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Editorial

Florence Howe

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EDITORIAL*W. Berlin, June 1, 1978*

I am sending in this editorial from West Berlin, where, as visiting professor of women's studies at the Kennedy Institute for American Studies, I am teaching two seminars on women writers this summer. Mainly teachers and teachers-to-be are enrolled in the courses.

Major issues are being debated here in Berlin this summer. What is the future of women's studies at the Free University of the Kennedy Institute, where the last of three feminist faculty members will be leaving in March? And where there are no plans for replacing any of the three junior faculty members whose contracts have ended? A formal recommendation will be placed before the (almost entirely male) professoriat, asking that women's studies be institutionalized through the creation of at least one new permanent position. In addition to this effort, two groups of feminists in the community are debating the possible creation of women's studies institutions outside the Kennedy Institute altogether, and supported perhaps by the Berlin city fathers. One of these—envisioned as a Research Institute—will be considering its possible relationship to the Free University. The other will probably continue to discuss how to remain quite separate, since it seeks to serve as an educational center for women without the credentials for university admission.

Before I flew to Berlin, I attended, with Shirley Frank, the second annual meeting of the National Women's Studies Association's Coordinating Council (CC). While detailed reports of that meeting fill pages within, we wish here to applaud in particular the decision to begin planning at once for the first annual convention—to be held in June 1979. We are also pleased that the *Women's Studies Newsletter* and the NWSA have agreed to continue their relationship, and we look forward to working closely with NWSA's National Office to increase the number of member-subscribers. With the help of a reorganized Advisory Committee to the *Newsletter* that will function out of the NWSA National Office, we expect to be able to improve our coverage of NWSA news and to bring you debates and analyses as well.

While at the CC, we reminded delegates that the pages of the *Newsletter* have not yet become foci for debate about women's studies or the Association. Indeed, we continue to be worried by the *silence* of our readers. Does it mean there is nothing to criticize—that our pages are too bland? Or does it mean that we have managed to please all our readers? Or should we assume simply that women's studies practitioners are too busy to write to the editor? Whatever the problem, we'd like to know about it. And we'd like to hear from you—about the NWSA or about women's studies or feminist education more generally. With the next issue we inaugurate an "OpEd" page on which we will print relevant commentary of no more than 700 words. Feel free to discuss items in our pages, or to raise new issues for debate.

A personal note. In the fall, I will be visiting professor of women's studies at Oberlin College (English Department, Rice Hall, Oberlin, Ohio 44074); in the spring, at Denison University (Granville, Ohio 43023). My residence at these two colleges is part of an appointment to the Great Lakes Colleges Association, a mid-west consortium of twelve private colleges (see the *Women's Studies Newsletter*, Winter 1978). For the next year, I shall edit the *Newsletter* from these different locations. Letters to me may be sent directly to Oberlin (September through December) or Denison (February through May), or they will be forwarded from New York.

Florence Howe