

Feminist Peacework/ Mouvement féministe pacifiste Introduction

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This two-volume special issue on women and peace, like the women's peace movements past and present which inspired it, is a product of women's networks extending across national boundaries and other man-made obstacles. The scholarly, artistic, literary, and activist material included in these pages reflects the fellow travellers and milestones encountered on my journey, literal and metaphorical, as a scholar seeking to understand a movement for social change, an activist committed to healing, reclaiming and renaming our broken and dying world, and a woman struggling to understand what is demanded of us and what it means to be human in these numbing, terrifying, and hopeful times.

Working on this issue has been a part of a remarkable period of my life. Like many of my feminist peers, my life as a scholar and my life as an activist seemed all too often to go in different directions. Challenges and support from feminist peace activists (some of whose names appear in these issues) throughout the early 1980s helped me to bring the two together, which has made it both easier and harder to work. (That was not what I planned to do with my life, nor they with theirs.) This peace issue is a product of that process. During 1984 and 1985, women's meetings, conferences, peace actions, potluck suppers and social events, university and community classes, healing circles, concerts, and art exhibits were among the opportunities I and others took to seek contributions to these issues. We have included in the Archives section material which is not widely available to scholars, and unlikely to be preserved elsewhere. Much of it was collected at the 1985 Nairobi NGO Forum, where I helped coordinate the Peace Tent (provided by the Feminist International for Peace and Food, of which I am a member). The artwork, poems and photographs, too, reflect the experiences and visions of women struggling to bring forth a peaceful world.

Although we have not attempted to impose uniformity of theme, form, or analysis on this two-part peace issue, certain

of these make themselves evident. Today women's peace movement is a worldwide movement, involving women (and perhaps men) from many different positions, situations and conditions in life. "Peace" is defined not only as the absence of war, but as the absence of all forms of violence and inequity. Peace is seen to include feminist, ecological, social justice and development issues, because all of these are quite literally interdependent. While the issues women focus on vary according to where they live and their daily responsibilities and opportunities to act, it is widely accepted that only by acting together can we change the situations that threaten us. As a historian, I find it both sobering and inspiring that feminist peace activists and peace scholars of my grandmother's generation came to similar conclusions.

Today, as the UN points out, women are half the world's population, perform two-thirds of the world's work, receive only one-tenth of the world's income, and own only one-hundredth of the world's property. Peace is a profoundly political issue, for it requires a reallocation of power and resources that will drastically change every nation, every economy, every institution from the military to the schools to the family, all over the world.

Volume 12 Number 1 features a French-language section edited by Micheline de Sève, for which *Atlantis* received a grant from the Université du Québec à Montréal to help defray costs of production. We are grateful for their assistance. So many women (and men) have inspired and supported me during the lengthy and difficult process of bringing this project to fruition that there is not space to acknowledge them. Nonetheless, I express my gratitude to Editors Susan Clark and Deborah Poff, who initiated this peace issue; Micheline de Sève, whose research and teaching have been of such importance in the development of Québec feminist-pacifism; Ursula Herrmann, whose help in distributing the call for papers in the German Democratic Republic has made possible the beginning of what we hope will be a continuing

scholarly exchange; Alice Wiser, who arranged for Tatyana Mamanova's report; fellow midwife, Martha Barnstead, whose tact, energy, and grace under pressure have been remarkable; Jo Vellacott, Rosalie Bertell, Ursula Franklin and Muriel Duckworth, all of whom I want to be when I grow up; and Joanne Oldring Sydiaha, whose call to courage continues to summon me.

