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CHAPTER 3

The Golden Years

*We intend to settle for nothing less than equal representation
in all levels of political power.*

— CONGRESSWOMAN BELLA ABZUG, JULY 1971

IT WAS AN “odd-lot coalition of activists from Congress and the women’s liberation movement” from the outset,¹ but when 300 women gathered in Washington, D.C. in July 1971 to form the National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC), they heralded a new force on the national political landscape. The speakers were nationally prominent political activists whose lineages linked the new feminism to other struggles for justice, past and present: Fannie Lou Hamer, a Mississippi civil rights leader, knew firsthand the importance of electoral politics, having endured eviction and severe physical brutality for insisting on her right to vote; Bella Abzug, an activist from the forties and fifties, a member of Women’s Strike for Peace, a Congresswoman from 1970 to 1976, known for her loud, brassy, and eccentric ways, Bella’s trademark big-brim hats could be spotted at a distance; Gloria Steinem, professional journalist, founder of *Ms.* magazine; Betty Friedan, labor activist in the fifties, journalist, and founder of NOW; and Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman elected to Congress. The Caucus leadership was middle-class and well-connected, but they had recruited to this meeting younger activists of many races, creating a mix that was, in the words of *Newsweek*’s reporter, “rowdy” and “kinetic as group therapy.” Reportedly, accounts and photographs of the meeting reached President Nixon at his home in San Clemente where he and his aides bantered

about how it looked "like a burlesque." "Obviously," retorted Bella Abzug, "the president and his advisers are accustomed to viewing women only in terms of flesh shows." Despite their characteristic unruliness and wrangling, the newly formed NWPC set strategic goals to increase women's representation in the political parties and in Congress, and they pledged to end "racism, sexism, institutional violence and poverty through the election and appointment of women to public office, party reform, and the support of women's issues and feminist candidates across party lines."¹

Organizations and projects proliferated after 1970 as the dynamism of the movement spread to different constituencies—political insiders and outsiders, civil rights groups, working women, professional and academic disciplines, publishing. . . . The founding meeting of NWPC is a microcosm of the unruliness, creativity, and power unleashed by feminism. Each time women acted collectively, in turn, offers a glimpse of stirrings at the grass roots, where debates on "woman's place" had become the stuff of everyday life, and women suddenly found themselves empowered to challenge and change situations as small as a word or as large as the structure of their lives. The success of so many organized efforts, indeed, rested on the coiled energy of individual women, newly aware of previously unspoken injustices and ready to spring into action (or at least to speak loudly) on the issues that touched them most. It took some time for the backlash they provoked to gather support, so for a few years, wherever they could sustain a focus on shared goals, it seemed that nothing could stop this wave of change.

Washington insiders named the early years of the Second Wave the "golden years" because they achieved an unprecedented amount of legislation designed to correct gender inequities. Feminism emerged at the same time that women (in 1968) voted in equal numbers with men for the first time. In recent decades, women had not been perceived to be a coherent interest group. Suddenly they were a potential majority with a mind of its own. With feminist radicalism in the background, challenging gender roles across the board and politicizing disturbing new issues about the body and the family, issues framed as "equal opportunity" seemed simple, obvious, and mild.² So, for a few years, from about 1968

to 1975, the U.S. Congress seemed hell-bent on giving women what they wanted and giving it to them. Heavily outnumbered, victories came with breathtaking speed, and there was more legislative action in behalf of women's rights than in any other decades. Courts, too, responded to the meticulously argued briefs of feminist law that enlarged women's rights and opportunities.

Victories were never simple, however. The story about the combined strategies of grassroots feminists, Washington insiders, and organized outside pressure by using their EEOC complaints and court actions and their unions alike. Each story part of the roar of the cultural debate on "women's place" in homes and offices. The media described women's political activity with a slightly raised eyebrow, as in this description of the National Women's Political Caucus and its leaders:

In short, the women are refusing to be passive and are insisting that their gender be represented in Democratic politics. That's what they'll tell the press on House Wednesday for which they've picked up the tab.⁴

Critical to women's new political voice were those who asserted new rights as social justice. The Equal Pay Act in 1963 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act in 1964 gave working women had at hand a legal weapon to seize vigorously. The Equal Pay Act guaranteed women the same pay as men for the same job. The EEOC was created with a "national origin" as category of employment discrimination. The Equal Employment Opportunity

to 1975, the U.S. Congress seemed hell-bent on figuring out just what women wanted and giving it to them. Hearings, votes, and legislative victories came with breathtaking speed, and Congress passed more legislation in behalf of women's rights than it had considered seriously for decades. Courts, too, responded to the changed environment and the meticulously argued briefs of feminist lawyers, issuing a string of rulings that enlarged women's rights and opportunities.

