

PREFACE

Nineteen eighty-two has seen the massive growth of an American anti-nuclear war movement with a strong and diverse feminist component. Although the scope of this movement is unprecedented, women's mobilization against war is not: the intertwined growth of feminism and pacifism in the decade preceding World War I is a well-appreciated part of our heritage. Less well known are the creative and dramatic efforts of Women Strike for Peace, an organization born late in the McCarthy period, at a time when most progressive movements, including feminism, were at a low ebb. Amy Swerdlow's insightful reconstruction of this movement's history opens this issue of *Feminist Studies*. Exploring and recovering the dissident voices of the 1950s and early 1960s is an exciting and crucial task, and we look forward to future contributions on this era in our pages.

Another central political development of the 1980s is the renewed commitment to understanding and combating racism in the women's movement. Antiracism seems particularly urgent now, as the social policies and cutbacks of the present U.S. government pit women and minorities against one another. Among the 50 percent of minority Americans who are female, feminist activism is flourishing, and healthy criticisms of/and connections to the mainstream women's movement are growing. In a provocative contribution to continued consciousness raising around racism and feminism, we welcome Leila Ahmed's discussion of Middle Eastern women and of the ignorance-verging-on-racism with which Western feminists often approach them. We are also very happy to publish June Jordan's poem, "From Sea to Shining Sea", which is a powerful example of contemporary black feminist writing. Also in this issue are three responses to Annette Kolodny's "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism" (vol. 6, no. 1), and Kolodny's rejoinder. These pieces explore basic divisions of race, class, and homophobia as they affect feminist theory and practice. *Feminist Studies* will be publishing articles on black and white feminism in vol. 9, no. 1, our next issue. We are eager to continue to solicit work on these central questions.

Three groundbreaking historical studies complete this issue. Judith Walkowitz deconstructs the myth of Jack the Ripper as an exercise in terrorizing women in late nineteenth-century London, which conflated problems of urbanism, class, and sex. Ellen Ross dissects the daily life of East London's working-class women in

the same period up to the first world war. She delineates the segregated worlds of married women and men and shows the conditions under which gender antagonism and domestic violence erupt. And Martha Vicinus contributes a study of the tensions between the public and personal lives of Constance Maynard, English educational pioneer, who Vicinus uses to illustrate the accomplishments and consciousness of single, professional women in the late nineteenth century. Taken together, these three pieces show not only the strengths and creativity of contemporary feminist historical scholarship, but they also enrich our understanding of the complex interconnections between class, public culture, and sexuality.

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for the editors