WOMEN IN SOCIETY A Feminist List edited by Jo Campling

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The 1970s and 1980s have seen an explosion of publishing by, about and for women. This new list is designed to make a particular contribution to this process by commissioning and publishing books which consolidate and advance feminist research and debate in key areas in a form suitable for students, academics and researchers but also accessible to a broader general readership.

As far as possible books will adopt an international perspective incorporating comparative material from a range of countries where this is illuminating. Above all they will be interdisciplinary, aiming to put women's studies and feminist discussion firmly on the agenda in subject-areas as disparate as law, physical education, art and social policy.

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

A Feminist List edited by Jo Campling

Published

Sheila Allen and Carol Wolkowitz **Homeworking: myths and realities**
 Jenny Beale **Women in Ireland: voices of change**
 Gillian Dalley **Ideologies of Caring: rethinking community and collectivism**
 Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover (*editors*) **Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: women's history and women's work**
 Diana Gittins **The Family in Question: changing households and familiar ideologies**
 Frances Heidensohn **Women and Crime**
 Muthoni Likimani (*with an introductory essay by Jean O'Barr*) **Passbook Number F.47927: women and Mau Mau in Kenya**
 Sharon Macdonald, Pat Holden and Shirley Ardener (*editors*) **Images of Women in Peace and War: cross-cultural and historical perspectives**
 Vicky Randall **Women and Politics: an international perspective** (2nd edition)
 Rosemary Ridd and Helen Callaway (*editors*) **Caught Up in Conflict: women's responses to political strife**
 Clare Ungerson (*editor*) **Women and Social Policy: a reader**

Forthcoming

Eileen Aird and Judy Lown **Education for Autonomy: processes of change in women's education**
 Jennifer Breen **Women and Fiction**
 Maria Brenton **Women and Old Age**
 Sheila Button **Women and Local Politics**
 Ruth Carter and Gill Kirkup **Women in Engineering**
 Angela Coyle and Jane Skinner **Women and Work: positive action for equal opportunities**
 Audrey Droisen and Emily Driver (*editors*) **Child Sexual Abuse: a feminist perspective**
 Lesley Ferris **Acting Women: images of women in the theatre**
 Tuula Gordon **Feminist Mothers**
 Frances Gray **Women and Laughter**
 Eileen Green, Diana Woodward and Sandra Hebron **Women and Leisure**
 Jennifer Hargreaves **Women and Sport**
 Annie Hudson **Troublesome Girls: adolescence, femininity and the state**
 Ursula King **Women and Spirituality**
 Jo Little, Linda Peake and Pat Richardson (*editors*) **Women in Cities: gender and the urban environment**
 Susan Lonsdale **Women and Disability**
 Jan Pahl **Marriage and Money**
 Shelley Pennington and Belinda Westover **A Hidden Workforce: women homeworkers in Britain**
 Lesley Rimmer **Women's Family Lives**
 Susan Sellers **Language and Sexual Difference: feminist writing in France**
 Patricia Spallone **Beyond Conception: the new politics of reproduction**
 Taking Liberties Collective **Learning the Hard Way: women's oppression in men's education**
 Jane Thompson **Introducing Women's Studies**
 Deborah Valenze **The Other Victorian Woman**
 Janet Wolff **The Art of Women**
 Ann Woodhouse **Sex, Gender and Transvestism**

Images of Women in Peace and War

Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives

Edited by

**Sharon Macdonald,
Pat Holden
and
Shirley Ardener**

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EDUCATION**

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First published 1987

Published by
MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

Photoset in Times by CAS Typesetters, Southampton

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Images of women in peace and war: cross-cultural and historical perspectives. —
(Women in society).

1. Women and war

I. Macdonald, Sharon II. Holden, Pat

III. Ardener, Shirley IV. Series

303.6 U21.75

ISBN 978-0-333-42895-5 ISBN 978-1-349-18894-9 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-18894-9

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Published by Macmillan Education

Caught Up in Conflict: women's responses to political strife
edited by Rosemary Ridd and Helen Callaway, 1986.

