

## Going to bat for the grass roots women's movement

truth is that Wonder Woman was an army intelligence officer, working "for America, the last citadel of democracy, and equal rights for women." The Ms. story also announced that Wonder Woman comics, which had been on the wane since the 1940's, would be reborn in 1973 with a woman editor.

The next January's issue of Ms. told readers that the magazine would soon publish a book on Wonder Woman: "It is the first Ms. book. (In fact, we hadn't planned to do one so soon; it just grew out of readers queries about how to find these comics...)"

### Wonder Woman comic reborn 1973

This exemplifies the fraudulent relationship Ms. has with its readers. It seems obvious, once the facts of financing are known, that commercial interests and politics are coinciding in the Ms. empire.

The 1973 version of Wonder Woman was to be more pacifistic, in adherence to the general line pushed by Ms. In both her old and new model, Wonder Woman's guiding incentive is "patriotism"—a stance protective of American ruling class interests.

The promotion of this comic strip heroine is also an indication of the anti-people attitude of liberal feminists who ignore or actually denigrate the real achievements of down-to-earth women. The "Redstocking" investigators point out that this practice, "leads to an individualist line that denies the need for a mass movement, and implies that when women don't make it, it's their own fault."

The elitist line is actually one of Ms.'s biggest selling points in attracting advertisers. In order to get ads, Ms. has sold out the ordinary woman. From a Ms. ad in the New York Times of March 19, 1974, a standard market survey shows the Ms. audience of 1,400,000 as having the best educations, living in higher income households, holding more managerial-professional jobs than any other woman's magazine readers, and 54 percent of them are between 18 and 34.

The ad policies of Ms. are an equally important indicator of the magazine's financial and political backing, especially in view of the frequently stated Ms. claims of extreme selectivity regarding which ads they will accept. This stance makes any ad they chose amount to an endorsement.

Blatantly sexist ads are most often rejected, along with ads for cosmetic and fashion products. However, Ms. seems to have no moral problem accepting public relations and job recruitment ads for large corporations. ITT is one of the most regular advertisers in Ms. along with non-product ads from Ortho pharmaceuticals, Exxon Oil, Chemical Bank, Bell Telephone, Singer Aerospace, Shearson-Hamill stockbrokers, Gulf and Western Oil and Merrill-Lynch stockbrokers.

In their special "Human Development" section each month, Ms. runs a series of advertisements for careers in companies like these. A letter in September 1973, from Amy Swerdlow of Women Strike for Peace questioned what the recruiting of women for ITT had in common with human development. "Let's have a Ms. story on all ITT activities around the world. Then let the reader decide what talented women will find at ITT headquarters," she submitted.

Ms. editors replied that in the light of all the unemployed women and women on welfare, they could not be too selective about job ads. As if welfare mothers are all headed towards ITT careers. There is much controversy over whether Ms. magazine is a commercial or a political enterprise. Elements of both seem to exist, as ingredients of the Ms. ideological package.

Recently, in a television appearance, Pat Carbine, now publisher of Ms. and formerly editor of McCall's in 1971 when that magazine named Gloria Steinem "Woman of the Year", declared that the women's movement was currently in "Phase Two." Radicals were necessary for getting things started, she conceded, but the moderates were now in control.

The "Redstocking" women feel, "To the extent that this is true it represents the decision of the American establishment—the people in a position to choose who gets access to the press and airwaves, who gets hired to the token women's jobs, who gets funding for their projects."

According to the data researched by the "Redstockings", Ms. owes its existence to the highest ranks of corporate America. "Phase Two" of the women's movement, as described by Pat Carbine and exemplified in Ms. magazine, seeks to cover up the historic connection between feminism and radicalism.

In order to avoid the latter, it must distort the former beyond all recognition. Why is it that Ms. published no articles on forced childbearing and its economic function in society, for example, but does tell you how to bring up your kids with its "Stories for Free Children"?

"Why is more space devoted to 'etiquette for humans' and 'Populist Mechanics' than to a root analysis of women's unpaid and-or exploited labor which as Susan B. Anthony reminded us, has kept society's wheels turning for centuries. What is the political function of Ms. popular image as the magazine of the liberated woman? The very reason for the resurgence of the modern women's liberation movement, after all, was the realization that emancipation was a myth, that women were not liberated."

The "Redstockings" say that they realize what raising these issues will do within the women's movement. They feel strongly that the time to revive the radical ideas and leadership which marked the growth of the modern women's liberation movement. All the trappings of the radical upsurge remain, but the content and the style have been watered down.

The data published in the "Redstockings" press release will soon appear as part of a 160 page theoretical journal called Feminist Revolution. In it, these women who term themselves activists and originators of the women's liberation movement will analyze the movement's successes and errors and propose a renewed offensive.

Meanwhile, the Ms. empire proliferates with information and resources gathered in the name of women's liberation. This process of information collecting is especially dangerous when put together with the fact that Gloria Steinem and cronies like Felker have a traceable history in intelligence gathering for the US government. What does Ms. do with all the data it has collected over the course of years, pertaining to the lives of many sincere radicals and women innocent of the Steinem-CIA connection?

Approached from an ideological perspective, it may not seem to matter whether Steinem has kept up her association with the CIA while she is editor of Ms. magazine and President of the Ms. corporation. Both the CIA and Ms. can be viewed as beholden to the same power elite, whether they are working separately or apart.

