

Unit 10: Gender Issues

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will

Be aware of the following

- Variety of outlooks toward women within Islam
- Importance of female sexual purity to marry Eastern Orthodox and Muslims
- Women saints and nuns in the Eastern Orthodox tradition
- Increase in exploitation of women (pornography, prostitution and abuse) in some parts of the former Soviet Union
- Detrimental effects of military personnel participating in the sex trade
- Variety of women's experience in the Russian Federation
- World War II combat arms participation by Soviet women
- Current statistics on women in the Russian Federation Armed Forces, and support military occupational service positions they held
- Traditionally patriarchal nature of Russian society
- Trends concerning women's roles under Perestroika
- Statistics of women in wages, employment, parliament and as crime victims
- Current marginalization experienced by some Russian Federation women
- State Department's assessment of women's issues--domestic violence, legal sluggishness and employment

Identify

- Hijab, Saints, Apostles
- Martyr, Theotokos
- Religious orders
- Canonize

- St. Seraphim of Sarov
- Veneration
- Perestroika

Realize

- High percentage of Soviet women who practiced engineering, mathematics and medical doctor vocations
- Double burden--being home provider and wage earners--experienced by many women in the Soviet era
- Use of abortion as a primary means of birth control in the Russian Federation
- Trafficking in women within the New Independent States and the reasons for its existence
- Disproportionately high percentage of women currently unemployed in the Russian Federation
- Low pay scales for women compared to men in the Russian Federation
- Development of women's religious communities in the Russian Orthodox Church
- Large number of widows who make up women's Russian Orthodox religious communities
- Importance given Mary the mother of Jesus in Russian Orthodox circles
- Reasons for prostitution's appeal to some Russian Federation women
- Impact of prostitution on deployed U.S. Armed Forces personnel

Unit 10: Gender Issues

I. Overview

"...there is a huge difference between the lives and opinions of young and old women, urban and rural women, professional and uneducated women, prostitutes, lesbians, religious women, radical feminists and women of all ages and nationalities who wish to return to the traditional values of home and family. Such richness and multiplicity remind us that it is impossible to universalize a particular pattern of experience for women..."

-- Rosalind Marsh, "Women's Studies and Women's Issues," Women in Russia and Ukraine, p. 7.

1. Military Experience

a. World War II Eight hundred thousand Soviet women served in World War II. Though most were medical workers, a sizable group were full combatants--bomber pilots, tank drivers, snipers, and engineers. The Hero of the Soviet Union combat medal, comparable to our Medal of Honor, went to eighty-six women armed forces personnel.



In the book Night Witches, the Untold Story of Soviet Women in Combat, author Bruce Myles describes the many Russian women air pilots during 1939-1945. During the summer of 1942 on the southern front, these pilots would fly up to ten bombing runs each night against German offensives.

One pilot, Nadia Popova, was forced down by flaming fuel tanks on her PO-2 Fighter. Author Myles' describes Nadia's sense of resolve and fortitude.

"Her skin was fresh and unlined and bore remarkable little sign of the pressures of daily air combat. In her mental attitudes, though, she recognized a toughness that had never been there before. She had always been determined, but now she knew that her experiences under fire had given her a ruthless single-mindedness" (p. 83).



b. Present realities In direct contrast to wartime combat service, in peacetime Soviet women serve in support positions far from front lines.

Women now make up only four-tenths of 1 percent of the Russian Federation forces, compared to some 14 to 20 percent in the United States military.

Recently the Frunze Naval Academy at St. Petersburg accepted its first woman cadet, Lyudmila Yolshina, who comes from a long family lineage of graduates of the Academy.

2. Man's World Patriarchal attitudes toward women in Russian society take a variety of forms. In politics, Rosalind Marsh writes, *"Under the rule of the tsars, the Soviet regime and the new democratic rulers of Russia and the Ukraine, power has always rested in the hands of men who have legislated for women" (p. 5).* Women primarily were behind-the-scenes organizers rather than front runners.

In Russia, motherhood traditionally meant not only the raising of children, but encompassed the physical and emotional support of men.

In the early 1980s, when the Soviet Union sought to boost birthrates, popular magazine articles saw women as the key to enabling men to be sober, industrious and responsible to their children. Women took the blame for irresponsible and alcoholic husbands. Patience, understanding and "inexhaustible love" toward their wayward spouse became unwritten ideal traits possessed by a wife.



