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Rote Liebe

(Red Love)

(WEST GERMAN-COLOR)

Variety — 3-17-82

Berlin, March 9.

A Rosa von Praunheim Film Production, Berlin. Features entire cast. Written, directed and edited by Rosa von Praunheim. Camera (color), Mike Kuchar, Praunheim. Reviewed at Studio am Kudamm, Berlin, March 9, '82. Running time: 80 MINS.

Cast: Sascha Hammer, Mark Eins, Helga Goetze, Olga Demetrescu, Eddie Constantine.

Rosa von Praunheim's "Red Love" is linked indirectly to the Gotham Underground by virtue of pic's co-cameraman, Mike Kuchar, whose Underground classics in 8m and 16m made with his brother George while the twins were still in their teens, caused esthetic splashes in the 1950s and 1960s. Praunheim leans heavily on Mike Kuchar's penchant for colorful drama in the narrative, naively acted segs of "Red Love," a dramatization of Alexandra Kollontai's melodramatic novel. For the other half, a video-filmed interview with free-love advocate Helga Goetze, it's Praunheim himself who does the lensing. Both parts are integrated into a whole by cross-editing the stories as they unfold, the general theme of "Red Love" being the liberation of the so-called New Woman.

The Alexandra Kollontai seg has historical relevance. She was a Cultural Minister in Lenin's first government, her claim to fame found in the melodramatic novel about a liberated woman, Vassilissa, learning the hard way how to defend herself against a patriarchal husband. Praunheim directs the melodrama in appropriately naive and overdone acting terms, much as it

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was probably intended to be back in 1919 to instruct illiterate housewives how to liberate themselves in the new Socialist society. Performances by Sascha Hammer as Vassilissa and Mark Eins as the roving husband are singular, enough to indicate that Rosa should try his hand at legit productions and the narrative film for a change.

The docu seg, about Helga Goetze, is old hat in Germany, but tickled auds at the Forum screenings during the Berlin fest and its ongoing run at the Studio am Kudamm in Berlin. Helga is the New Woman of the 1980s, a mother of seven children who walked out on her family at the age of 50 when the last daughter had already reached 16 and could fend for herself. Her liberation began during the Student Reform movement of the late 1960s, Helga casting away a bourgeois 30-year married existence in Hamburg for the free-wheeling Otto Muehl Commune in Vienna.

She dabbled in the arts at the same time as tasting of the forbidden fruits, showed up at political meetings and literary discussions in West Germany to preach the religion of the New Women and Free Love. Now she's living in Kreuzberg in West Berlin, where the video interview was made — the long talking session, when transferred from videotape to film stock, results in a seedy, naively overdone portrait that fits the excesses of the lady's liberating life-style.

"Red Love" is on its way to Filmex in L.A. next, which should guarantee the rounds of Yank oases for the committed pic with an honest erotic bent. —Holl.