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EDITORIAL

Wellesley College/Center for Research on Women

International Perspectives

In this issue, among the items in the Graduate Women's Studies feature, you will find two M.A. programs at British universities. This is not an accident, but an illustration of the growth of women's studies around the globe. During March, I traveled for two weeks in a crammed visit to women's studies programs, scholars, and research centers in Oxford, London, Paris, and Rome. Perhaps because the unemployment of women academics is a serious problem, research seems more important than teaching, especially in a university context, where graduate scholarship in women's studies is helping Europeans to flesh out the history and contemporary experience of women's lives. The major areas and interdisciplinary approaches are familiar: the family and work. I will report on this visit in detail later.

In mid-April, a West Berlin initiative will bring to the campus of the Free University of Berlin women's studies practitioners from Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, France, and the U.S., for a discussion of the institutionalization of women's studies and the promotion of women's studies research. From the U.S., Elaine Reuben, NWSA Coordinator, and Peggy McIntosh, Faculty Development Coordinator of Wellesley's Center for Research on Women, will attend.

In early May in Paris, UNESCO's Social Science Division responsible for women's studies will hold a week-long conference for representatives of more than a dozen nations to draft a position paper on women's studies for the United Nations World Conference on Women, in Copenhagen, July 14-30. Representatives of the following countries will participate: Tunisia, Tanzania, Senegal, Britain, France, the U.S., Canada, Dominican Republic, India, Thailand, East Germany. I will be the U.S. representative.

In July, parallel to the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women, a nongovernmental Forum will be held on the Amager Campus of the University of Copenhagen, which can accommodate approximately 2,000 participants. For this Forum, to be held between July 14 and 24, three international women's studies seminars are being planned, along with an international registry, and a women's studies resource center. The seminars will be open to all, and will focus on the following topics: Developing a Body of Knowledge about Women; Creating Non-Sexist Teaching Material; Getting Women into the Educational Curriculum. Workshop participants will come from a broad range of nations. (Note: Because travel and accommodations are so expensive, it will be helpful to know the names of women's studies practitioners planning to attend the Copenhagen conference. Such persons should write to me at Babcock Hall, College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio 44691, before June 5.)

In addition to these multinational meetings, women's studies practitioners are forming national networks that may lead to associations. In Italy, for example, two leaders of the Milan-centered Group for Research on the Family and Women (GRIFF) have produced a *Guide to Women's Studies in Italy* (which we will print in a forthcoming issue). National Italian meetings by GRIFF in June will focus on the patterns of institutionalizing women's studies, on the risks of ghettoization, and on research methodology.

In Britain, plans are in process for a U.K.-wide meeting of women's studies teachers and researchers before the end of 1980. In the works also is an updated *Guide to Women's Studies in the U.K.* by the London-based Women's Research and Resource Centre. And from Japan, a recent visit to the U.S. by Mioko Fujieda, English and women's studies teacher at Kyoto Seika College, suggests interest there in a women's studies association.

How do we view these developments? At the very least, they raise enormous questions of leadership and responsibility. They also require hard choices about scarce resources—money, time, people. Should we be institution-building in the U.S. or helping, advising, missionizing, urging—and learning from—women's studies internationally? How can U.S. practitioners be helpful and also alert to the contextual differences of nation, race, ethnicity, social class? How can women's studies be useful to nations needing literacy programs, especially for women? What will be the effect on U.S. programs of these new open windows on women of the world?

—F.H.