

# Birth Work as Care Work

## Stories from Activist Birth Communities

**Alana Apfel • Foreword by Loretta J. Ross**

**Preface by Victoria Law • Introduction by Silvia Federici**

*Birth Work as Care Work* presents a vibrant collection of stories and insights from the front lines of birth activist communities. The personal has once more become political, and birth workers, supporters, and doulas now find themselves at the fore of collective struggles for freedom and dignity.

The author, herself a scholar and birth justice organizer, provides a unique platform to explore the political dynamics of birth work; drawing connections between birth, reproductive labor, and the struggles of caregiving communities today. Articulating a politics of care work in and through the reproductive process, the book brings diverse voices into conversation to explore multiple possibilities and avenues for change.

At a moment when agency over our childbirth experiences is increasingly centralized in the hands of professional elites, *Birth Work as Care Work* presents creative new ways to reimagine the trajectory of our reproductive processes. Most importantly, the contributors present new ways of thinking about the entire life cycle, providing a unique and creative entry point into the essence of all human struggle—the struggle over the reproduction of life itself.

### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Alana Apfel** was born in the United States and raised in the UK. She holds graduate degrees in anthropology from the California Institute of Integral Studies and the University of Edinburgh. Her writing engages the politics of care work with a focus on birth and activist birth communities. Alana teaches on ways to radicalise birth work and continues to support people through birth in Bristol, UK.

**Loretta J. Ross** was a cofounder and National Coordinator of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. She is one of the creators of the term “Reproductive Justice” coined by African American women following the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

**Victoria Law** is a mother, photographer, and writer. She is the author of *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women* and coeditor of *Don't Leave Your Friends Behind: Concrete Ways to Support Families in Social Justice Movements and Communities*.

**Silvia Federici** is a feminist activist, writer, and teacher. In 1972 she was one of the cofounders of the International Feminist Collective, the organization that launched the international campaign for Wages for Housework. In the 1990s, after a period of teaching and research in Nigeria, she was active in the anti-globalization movement and the U.S. anti-death penalty movement. She is the author of *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*.

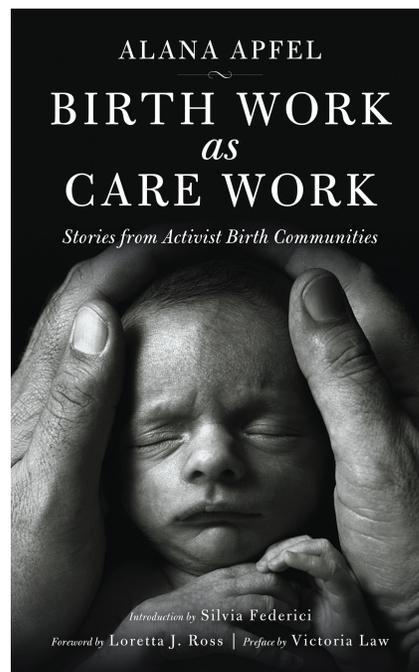
### ACCOLADES

“I love this book, all of it. The polished essays and the interviews with birth workers dare to take on the deepest questions of human existence.”

—Carol Downer, cofounder of the Feminist Women's Health Centers of California and author of *A Woman's Book of Choices*

“This volume provides theoretically rich, practical tools for birth and other care workers to collectively and effectively fight capitalism and the many intersecting processes of oppression that accompany it. *Birth Work as Care Work* forcefully and joyfully reminds us that the personal is political, a lesson we need now more than ever.”

—Adrienne Pine, author of *Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras*



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