

109 Third Avenue
New York City
New York 10003
United States of
America

Dear *Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo*

This is a heartfelt and urgent invitation for your participation in an historic project regarding women all over the world. In the fall of 1983, the first anthology comprised of writings from the International Women's Movement, Sisterhood is Global, will be published (initially in the United States, by Doubleday and Co*). I am--as an independent writer and women's activist--coordinating this project, and compiling and editing the book, and I am pleased to invite you to write the article on Women in *Portugal*. Let me give you some background about the project:

The Sisterhood is Global Project

In October of 1970, Sisterhood is Powerful: The First Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement in the United States, which I compiled and edited, was published (Random House and Vintage Paperbacks). Today, ten years later, it is still in print in both cloth and paperback. It has become a classic of modern feminist literature, still serves as the basic introduction to the American women's movement in its capacity of a general trade book, and is the staple of women's studies programs and courses all over the country; it has sold well in English-language foreign markets, has been excerpted into seven languages and translated in full into two. My goal had been to produce as comprehensive, lively, and solid a collection as possible. In the ensuing decade, that work bore remarkable fruit.

Now is the moment for Sisterhood is Global: The First Anthology of Writings from the International Women's Movement--a book reflecting the intense network of contacts and interlocking activities that we have participated in building over the past decade, and reflecting as well the fact that this foundation is now solid enough to support a genuine and powerful global movement of women which will have enormous political impact, continuing throughout the 1980's and in fact transforming the Twenty-first Century. Women have served recently or are currently serving as heads of state of more nations (of world-power as well as developing-nations status) than ever before--including Iceland, India, Israel, Norway, Portugal, Dominica, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom--and they are not figureheads

* and Anchor Press in paperback



but political forces in their own right. The growing consciousness about the vast resource of womanpower-- more than half the human species--is evident in a proliferation of statements, plans of action, programs, resolutions, legislation reforms, and other blueprints for change being put forward by national governments, international congresses and agencies, multinational corporations, and cross-cultural progressive movements. But what is even more exciting than that tip of the iceberg is the volcano itself: what women all over the planet are beginning to whisper, say, and shout, to themselves and one another-- and what we are then proceeding to do. It is my profound belief that the 1980's and 1990's will be an explosion of consciousness about global feminism.

Sisterhood is Global will be, on an international scale, what Sisterhood is Powerful was on a domestic one: a cross-cultural, cross-racial, cross-age-group, cross-sexual preference, cross-occupation/class, cross-ideological assemblage of women's voices. We cannot, of course, include every country on the planet, for space limitations, but we will aim at approximately 70 nations, in a broad representation of areas. Sisterhood is Global will not pretend to be a "definitive" representation (of all countries, or of all the women in a given country), but rather will be a varied and energetic collection of articles (and perhaps some fiction and poetry) by women whose main connection to one another is a mutual commitment to worldwide freedom for female human beings.

Some further detail might be useful:

The Introduction

The collection will be preceded by an essay--an Introduction, by myself--recapping the history behind this wave of global feminism, from informal one-to-one contacts up through feminist meetings, "underground networking," and official conferences (such as those sponsored by the United Nations and other international bodies). The Introduction will also contain a full explanation for the methodology of this compilation and how it came to be. Furthermore, the essay will set forth the theme of the book: how the political philosophy of feminist thought makes possible a totally new way of viewing international affairs, one grounded in immediacy and practicality, less concerned with traditional diplomatic postures or abstractions but rather focused on concrete, daily, and unifying realities of priority importance to the majority of the world's population. The traditional and cross-cultural opposition which women have expressed to war, for example, and our healthy skepticism of certain technological advances (which most men seem overly impressed by at first, and disillusioned by at last)--these are only two instances of shared attitudes among women, which, despite many other differences, seem basic to a common



world-view. Last, the Introduction will include a theoretical analysis of the current state of global feminism, and an hypothesis for its future-- with various strategies and specific tactics, ranging from those useful in legislative and electoral drives to those necessary in situations of guerilla warfare; those possible where extremely sophisticated news media constitute invaluable tools of communication to those where no free press exists; those where religious institutions loom as the prime obstacles to women's freedom, and those where religious ritual acts as a political "code" for women to express rebellion and individuality with a modicum of safety and a margin of movement. The essay will also suggest the shape emerging of a new "feminist diplomacy"--specific approaches which Western feminists, for example, must consider in opening dialogue with Third World feminists, to avoid unconscious neo-colonialist behavior, etc.