One woman's characterization of her husband exemplifies the hard-nosed realities of living in a "man's world." *"I don't know how many bitter stories and complaints I've had to listen to! He doesn't care about the house, he's always in a temper, he comes home drunk, he treats the place like a hotel"* (Marsh, p. 252).

3. Socialist Equality and the "Double Burden"

a. Workplace gains Communism brought significant occupational and educational gains to women. By the 1990s, some 40 percent of managers within public agencies were women (a statistic equal to that of the United States). A "glass ceiling" however, remained for top administrative positions.

In the field of engineering and mathematics, women comprised over 50 percent of the Soviet workforce. Sixty percent of the Soviet Union's medical doctors were female. In America, women make up only 15 percent of the engineering, mathematics and medical doctor personnel.

b. "Double burden" Yet with this advance in occupational standing, often women had to take initiative in keeping homes operational.

Writes columnist Alessandra Stanley, *"Soviet society empowered women to work outside the home, then doubled their load, forcing them to hold down jobs and still take care of the children, the house and the bureaucratic tangles of everyday survival..."* ("Democracy in Russia: Women's Lib Is Just Cosmetic") p. 3.

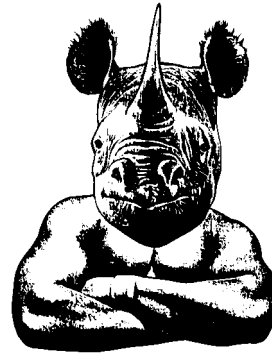
The negative effect on the Soviet family, to say nothing of the energy required for such dual focused effort, made the woman's role a very wearisome one.

4. Perestroika

a. Return to traditional roles Michail Gorbachev, in his 1987 book Perestroika, mentioned the need for Soviet women to return to their "purely womanly mission" of traditional household roles. Male Russian leaders, whether following the trend advocating Western pluralism or that of returning to conservative Orthodox values, agreed with platforms advocating a woman's place to be the traditional home and family spheres.

b. "Re-masculinization" of society Some argue that since Perestroika, the "strong and capable woman worker" of the early Soviet era is now replaced with the image of domestic servant.

Aggressive, competitive, risk-taking men need the nurture of supportive wives/mothers. Violence against women, exploitation of sex in the media and drastic reduction of women in employment and political leadership positions serve to verify this trend.



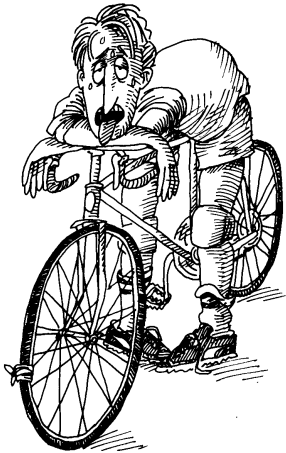
c. Poverty and unemployment With the blossoming of Perestroika, poverty and unemployment had a disproportionate impact upon Russia's female population. Women aged 20 to 45 were most likely to receive cutbacks and layoffs. Single mothers faced especially bleak prospects.

d. "Spontaneous" advocacy groups One of the positive benefits of Perestroika is the unplanned rise of women's groups dedicated to political, educational, economic, religious, artistic and charitable causes. The variety of these organizations arose in response to a perceived lack of interest on the state's part to women's issues. The "Women of Russia" movement, Committees of Soldier's Mothers, and Independent Women's Forum are but a few of the organizations which arose during this period.

5. Current Realities

a. Statistics Swanee Hunt, the U.S. Ambassador to Austria, gives the following dismal statistics concerning women within Russia today ("Women's Vital Voices," Foreign Affairs, July/August 1997, pp. 3-4).

- **Wages** In 1989, women's wages were 70 percent of their male counterparts. As of 1995, the percentage lowered to 40 percent.
- **Employment** Too often, women now are the "last hired and first fired"
- **Domestic crime** In Russia today, an estimated 80 percent of violent crime takes place in the home. Each year, 15,000 women are killed by their husbands.
- **Parliament makeup** In 1987, women comprised some 33 percent of parliament membership. By 1994, the number was reduced to under 3 percent.



b. Marginalization Though life under Communism was no picnic, the transition to capitalism is especially difficult for Russia's women. "[D]iminished labor market access, increasing vulnerability to crime, loss of family-oriented social benefits, and exceedingly low parliamentary representation" serve currently to marginalize women within the Russian Federation (Hunt, p. 2).

