that we hope it may provide a useful model for other women's studies programs concerned with reaching out to the community.

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Feminist Publishing in Israel
By Marcia Freedman

Israel has a population of 3½ million people who, for the most part, speak, read, and write an ancient, patriarchal language recently revived and fortified by an infusion of new terms and even some new syntactic constructs. The result of this self-imposition of a parochial language upon a people who, as a people, had been at home in at least one European language as well as Yiddish and Ladino, was to transform the People of the Book into a rather ill-informed and culturally isolated society. The few channels of information from the West that do exist—mainly films and books—are institutionally monitored by male publishers, distributors, bookstore owners, translators, and editors, not to leave out the political, military, and moral censors. For women this has meant that the amount and quality of feminist literature available in Hebrew (or in English, for that matter) have been minimal.

It is no great surprise, then, that the state of feminist consciousness, commitment, and number-strength has been maintained at roughly the same low level for several years now. What is surprising is that there is a functioning feminist movement/network at all—but there is, and recently it has begun to grow and to take itself more seriously.

One of the important reasons for these beginnings of change is that a women's bookstore, Woman's Voice, opened in Haifa this past year. The success of the store in both discovering and developing a market for feminist literature has had several important consequences. First, branches of Woman's Voice will soon be opened in the other two major Israeli cities, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Secondly, a new publishing collective, Bat-Kol, has been formed and will issue several new translations of important feminist works within the next several months. And thirdly, some original works in Hebrew, self-published by their female authors, will soon appear.

Until now, most of the feminist literature available in Hebrew has been published by the six or seven major commercial publishers: both of Erica Jong's novels, Fallaci's Letter to an Unborn Child, Baker-Miller's Toward a New Psychology of Women, several novels of Virginia Woolf, a mutilated version of The Hite Report, Plath's The Bell Jar, and a few others. It is rumored that certain publishers hold the rights to many other feminist books, but none of them seems to be making any effort to have them translated and set in print.

There is also a feminist press, established several years ago by two women who have issued three books since 1974: an anthology of articles translated from American sources, Barbara Seaman's Free and Female, and Michael Korda's Male Chauvinism. Much awaited and hopefully forthcoming is Our Bodies, Ourselves. The women who own the press do the translating themselves. Publishing and distribution are done by a commercial press under the women's imprint, The Second Sex.

There is also a small number of feminist books originally written in Hebrew, all, with one exception, published by commercial presses. The exception is a reprint put out by the Women's Aid Fund, an account of the suffrage movement in the Jewish Settlement in Palestine between 1900 and 1948 (Sarah Azaryahu, The Union of Hebrew Women for Equal Rights in Eretz Yisrael). This book has been translated into English by this writer and will soon be self-published in a manuscript edition. Another important local book is an account of political and sexual oppression written by a Palestinian Arab from the West Bank and published by an Israeli publisher (Romanda Tawill, House Arrest). In addition, Shulamit Aloni and Tchya Bat Oren have written general accounts of women's oppression under rabbinical law and a primer of feminism (respectively, Women as Persons and Women's Liberation—Where Is It Going?).

The Dinner Party Comes to Houston

Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party"—a massive banquet table celebrating the achievements of over 1,000 women throughout history—will be on display at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City for three months, beginning March 9, 1980. Sponsored by the university and several local cultural organizations, the exhibit will be accompanied by lectures, concerts, films, and many other events highlighting the role of women in the arts.
And that is the state of feminist publishing in Israel.

We are probably in a situation not very different from that of most small countries removed geographically and by language from the major centers of feminist activity. Israeli feminists are a small, isolated, and alienated group, surviving from year to year in spite of widespread distrust and fear of our nonconformity. The committed can be counted in the tens. There is no women's studies here, though there are a handful of organizations or widespread grass-roots support giving us legitimacy. We fight, always, with our backs against the ropes, not because we have been driven there, but because, really, we have not yet managed to come out of our corner. However, those of us that are today actively committed to writing, translating, publishing, and distributing feminist literature believe that that is the key to raising consciousness and to developing a broadly-based grass-roots movement. At the opening of Woman's Voice in Haifa, one of the speakers declared the moment "historic." But, as the speaker who followed commented (a 92-year-old feminist, Rachel Kagan): "Let's wait a few years and see."