The Articles

The Prefaces

Each article will be preceded by a one-page Preface on the country, to include the basic statistics (type of government, population and female ratio, birth rate, literacy breakdown, major industries and agricultural forms, etc.) as well as a brief historical overview of the history of feminism in that country (for example, the 12th-century Turkish harem revolts; the Chung Sisters, heroic warriors in 17th-century Vietnam; the actual historical Amazons of Dahomey; the Celtic tribal queens and generals; the Brazilian priestess-prophets, etc.). This brief Preface to each essay is meant to free the Contributor so that she need not provide exhaustive introductory background to her culture unless absolutely necessary, but can concentrate her writing on present, political, and personal realities instead. (Each short preface will be shown to the Contributor--and her suggestions in advance for resources will be welcomed.)

Length

Each article will run between five and seven (double-spaced, typed) manuscript pages (approximately 2000 words). However, there must be room for variations, since some countries may be represented by collective Declarations (which will be shorter) and others may require longer articles because of the complexity of their current situations. Furthermore, certain articles may be in transcript form (interviews with non-literate women). It is certain, however, that the book will be of major size.



6-7 pp
2 prefacs

Translation and Editing

Most Contributors will be writing in English, a few in French. Still others will be writing in their native languages. Consequently, although some translation will be required on this end, the bulk will require only editing. The aim of both translation and editing must be to preserve the flavor, imagery, proverbs, and tone of each nationality, while making certain that each essay is in lucid, lively, accessible English prose. A further aim is for each piece to be easily approachable for translation into other languages-- as a large international readership for the anthology is assured.

The Contributors

The range of Contributors will be considerable. Although two-thirds of the women invited have verbally agreed already and eagerly to participate, it must be remembered that personal and political fates of some seventy women can change drastically during the projected two-and-a-half years needed to assemble this book: revolutions take place, people are elected to high office or go into exile or underground, people feel less (or more) free to write what they believe.

In Sisterhood is Global the range of Contributors will be from Prime Ministers (current and former) to market women, from peasant-weavers to writers and scientists from radical militants to "closet feminists" in international diplomatic circles, from women organizing underground in totalitarian countries to those already known world-wide as feminist spokespersons. There are special problems: for instance, in certain nations, Contributors may have to write under pseudonyms. The spectrum--radical feminist, socialist feminist, moderate/reform feminist, revolutionary feminist, parliamentarian/legislative feminist, what-have-you--will of course be retained and affirmed in order to show as wide a possible a world view of women's activism, and to see just where the differences, similarities, parallels, and overlaps really are. The majority of Contributors, of course, will be from the Third World nations--the majority of the world.



In most cases, I have chosen to invite participation from women who are active in a specific field of their own--literature, the hard-core social sciences, politics, etc.-- but who are also committed feminists, rather than women who are "full-time" feminist activists. This is to avoid everyone writing the same theoretical (or rhetorical) article. But there are some exceptions. For example, there are so many intensely differing wings of the French movement that the one unimpeachable unifying presence would be, of course, Simone de Beauvoir. Maria de Lourdes

Pintassilgo and Marilyn Waring, as additional examples, were invited (and have accepted) less because of their having been respectively a Prime Minister of Portugal and a Member of the New Zealand Parliament than because each writes in a moving, personal fashion about the condition of women in her country.

