houses burnt, obscenities scrawled on the walls etc. etc. Many non-white women are afraid of walking out of the house for fear of attack.

(The whole question of how non-white women experience racism and understand the threat of the National Front is one I find difficult to write about as a white woman. However, there is a new book by Amrit Wilson called 'Finding a Voice' published by Virago £2.50 which

is a series of interviews with Asian women and their experiences of Britain. Also, the recent London Socialist Feminist conference on Racism produced a lot of papers relevant to this).

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The following extract is from 'Women and the Politics of the National Front' produced by a group of women in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham written in 1978. It points out why the National Front's ideas on women have to be confronted, and why they are appealing to some women.

'Reliable sources estimate that 1/4 of the NF's membership is women. Given women's traditional role as housewives and homemakers, their primary orientation focuses on the home and the community rather than the sphere of waged work outside the home. Hence, the deterioration of inner city facilities, the cuts in welfare, education etc. have effected women. Above all, as we have already mentioned the NF have made inroads into residents associations, attention to these areas of community struggle.....

The NF's appeal to women can perhaps be seen in the context of the elevated status they give to women's role as MOTHER. Women are increasingly being forced back into the home finding their workload ever heightening as the full effects of the crisis come into play. The NF without actually alleviating a woman's real position, PRESENTS AN IDEOLOGY WHICH GLORIFIES THE STATUS OF MOTHERHOOD' OF MOTHERHOODS VITAL ROLE IN BUILDING RACE AND NATION.'

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Typical British Movement propaganda

WANT THIS FOR YOUR GIRLFRIEND?

WANT THIS FOR YOUR CHILDREN?



**RACE-MIXING IS EVIL - FIGHT IT WITH**