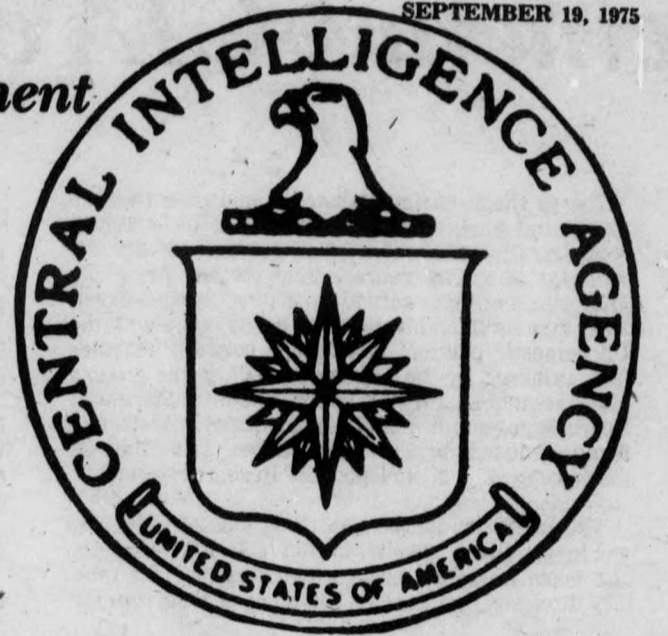
The "Redstockings" assert that on another level it is crucial that this question be cleared up: "A great deal of information flows into the Ms. offices constantly. The Gazette, a regular feature of news of the women's movement, requests that readers send in stories about their own and other women's activities.

"Incidents have come to our attention of women who were asked to write overviews for Ms. on various aspects of the women's movement. These articles were submitted but were drastically cut or never published—although lots of issue space was filled up with reprints from books already having a mass distribution. Ms. has the names of individuals and groups mentioned in this data-rich material. The rest of us don't, with the result that we are left isolated and in the dark."

Another Ms. related group now under scrutiny, called the Women's Action Alliance was founded by Steinem in 1971. Its office is located in the same building as Ms.

According to "Redstocking" research, despite its name, the WAA is not involved in action: "Although it described itself in a 1974 mailing as 'impoverished', it had already received a \$20,000 grant from the Rockefeller Family Fund for the establishment of a national clearinghouse information and referral service on the women's movement. Contacts to be used for this project, according to the Foundation Grants Index for that year, included access to key women leaders, information files assembled by outside sources and a close working relationship with the magazine Ms."

"Since that time there have been many more grants for the 'impoverished' WAA, from Carnegie Corporation: \$51,000, Sagem Fund: \$23,000, Carol



Buttenweiser, (Leob) Foundation: \$5,000, Arca Foundation: \$12,000, Chase Manhattan Bank Foundation (Rockefeller): \$5,000."

As the "Redstocking" expose points out, it is essential that people with access to this kind of information be trustworthy. The information gathered should be used, of course, to further the objectives of the women's movement.

Gloria Steinem's history of information gathering for the CIA and her apparent expertise in this area of domestic intelligence would seem to disqualify her from her current role as the walking logo of the women's movement. The fact that she has never disavowed her connection to the CIA, although she has misrepresented her past actions as an Agency employee, imply that she is still covering up and therefore she has not earned the trust her position requires.

Steinem, with her vehicle, Ms. magazine, has undertaken the job of rewriting the story of the women's movement. Ms. magazine represents the movement now, as if nothing else had existed before it. When real feminist pioneers cannot be ignored, Ms. has a way of undercutting their accomplishments.

The "Redstocking" report points to a bizarre statement by the Ms. editors to introduce an interview with Simone de Beauvoir. Ms. stated that the author of *The Second Sex*, whose monumental exposure of White male supremacy laid the groundwork for the modern, organized movement, was now about "to join the movement at last." This issue appeared in July 1972, with the headline: "New Feminist; Simone de Beauvoir."

Also published by Ms. is something called "A Guide to Consciousness-Raising." Kathie Sarachild, a "Redstocking" who says she thought of the idea, was never consulted or mentioned and her definition of the term was altered in the process. The Ms. people now present themselves as consciousness-raising experts to their considerable audience. It is easy to see how they can pull off such a sham, from their financial standpoint.

It is less simple to know what can be done about this co-optation of the authentic women's movement which began in radical and militant fashion. Attacks from corporate America marked the emergence of a strong mass movement. Most frequently, it was declared that such militancy was alienating women, turning them off. Despite opposition, a mass movement was underway.

Since direct attacks on the growing nexus of radicalized women were not effective, another plan was master-minded by "experts". This is how and when Gloria Steinem and Ms. fit into the picture. In the words of the "Redstockings" (a name that synthesized two words Bluestockings, the insulting name for the early nineteenth century feminists, with red, the symbolic color of revolution):

"An alternative to radical feminism now exists, and Ms. is its house organ. In the past few years we've had a chance to feel the effects of that situation. Researching this subject gave us a glimpse into the behind-the-scenes interest groups which have been responsible for those ill effects. These interest groups must be brought into the full light of day if the authentic women's liberation movement is to emerge from its current eclipse."

Persons curious about the Redstockings or wishing additional information can write to them at P.O. Box 413, New Paltz, New York, 12561. Their phone number is (212) 777-9241.