

**For Immediate Release**

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**NATIONAL WRITERS UNION MEMBER SELF-PUBLISHES BOOK  
CENSORED BY SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PRESS**

**The Controversial *Lahore With Love* Now Available on Amazon.com**

NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 22, 2011 -- Ten months after Syracuse University Press pulled the critically acclaimed *Lahore With Love: Growing Up Girlfriends Pakistani-Style* from the shelves, Dr. Fawzia Afzal-Khan has self-published her fictionalized memoir, making it available to the public through Amazon.com.

Originally published in April 2010 by Syracuse University Press, *Lahore With Love* received glowing reviews in *Booklist*, *FeministReview.org*, and *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*. Harvard University's Henry Louis Gates Jr. called it "a tale that is marvelously compelling and endlessly entertaining, at once poignantly personal and richly political." Acclaimed Egyptian novelist and women's and human rights activist, Nawal el Saadawi writes, "Afzal-Khan's is a gifted dissident voice and I hope many people will read her beautiful memoir which challenges stereotypes, universal fanatic fundamentalism, and religious, political, and sexual taboos."

Despite the positive reception for *Lahore With Love*, Syracuse University Press pulled the book from distribution when a woman in Pakistan threatened Dr. Afzal-Khan and Syracuse University Press with a defamation suit. The woman claimed that her reputation had been harmed because a female character was portrayed in an offensive and damaging manner. Yet, as Dr. Afzal-Khan wrote to Syracuse University Press, "The paragraphs quoted by [the woman's] attorney as 'proof' that the character is her and that the portrayal is of an 'immoral,' 'offensive' and 'vulgar' woman are taken totally out of context and misinterpreted in the most literal and nonsensical way." Dr. Afzal-Khan contends that the woman's claims are "unprovable," and is in the process of defending herself and her book against such claims in Pakistani courts of law.

"It is unfortunate that Syracuse University Press chose not to support Dr. Afzal-Khan and stand by her book in her hour of need," said Susan E. Davis, National Contract Advisor of the National Writers Union. "You would think a university press, in this case one that reports to the university's Dean of Libraries, would stand up for its authors."

Noting that the book is a fictionalized memoir, Davis observed, "That means it has tremendous First Amendment protection in the United States. Yet it's ironic that while Syracuse University has the First Amendment etched on the windows of Newhouse Building Three, the press that bears its name refused to defend the book."

While Dr. Afzal-Khan was negotiating with Syracuse University Press last summer in an attempt to resume publication, the SPEECH Act (Securing the Protection of our Enduring

and Established Constitutional Heritage Act) was passed. The law was designed to prevent “courts from enforcing foreign judgments in libel cases that would not pass muster by U.S. standards.” Davis noted, “Syracuse University Press was well insulated by the SPEECH Act. Even if some miscarriage of justice resulted in a judgment being obtained in Pakistan, it would have no impact here as it could not withstand the rigors of that act.”

Dr. Afzal-Khan notes that the National Writers Union has been very helpful getting her book in print once again. “I am deeply indebted to the National Writers Union for its valuable advice and solidarity,” said Dr. Afzal-Khan. “Thanks to the extensive knowledge and support of members of the Grievance and Contract Division, I was able to protect my book and advance its best interests during my long ordeal with Syracuse University Press. I urge would-be authors, academic as well as others, to become members of the NWU and consult them before signing contracts with any press.”

*Dr. Fawzia Afzal-Khan is University Distinguished Scholar and Professor of English at Montclair State University, where she also directs the Women and Gender Studies Program. **Lahore With Love: Growing Up Girlfriends Pakistani-Style**, a fictionalized, parodic, yet loving memoir about life in Pakistan, is her fifth book. Appendices about the controversy with Syracuse University Press have been added to the new edition.*

*The National Writers Union (United Auto Workers Local 1981, AFL-CIO) is a national labor union and advocacy organization for freelance and contract writers in all genres, media, and formats. The NWU works to defend the rights and improve the economic and working conditions of all writers.*