Abortion, used for a variety of reasons, is a primary means to regulate family size. Lack of birth control education and means is commonplace. Abortions often occur in an "assembly line" fashion, adding to the sense of depersonalization. Though estimates vary,

Unit 10: Gender Issues

Russian women average three abortions in their lifetime.

For wives comprising the wealthy upper 1 percent of the Russian Federation, isolation, anxiety and boredom can be unwelcome partners of economic prosperity.



Says Olga Dubova, wife of a top executive, *"Most husbands want to keep their wives in the shadows"* (Alessandra Stanley, "Russian Wives Learn What Money Can't Buy, New York Times, 11 Mar 1997, p. A1).

c. U.S. Department of State Assessment The Russia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 gives the following assessment of women's issues within the Russian Federation.

(1) Domestic violence *"Domestic violence remains a major problem, as victims rarely have recourse to protection from the authorities. Police are frequently reluctant or even unwilling to involve themselves in what they see as purely domestic disputes. Many women are deterred from reporting such crimes because of this and because the housing system makes it difficult either to find housing outside the family dwelling or to expel an abusive spouse, even after a final divorce action.*

According to a December Human Rights Watch report, the Government reported that almost 11,000 women reported rape or attempted rape in 1996. Human Rights Watch further reported that Yekaterina Lakhova, President Yeltsin's advisor on women's issues, has estimated that 14,000 women are killed by husbands or family members each year. Human Rights Watch notes, however, that these statistics underestimate the extent of the problem, due to the underreporting of these crimes by victims. In 1996 [an estimated] 80 percent of violent crime occurred in the home."

(2) Medical/legal sluggishness *"Hospitals and members of the medical profession provide assistance to women who have been assaulted. However, some doctors are reluctant to ascertain the details of a sexual assault, fearing that they will be required to spend long periods in court.*



While noting that the Government has begun to address the seriousness of the problem of violence against women, the Human Rights Watch report criticized the Government for 'failing to afford victims of violence the protection of the law ...,' and Russian law enforcement officials for not effectively ensuring that incidents of violence against women are investigated and prosecuted, and for sometimes obstructing their investigation and prosecution.

The report further stated that 'This discrepancy between the law as written and the law as applied demonstrates Russia's failure to fulfill its international human rights obligations.' Human Rights Watch also criticized the State Duma for its 'seriously flawed' drafting of a law on family violence. It noted that many women's groups have faced considerable difficulty in gaining access to and commenting on drafts of the law."

(3) Employment *"There is credible evidence that women encounter considerable discrimination in employment. At a Duma-sponsored roundtable held on March 5, 1996, representatives of 53 women's associations appealed to the Duma to improve the legal status of women by creating a council to assess all draft legislation to ensure that it provides for equal opportunities for women and men.*

In their appeal to the Duma, the women's associations' representatives raised their concerns that women form a disproportionately high percentage (62 percent) of the officially registered unemployed, that women are discriminated against in hiring and firing, that the differences between the salaries of

Unit 10: Gender Issues

men and women have increased sharply, and that few women attain senior positions."

(4) Enforcement of laws "Human Rights Watch in 1996 accused the Government of participating in discriminatory actions against women, contending that the Government seldom enforces employment laws concerning women. Employers prefer to hire men, thereby saving on maternity and child care costs, and avoiding the perceived unreliability that accompanies the hiring of women with small children. In July 1996, a change in the Labor Code prohibited women between the ages of 15 and 49 from being hired for jobs that are considered to be harmful to their health, including working on the night shift. Many of these jobs pay more, allow early retirement, or both."

(5) Pay "Women continue to report cases in which they are paid less for the same work that their male colleagues perform. Moreover, women have reported sexual harassment in the workplace, with employers frequently requesting female employees 'without complexes,' meaning that they should be receptive to liberties taken by their employers."

Job advertisements often specify sex and age groups, and sometimes physical appearance as well. The Government does not collect statistics on wages or income by sex; one informal estimate is that women's average incomes are about 50 to 55 percent of the average male incomes.



Professions dominated by women tend to be lower paid than those dominated by men. Moscow human resources managers privately admit that discrimination against women in hiring is common. Unemployment, at 9.3 percent of the workforce as of August, also disproportionately affects women."

II. Religious Perspectives

1. Islam



a. Helpful global outlooks The following material, descriptive of worldwide Muslim practice, provides a context for Russian Federation Islamic understanding.

(1) Variety Islam in the Russian Federation, while diverse, nevertheless incorporates practice and thought derived from historic Muslim eras. While the Qur'an, hadith, and Sharia give distinct instruction concerning a woman's role and position, there is diversity when implementing this guidance in regions of the Russian Federation.