Marcia Freedman, former member of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and founder of the Women's Party, lives in Haifa.

**A Note on Jewish Women's Studies in the United States**

As Israeli feminists attempt to connect with the women's movement outside Israel, Jewish feminists in the United States are attempting to connect with them and with the Jewish heritage both groups share. Due to the peculiarities inherent in that heritage, "Jewish Women's Studies" in the United States is as much in its infancy as feminist publishing in Israel. This past year, however, at the First Annual NWSA Convention, a session on Jewish Women's Studies: Theory and Practice took place, as well as a roundtable discussion on Feminism and Judaism, and a spontaneously organized Shabbat service that was inspiring for those who attended.

One of the participants in the session has been collecting syllabi for Jewish women's studies courses that have been offered thus far in various colleges and universities. A booklet containing these syllabi can be obtained, for $2.50 postpaid, by writing to Edward R. Levenson, Dept of Religious Studies, Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085.

Probably the most valuable source available for those attempting to pursue Jewish women's studies and needing a place to begin is the latest edition of Aviva Cantor's classic *Bibliography on the Jewish Woman*, available for $3.00, postpaid, from Biblio Press, PO Box 22, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365. The bibliography is divided into sections listing nonfiction books, articles and book chapters, and works of fiction on such subjects as Jewish Women's History; Religious Life and Law; the United States and Canada; Israel; and the Holocaust. There are also sections for Children's Books and for Poetry.

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<td>Introducing <em>Manushi</em>:</td>
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"Liquor, the slaying of women and Shudras . . . are all minor offences," according to Manu, the Hindu lawgiver. "To rape is human," asserts Mr. Joshi, Chief Minister of the province of Madhya Pradesh.

V. Meera calls on these voices of tradition to open her article, "Prisoners of Inequality: Sexual Abuse of Dalit Women," in an excellent new feminist bimonthly magazine called *Manushi: A Journal about Women and Society*. *Manushi*, whose title means "woman" in Hindi, first appeared in January 1979, as the pioneer publication of its kind in India. It is produced in Delhi by an independent feminist collective committed to breaking the long silence of Indian women, who are among the most brutally oppressed in the world today. They are victims not only of sexism, but also of caste divisions, class hatred, poverty, and feudal social relations. For the uninitiated Western reader, a journey through the pages of this journal may be an excruciating experience.

For in India to talk about women's oppression is to talk, literally, about death: torture, starvation, infanticide, suicide, murder. Here we find young brides sprinkled with kerosene by their mothers-in-law and set ablaze if they fail to bring a sufficient amount of money and goods as dowry for the groom's family. We read the "Letters Written at Death's Door," three suicide notes from a young woman who, as the fourth daughter in a family of limited means, was unable to produce a dowry large enough to satisfy her husband's greed. His incessant reproaches drove her, on July 21, 1978, to douse herself in kerosene and light the match. The custom of burning widows alive has been outlawed for more than a century, but fire still seems to be a favorite tool of vindictive inlaws. As Shabha Sadagopan and Radha Kumar report in their article on marriage customs: "In 1975, three hundred and fifty women were burnt to death in Delhi alone. These were reported as suicides to the police. But in reality they were dowry deaths. . . ."

Gynocide, however, is not restricted to young brides. In an article on sexism in the family planning movement, we learn that among female infants the mortality rate is significantly higher than for male babies. A greater incidence of malnutrition also occurs among women, which in turn contributes to the ill-health of both mother and child. Hospitals, too, fail to provide a sufficient number of maternity beds, which increases the risk of death for parturient women. In fact, the life expectancy for females in India has not risen at the same rate as it has for males, and India is one of the few countries in the world where the ratio of women to men has actually been shrinking: at present,