Focus for Contributors

Each invited Contributor is being "assigned" her piece together with the following suggestion-outline of the issues she should consider in the writing, although she is, of course, free to diverge from the formula as she sees fit:

- 1) What is the basic situation re women in your country?
- 2) What is the worst obstacle/adversary of women there?
- 3) What is the greatest strength you see women as already possessing there? What are the greatest gains/advances made by women in recent years/decades?
- 4) What is/are the cutting-edge issue/s (economic, sexual, literacy-education, national development or independence struggle, bride-sale, slavery, birth-control, genital mutilation, political representation, many or all of the above, etc.)?
- 5) What seem to be the best ways of organizing and uniting women there?
- 6) Is there an organized women's movement in your country? If so, what is its general status, composition, spectrum, range of groups, areas of theoretical or tactical argument or differences?
- 7) What are your estimations for the future of feminism in your country? Timetable?
- 8) How can other women, in other countries, help women in your country most effectively?
- 9) General feminist analysis?

I strongly urge each Contributor to avoid rhetoric. The basic facts, the specific details of women's lives and conditions, are what move people and help them to truly understand the political situation. One story, case-history, or personal anecdote is more effective than 100 pages of dogma. So each Contributor will be asked to tell her personal story as much as possible, or to lace her article with anecdotes that bring out the reality, passion, pain, and vision of her sister citizens. This will make the book all the more, not less, politically effective.

Each Contributor is also being asked to send in, with her article, a short (two or three paragraph) Biographical Note on herself.



Graphics Section

This section, which proved so popular in Sisterhood is Powerful, is even more important in a world where two-thirds of all non-literates are women. Furthermore, the emotional impact of such a section is great. It would include, for example:

Cross-cultural works of visual art (painting, sculpture, pottery, batik, weaving (cloth and basket), sand and rice painting, ritual masks, quilts, baby garments, carvings, etc.

Photographs of dance, especially from those cultures where women's dancing is of special significance (the real Geisha tradition, the Balinese girl dancers, the sacred Amazon dance in Brazil, etc.); also, women athletes re the Olympics--a sampling.

Faces

A "family of women" montage.

Ceremonies--musical, religious, or other, especially those specific to women officiating: Voudon in Haiti, Hopi female shamans in a healing trance, Buddhist nuns in chant, and other examples. As a consciousness-raising irony, a few cross-stereotype images would be nice, such as Kiri Ti Kenawa singing Schubert lieder.

Actions--for example: the Lyon (France) prostitutes' strike and seizure of the cathedral; Take Back the Night Marches in Europe; the Italian feminist teenage "mobs"; the "Crazy Ladies" of Argentina; abortion-rights demonstrations in Spain; the Iranian women's marches; the South African child-care-center vigils; the village demonstrations against "dowry-murders" in India, etc.

The Appendices

Bibliography:

Each contributor will be asked to provide a brief (five book) bibliography for each country, the works preferably those available in English or French. This is important for readers wishing to follow up in more depth on women's status in the various countries.



Index:

We will prepare an extensive subject-and-name Index with thorough cross-referencing. This is especially important for scholarly use and library approval, and because the national representation in the text will be alphabetical--which is both dramatic and less

Index, cont.

compartmentalizing (as might be such textual categorization as "European," "Developing Nations," "The Orient," and so forth).

World Statistics on Women:

A short breakdown of overall statistics on such subjects as women's literacy, employment, birth-rate, mortality of women and children, etc. (Contributors' suggestions welcome.) For example, the now famous (and staggering) statement by U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim: "While women represent half the global population and one-third of the labor force, they receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than 1% of world property. They are also responsible for two-thirds of all working hours."

The Network:

A representative list of the major women's organizations and publications and their addresses--from the basic United Nations Agencies useful to women, to activist feminist groups like the Comité International des Droits des Femmes, WIN (Women's International Newsservice), Isis (the English-and-French language Swiss digest of international feminist news, AWARD (African Women's Association for Research and Development), etc. Again, resources suggested by Contributors will be appreciated.