Throughout the regions where Islam is practiced, customs vary concerning women's dress. Some fundamentalist extremists seek to impose strict Islamic social codes requiring head-to-foot shrouds. They would restrict women to the practice of nursing or medicine alone. Progressive women seek reform in restrictive clothing practices, and in economic, education, and decision-making policies.



No single Muslim position on women exists.

(2) Western media negativity Our media often portrays Muslim women as victims of Islamic resurgence. Negative treatments of polygamy, divorce by simple repudiation, veil wearing, segregation of the sexes, imprisonment in household tasks, dependence on the husband and lack of legal rights are the focus. The positive, stability enhancing, personally fulfilling dimensions of the discussion are often overlooked.

(3) Complementary roles

"Tradition-oriented [Muslim] men and women do not view the social customs and restrictions as repressive, but as complementary to the status and nature of women. They see the restrictions as providing protection for women so that they need not be subjected to the stress, competition, temptations, and possible indignities present in 'outside' society." (Margaret Nydell, Understanding Arabs, p. 55.)

(4) Assumption of male/female emotional and physical differences Most interpreters of the Qur'an accept the notion of radical, distinct emotional as well as physical differences between the sexes. (See Dr. Gamal Badawi's The Status of Woman in Islam.)

Three treatments of Islamic women's rights--the traditional, fundamentalist, and progressive--assist our understanding.

b. Traditional views of the status of women

The Status of Women in Islam, a pamphlet by Dr. Gamal A. Badawi, published by The Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada, outlines conventional perspectives on Islam's treatment of women. Dr. Badawi's perspective is instrumental in understanding traditional women's roles. His views seem to accurately portray traditional Muslim positions.



(1) The historical context Given the dismal status of women in seventh century Middle East society, Islam did much to restore dignity and individual rights.

(2) Spiritual equality Before God, men and women are on equal footing.

"The Prophet said, 'All people are equal, as equal as the teeth of a comb. An Arab is no better than a non-Arab, nor is a white person over a black person, nor is a male superior to the female. The only people who enjoy preference with God are the devout.'" (Hadith as quoted in Marston Speight, God is One, p. 50.)

(3) Social position in the home *"The Qur'an clearly indicates that marriage is a sharing between the two halves of the society, and that its objectives, beside perpetuating human life, are emotional well-being and spiritual harmony.*

Its bases are love and mercy... 'And among His signs is this: That He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest, peace of mind in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are signs for people who reflect.'" (Sura 30:21, Badawi, p. 16.)



(4) Economic position *"According to Islamic Law, a woman's right to her money, real estate, or other properties is fully acknowledged. This right undergoes no change whether she is single or married..."*

With regard to the woman's right to seek employment... Islam regards her role in society as a mother and a wife as the most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor baby-sitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of upright, complex-free, and carefully-reared children. Such a noble and vital role, which largely shapes the future of nations, cannot be regarded as 'idleness.'



...there is no decree in Islam which forbids a woman from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in positions which fit her nature and in which society needs her most. Examples of these professions are nursing, teaching (especially for children), and medicine. Moreover, there is no restriction on benefiting from woman's exceptional talent in any field. Even for the position of a judge...we find early Muslim scholars...holding there is nothing wrong with it." (Badawi, p. 22.)

(5) Political dimensions Political involvement--election, nomination to political office, participation in public affairs--in some Islamic circles is not limited to men alone. However, throughout the Middle Eastern world and much of Southeast Asia, most Muslim women are ineligible to become heads of state.

(6) Hijab (HEHZH-yahb) Analysts often interpret the growing, widespread popularity of hijab (traditional Muslim dress for women, including covering of the head), as indicating a rise of traditionalist Islam.

Judith Miller, in describing the difficulty of assessing the depth of what some depict as the growing Islamic fervor, outlines the following reasons for a woman's use of traditional dress:



(a) Expense Cost of cosmetics and trips to hairdressers is greatly reduced by wearing traditional garb.

(b) Psychological distance In crowded living conditions, hijab maintains a safe haven--even in the midst of congested conditions.

(c) Safety Traditional dress says "This is a devout woman. Leave her alone."

(d) Mobility In conservative cultures, the chador (woman's shawl) allows a woman to venture outside the confines of her home.

