

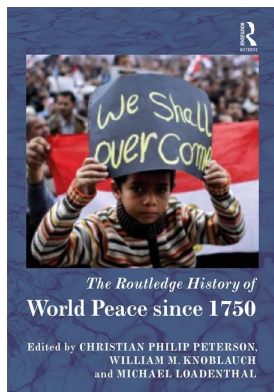
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Publisher: *CRC Press*

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## **The Routledge History of World Peace Since 1750**

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### **Feminist Perspectives in the Implementation of UN Resolution 1325**

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315157344-33>

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**Published online on: 04 Sep 2018**

**How to cite :-** Judith Oleson. 04 Sep 2018, *Feminist Perspectives in the Implementation of UN Resolution 1325 from: The Routledge History of World Peace Since 1750* CRC Press

Accessed on: 27 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315157344-33>

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## FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTION 1325

*Judith Oleson*

The need to explore connections between feminism and peacemaking rests within several social/cultural conditions. First is the predominance of patriarchy in how we view conflict, war, and the field of peacemaking; second are the limited documented narratives of women as resisters of violence, mediators of conflict, and facilitators of peacemaking and community reconstruction post conflict. This chapter will focus on the general (but not comprehensive) relationships between feminism and peacemaking in the US from the 1940s until the present. The US was in no way superior in its articulation of feminism and peacemaking over other countries around the globe; instead, many US feminist peacemakers were both challenged and supported by global movements throughout this time period. It is in the interaction between the national and international where this movement is most dynamic and nourished, as will be highlighted in this chapter through references to several feminist peace theorists and educators, and particularly, in relation to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325).

First, the highly misunderstood term “feminism” warrants revisiting. Sonia Johnson, who began speaking out in support of the US Equal Rights Amendment in 1977, provides an early definition:

Feminism is the articulation of the ancient underground culture and philosophy based on the values that patriarchy has labeled “womanly” but which are necessary for full humanity. Among the principles and values of feminism that are most distinct from patriarchy are universal equality, non-violent problem solving, and cooperation with nature, one another, and other species.<sup>1</sup>

These values, although not exclusive to women, are culturally and historically dominant in women’s experiences. Thus, feminism provides an alternative paradigm to patriarchy, and this alternative paradigm applies to peacemaking. Feminists’ desire for universal equality can prevent the conditions that create war, a fundamental tenet to any feminist peacemaking approach. Feminist non-violent problem solving is, in itself, a strong force for avoiding war. Although feminism has evolved through several “waves,” and at times opposing perspectives, when it comes to war and peace, feminists understand what is at risk when patriarchal forces are willing to destroy the Earth and each other. Feminist values of respecting relational dimensions of life have been minimized and marginalized by mainstream culture through

values of competition and dominance—values that often lead to war. Feminist values, however, have been more recently highlighted through the fields of peace education, inclusive security, and the intersection of gender studies with post-conflict reconstruction.

According to Betty Reardon, a feminist definition of peacemaking would generally include an analysis of and creative response to the conditions that create war, problem-solving methods to avoid violence, and finally the analysis of risk to, and protection of, the environment before going to war.<sup>2</sup> These perspectives are certainly not unique to feminist peacemaking, as they can be found across peace scholarship. But they are not typically the point of reference when historically male leaders oversee the shift from violence to war or from war to diplomacy. This statement is not asserting a form of biological determinism per se; instead, it represents a recognition that women have developed a unique perspective through the centuries as they have responded to conflicts and lived with the devastating impacts of war.

Ironically, these feminist perspectives can be the very reason why men often exclude women from the negotiating table. Turning to post-conflict rather than preventive notions of peacemaking, a question arises: Why are feminist values often perceived by diplomats, generals, and other policymakers as counterproductive? For example, the feminist commitment to cooperation with “the other” can be suspected as mistrust, while investment in collaborative problem-solving is feared as co-option with “the enemy,” thus weakening one’s position in the negotiation process. Diplomacy, then, like warfare, can go hand-in-hand with patriarchy. Although women may not have been on the front lines of the fighting, they have lived with the horrors of war: Loss of spouses and sons, victims of rape and torture, abduction of their children for soldiering, displacement from homes, separation from elders and other family members, and destruction of homes, crops, and entire communities. Women understand not only the devastating impact of war but also the essential ingredients of healing and the rebuilding of their communities. Excluding women in a post-conflict peacemaking process is a grave mistake, and it was this concern that motivated many local and international NGOs to pressure the United Nations Security Council to pass UNSCR 1325. But the full significance of UNSCR 1325 cannot be understood without examining the history of women’s peacemaking, and the narratives that represent feminist perspectives on peace.