Victories were never simple, however. Each had its own behind-the-scenes story about the combined strategic impact of policy-oriented feminists, Washington insiders, and ordinary working women who generated outside pressure by using their newly acquired rights to initiate EEOC complaints and court actions against discriminatory employers and their unions alike. Each story played out against the background roar of the cultural debate on "women's place" in kitchens, bedrooms, and offices. The media described women's political activism with implicitly raised eyebrows, as in this 1973 *Boston Globe* report on a National Women's Political Caucus meeting with state Democratic Party leaders:

In short, the women are refusing to be taken for granted any longer and are insisting that their voice be heard and that their gender be represented in Democratic decisions and leadership. That's what they'll tell the party brass at a breakfast at the Parker House Wednesday for which the ladies will defy all tradition and pick up the tab.⁴

Critical to women's new political clout were the thousands of women who asserted new rights as soon as they had them. With the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, working women had at hand new and powerful legal tools, which they seized vigorously. The Equal Pay Act made it illegal to pay women less than men for the same job. Title VII added "sex" to "race, religion, and national origin" as categories protected by federal law from employment discrimination. The Civil Rights Act also established an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to hear complaints and enforce

compliance with its antidiscrimination rules. In the first year of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, nearly 2,500 complaints (27 percent of the total) came from women charging sex discrimination. Individual women often filed their complaints without the support of their unions and in some instances charged the unions with discrimination. Even progressive unions like the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) that had a history of attention to women's issues and provided leadership to the President's Commission on the Status of Women found their female members restless and willing to use governmental remedies against their unions as well as their employers. The commissioners, however, were for the most part unprepared to consider sex discrimination a significant issue and for their first year made no response to such complaints. Commissioners Aileen Hernandez and Richard Graham and EEOC lawyer Sonia Fuentes, disturbed by their colleagues' inaction, began to articulate the need for an "NAACP for women" to pressure the EEOC to enforce the law. This, of course, was the idea behind the creation of NOW.⁵

Unions and companies often tried to claim that denials of access to overtime and higher paying jobs were necessitated by state protective laws.⁶ These laws, many on the books for half a century or more, "protected" women from exploitation by limiting the hours they could work and specifying allowable working conditions, such as limits on the amount of weight a woman could be asked to lift. Such rules, of course, resulted in the exclusion of women from many of the better paying occupations and from opportunities for promotion. Under feminist prodding, courts began to rule that protective laws could in fact discriminate and thereby violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.⁷

A landmark case began when Lorena Weeks sued Southern Bell Telephone Company for refusing to promote her to a job she had handled many times as a substitute and instead hired a man with less seniority. When she lost her case in 1967, Marguerite Rawalt of the NOW Legal Committee offered assistance on appeal. Attorney Sylvia Roberts from Baton Rouge prepared the case with Rawalt and argued it before the appeals court. Standing only 5 feet tall, Roberts marched around the

courtroom carrying the equipment required while arguing that the company rules that restrictions on jobs for women were not a "bonafide occupational qualification." The decision handed down in *Mary Bell* denied the validity of the "bfoq" exemption restrictions and set a new standard of proof that many, or even most, women job requirements justify such a restriction (states) would have to show that all or not do so. The choice to accept a parity with women as it already did for men.⁸

The greatest political goal of all, divided supporters of women's rights of the suffrage era, the ERA had first the National Women's Party, to remove obstacles to full legal equality. With a coalition that "Equality of rights under the law shall be enjoyed by all citizens of the United States or by any state like Southern Bell's would tumble their labor union allies, however, to protect working women from conditions, were horrified. To the situation of the most disadvantaged were passed solely for women get any kind of protection. dropped their opposition to a minimum wage or occupationalization that protection could initiatives and protests from both supporters had come to include the League of Women Voters, the YWCA, the American Association for Women's Rights, the American Cause, and the United Auto Workers capable of mounting a rally on Capitol Hill that

courtroom carrying the equipment required for the job in one hand while arguing that the company rules that placed weight lifting restrictions on jobs for women were not a "bona fide occupational qualification." The decision handed down in March 1969 in *Weeks v. Southern Bell* denied the validity of the "bfoq" exemption for Bell's weight-lifting restrictions and set a new standard of proof. No longer would a demonstration that many, or even most, women could not perform a specific job requirement justify such a restriction. Instead, employers (and states) would have to show that all or "substantially all" women could not do so. The choice to accept a particularly difficult job should rest with women as it already did for men.⁸