(e) Fashion For some women, wearing hijab is a statement of fashion and generational rebellion. (See God Has Ninety-Nine Names, pp. 469, 470.)

c. Fundamentalist outlooks



In Afghanistan, recent imposition of strict Sharia ruling bars most women from working outside the home or going to school. Taliban clerics and militia seek to reestablish medieval guidelines within this war-torn country. Perceived discrimination against women is the result.

On 7 Oct 1996, the United Nations formally objected to this extreme treatment, warning that foreign aid programs may be disrupted unless change incurs.

d. Progressive views

One of this century's first progressive women was Egypt's Huda Sarawi (hoo-DAH sah-RAH-wee). In 1923, she threw her veil into the Mediterranean, becoming one of the first women to become unveiled.

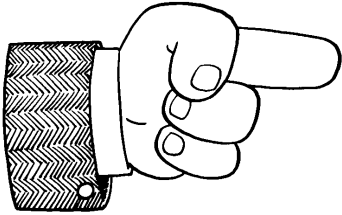


In response, her husband quickly divorced her. In time, she founded the Egyptian Feminist Union, which promoted nationalism, education for women, and an outlawing of the veil.

Unit 10: Gender Issues

Today, a broad based woman's group, the "Sisters in Islam," advocates laws against domestic violence. They promote Qur'an interpretation by women textual critics.

Advocates of Muslim women's rights seek equality in education, property rights, and business opportunity.



"They also want reform in Muslim family laws that often leaves them at the mercy of men who can divorce them without warning, take away their children, deny them the right to travel and bequeath them as chattel to the next male relative."

(See Barbara Crossette, "Women's Rights Gaining Attention Within Islam," New York Times, 12 May 1996, p. A3.)

e. Russian Federation realities The statement of one Mufti (Islamic leader) in Chechnya gives insight on gender issues within that region of the Russian Federation. After describing the importance of women within society and the necessity of their purity, the leader states *"[The woman] must remain clean--both from the religious and from the practical point of view. She must be protected, but not isolated. Islam forbids the suppression of women. The Chechen woman favors Islam, like the rest of our people"* (Paul Henze, Islam in the North Caucasus: The Example of Chechnya, p. 39).

2. Russian Orthodox Thought and Practice

a. Introduction Some may see Russian Orthodox practice--especially the inability of women to become priests or tendency to foster traditionally conservative attitudes and roles for women--as serving to limit gender freedom, especially within the Russian Federation. Historically however, women possessed great positions of power and authority within the church.



The following section addresses the subjects of women's religious communities, Theotokos, saints and feminist theological thought. It argues that gender issues applying to women in Russian Orthodox practice may be more nuanced than initially appear.

b. Women's religious communities

Both men and women enter religious orders--communities of Christians who live as active witnesses to Jesus Christ and who observe vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Monastics stress community living, prayer, reflection and solitude. Nuns as well as monks are part of these holy orders.



In a helpful article entitled "Women's Religious Communities (1764-1907)" (Seeking God, ed. Stephen Batalden), Brenda Meehan outlines the rich leadership heritage taken by women within the Russian Orthodox monastic tradition. The author examines some 217 different centers. Spawned by religious revival, calls to a holy life patterned after spiritual mystics, and embodying the practices of the desert fathers, these communities were primarily rural. Women undertook leadership of these monastic communities in five distinct ways.



(1) **St. Seraphim of Sarov** (SYER-ahf-yim SAHR-ahf, 1759-1833) This monk, hermit and ascetic (podvizhnik) was a sort of spiritual athlete, accomplishing many astounding religious feats. He lived "at one with God and nature." Though people came seeking his wisdom, for over twenty years St. Seraphim kept a vow of silence. He took special theological interest in the many women who came seeking his guidance or who settled near the Sarov hermitage. At Diveevo, St. Seraphim founded a community of virgins based on strict ascetic rite.

(2) Recognized spiritual elders Members of the Diveevo cloister developed strong spiritual followings based upon their own piety and recognized leadership. Blessed Natal'ia, considered a "holy fool" by some in her youth, eventually adjusted to monastic rite. Dressing lightly in rain or frost, she prayed constantly and read the Psalms often throughout the night. The rigor of her practice and simplicity of her life attracted those seeking counsel and spiritual insight. Natal'ia created a separate women's community at Meliavskaia in 1900.

Hermit Anastasia Semenovna Logacheva (1809-1875), devout from her youth, sought guidance from St. Seraphim on three separate occasions. Prior to her taking ascetic vows, Seraphim advised her first to care for her incapacitated and elderly parents. After her parent's death, she became a leader who attracted the troubled and searching.