Rosemary Ruether’s comprehensive article for the *Christian Century* entitled “Feminism and Peace” documents connections between peace activism and feminism among early abolitionists, suffragettes, and modern initial waves of feminism. She traces the early abolitionist movement in New England, especially feminists such as Maria Chapman, Lucretia Mott, and even William Lloyd Garrison, whose sense of social justice against slavery also called for the rejection of war. During the nineteenth century, all three of these activists worked towards an immediate and uncompromising end to slavery. Ruether connects the early pacifist and feminist movements to Quakerism (Society of Friends) and the Shaker’s rejection of violence and war with the affirmation of women’s equality. She writes, “The Society of Friends offered a congenial environment for both women’s equality and nonviolence through a common understanding of a radical Christian ethic of love.”<sup>3</sup>

Ruether provides additional examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where feminist perspectives were related to both social activism and ideals for peace. For example, Jane Addams’ *Newer Ideals of Peace* critiques the male definition of citizenship based on bearing arms, and instead insists that a new definition of citizenship be tied to resolving conflict through non-violent methods.<sup>4</sup> During World War I, Addams wrote four peace platforms attempting to answer the question, “What new institutions and government policies

would help prevent war?”<sup>5</sup> Along with Carrie Chapman Catt, Addams called for the first all-women’s peace meeting in Washington to “enlist all women in arousing the nations to respect the sacredness of human life and to abolish war.”<sup>6</sup> She represented the US Women’s Peace Party at the International Congress of Women in the Hague in 1915. This was the foundation for the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF), founded by Addams and other activist women.<sup>7</sup>

The WILPF was significant in that its values were adopted by some of the world’s most powerful leaders who helped to shape an agenda for peace. For example, WILPF beliefs were evident in nine of President Wilson’s fourteen points utilized in the Armistice Agreement ending the Great War (or World War I) of 1918. The league has had over a hundred years of consistent peacemaking at a global level, and the WILPF website timeline points to major campaigns, international conferences, and organized movements that have shaped both domestic and international policies.<sup>8</sup>

In his book *Peace*, David Cortright contends that Jane Addams and her contemporaries “rejected the assumption that a woman is against war . . . simply and only because she is a woman.” He also notes that “modern feminists dismiss the ‘essentialist’ idea that women are inherently more non-violent and peaceful than men,” and that “the association of femininity with peace is a form of biological determinism that has been used historically to reinforce subordination of women, to deny women political responsibility.”<sup>9</sup> He summarizes this movement:

The women’s movement is based on the opposite belief that reason is superior to force as a factor in human affairs. Pacifism and feminism are based on the same principle, the elevation of moral force over the use of physical force. Modern writers define feminism as the struggle against patriarchal hierarchies that are at the root of violence and oppression. Feminism rejects the personal violence that subjugates women and the political violence that oppresses society. Feminism seeks to break the social conditioning that sustains violence against women and perpetuates institutionalized war-making.<sup>10</sup>

This connection between women’s rights and peace was actualized through Eleanor Roosevelt’s lengthy negotiations with global leaders, persuading the UN to adopt the UN Charter of Human Rights in 1948. This document insisted on rights for all people, but unfortunately, the years of communism and the Cold War quieted the outward activism of feminist pacifists. US anti-communist rhetoric and fears of Soviet domination, combined with an emphasis on the nuclear family, and narrowing roles of women post-World War II, all contributed to this silence—except for the WILPF who fought consistently against the cold war mentality and the superpowers’ arms buildup.

