

## Let Women Lead

War is a feminist issue because there is an unbroken continuum between personal and international violence. Men compartmentalize and dominate by sex, age, race, class, sexual preference, political preference, nations, and political blocs. They use the divide and conquer tactics on thoughts as well as people. It is therefore already a feminist act to make the connections between types of violence along the continuum.

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### Nature/Culture

Women are considered as the natural resource of the male as providers of free labor, sexual pleasure and children. Nationally, elites consider the masses their natural resource, their 'woman' and make war against them if they rebel. Internationally, elite nations take the position of the male versus other 'female' nations as resources which they invade, exploit, penetrate, change, and from which they receive the profits while devaluing and disempowering their people.

Nations, like the individual men who govern them, define themselves as civilized while considering other nations as nature, uncivilized or barbarian if their values and customs are different. So they make war to control these differences, and to make these peoples submissive, effeminate. At the same time, elite individuals and businesses make war against Mother Nature herself, defiling her, poisoning and wasting her permanently.

### Values

Women's values are different from men's. Men invest trillions of dollars to maintain their strength and govern by force. The women's alternative value is the satisfaction of human need as evidenced in our nurturing capacity. Eight-hundred-million people are suffering starvation. Their food has been transformed into instruments of male national competition to possess resources and minds just as individual men possess women's bodies, allegiances, and capacity to labor.

### Flight

The battered homemaker fleeing from the home she maintains without possessing is the sister of the refugee populations of the earth, 99% of whom are women and children.

### Silence and Invisibility

Male conceptual language, ridicule, trivialization, silence women on an individual level. From the incest survivor to the woman scholar, to populations who are not allowed to vote, or whose votes are falsified, our truths are not heard.

Disenfranchisement, lack of educational access, pornography, propaganda stifle our different realities. Our labor is invisible, its value denied whether of the mother, homemaker, volunteer, secretary, farmer. At least part of the work of all women is made invisible by paying us less. By this means, men over-value their own economic styles which consist of the pauperization of the many and the elitization of the few.

## Property

Having been objectified as the property of men for centuries, we identify with mother earth, with freeing the land and all peoples from oppression and control by the symbolically strong. At the same time we reject as hypocritical sentimentality the justification of war as the "protection of women and children". We see this as an expression of competition for ownership and as protection of our lives as part of men's property, thus continuing our oppression.

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Peace is a feminist issue because women's values which are both pragmatic and visionary emerge from the everyday life-giving practice of the majority of the human species. With this miraculous, ordinary women's spirit we can end centuries of oppression. We are already moving in a continuum of peace.

Every individual woman who lives in peace and justice resonates with the future peaceful earth we are creating and makes it more probable. Every nuclear-free zone on earth makes it more probable that there will be individual women living in peace. When, beyond the boundaries that compartmentalize us, we begin to nurture each other and to universalize our experience, we effectively affirm the needs of the weak to be of major importance on a world scale, while force, and the satisfaction of its needs, are of secondary importance. We do not want "strength" in the male sense. We want to facilitate the abundant and creative earth to share with all her children. We recognize that the free labor which women have always contributed to the family and nation has been a hidden gift economy as opposed to male monetarization and exchange. Now, as a return on this gift, we want peace.

Beyond male definition, even when we have not believed our own minds, we have lived a different reality, rarely articulated even to each other. This has caused us to resist, actively or passively, as individuals when collective consciousness was denied us, and at many times during history, to resist collectively. As each individual woman now comes to consciousness she brings with her the ten-thousand year old women's underground. And what this underground implicitly knows is that male ejaculatory tactics on both the individual and the global level must be replaced by the women's approach. Sensuality, mutuality, readiness, amity and joy are more practical than guns, bombs, and war games.

We are different women, women nonetheless; in different struggles, struggles nonetheless. United, let us set the standard for sanity, individually, nationally, and internationally.