(3) Widows Margarita Mikhailovna Tuchkova was an aristocratic woman whose husband, General Tuchkov was killed at the Battle of Borodino in 1812. Borodino (bah-rah-dee-NAH), a village some 113 km WSW of Moscow, was the scene of a 7 September defeat of the Russian Army by Napoleon.



Tuchkova desired to build a church in honor of her fallen husband and other soldiers. Living in a hermit's hut while in Borodino negotiating the building process, Tuchkova (called Mariia within monastic circles) developed a pious reputation and drew people to her. Abused women were especially singled out for compassionate attention. By 1877, over 200 sisters lived in the monastery at Spaso-Borodinskaia.

Other widows followed the example of women such as Tuchkova. Entering monasteries or founding communities later in life, after completing obligations to spouse and children became a pattern for these often wealthy leaders.

(4) Clergy established communities In response to initiatives at the local level, bishops and clergy often would establish monastic communities for women. Schools, almshouses, orphanages, hospitals, icon development and homes for the elderly came under this category. Some describe Countess Evgenia Borisovna Efimovskaia (1890-1925), a member of one of these communities at Ekaterina, as the ablest Russian theologian of her time.



(5) Local initiatives Ordinary men and women of villages and towns, in response to a need, established shelters under the leadership of pious women. Designed for the homeless, elderly, and widowed--"familyless" women especially--these centers also became homes for poor or orphaned girls.

Orphans of fallen soldiers habited some of the sanctuaries. They served as informal wayfarer hostels as well.

Such shelters also became centers for prayers for the dead. Through the charitable work and demonstrated piety of the leaders of these communities, great societal influence--a tangible demonstration of the compassion of faith--came about.

c. Theotokos (thay-oh-TOHK-uhs, "bearer of God") Orthodoxy calls Mary, Jesus' mother, by this ancient Greek title. The belief that Jesus Christ, the child she bore, is God made flesh (the incarnation) gives heightened appreciation for Mary, the "God-bearer" or Mother of God.

Next to Jesus Christ, icons depict Mary more than any other person. Feast days in Mary's honor bestow great reverence upon her. As a byproduct, some would argue the position of all women is upraised as a result of the veneration given Mary.

d. Saints and apostles Women saints receive veneration (to regard with reverence or awe) within orthodoxy, though canonization is less structured and centralized. Nuns dedicate themselves to a cloistered life in established religious orders. Some theologians suggest Mary of Magdala, Junia (who is mentioned in Romans 16:7) and Phoebe (Romans 16:1) were apostles.



In addition to the early apostles, many saints are women. Martyrs for the faith, or those who have lived a life worthy of imitation by all the faithful are canonized as saints. During this process, the church studies the person's life and history. Then, in successive stages, declares them "blessed," "beatified," and canonized.

A few of the early women saints include Helena, mother of Constantine and discoverer of the cross (A.D. 326); Agnes, a child martyr (292-304); Anne, the mother of Mary; Monica, the mother of St. Augustine; Dorothea, victim of fourth century persecution; and Gertrude (d. 664).

e. Feminist theologians

Within Christianity at large, some feminist (or "womanist") theologians argue that women must see religion through the lens of their own personal experience. God's grace and holy baptism--foundations of the faith--are readily embraced. Yet different meanings may be attached to these ideas and rituals. Literature concerning womanist issues in Eastern Orthodoxy is rare.

III. Pornography and Prostitution

"[T]rafficking in women is fueling organized crime, creating a menacing new East-West link...societies cannot honestly support women as builders of the new economies while tolerating a market in which criminals sell them as commodities."

--Swanee Hunt, "Women's Vital Voices," Foreign Affairs, July/August 1997, p. 5.

1. Exploitation

a. Media Within Soviet Russia, stemming in part from bans on pornography and a lack of advertising, the denigration of women--images of women as temptresses, sexual playthings or victims--was curtailed within the media.

The recent media surge, often imported from the West, views women as sex objects and victims of violence. Such characterizations demonstrate that hostile or stereotyped attitudes were repressed, rather than eradicated, within Soviet society.



b. Prostitution Some recent news accounts depict prostitution as "booming" within the Russian Federation. In the industrial center of Saratov (sah-RAH-tahf), located 220 miles north of Volgograd, "hundreds of local women--teachers, nurses, single mothers and even schoolgirls" work as prostitutes due to the ailing economy and pitifully low wages (Alessandra Stanley, "With Prostitution Booming, Legalization Tempts Russia," New York Times, 3 March 1998, p. A1).

c. Trafficking in women A 10 March 1998 fact sheet released by the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues of the U.S. State Department, states...