By the 1960s, in the US, a newer brand of feminism challenged the link between women’s values and pacifism. Seeking emancipation through rights and economic equality, Second-Wave Feminism moved from the suffragette issues of voting rights and peacemaking to broader issues of sexuality, economic equality, and redefining women’s roles in the family. In her chapter on “Female Generation Gap,” Ruth Rosen describes the women of the 1960s who rebelled against the Cold War rhetoric of arms buildup and the anti-Communist agenda that led to the Vietnam War.<sup>11</sup> In 1961 women around the world, mobilized by Women Strike for Peace, effectively protested against both tainted milk and the above ground testing of nuclear weapons. This example still reflects the separate spheres idea (that women engage

in domestic issues of food and safety while men engage in global policy issues) famously critiqued in Betty Friedan's 1963 publication, *The Feminine Mystique*. Yet, American women (and men) continued to link with activists around the world for nuclear disarmament. One such leader was Kate Hudson, the British General Secretary of the CDC, who documented women's roles in this movement in her book *CDC: Now More Than Ever, The Story of a Peace Movement*.<sup>12</sup> In 1978 Helen Caldicot's book, *Nuclear Madness* seemed to re-awaken women into a new level of awareness, while the Greenham Women's Peace Camp in the early 1980s provided a model for women's collective action.<sup>13</sup>

The fracturing of Second-Wave Feminism in the late 1960s had many factors, including critiques within the movement for still permitting women's separate sphere identities and traditional roles. In response to this fracture, one aspect the movement developed was a sense of required counter-violence or militarism towards male violence. Women pacifists "had to defend and redefine the links between feminism and nonviolence against a new assumption that female nonviolence promoted their passivity and victimization."<sup>14</sup> An increasing awareness of the sexism of male leadership in the anti-war movement and the rise of the Black Panthers fueled this sentiment; consider the Vietnam Era slogan to counter-act the view of draft resisters as cowards: "Girls say yes to men who say no."<sup>15</sup> Another shift was the end of a singular, leftist movement that diversified into a cultural feminism that advanced the politics of gender, anti-capitalism, and lesbianism. Feminist scholar Pam Solo describes how changes in the antinuclear movement influenced women peacemakers—through nonprofits, the UN, and public office—to begin using their influence to build an agenda for common security. Examples of this shift are reflected in the Civil Society Institute, Women Waging Peace (now the Center for Inclusive Security), The Hastings Group, etc. These groups represent a more inclusive approach that has integrated women's wisdom and desire for peace with positions of power and greater capacity for political leverage.<sup>16</sup>

Increased reports of rape as a weapon of ethnic cleansing (in Vietnam, the Balkans, Rwanda, etc.) and the growing awareness of domestic violence towards women has continued to move feminists away from pacifism and toward a more radical form of self-protection and political action. As Ruether explains:

For many contemporary feminists, the response of women to male violence cannot simply be a contrary assertion of feminine values of love and nurture. These qualities themselves have become distorted in female socialization into timidity and vulnerability . . . At this point it becomes impossible to forge new links between feminism and peace. Feminism fundamentally rejects the power of the principle of domination and subjugation.<sup>17</sup>

Ruether acknowledges that by the 1980s, feminists in the peace movement were trying to reintegrate feminist theory/activism with a broader humanism without war. An example of this integration through the 1990s was the massive organizing effort among WILPF and hundreds of women's organizations around the world, all of whom rejected the "principal of domination and subjugation of women in failed peacemaking efforts." Collectively, they began to address the relationship between war and poverty, the continued use of rape in modern wars, and the absence of women in peace negotiations and post-conflict planning. These issues, in addition to women's growing role in public policy, spurred a massive effort toward a UN resolution that would address women's issues in peacemaking, or what also has come to be known as "Inclusive Security."<sup>18</sup>

After extensive lobbying efforts by The United Nations Development Fund for Women, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Security Council unanimously passed UNSCR 1325 in October of 2000. US feminists such as Betty Reardon were the primary organizers for UNSCR 1325, along with the WILPF and other female NGO global leaders. This effort, championed by Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury (then president of the UN Security Council), resulted in an approach, advocated by the UN, that insisted women play a significant role in conflict management, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace. It advocates for women to be engaged at “all levels of decision-making, including national, regional, and international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations; as soldiers, police and civilians; and as Special Representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General.”<sup>19</sup> The Resolution also created a gender unit at the Department of Peacekeeping, which on paper ensured gender-inclusive advisement in all UN peacekeeping activities. It required that women and men benefit equally from post-conflict reconstruction activities and launched a global database of expert women peacemakers, including traditional processes. It also called for the “specific protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations such as refugee camps.”<sup>20</sup> UN Member States developed National Action Plans (NAP) to identify priorities and resources, and commit to specific actions.