The greatest political goal of all, the Equal Rights Amendment, had divided supporters of women's rights for nearly half a century. A legacy of the suffrage era, the ERA had first been proposed in 1923 by the National Women's Party, to remove in one fell swoop the remaining obstacles to full legal equality. With a constitutional amendment mandating that "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex," legal restrictions like Southern Bell's would tumble in a hurry. Progressive reformers and their labor union allies, however, who had fought long and hard for laws to protect working women from excessive low wages and harsh working conditions, were horrified. To them, legal equality would only worsen the situation of the most disadvantaged, forgetting that protective laws were passed solely for women in an era when that was the only way to get any kind of protection. Since the 1930s, however, courts had dropped their opposition to legislation protecting all workers, such as minimum wage or occupational safety and health rules. Leaders' realization that protection could be discrimination grew in response to initiatives and protests from below.⁹ By 1970, however, the ranks of ERA supporters had come to include most of its former opponents: the League of Women Voters, Business and Professional Women, the YWCA, the American Association of University Women, Common Cause, and the United Auto Workers. Together they formed a coalition capable of mounting a massive 2 year campaign that generated more mail on Capitol Hill than the Vietnam War.¹⁰

The ERA received "official" support in 1970 in the report of President Nixon's short-lived Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities, appointed to gather information for his State of the Union address. Under the leadership of Virginia Allen, the Task Force produced a sharply worded pro-ERA report, *A Matter of Simple Justice*, which the administration quickly suppressed. Elizabeth Koonz, Director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor, finally succeeded in publishing the report (after it had circulated underground for several months) in time for the Women's Bureau's Fiftieth Anniversary Conference in June 1970.¹¹

Among the 800 contentious women at the Women's Bureau Conference was Arvonne Fraser, a longtime activist in the Democratic Party. She had managed her husband's successful campaigns for election to Congress and then staffed his congressional office. She listened raptly to Elizabeth Koonz, an African-American Republican, speaking about unity among women toward the goal of women's full participation in American life. Fraser jotted notes to herself so that she wouldn't forget: "Koonz—standing ovation—beautiful voice, resonant, deep with a lilt and humor. . . . At [the] end of her speech a young women's lib type stood up and said she didn't see many lower class women or many young women in the audience . . . immediately to her left an older black woman in [a] pink outfit came up and demanded: 'what do you expect a lower class woman to look like?' [T]he whole audience hooted and clapped and Mrs. K responded: 'we don't judge people by their outward appearance.'" Koonz indicated that some welfare mothers had been invited and when she asked young women to stand, ". . . they included young black women as well."¹²

Even as this feminist intergenerational clash occurred at the Women's Bureau Conference, Representative Martha Griffiths filed a discharge petition to force the ERA out of the House Judiciary Committee and onto the floor of the House. The previous month the ERA had received its first congressional committee hearing since 1956 as a result of a NOW demonstration in February. Twenty women from the Pittsburgh chapter, under the leadership of Wilma Scott Heide, had disrupted a hearing on the vote for 18-year-olds to demand immediate

action on the ERA. With a reluctant congressmen, the petition passed on July 20 and thus bypassed debate in which Emanuel Celler (once between a male and a female chestnut horse"), it passed the

On March 22, 1972, both the ERA. By the end of the year, it was clear that the rate of opposition forces began to grow. However, were a sign of women's progress that paralleled and reinforced previous successes and commissions on women to increase women's political participation, discriminatory laws, and to ensure women formed feminist caucuses.

In Congress, 1972 turned into a year of legislation. In addition to the Higher Education Act, provisions on the basis of sex, benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination or activity receiving federal aid for the growth of women's opportunity Act broadened its enforcement capabilities and their child care expenses. "a watershed year. We passed something. There was no opposition among women? So we just kept pushing."

Arvonne Fraser was one of the women with feminist outsiders in her golden years. As she described the movement much the same as she was organizing her own support group, she first to join NOW in 1962

action on the ERA. With a constant flow of letters and telegrams to reluctant congressmen, the petition reached the necessary 218 signatures on July 20 and thus bypassed a committee vote. On August 10 (after a debate in which Emanuel Celler argued that there was "as much difference between a male and a female as between a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse"), it passed the House 350 to 15.¹³

On March 22, 1972, both houses of Congress finally approved the ERA. By the end of the year, 22 of the needed 35 states had ratified it. No one could know that the rate of ratification would decelerate sharply as opposition forces began to organize themselves. The early victories, however, were a sign of women's political self-organization at the state level that paralleled and reinforced their new national visibility. Political caucuses and commissions on women in most states coordinated their efforts to increase women's political participation, to press for the elimination of discriminatory laws, and to generate new initiatives. In Minnesota, women formed feminist caucuses in both major political parties.¹⁴

