

PREFACE

By the time this issue of *Feminist Studies* reaches you, Rosalind Petchesky, Mary Ryan, and Judith Walkowitz will have retired from the editorial board. We salute their tireless and creative efforts. With their help, *Feminist Studies* has become a major forum for the development of women's history and feminist theory in this country. We're proud and deeply grateful for what they have helped us to accomplish. We will miss them.

We are also delighted to announce that Barbara Christian, Ellen Ross, Christine Stansell, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn have joined the board. We welcome them to a life of hard labor! Our expansion reflects the exciting growth and diversity of manuscripts submitted to *Feminist Studies*, a diversity well illustrated by the current issue.

As this issue goes to press, the Reagan administration is advocating military intervention against the government of Nicaragua. Even while we recognize this very serious danger, a feminist examination of the situation of women in Nicaragua remains important. Women's mobilization in the Sandinista revolution was enormous, and women have clearly benefited from the social changes the revolution brought. Yet the extent to which women are "emancipated" in Nicaragua today remains limited. That paradox is the focus of our lead article in this issue, by Maxine Molyneux, which explores the implications of the Nicaraguan experience for the broader problem of the relationship between socialism and feminism.

Women's mobilization in relation to socialist movements has taken place in many times and places. Dana Frank's richly detailed reconstruction of the New York City food boycott of February 1917, a protest by immigrant Jewish women against the high cost of living, is an important analysis of the dynamics of a grassroots housewives' movement. It sheds new light as well on the relationship of the Socialist party to women and woman-centered activism in this period.

Woman-centered activism is also an important theme in Michelle Fine's analysis of Susan Schecters recent book, *Women and Male Violence*. Using data from many feminist projects, Fine dissects the central contradictions involved in demanding government-funded social services for women. On the one hand, when we win social services, they are always too little, too late, and too narrowly professionalized. On the other hand, we must situate

ourselves in a struggle to democratize those inadequate services among the diverse, vulnerable women whom we initially intended to mobilize and empower. It is our own politics, as well as those of state funding, that we must continually examine.

Three other articles in this issue are tied together by their exploration of friendship from a feminist perspective. Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich's thoughtful review essay of three recent feminist biographies examines the complex relationship of author and subject, which Minnich conceptualizes as a form of feminist friendship. Feminist friendship also lies at the center of Anne Finger's short story in which two friends recount their abortion stories, evoking a wide range of feelings and experiences, and reminding us of the intersection of personal and political life. And, thirdly, the working friendship between Helen Corke and D.H. Lawrence is the subject of Jane Heath's essay. In it, she touches on the blurred boundary between literary and lived realities, and the difficulties of articulating a specifically lesbian sexuality at the turn of the century.

The representation of sexuality is an important theme in Josephine Withers's analysis of Jody Pinto's drawings and landscape sculptures as well. Heterosexual relations are the subject of Alicia Ostriker's two poems. Finally, this issue includes two important contributions to a continuous intellectual battle between feminists and antifeminists concerning the "natural" origins of human sexuality and the sexual division of labor. In this battle, the data of primatology, archaeology, and physical anthropology provide powerful ammunition. Anthropologists Mina Davis Caulfield and Adrienne Zihlmann provide critical essays engaging the problems and possibilities which a theory of human evolution poses to feminist theory, an issue which we are sure will continue to be debated.

Ruth Milkman and Rayna Rapp,
for the editors