Unfortunately, by the time the UN compiled its 10-year review, only twenty-four countries had developed and launched action plans.<sup>21</sup> The implementation of these plans proved challenging. The ten-year report executive summary summarized the following:

- There has been limited participation of women in peace negotiations and peace agreements.
- Some progress has been made in women’s participation in politics.
- There has been modest success in integrating a gender perspective into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.
- The impact of peacekeeping missions in supporting gender-sensitive reforms has been mixed.
- Missions have had a positive impact in the implementing of legal and judicial reforms by supporting the adoption of gender equality provisions in national constitutions and relevant laws.
- Widespread sexual and gender-based violence has proven a formidable challenge for peacekeeping missions.
- While peacekeeping missions have had some impact in the protection of women internally displaced and women refugees, the coverage and effectiveness of protection measures require improvement.
- The gender balance of peacekeeping personnel is far short of the policy goal of 50/50 representation.<sup>22</sup>

The United States did not sign on to UNSCR 1325 initially, and took until 2011 to develop a NAP. The US resistance to UNSCR 1325 is a complicated political reaction based on claims of threats to national sovereignty, a perceived undermining of the traditional “family structure,” and a belief that equal rights would lead to sexual and reproductive rights.<sup>23</sup> UNSCR 1325 has not had the impact in the US as it has in many countries.

In 2010, eleven countries adopted NAPs and by 2015 the number had risen to fifty-six.<sup>24</sup> These countries utilized the NAPs as their focal point for organizing public policy around women, human rights, and conflict prevention. These activities around the globe have been summarized in both the ten and fifteen year UNSCR 1325 year reports.

The rise of ISIS, the War on Terror, and globalization have all presented new challenges for feminist peacemakers. The increasing levels of global inequality and devastation indicate that patriarchal values are flourishing through an agenda of war. The recent expansion of terrorism in the Middle East and the resulting issues of destabilization, poverty, and extremist ideologies in the twenty-first century have influenced the course of US foreign policy. These factors have resulted in an entirely new profession of homeland security that presents new challenges to feminist perspectives on peacemaking. As David Cortright argues:

Over the decades the United States engaged in a vast program of military interventionism that has continued to the present. Through covert and overt military action and political manipulation, Washington destabilized governments and fomented military coups and wars in dozens of countries around the world . . . The US tendency to militarize international affairs has devalued diplomatic approaches and led to continuous military interventions and the occupation of Iraq.<sup>25</sup>

The inclusion of more women on both sides voluntarily serving in the military, particularly in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, makes gender analysis in peacemaking more complex. Indeed, the War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq acts as one example of how gender is clearly central to enabling and justifying war.<sup>26</sup> Since 9/11, US feminist peace activists have had to move through new methods of engagement to address the expanse of military action justified through homeland security. The feminist organization that has embodied this trend in the US is Code Pink, which articulates their history since starting in 2002:

We set up for a 4-month all-day vigil in front of the White House during the cold of winter. The vigil inspired people from all walks of life, and from all over the country, to stand for peace. Many organizations joined us, including Global Exchange, Greenpeace, WILPF, WAND, Public Citizen, NOW, Women for Women International and Neighbors for Peace and Justice. The vigil culminated on March 8, International Women's Day, when we celebrated women as global peacemakers with a week of activities, rallies and a march to encircle the White House in pink. Over 10,000 people participated . . . CODEPINK thus emerged out of a deep desire by a group of American women to stop the United States from invading Iraq. The name CODEPINK plays on the former Bush Administration's color-coded homeland security alerts—yellow, orange, red—that signaled terrorist threats. While Bush's color-coded alerts were based on fear and were used to justify violence, the CODEPINK alert is a feisty call for people to “wage peace.” Since then CODEPINK has become a worldwide network of women and men committed to working for peace and social justice.<sup>27</sup>

And yet Code Pink has not been able to sustain a movement of feminist peacemakers. In a 2013 *Washington Post* interview, Code Pink leader Medea Benjamin indicated that efforts in protesting the war in Syria paled in comparison to their protests of the war in Iraq. She

stated, “We’re smaller. We lost a lot of people who didn’t like us criticizing Obama. But we still got our feistiness.”<sup>28</sup>