In Congress, 1972 turned out to be a banner year for women's rights legislation. In addition to the ERA, Congress passed Title IX of the Higher Education Act, providing "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance," setting the stage for the growth of women's athletics later in the decade. The Equal Opportunity Act broadened the jurisdiction of the EEOC and strengthened its enforcement capacity. Working parents received a tax break for their child care expenses. Representative Bella Abzug recalled 1972 as "a watershed year. We put sex discrimination provisions into everything. There was no opposition. Who'd be against equal rights for women? So we just kept passing women's rights legislation."¹⁵

Arvonne Fraser was one of the Washington insiders whose linkages with feminist outsiders made for such a powerful alliance in these golden years. As she describes her own story, she came into the women's movement much the same way thousands did around the country, by organizing her own support group. Schooled in organizations, she tried first to join NOW in 1968 or 1969, but her letter was returned—proba-

bly a casualty of NOW's disorganization after the UAW withdrew financial support or perhaps NOW's early policy of restricting membership to professional women.¹⁶ So, she invited 20 women to her home to talk about the new women's movement. They would not have called themselves a consciousness-raising group. That was a label for younger radicals. But they easily adopted the small group-organizing strategy of women's liberation. At the first meeting, women decided not to introduce themselves in terms of their relationships with men precisely because most of them were in Washington because they were on the staff of, or married to, prominent male politicians. As word of the group spread, reporters tracked Fraser down at her husband's congressional office. "The reporter's first question was: 'Who are their husbands?' I refused to answer, and the group began to call itself 'the Nameless Sisterhood.'" ¹⁷

The Nameless Sisterhood linked an important underground of feminists in key policy-making positions in Washington. It spun off organizations—as when Bernice Sandler urged Arvonne Fraser to organize a Washington chapter of the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), which rapidly became a major source of activism on both legal and legislative fronts. It also initiated legislation. The story of the Women's Education Equity Act (WEEA) shows how informal networks can work when the timing is right.

The idea for the Women's Education Equity Act originated with Arlene Horowitz, a secretary on Capitol Hill who had worked for 3 years for a House Education Subcommittee. Frustrated that "the males on this committee felt that women were only good for typing and carrying out their wishes," she "ran out of typing one day, so I decided to knock off a bill."¹⁸ The idea was to create a Council on Women's Educational Programs in the Department of Education that could devise programs to address discrimination against women in educational access, in curriculum, and in hiring by funding small, innovative projects that could document problems and develop model solutions. Horowitz approached both Fraser and Sandler, who were initially dubious but responded to her persistence by calling a meeting to work on the draft and to ask Representative Patsy Mink to hold hearings. Fraser recalled,

We met one night in 1972 at draft the bill. Present were Sh sex-equity problems for the Marguerite Rawalt, who can consistent with the ERA when a few others rounded out the rizing of funds, we laughing about what that amount of n

As the bill progressed thro tive Mink and Senator Walter tion to generate publicity and longtime political ally, colum column, "Women's Rebellion proposed WEEA to myriad f ways educational systems tra study on vocational education "around the country porin NOW's widely read study e also quoted Fraser's own te looked at the education of they need, 'just in case'—ju they need to support them Women's Educational Equ

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We met one night in 1972 at George Washington University to draft the bill. Present were Shirley McCune, who was working on sex-equity problems for the National Education Association, and Marguerite Rawalt, who came to ensure that the bill would be consistent with the ERA when it passed. Sandler, Horowitz, I and a few others rounded out the group. When we came to the authorizing of funds, we laughingly entered \$30 million, fantasizing about what that amount of money could accomplish.¹⁹

As the bill progressed through Congress, sponsored by Representative Mink and Senator Walter Mondale, female networks went into action to generate publicity and support. Hearings aired the issues. Fraser's longtime political ally, columnist Geri Joseph wrote a widely reprinted column, "Women's Rebellion Against Dick and Jane," which linked the proposed WEEA to myriad feminist grassroots efforts to document the ways educational systems tracked girls into traditional roles: a WEAL study on vocational education for girls in Waco, Texas, NOW task forces "around the country poring over children's readers," and Princeton NOW's widely read study entitled "Dick and Jane as Victims." Joseph also quoted Fraser's own testimony at hearings on the bill: "We have looked at the education of girls as a kind of life insurance, something they need, 'just in case'—just in case they can't find a husband or in case they need to support themselves while looking for a husband."²⁰ The Women's Educational Equity Act became law 2 years later.