**Images of Women in Peace and War: cross-cultural and
historical perspectives**
edited by Sharon Macdonald, Pat Holden
and Shirley Ardener, 1987.

Published by Croom Helm Ltd, Provident House, Burrell Row,
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT:

Defining Females: the nature of women in society
edited by Shirley Ardener, 1978.

Fit Work for Women
edited by Sandra Burman, 1979.

Women Writing and Writing About Women
edited by Mary Jacobus, 1979.

Women and Space: ground rules and social maps
edited by Shirley Ardener, 1981.

Controlling Women: the normal and the deviant
edited by Bridget Hutter and Gillian Williams, 1981.

Women's Religious Experience
edited by Pat Holden, 1983.

Women and Property, Women as Property
edited by Renée Hirschon, 1984.

Women and Work in Pre-industrial Britain, 1300–1700
edited by Lorna Duffin and Lindsey Charles, 1985.

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Acknowledgements

The editors and publishers acknowledge with thanks permission from the following to reproduce the cover photograph and illustrations in the text:

Mary Evans Picture Library for the cover photograph; Mary Evans/Fawcett Library for the illustration of Boadicea in Plate 1; The Trustees of the National Museum of Scotland for the illustration of an Inka vase in Plate 2; IDAF for the illustration of women SADF members in Plate 3; Paula Allen for the illustration of women at Greenham Common in Plate 4; Catriona Howse for the illustration from the Dragon Action leaflet in Plate 5.

The editor and publishers also acknowledge with thanks permission from the following to reproduce extracts in the text: Department of Sound Records, Imperial War Museum; and CND for quotes from an unpublished independent report of research which it commissioned.

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Preface

This volume is the latest in the series sponsored by the Oxford University Women's Studies Committee; previous titles are listed in the front of this book. The editors have selected studies which consider women's direct involvement as *active participants* in both peace movements and in wars, and also studies which discuss the more diffuse, pervasive, *realm of ideas* which conjures up images identifying women sometimes as warriors, sometimes as peace-makers. We were aware, of course, that the distinction is not absolute since the reification of women – whereby they do duty as manipulable symbols – bears crucially upon the world of practice.

The definition of 'war' has always been problematic – as declared war shades through guerrilla-type resistance movements into urban violence, for example. Different interpretations of a conflict and its context may co-exist, though not necessarily in harmony. For example, there may be differing views even as to whether a state of peace or war exists. A particularly acute awareness of definitional problems has arisen in recent years with the existence of nuclear weapons; these are claimed by one side as evidence for the keeping of the peace in Europe and by the other as evidence of a permanent state of war. The terminology 'cold' applied to war is itself suggestive. The problem of apparent identities masking difference is illustrated by women's peace-movements which have been in existence for a long time but today are a response to a new set of ideas, circumstances and techniques, firmly located in feminism. The term 'Amazon', as Isle Kirk shows (Chapter 2), has been applied in widely different contexts; these range from the original ancient European texts to the female militia of nineteenth-century Dahomey (see the cover). Further, peace and war are indefinable one without the other and the varied nature of women's involvements in both is explored in this book.

Just as ideas of war and peace are mutually defined, so concepts of men and women are mutually contrasted and reflected. The wide variety of historical and cross-cultural situations addressed here show that women's roles in both war and peace-movements are very much determined by broader perceptions of gender and notions of appropriate female roles held by the societies to which they belong.

Stereotypes of maleness – particularly those evoked in time of war – throw into exaggerated contrast imagery and symbolism associated with women. Compatabilities and inconsistencies become especially critical when women are incorporated into active military service. Further, women in war situations often form organisations that structurally replicate those of men, but which express very different sets of values and self-perceptions. On the other hand some contemporary peace-movements in Britain have attempted to dissolve certain common institutional structures, and in doing so pose a challenge to the much wider arena of perceptions of gender-difference, thus evoking both praise and criticism.