"Well-established criminal organizations traffic in women and girls, often capitalizing on rising unemployment and disintegrating social networks in developing countries, Central Europe, and the former Soviet Union. North America is a growing destination point for trafficking victims" (p. 1).



According to Michael Specter, trafficking in Slavic women is the latest prostitution fashion ("Traffickers' New Cargo: Naive Slavic Women," New York Times, 11 Jan 1998, p. A1). Huge profits, ready markets, minimal punishment and few risks of getting caught spur traffickers of Russian Federation and former Eastern European women. Given the sense of societal despair, alienation, poverty and hopelessness experienced by some Russian Federation youth--especially women--this disturbing trend may likely continue.

2. Impact on Armed Forces Personnel

For isolated, comparatively wealthy, sometimes lonely Armed Forces personnel stationed in Europe or visiting on a short temporary duty (TDY) stint, participation in the sex trade can seem an overwhelming and attractive temptation. Consideration of the following issues, in addition to the matters raised above, may assist personnel in dealing with the issue.

a. Risk Participating in the prostitution trade--whether legally or illegally--involves physical and emotional/psychological risk. Physical hazards are well-known--exposure to venereal diseases, AIDs, and an underground world lucrative for criminal activity.



Less familiar are the emotional/psychological risks. For married personnel, the dissonance raised in "playing the field" while having wives and children back home can affect emotional ties once a return to CONUS (Continental United States) occurs. Whether single or married, engaging in a kaleidoscopic venue of sexual favors cannot but impact relations involving more long-term commitments.

b. Values

Armed Forces personnel represent the United States. As military members, we possess values--integrity, selfless service, commitment, competence, loyalty--which apply whether in or out of uniform. When participating in a questionable trade, it defames these values.

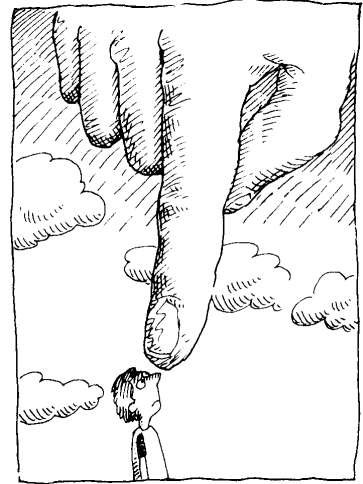


Marriage vows are dishonored. Religious ethical practice is ridiculed. The illegality of the prostitution trade is increasingly seen as a crime, not only by those who sell the services, but by clients engaging in the business.

c. System perpetuation In a recent (25 Mar 1997) U.S. Department of State report to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, delegate Robert Loftus stated, *"If outright chattel slavery has ended in almost every country of the world, there continues to be an alarming number of closely related practices."*

Unit 10: Gender Issues

One of the most reprehensible of these is the trafficking of women and girls for sexual purposes. The responsibility for this loathsome practice, which is particularly prevalent in certain countries of southern and southeast Asia, but also growing elsewhere in the world, is not solely confined to those who conduct the sex trade. Those who engage in sexual tourism are equally culpable." Military members who engage in the sex trade are guilty of sustaining and maintaining the practice.



3. Practical Considerations

On Partnership for Peace and military-to-military activities, officers and non-commissioned officers would be wise to prepare themselves beforehand to avoid compromising situations. The military tradition of the Russian Federation and Newly Independent States may encourage a gratuitous use of women, whereby escorts are readily provided visiting senior leaders.



"The Army is more than an organization; it is an institution with a unique and enduring set of values.

Values are the essence of our Army. Like combat skills, they have to be trained, honed, and polished to perfection. The Army instills these values in its soldiers who are men and women in the Army. These values are as follows: Duty, Honor, Courage, Loyalty, Integrity, Respect, and Selfless Service."

General Dennis Reimer, 17 Oct 1997

Vocabulary List--Gender Issues

Apostles Early disciples of Jesus, sent forth by him to proclaim his teachings

Canonize Process by which the church identifies those who will be saints. Canonization first examines the life and history of the respected individual, then declares them, in successive stages to be blessed, beatified and then canonized a saint.

Hijab (HEHZH-yahb) Traditional Muslim dress of women, often including covering of the head

Martyr One who dies for their faith

Mother Teresa of Calcutta Roman Catholic nun, founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity. Born in Skopje of Albanian parents, Mother Teresa became one of the 20th century's most respected women.