As women like Arlene Horowitz throughout the country began to re-think aspects of their everyday lives they had never previously questioned, they generated a barrage of new issues for feminist policy activists. Suddenly, concrete evidence of discrimination was easy to find and to present to courts and legislatures. Wave upon wave of new leaders and organizations arose. The surge of energy around each issue could carry it forward with astonishing speed. When the National Commission on Consumer Finance initiated hearings on the problem of women and consumer credit in the spring of 1972, policy makers were stunned by the flood of complaints and demands for action. NOW, WEAL, Parents Without Partners, and the American Civil Lib-

erties Union all conducted investigations on consumer credit, finding that the credit industry consistently marked women as "poor risks." If single, they might marry; if married they might become pregnant. In either case it was presumed that they would stop working, so their income was not considered a valid basis for credit. Divorced and widowed women found that they had no credit record. Married women's income was commonly not considered in mortgage applications, although some companies would reconsider on the basis of a physician's assurance that the woman was sterilized or taking birth control pills.²¹

Two NOW members, economist Jane Roberts Chapman and attorney Margaret Gates, established the Center for Women Policy Studies in March 1972 with a \$10,000 seed grant from Ralph Nader's organization. Later that year they garnered a \$40,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to investigate the problem of women and consumer credit (an interest created when "a female employee of the Ford Foundation was turned down on a credit application and senior staff there became interested in this economic issue").²² Their research, in turn, both galvanized other networks and produced a systematic body of "expert" information for presentation to legislative hearings and briefings for interested organizations. The result was the passage in 1974 of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, followed by 2 years of careful monitoring and pressure to ensure that the Federal Reserve Board's regulations to enforce the EOCA would have the necessary "teeth" to protect women. Problems persisted, but credit was substantially more available to women by the 1980s than it had ever been.²³ Another response to the revelations about women and credit was the creation of feminist credit unions and banks, illustrating again the two-pronged strategic approach that characterized the movement as a whole: change the rules but also build institutions that can function as if the world were feminist.

The most powerful organizational expression of the insider-outsider alliance was the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), which formed in 1971. In the tradition of the women's suffrage movement, NWPC set out to use the vote "to influence the priorities of our nation away from war and toward dealing with the diverse critical human problems of our society."²⁴ "The time has come," its leaders asserted,

"to assume our rightful place as for life-enhancing priorities."²⁵

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"to assume our rightful place as decision-makers and to raise our voices for life-enhancing priorities."²⁵

The vision of NWPC was somewhat muddy at the outset, which turned out to be a strength, at least for a time. Fundamental was the demand for equality, for full participation on the grounds of simple equity:

Certain facts of political life still shock and anger us. Women are 53 percent of the population. They turn out at the polls in larger numbers than men. They do most of the drudge work in politics. But of the 435 members in the House, only 12 are women. Out of 100 senators, one is a woman. There are no women Governors, few big city women mayors, only a scattering of women in state and city government.²⁶

They also suggested, however, that "women's political power" could "redirect our nation toward peaceful goals," a perspective that would have been very familiar to their suffragist foremothers. One of the founders recalled later the belief

... that women shared a common perspective based on their roles outside the power structure as nurturers and consumers or as victims of sex discrimination in education and employment. . . . Some [founders] thought consensus would arise out of women's innate humaneness, an alleged quality which made them more responsible in relation to power than men. The assumption that women were by nature more humane made some of the women uneasy, but since the case for political equality did not depend upon it, it was allowed to pass largely unexamined.²⁷

When Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem, Representative Shirley Chisholm, and Representative Patsy Mink called an initial meeting to announce their intention to form a national women's political caucus, more than 100 showed up. The initiating committee then invited women from across the country to attend an organizing conference on July 10-11, 1971, in Washington, D.C., the meeting that

Newsweek described as "rowdy." They articulated from the outset a "strategy of inclusiveness" that made NWPC one of the most racially diverse of all the new feminist organizations. For the first year and a half, the national leadership of NWPC consisted of a national policy council that included feminist media "superstars" like Friedan (originator of the caucus idea), Abzug, Chisholm, and Gloria Steinem; women with powerful media and political connections, like Shana Alexander (editor-in-chief of *McCall's*), Liz Carpenter (former press secretary of First Lady Lady Bird Johnson), Virginia Allen (former chair of Nixon's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities), Elly Peterson (former Vice Chair of the Republican National Committee), and Jill Ruckelshaus (aide to President Nixon); but also key leaders from minority communities, labor unions, and organizations of the poor: LaDonna Harris (Indian rights leader), Myrlie Evers (civil rights activist), Dorothy Height (President of the National Council of Negro Women and a leader in the YWCA), Fannie Lou Hamer (civil rights leader), Olga Madar (United Auto Workers), Beulah Sanders (Vice President of the National Welfare Rights Organization), and Wilma Scott Heide (NOW president).

At the organizing conference three caucuses formed immediately: black women, radical women, and younger women. Although the initiators were experienced with strong, national organizations, their inclusive strategy drew in many who preferred local experimentation and resisted centralized authority. As founder Rona Feit put it, there was no money and no staff and "infighting was common at every level."²⁸ Yet they launched a local organizing process that inaugurated 30 state caucuses by December 1971.