As social anthropologists, the editors ensured that the book would not be restricted to contemporary British material, but would range widely over time and space: that it would be cross-cultural. Of course, the limitations of book length posed problems for such ambition. A selection of available material has had to be made; a certain arbitrariness has been inevitable. But we make no apologies for adopting this course even though darting across contours of space and time may open us to charges of lack of comprehensiveness and consistency. The avoidance of complete ethnocentricity makes this worthwhile.

The studies selected were drawn from different sources. Three derive from a seminar series convened by the editors for the Oxford University Women's Studies Committee in 1983: those by Jessica Mayer, Lynne Jones and Margaret Brooks. The papers by Sharon Macdonald, Rosemary McKecknie, Tabitha Kanogo and Penny Dransart were first given at the Oxford Women's Social Anthropology Seminar.¹ The papers by Ilse Kirk, Ruth Roach Pierson² and Elaine Unterhalter were written especially for this volume.

Discussions during the seminars referred to, and informally afterwards, have played an important part in forming some of the ideas expressed in this book, and we are grateful to those who participated. Timothy Ashplant helped plan the Committee's seminar, and Alison Smith, Helen King and Jill Cook all offered

useful editorial advice: we thank them. While editing this book has been a co-operative exercise, we wish to acknowledge the special role of Sharon Macdonald who not only wrote the Introduction, but shouldered a disproportionate part of the editorial function.

SHIRLEY ARDENER, PAT HOLDEN

Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford

Notes

1. Attention is drawn to a number of papers given in the women's Studies Committee's programme and at the Oxford Women's Social Anthropology Seminar which could not be included in this book, so that readers may consult those in print elsewhere and may contact the authors of others. Thus at the Committee's seminar, Anne Armstrong (Anne Mayo) formerly of the British Army, currently editor of *Neighbours* (the journal of the British Army wives' club), gave a paper on 'Women in the British and US Armed Forces' which included some comparative material from other armies. Lindiwe Guma and Elaine Unterhalter spoke on 'Women in the National Liberation Struggle of the ANC'. Anne Summers gave a paper which now forms part of her book *Angels and Citizens: British Women as Military Nurses 1854-1914* (Routledge & Kegan Paul). Marina Warner's talk on 'The Language of War in the Allegories of Virtue: from Nike to Margaret Thatcher' is embodied in her *Monuments and Maidens. The Allegory of the Female Form* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1985), Mandy Merck's contribution on Amazons was based on her paper in *Tearing the Veil* (ed. Susan Lipshitz, Tavistock, 1978).

Papers given at the social anthropology seminar of special relevance to the themes of this book include 'Women Warriors in Traditional Ethiopia' by Tsehai Berhane Selassie, a version of which has appeared in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* (JASO XII, 1, 1981) as "'Centre" and "Periphery" in History; The Case of Warriors and Women in traditional Ethiopia'. Sabine Willis spoke on 'Anzac Day and Women' (see 'Rape - Our Window of Vulnerability' in *Social Alternatives* I, 3, 1984). Ilse Kirk gave a paper on 'The Ibo Women's War' which is soon to be published in Denmark, as well as a paper on the so-called 'Amazons of Dahomey' in West Africa. A short version of Audrey Wipper's paper on 'Riot and Rebellion among African Women: three examples of women's political clout', can be found in *Perspectives on Power* (ed. Jean O'Barr, Durham USA, 1982). Jean O'Barr, of Duke University, in her seminar paper on Kenyan writers, prefigured her Introductory Essay to *Passbook Number F.47927: Women and Mau*

Mau in Kenya by Muthoni Likimani, published by Macmillan Education in this series (1985). See also Mona Macmillan's Study 'Camp Followers: A Note on Wives of The Armed Services' in *The Incorporated Wife*, eds. H. Callan and S. Ardener (Croom Helm, 1984).

2. An earlier version of the paper by Ruth Roach Pierson was delivered at the Conference on 'Gender and War: Historical, Political and Cross-Cultural Perspectives', sponsored by the Program in Women's Studies and the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University, 17 March 1984.