The War on Terror continues to violate the core values, ethical foundations, and human rights values that are central to feminist peacemaking. Violence breeds counter-violence of greed and exploitation at the personal, corporate, and global levels. Thus, it weaves a complex role of perpetrators and victims, creating a spiritual vacuum at a time when we most need ethical grounding and the best of humanity. As a people desensitized to war, fear has captured our moral imagination. Feminists in the US and around the world can play a key role in organizing to support women working to change the behavior of misogynistic governments in the Middle East and elsewhere. One example is the Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy, an NGO in the Boston area that, through Podcasts and other forms of social media, supported women throughout Iran who ran for local public office in May of 2017.<sup>29</sup> Iraq (2014) and Afghanistan (2015) have created National Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, and include both political and cultural strategies, but other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran do not. In its critique of the first US NAP for UNSCR 1325, the WILPF warns that “only if SCR 1325 is manifest for its transformational power to rethink national security will it do what both President Obama and WILPF imagine it will do by prompting women’s participation in conflict prevention.” They also warn that:

Ultimately the success of the NAP on Women, Peace and Security rests on Congress’s political will to release funds earmarked for military expenditures into the general fund to be used to support civic engagement at the local level . . . we call on relevant human rights monitoring bodies, to exercise global leadership in realizing a Women, Peace and Security agenda that is firmly grounded within a human rights framework and proactive in creating a sustainable peace.<sup>30</sup>

In reviewing the fifteen-year report on UNSCR 1325 it is evident that the world, and the nature of war, has changed significantly since 2000. The report, “Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325,” acknowledges some successes, but also calls on the world to unite around the following principles:

1. Prevention of conflict must be the priority, not the use of force.
2. Resolution 1325 must be seen as a human rights document for women in conflict.
3. Women’s participation is the key to sustainable peace.
4. Perpetrators must be held accountable and justice must be transformative.
5. Localization of approaches and Inclusive participatory processes are crucial to the success of national and international peace efforts in terms of UN peacekeeping.
6. Supporting women peacebuilders and respecting their autonomy is one important way to counter extremism.
7. All key actors must play their role. (civil society, member states, regional organizations)
8. A gender lens must be introduced into all aspects of the work of the Security Council.
9. The persistent failure to adequately finance the women, peace and security agenda must be addressed.
10. A strong gender architecture at the United Nations is essential.<sup>31</sup>



The study concludes with a plea: That the great changes ahead must primarily be understood in the context of the needs and concerns of women in specific situations of conflict. Locality must be the most important factor in analysis of conflict. Women spoke with one voice from every continent to convey a key message to the Security Council: The UN must take the lead in stopping the process of militarization and militarism that they began in 2001 (with UNSCR 1325) in an ever-increasing cycle of conflict.<sup>32</sup> The Executive Summary of the 15-year report states,

More than 60 Member States, international and regional organizations responded to requests for submissions to the Global Study and 47 civil society organizations, academics and research institutes provided inputs via a public website. A survey of civil society organizations generated responses from 317 organizations in 71 countries. Thus the breadth of the engagement with Resolution 1325 is wide.<sup>33</sup>

The question remains, how wide and how deep is this work today, particularly when, as the report references, the world has changed in numerous ways since the Resolution was passed in 2001? Acquiring depth in Feminism and Peacemaking requires a re-awakening of our repulsion to war, an awareness of our indifference and our complicity, and re-establishing ourselves as a people (and particularly women) that move toward this love of justice, not away from it. It means not only individual and institutional critiques, but also contemplative processes that reach deep into our fears and wrestle with our collective shame. With the recent escalation of nuclear arms production and threat of use, under the Trump administration, US women are desperately needed to challenge a power dynamic that can destroy both humanity and the earth. Rosemary Ruether's call toward this integrative, feminist approach in 1983 can be utilized to continue the efforts today:

Feminism fundamentally rejects the power principle of domination and subjugation. It rejects the concept of power which says that one side's victory must be the other side's defeat. Feminism must question social structures based on this principle at every level, from the competition of men and women in personal relationships to the competition of the nations of the globe, including the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. We seek an alternative power principle of empowerment in community rather than power over and disabling of others. Such enabling in community is based on a recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of life, of men and women, blacks and whites, Americans and Nicaraguans, Americans and Russians, humans and the nonhuman community of animals, plants, air and water. Nobody wins unless all win. War-making has reached such a level of destructiveness that the defeat of one side means the defeat of all, the destruction of the earth itself. Feminism today sees its links with the cause of human survival and the survival of the planet itself.<sup>34</sup>

UNSCR 1325 still seeks to embody these principles, and will continue to be a guide, but not a complete solution, to multi-layered approaches to peace that feature feminist perspectives.

## Notes

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