Enthusiastic state caucus founding meetings focused on gaining access to party presidential nominating conventions in 1972.²⁹ The result of this effort was astonishing. Both political parties increased the representation of women enormously. Female delegates to the Republican Convention rose from 15 to 30 percent, Democrats from 13 to 40 percent.³⁰ Each party also included a "women's plank." Shirley Chisholm's presidential candidacy (the first black woman ever to run) and the influence of feminists in the McGovern camp made the Caucus extremely

visible at the Democratic convention. McGovern supporters with concern about Caucus members' loyalty, her strongest supporters were distressed that even Bella Abzug was not to vote for Chisholm on the first ballot.

By 1973 the Caucus was ready in Houston, Texas: 1,500 women came to a caucus basis upon which to build a national Political Caucus is not to be the current movement, but the big umbrella weight and the muscle for those in this country see as concerns."³¹ A possible task of chairing a workshop. Those who envisioned a muscular caucus quickly realized that power with the state caucuses. A wave of roots and reflecting the spirit of current "superstar" leaders, one favor of grassroots leadership. (do the same. Friedan and the re

Perhaps most startling about survived its own centrifugal Ziegenhagen wrote in a report

As we listened to speaker at the last, we were struck by Gloria Steinem said what come in all sizes, shapes a was a kaleidoscopic delight with every description of waves, smart Afros, long blue jeans, pants suits, from California in a su

visible at the Democratic convention. Chisholm never really had a chance. McGovern supporters withheld some commitments out of concern about Caucus members' loyalty to Shirley Chisholm, but she and her strongest supporters were distressed at the weakness of her support. It stung that even Bella Abzug was unwilling to cast an initial, symbolic vote for Chisholm on the first ballot.³¹

By 1973 the Caucus was ready to hold a founding convention in Houston, Texas: 1,500 women came to establish "... the organizational basis upon which to build a national political movement for women." Shirley Chisholm argued that "the function of the National Women's Political Caucus is not to be the cutting edge of the women's liberation movement, but the big umbrella organization which provides the weight and the muscle for those issues which the majority of women in this country see as concerns."³² Arvonne Fraser was assigned the impossible task of chairing a workshop to design the structure for NWPC. Those who envisioned a muscular, centralized, and efficient organization quickly realized that power and responsibility would have to reside with the state caucuses. A wave of antielitism, emanating from the grass roots and reflecting the spirit of the women's liberation movement, led current "superstar" leaders, one after another, to offer to step aside in favor of grassroots leadership. Chisholm was the first, urging others to do the same. Friedan and the rest followed.³³

Perhaps most startling about the NWPC—apart from the fact that it survived its own centrifugal stresses—was its sheer diversity. Mary Ziegenhagen wrote in a report to members in Minnesota,

As we listened to speaker after speaker, each more impressive than the last, we were struck by the astonishing diversity of the crowd. Gloria Steinem said what we've always known, "You see, women come in all sizes, shapes and colors," and to be in the midst of it was a kaleidoscopic delight. A vast room crammed to the corners with every description of female persons: worried blue permanent waves, smart Afros, long black braids; silk print dresses with pearls, blue jeans, pants suits, who-cares-which-dress, and a delegate from California in a sun-colored muu-muu and lavender head

scarf. And no less varied and diverse were the political hues of that rainbow, as we were soon to learn when we got down to the business of deciding what shape the Caucus was to take.³⁴

In contrast to more radical feminist groups, women of color were part of NWPC from the outset. At stake was access to public power: representation in parties, in elected office, in appointments. Avis Foley, an African-American delegate from Minnesota, reported that "there must have been nearly 100 black women at the conference—enough to be truly visible and that really set the stage for me." After noting the diversity of black women there from across the country and their varied political persuasions, she described their tactical solidarity: "An unexpected opportunity for black solidarity arose when Gwen Cherry, Chair of the Convention and Democratic Florida State Legislator, was threatened with removal." Criticism focused on Cherry's failure to control the unruly crowd, many of whom were unaccustomed to abiding by parliamentary procedure. In response, members of the black caucus "... stationed ourselves at each mike to prevent monopoly by one person or group, guarded access to the rostrum until aisles were clear to ensure true count of a standing vote. No more was heard of Gwen's removal."³⁵

Similarly, a Chicana caucus made up of members of La Raza Unita Party functioned as "a highly disciplined group with articulate and feisty leaders." One observer reported that "with no small amount of courage and by paying attention—and undoubtedly, suppressing internal disputes—they succeeded in electing three of their members to the national steering committee and in gaining substantial concessions. . . ."³⁶ NWPC incorporated these diverse groups by agreeing to the formation of permanent minority caucuses for blacks, Chicanas, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans with representation on the National Steering Committee. It also guaranteed representation of Republicans (who were in a distinct minority). In subsequent years, permanent caucuses emerged also for Asian-Americans, lesbians, and Capitol Hill staff members.

