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**WOMEN'S STUDIES
NEWSLETTER**

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EDITORIAL

Oberlin College, November 24, 1978

HARD CHOICES

Many of us deal with hard choices by refusing to choose: we decide that "both" are necessary and we divide our time, our resources, our energies, our love and commitment. And such decisions are, of course, necessary. We cannot usually choose *between* our families, our lovers and friends, *and* our work. We cannot make those choices because they are, in fact, unreal: our lives and our work are one. It is not that there are no tensions, no "obligations," no problems. But they are felt as such, and what one usually needs is a support group to help dispatch the discomfort, or to help in practical ways with flexible working hours or child care.

Interestingly, many of us seem—at the end of 1978—relatively able to deal with such tensions and problems. We seem able to stretch and make flexible our personal resources. Our lovers, friends, families, are essential to our working lives. That hard choice was not really a choice at all.

But other hard choices remain to be made—at the workplace, where resources are often less flexible. How many of us have refused to choose between our "professional" work and our "movement" work; or between our traditional or disciplinary teaching and our "women's studies" teaching? How many of us sit on school or campus Title IX or Women's Studies Committees because we think it makes an important contribution to the "movement," and yet go on teaching "the men's curriculum" to hundreds of students each year? Or, to take still another example, how many of us study or teach on university campuses untouched by women's studies, and spend our time campaigning for women's studies in the community rather than in the university at all? These are all examples of hard choices we have made, that we need to be conscious of, to discuss and analyze.

How many of these choices are dependent on the scarcity of resources—money, people, imagination? How many on ideological considerations? How many on fear? Is it a fact, for example, that certain traditional departments will tolerate participation on a Women's Studies Committee as "service," but will not tolerate revision of the curriculum? Is it easier to work for women's studies *away from* one's school or university campus?

It is with such hard choices in mind that we decided to include in this first of two pre-Convention issues a special feature on the battle among West German feminists over a possible university-based women's studies institute that was meant to function as U.S. Women's Studies Programs do—to coordinate and give support to individual faculty teaching women's studies courses. That institute is in serious trouble, and in our Spring issue we will report on its status and continue our review of West German feminist institutions and ideologies.

It is with such hard choices in mind also that we urge readers to consider the importance of *working for* the National Women's Studies Association. We mean more than dues-paying and attendance at the National Convention this May—we expect those participatory actions from our readers. We are asking for further hard choices: to work for the NWSA—which means to offer time as a regional or caucus correspondent; to offer time in the National Office during vacations, January-break, in the summer, on a sabbatical; to offer to write a grant proposal for NWSA; to think of the NWSA as a constituent part of grant proposals you may be writing in your own institution. In short, as Elaine Reuben tells us in the pages within, the NWSA can become an organization that will make a difference only if it engages our working lives.