Legislation:

A list of pending and vital international legislation re women's equality. For example, the U.N. Decade of Women Plan of Action put forward at Copenhagen (1980); the International Convention Against Discrimination (which, if signed and ratified by twenty member states of the U.N., will carry the weight of international law).

Proverbial Feminism:

A sampling of proverbs, rallying cries, slogans, midwives' sayings, and song fragments from different cultures. For example: fragments of Borneo "birth poems"; the Zulu song, "Now you have trod on women, now you have erred, now you have at last touched rock," etc. Any suggestions for inclusion from Contributors will be welcomed here.

Sisterhood:

A double-page spread of the word "sister" in all modern languages, the listing to be in alphabetical order of the languages, from Afghani to Zambian.



That should give you an idea of Sisterhood is Global. As I hope you see, it is an enormously exciting project, and the book will, we anticipate, open up areas of knowledge and dialogue between women all over the planet, and create and widen an audience, in turn, for many other books by other women that can focus in greater detail on specific countries.

Our schedule on the book is as follows: deadline for manuscripts from the Contributors is September 15, 1981. During this fall, winter, and early spring of 1981-2, the emphasis will be on the translating and editing of the articles here in the U.S., with the edited version being sent back to the Contributor for approval. (If it is possible for you to write in English, that will make the process go faster, but if you feel more comfortable writing in your own language or in French, by all means do so. We will have responsible translators to take things from there.) By April 1982, all of the articles should be in final form (although last-minute updating of major political changes in a given country can be added and revised in until we are at the stage of galley-proofs on the book). During the late spring and all summer and fall of 1982 I will devote myself to writing the article Prefaces, the Introduction, and assembling the index and appendices. The complete book must be delivered to the publisher in December 1982. That next year will be spent overseeing its actual production (graphics, galley-proofs, cover design, etc.) so as to ensure accuracy, "feminist diplomacy," and esthetic good taste. Book publication in the U.S. is in the fall of 1983, after which it will go into translation and publication in other countries. It is my hope that by 1985 (the U.N. Decade of Women conference, probably in Nairobi), the book will already be published in several different languages.

You'll notice that this is a fairly tight schedule. For this reason, to save time, I am enclosing (three copies of) the contractual Agreement Form between myself and each Contributor, so that if you agree, as I profoundly hope you will, to write an article for the anthology, you can merely return two signed copies to me, and keep one for yourself. I believe that the Agreement is self-explanatory, and as simple and unbureaucratic as we could possibly make it, while still acceptable to the publisher. (Each Contributor will of course receive a complimentary copy of the book.) One word about the fee: it is small --and I heartily wish it could be more. Please understand that 70 different women are involved, plus translators and research aides, for this project; as it is, the publisher's advance monies do not cover the book's expenses by far. The balance will be coming out of my own pocket and/or from various scholarly foundations we are approaching with grant proposals.



Please understand further that, because of the book's high production costs (we want it to be a sturdy and beautiful book!--but selling at as low a price as possible, so that all women can afford it), it may be years before any royalties are a reality. When that does happen, and after I have recouped the monies I have advanced, then I plan to do what I did earlier with the proceeds from Sisterhood is Powerful: to set up a small foundation (international, in this case) to turn monies back into women's projects and organizing activities all over the world. This book is, for me, a labor of love--one I hope you will understand the import of and will share.

Last, please forgive this form letter. It should be clear by now that the scope of the project necessitated it. Still, you should know that you yourself are being invited to participate because of your reputation in the international women's community--for dedication, committment, responsibility, and accuracy. To reassure you, in turn, about myself (especially those of you I've not yet had the pleasure of meeting personally), I am enclosing, for your information, my own background vita.

I want to end this letter by thanking you for your time in reading such a lengthy communication, and by expressing my most profound hope and anticipation that you will want to join with so many other courageous women all over the world who--whether distinguished or humble, highly educated or non-literate, urban or rural--are already a part of this project. To work together across all the boundaries we face is challenging and exhilarating. Such a book has, literally, never been attempted before. It could and should be one more tile in a more-than-ever-before imperative mosaic of genuine equality and peace among all peoples--children, women, men, nations.