It was a black Congresswoman from Texas, Barbara Jordan, who reminded the assembled women that the Declaration of Independence

was not written overnight nor conflict and strongly worded the vision that made a diverse stance despite inevitable conflict.

The winds are changing, and the liberation movement focusing itself, becoming the National Women's Political month. Representative . . . tively we've come together women's political movement civil rights leader was the York's City-wide Coordinator was there. They see, . . . about human rights rather than a family quarrel, as

Shortly after that four Washington NWPC office stint in the Peace Corps and the social revolution at home. Abzug's first congressional term threw herself into Georgia neighbor who said to her [come] help us form the next step through the door. A high-powered group at the time including Doris Meisner, My Millie Jeffrey, and Roy. A revolutionary new beginning in action groups. "[We want] Dues? Planning? What is the thing I knew someone around here; do dev

was not written overnight nor was the Constitution drafted without conflict and strongly worded dissent. Toni Morrison later articulated the vision that made a diverse group of women willing to go the distance despite inevitable conflicts:

The winds are changing, and when they blow, new things move. The liberation movement has moved from shrieks to shape. It is focusing itself, becoming a hard-headed power base, as the National Women's Political Caucus in Washington attested last month. Representative Shirley Chisholm was radiant: 'Collectively we've come together, not as a Women's Lib group, but as a women's political movement.' Fannie Lou Hamer, the Mississippi civil rights leader was there. Beulah Sanders, chairman of New York's City-wide Coordinating Committee of Welfare Groups, was there. They see, perhaps, something real: women talking about human rights rather than sexual rights—something other than a family quarrel, and the air is shivery with possibilities.³⁷

Shortly after that founding meeting, Lael Stegall walked into the Washington NWPC office with her 3-week-old son on her hip. After a stint in the Peace Corps she had returned in the late sixties "to be part of the social revolution at home." Interested in policy, she worked in Bella Abzug's first congressional campaign in 1970 and in 1971. After that she threw herself into George McGovern's campaign. It was a Republican neighbor who said to her late in 1972, "Have your second baby and [come] help us form the NWPC. We need women like you." That first step through the door "began a decade of politics for me." Despite the high-powered group at the helm—a set of accomplished women including Doris Meisner, Myrlie Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, Sissy Farenthold, Millie Jeffrey, and Ronnie Feit—Stegall remembers a sense of revolutionary new beginning that echoes the experiences of women's liberation groups. "[We were] clueless about how to build an organization. Dues? Planning? What do you do with a steering committee? Next thing I knew someone said 'someone has to learn how to raise money around here; do development; go talk to Roger Craver at Common

Cause. You are entrepreneurial, why don't you do that?' So I said, 'oh, OK.' In those years, you just did it. . . . By 1979 I knew as much about women, money, and power as anyone."³⁸

Involvement in NWPC brought women of color together not only with white women but also with each other. Their caucuses further nourished growing networks among minority feminists, who increasingly felt the need for organizations that could articulate their needs and their perspectives directly. The black caucuses of the NWPC and NOW led to the formation of the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO). In response to a call in the summer of 1973, over 100 African-American women gathered in a New York church "to find out what this women's lib thing is all about." A reporter for *Essence* described the gathering:

As the meeting progressed with women shooting hands into the air to speak, a testifying filled the crowded room like vapor. Applause, laughter and 'right ons' greeted the different chapters of each woman's life as recognition and empathy flashed through the women's minds. The talk was of being on welfare, of not having day care facilities and black men; of color discrimination within the race, salary and job discrimination, of being a lesbian, of being treated as a sex object, of learning to love oneself and black men.

Black men have confidently scoffed at "those crazy white women who just want out of the kitchen." As one brother said to me "Our women got more sense." But black women, regardless of their attitudes toward the women's movement, are largely disregarding male rhetoric about "stepping back" and the benefits of the "prone position."³⁹

At a press conference, founders of the NBFO announced that

The distorted male-dominated media image of the Women's Liberation movement has clouded the vital and revolutionary importance of the movement to Third World women, especially black women. The movement has been characterized as the exclusive property of

the so-called 'white' women who are involved in this movement. The race, and an awareness of the race, represent these characteristics. BLACK FEMINIST organizations represent the particular and the universal of half of the Black

Their militant rhetoric has influenced the United States to its racist and imperialist revolutions.

