
Foreword

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I read *Feminism and Antiracism: International Struggles for Justice* in the midst of the year 2000 U.S. election when the margin of victory was less than the margin of error. Internationally, the election debacle revealed some of the contradictions and hypocrisies of U.S. imperialist claims to be the guardian of democracy. Nationally we were confronted by strategists arguing the validity of charges lodged by diverse groups of disenfranchised citizens. It appears that standards requiring a recount are different for white middle-class retirees, for black Americans, and for mail-in ballots from overseas military personnel. Black Americans, Haitian Americans, and other citizens of color, largely ignored in the Supreme Court appeal, turned to the NAACP, the Rainbow Coalition, and other civil rights leaders to call for a federal investigation. Devices and maneuvers that disenfranchised Florida voters were as diverse as the groups affected: butterfly ballots, hanging chads, ballot tampering, destroyed ballots, voters turned away at the polls, racial profiling, and police harassment. The debates, lawsuits, and protests about U.S. electoral processes—and the important literature I was reading—focused my attention on the need for a feminist and antiracist struggle to make every vote count. The sixteen cases presented in this volume make us recognize risks and dangers, efforts, and strategies used to build real democratic institutions. Reflecting on the creation of a women's center in Italy; the struggles to organize immigrant women from Somalia, Eritrea, the Ivory Coast, Morocco, Kenya, Yugoslavia, Spain, Germany, and Tunisia; or the efforts of white and black South Africans in a rape crisis center—I pondered the rich possibilities for uniting Blacks, Haitians, Jews, Latinos, the elderly, women, the poor, and military personnel behind the struggle to change the electoral system and put an end to voter disenfranchisement.

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France Winddance Twine and Kathleen Blee have edited an important scholarly work that moves the discussion of feminist and antiracist practices beyond theory and into the streets, schools, homes, shelters, clinics, campuses, broadcasting networks, courts, rape crisis centers, churches, and women's organizations. Kathleen and Winddance began this project by issuing a challenge to contributors to interrogate the concepts of feminism and antiracism by examining struggles within specific regional and national structures. They thus underscored the local limits and cultural constraints that shape antiracist practice. The resulting anthology offers focused cases of feminist activists who are committed to antiracist practices but must implement these practices for social justice in concrete and historical circumstances. Their work is grounded in specific local struggles throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, the South Pacific, and the Middle East. Contributors explore successful and unsuccessful alliances across boundaries of gender, religion, class, caste, sexuality, ethnicity, generation, and nationalism. The analysis and personal reflection on coalition building in the struggles for social justice that takes place across multiple hierarchical axes helps move the twentieth century analysis of class solidarity and social change toward twenty-first century discourse on feminism and antiracism.

This volume challenges both scholars and activists to rethink binary models of organizing and embrace the complexities manifested in a global economy and the transnational circumstances created by colonialism and its legacies. Each case offers valuable lessons learned by activists and organizers laboring in the critical intersections framed by feminist and antiracist practice. The anthology also reveals the transformative potential behind feminist and antiracist organizing practices. It instructs us by allowing us to see both successful and not so successful processes of social change resulting from actual practices used by feminist and antiracist organizers in a variety of international settings, including: women's courts in India, immigrant women's centers in Italy, health care workers in Yemen, strippers in San Francisco nightclubs, and volunteers in rape crisis centers in South Africa and the United States. The authors carefully attend to practices and processes of feminism and antiracism and capture everyday challenges to hierarchical social structures and normative social relationships. In these accounts, tensions and transgressions suggest transformative potential and social justice beyond immediate needs and crises. Grounded struggles in feminism and antiracism challenge the existing hierarchical power structure and use both direct and

indirect methods for reconstructing social relationships. For example, in her analysis of practices adopted by the *murshidat*, the women primary health care workers in Yemen, Delores Walters not only documents significant changes in maternal and infant mortality, but helps us understand the changing genealogical, racial, gender, and occupational social relations. Examining the “danger talk” occurring in staff meetings at a rape crisis center in South Africa, Michelle Rosenthal attends to tensions that push race, ethnicity, and class toward discussions of feminist empowerment and democracy. Yoshiko Nozaki’s research on the inclusion of Comfort Women in Japanese history emphasizes how the process encourages teachers to confront their own racism and sexism.

Antiracist practice involves a process of changes introduced into the wide range of social relationships within multiple hierarchical axes. Struggles for maternal and child health care, religious freedom, immigrant women’s rights, and better working conditions involve women and men in ongoing social transformations. In the various feminist spaces that serve as sites for antiracist practice, the transformative potential is revealed. Having read *Feminism and Antiracism: International Struggles for Justice*, I can now more easily imagine a coalition to challenge election practices in the United States, because it no longer seems an impossibility! The lessons offered by these feminist ethnographies are that social relations and power blocs seemingly set in stone are here for us to study, discuss, and change. This volume furthers transnational struggles for justice.

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