

**Introduction to the Movement part of the Shulamith Firestone Memorial program,
Kathie Sarachild, September 23, 2012, New York City**

I am so sorry to be here but also so glad to be here sharing our sadness together, and--in the little bit of time we have-- our memories of this warm and generous, and oh-so-honest firebrand in our lives: Shulamith Firestone.

My relationship with Shulamith--Shulie, in the early days-- was on again, off again like the worst man who broke my heart and whom I continued to love for the pleasures and excitement of the good times. I realize that this metaphor comparing Shulamith to a man is probably politically incorrect in the best sense of the term, because all women have suffered from being called manlike when they are just being their strong, true selves.

But, for want of finding better words right now, I will go on to say that I am sorry that she will never break my heart again quite as badly and that I will never have the joys quite as much-- because, of course, reading letters and looking at her work will not have as much of the light and fire of immediate life, although, as you may see in the program and from the Redstockings Archives exhibit over there, I and my Redstockings co-workers put a lot of stock in the power of primary source archives to continue to light sparks and produce light-bulb moment ideas for taking CURRENT action, and what Shulamith showed and taught --albeit the lessons often came belatedly to us learners--what she showed and taught about the power of an authentic historic record of the movement is, I think, what was behind our continuing to work together at rare but precious times over the decades, after she officially dropped out of the movement in 1971. And I think it is why she gave me what records, books and materials she did for the Redstockings Archives for Action.

I'm going to be the guide through the people speaking of her during the Women's Liberation Movement and radical feminist part of her life. I was very close with her in New York Radical Women--part of the radical feminist grouping in NYRW, of which she and Anne Koedt were the leading forces. I was in Redstockings with Shulamith until she left Redstockings to begin New York Radical Feminists with Anne Koedt. But in Redstockings we were not as close politically, though personally we remained friends. We had differences over theory and strategy, and she even would say that I had taken over Redstockings.

But one of the wonderful things about Shulamith was--is-- that she did not cut my thinking, or the thinking of others who stayed in

Redstockings, out of what she considered--and what *Notes from the Second Year* would publish as-- the true, broad spectrum of radical feminism which the journal *Notes* was intended to represent, as she put it. And she still considered me a comrade.

It was a time then when we were debating theory and strategy openly and publicly--it was very stimulating and creative. And it is a great loss to the movement that this is no longer going on in even as much of the loosely centralized, national way that it happened in the late 1960s, with the theoretical journals of the different groups, the broader spectrum radical feminist journal *Notes*, and the just about 2-year-long national newsletter--the *Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement*-- edited by Jo Freeman, who is going to be speaking next, and who kicked male chauvinist butt together with Shulamith before I ever knew her.