Please join us. As women, we may be uniquely capable of transcending national differences, of reducing national antagonisms. As women, we constitute more than half of all humanity, a majority which has been silent for far too long. This book will be an instrument in breaking that silence.



In respectful and global sisterhood,

Robin Morgan
Robin Morgan

enc.: 3 copies of Agreement Form
Morgan vita

ROBIN MORGAN

A Political Activist involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's as well as the anti-war movement, and a founder of this wave of the Feminist Movement since 1966; she attended The Wetter School in Mount Vernon, New York (graduating with honors), and Columbia University. She was Guest Professor in Feminist Studies, New College, Sarasota, Florida, 1972; lectures, ovulars, and poetry readings at colleges, high schools, and community gatherings across the country since 1970. Co-founder of the New York Women's Center, the New York Women's Law Center, Contributing Editor to Ms. Magazine, member of The Feminist Writer's Guild, Women's Ink, The Feminist Women's Health Clinic (Board of Advisors), National Battered Women's Refuge Network, National Women's Political Caucus, etc.

Publications

Poetry:

Monster (Random House and Vintage Books, 1972)
Lady of the Beasts (Random House--cloth and paper, 1976)
The Harrowing of Heaven: New Poems and a Masque (forthcoming
Doubleday, 1982)

Anthologies in which poems appear include:
No More Masks!, The New American Writers, Campfires of the Resistance, We Become New, Woman/Poet.

Poems published in numerous literary journals, including:
The Yale Review, Antioch Review, The Atlantic, The Sewanee Review, Poetry Northwest, The American Poetry Review, New England Review, Sunbury, The Southern Review, and Chuomo Uri, and in feminist periodicals, including Ms., The Feminist Review, Feminist Studies, Up From Under, Chrysalis, Sojourner, Calyx, Feminist Art Journal, etc.

Prose:

Compiled and Edited Sisterhood is Powerful (Random House, and Vintage Books, 1970)
Co-Edited The New Woman (Bobbs-Merrill, 1971)
Authored Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist (Random House, and Vintage Books, 1977)
The Anatomy of Freedom: Feminism and the New Age (forthcoming, Doubleday, 1982)
The Mer-Child: A Legend (children's novel; forthcoming)
Sisterhood is Global: The First Anthology of International Feminism (forthcoming, Doubleday, 1983; compiled and edited with an Introduction)

Articles and essays appeared widely in mass-circulation, literary, and "underground" periodicals, including: The New York Times, (Op-Ed Page), The Village Voice, Ms., The New Republic, Amazon Quarterly, The Hudson Review, The Second Wave, Everywoman, etc.



ROBIN MORGAN

Publications

Prose, cont.

Anthologies reprinting essays include: Masculine/Feminine, Voices From Women's Liberation, The Oppressed Majority, among others.

Plays:

In Another Country, debut performance 1960, New York City, Ascension Drama Series; The Duel, debut performance May 1979 at Joseph Papp's N.Y. Shakespear Festival Public Theater.

Readings

Numerous colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad, including Harvard, Yale, Wellesley, Skidmore, Tulane, Smith, Barnard, Dartmouth, Bryn Mawr, Sarah Lawrence, and the Universities of Minnesota, California (Berkeley, Sacramento, and L.A.), Pennsylvania (at Philadelphia), Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Florida, Washington, etc. Also, readings at The Poetry Center (S.F.), Manhattan Theater Club, poetry festivals across the country, on television and radio, and for videotape archives.

Awarded the National Endowment for the Arts Literature Grant in Poetry, 1979-80; recipient of a Writing Residency at Yaddo, 1980.

Born January 29, 1941, Lake Worth, Florida. Lives in Manhattan with her husband, the poet Kenneth Pitchford, and their son Blake Ariel Morgan Pitchford (born 1969).

