Editorial

In June 1983, several Black women were approached by a member of the *Feminist Review* collective, with the suggestion of doing a special issue on Black women in Britain. At an initial meeting of the Black women it was clear that we had all recognized the necessity for having Black women's writings published. We saw this as an opportunity to initiate anthologies of Black women's writings in this country. We were however, only prepared to consider using this form if we could have complete editorial autonomy, which was agreed. Given that the readership of *Feminist Review* is predominantly white, we were concerned to make this issue accessible to Black women. We hope that in the future *Feminist Review* will include writings by and for Black women, so that this issue does not remain a token exercise. There is also an ongoing need for white women to take note of and act upon Black feminist critiques of the content and form of contemporary British feminism.

We were concerned to involve as many Black women as possible. To this end we sent out letters to a range of organizations and individuals across the country, inviting sisters to meet with us to discuss production of the issue and submit material. However, given the short time available to us, our attempts were not wholly successful, and we have remained a small group, based in London. We do not claim to be representative of all Black women, or of the Black feminist movement in its totality. Nor do we see this issue as comprehensive or definitive of Black women's experiences. Rather we hope it will stimulate further discussion and debate. We have attempted to provide a collection of perspectives which are in the process of continual development, refinement and growth. It also indicates some of the diversities within Black feminism, a diversity from which we draw strength. The process of collecting material for this issue confirmed our view that there is a wealth of political, academic and creative writings by Black women demanding an outlet. Such writings document our historical and contemporary experiences and inspire our political practice.

The feature articles highlight the central themes in Black feminist thinking which continues to develop an analysis of Black women's

experiences through a consideration of the simultaneous effects of race, gender, sexuality and class. They also draw out the historical and cultural continuities based in and transferred from our countries of origin, which inform contemporary resistance and struggle.

Black women have expressed and continue to express themselves through a variety of media. The poetry and book reviews in this issue provide only a glimpse of the vast reservoir of talent amongst Black women. The photographs of and by Black women are symbolic of the process of creating and projecting new images of ourselves. By focusing on Black women organizing autonomously we have been unable to include the numerous other forms of struggle which we are engaged in at home, at work and in mixed organizations. Despite the numerous pressures we face as Black women, and the constant demands on our time to fulfil our work, family and political commitments, and in spite of the lousy English weather, we enjoyed the experience of working together.

Although the six months of unpaid labour was intensely demanding, our recognition of the importance of producing this issue, as well as the strength we gained from working collectively inspired us to see it through.

Valerie Amos, Gail Lewis, Amina Mama, Pratibha Parmar

Statement from Feminist Review Collective

The Feminist Review Collective has handed over this issue to a guest editorial group of Black women who have had full editorial responsibility. We hope that the themes raised will feed into the journal's continuing work and generate discussion and further articles. The next issue, no 18, will be a special issue on Cultural Politics.