Perestroika Restructuring under Soviet leader Gorbachev. Production focused on what people desired to consume, not on what the state mandated alone.

Religious orders Communities of Christians, within the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic tradition, who observe vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Monks and nuns are part of these holy orders.

Saints Persons of exceptional holiness of life, formally recognized as such by the church

Theotokos (thay-oh-TOHK-uhs) Title given to the Virgin Mary as the Mother of Christ

Veneration To regard or treat with reverence or awe. Icons within Russian Orthodoxy are venerated rather than worshipped.



“Challenge yourself.”

Review Quiz: Gender Issues



Part 1--True or False Place a T or an F in the blank provided.

1. _____ During World War II, there was a significant percentage of Soviet women in their armed forces.
2. _____ Today women make up roughly 15 percent of the Russian Federation military.
3. _____ Perestroika encouraged bold, aggressive, risk taking women to conquer the workplace.
4. _____ Muslim practice concerning women's roles is uniform throughout the world
5. _____ Muslim practice often allows for women employment in professions of nursing, teaching and medicine.
6. _____ Advocates of Muslim women's rights seek equality in education, property rights, and business opportunity.
7. _____ Female sexual purity is a non-issue with Eastern Orthodox and Muslim practitioners.
8. _____ Women possess historical positions of influence and service within Russian Orthodox practice.
9. _____ Nuns cannot be a part of Eastern Orthodox religious orders.
10. _____ Roughly 33 percent of the Russian Federation parliament is made up of women.



Part 2-- Multiple Choice Place the letter of the most correct answer in the space provided.

1. _____ The "double burden" in Russian women's issues refers to
 - a. being both wage earner and homemaker at the same time.
 - b. roles where a wife must raise the children and play "mother" to her indolent husband.
 - c. being risk taking and aggressive at work while submissive and compliant at home.

2. _____ In his book Perestroika, Michail Gorbachev advocated women
 - a. place their children in care centers and strive for top positions in Russian industry.
 - b. take responsibility for their alcohol abusing and irresponsible husbands.
 - c. return to their "purely womanly mission" of traditional household roles.

3. _____ What workforce group is most likely to receive cutbacks and layoffs in the Russian Federation?
 - a. 45- to 65-year-old men and women
 - b. 20- to 45-year-old women
 - c. 30- to 50-year-old men

4. _____ Many tradition-oriented Muslim men and women see socially restrictive roles for men and women as
 - a. repressive.
 - b. mutually beneficial.
 - c. exploitive.

5. _____ Many husbands of the wealthy upper 1 percent of the Russian Federation
- treat their wives to a life of caviar, soap operas and exotic trips.
 - encourage their wives to form partnerships with them in business.
 - like to keep their wives secluded and uninvolved in business pursuits.
6. _____ Eastern Orthodox practice
- honors a long tradition of women saints.
 - honors only male saints.
 - recognizes no early church women leaders.
7. _____ The Russian Federation government is _____ in enforcing employment and abuse laws as they apply to women.
- active and prompt
 - slow and often inept/unconcerned
 - persistent and unyielding
8. _____ As the Russian Orthodox Church does not allow female priests, Russian Orthodox women
- are currently joining feminist theologians to lobby for opening priestly positions to them.
 - nonetheless are accorded high positions of authority in women's religious communities.
 - are leaving the church in great numbers.
9. _____ Next to Jesus Christ, icons in the Russian Orthodox Church venerate _____ more than any other person.
- Mary, the Theotokos (bearer of God)
 - Elijah, the protector from disaster and evil
 - John the Baptist, the one who announced Christ's coming
10. _____ United Nations Human Rights Commission delegate Robert Loftus recently reported that the sex trade is
- a problem only with those who traffic women and manage the loathsome enterprise.
 - a loathsome practice all who engage in "sexual tourism" must take responsibility for.
 - impossible to control and not worth the effort trying to curb.



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"Values are the bedrock...They inspire us to do what is right, day in and day out--in peace and in war. They are what has made us different from our civilian counterparts. They are the keys to our success in the future. Because you have exemplified... values throughout the history of this great Nation, today your daughters, and granddaughters lead military police patrols in Korea, keep the supplies flowing from Germany to Bosnia, and keep the skies free from scud missiles in Saudi Arabia."

General Dennis Reimer, "Women in Military Service for America,
17 Oct 1997