Carolyn Hanft described the two movements that predicted to address the country. As a result of the issues—involvement, however, was "stronger and to the point—even though involved in the time that mine too, and we're talking about our

An East Coast Black women's movement is no longer being such genuine. I have often admitted she cautiously, feeling that this weekend confirmed.

the so-called 'white middle class' women and black women seen involved in this movement have been seen as 'selling out,' 'dividing the race,' and an assortment of nonsensical epithets. Black feminists resent these charges and are therefore establishing THE NATIONAL BLACK FEMINIST ORGANIZATION, in order to address ourselves to the particular and specific needs of the larger, but almost cast aside, half of the Black race in Amerikka, the Black woman.⁴⁰

Their militant rhetoric, including spellings that visually link the United States to its racist past (the KKK or Ku Klux Klan), marked the continuing influence of black separatism and identification with Third World revolutions.

Carolyn Handy, an early member of NOW in Syracuse, New York, described the two reasons for founding NBFO. First, founders recognized that predominantly white feminist organizations may have tried to address the concerns of black women but had failed to do so effectively. As a result, black women felt a need "to get their heads together over issues—independently" as black women. Their second purpose however, was "... to make the movement—the women's movement—stronger and to attract and support all those black women with questions—even though the media keeps saying 'minority women aren't involved in the movement because they are already liberated.' ... It's time that minority women stand up and say, 'Listen, it's our movement, too, and we're supportive of our white sisters, and if you have any questions about our commitment, here we are. Ask us.'"⁴¹

An East Coast regional meeting of NBFO in November drew 500. Black women who attended spoke afterward of healing, of energy, of no longer being alone. Francella Gleaves wrote, "Never before have I felt such genuine sisterhood with other black women. A longtime feminist, I have often felt I was a pariah, since very few black women I knew ever admitted sharing my views."⁴² Suzanne Lipsky approached the meeting cautiously, tentatively, with low expectations. "But I came away with a feeling that something had been fulfilled; that I had been waiting for this weekend; that something very important and personal had been confirmed."⁴³ Alice Walker wrote lyrically about the power of being in a

room of black women who were not afraid and who talked about "things that matter. . . . So the air was clear and rang with earnest voices freed at last to speak to ears that would not automatically begin to close." She pondered the need to retrieve the history of black women, to persevere despite criticism from other black people and especially the fear of lesbians. "I only met other black women, my sisters, and valuable beyond measuring, every one of them. And we talked and we discussed and we sang for Shirley Chisholm and clapped for Eleanor Holmes Norton and tried to follow Margaret Sloan's lyrics and cheered Flo Kennedy's anecdotes. And we laughed a lot and argued some. *And had a very good time.*"⁴⁴ Within 4 months NBFO had a mailing list of 1,000.

With less fanfare, Latinas also created new organizations, but they found that identity politics was a continuing obstacle to unity among themselves (Mexican, Chicana, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.) as well as with other groups. Early groups of Puerto Rican women had begun to meet in Washington, D.C. and New York City in 1970-1971. Efforts to meet with Mexican-American women led them to believe they needed to develop separate organizations. As one of the early Puerto Rican activists recalled, she had "been deluded by the North American idea of Hispanic homogenization," which overlooks differences among the groups. "Latinas were not ready to have that kind of unity, for each group needed first to develop by itself." Lourdes Miranda also remembers her group meeting in the Cleveland Park Library in Washington D.C., where she and Carmen Maymi brought their daughters. One time her daughter came running down the hall saying that there was another group of women in the building "just like you" and asking why the two groups didn't meet together. As it turned out, there was a NOW chapter just beginning to form that also met in the library, but "of course" the two could not unite at that time. "We needed space to develop our brand of feminism. Our issues were not strictly gender issues, but racial as well." In 1972 the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women held their founding meeting at the Dupont Plaza Hotel in Washington. Despite mutual suspicions between professional women and community activists, the women who gathered discovered the power of Puerto Rican sisterhood. "What happened was so beautiful"

that it inspired participants to grow to more than 20 chapters from other Puerto Ricans focused on the needs of special employment inequality (linkism), and the broader issue of leadership of NCPRW were organizations as NWPC and organizations initiated by I

By the time Eliza Sanchez of 1975, Chicanas there had 8, Sanchez had walked under mother in the 2 year (1950 Mexico, later immortalized injunction enjoined working not only took over the picketing to do with sanitationing—be on the table along defining experience. I know the early years of women's activist teeth in the black community Advancement Initiative, the federal "anti-Louisiana. She had no staple of women's liberationism of womer Dallas in 1974, several committees of the local [Ladies] chapter. [We were count, [and] took over] to feel more like meetings, etc. as well as Washington and here this is where I want National Mexican

that it inspired participants to build a national organization that quickly grew to more than 20 chapters and endured for 25 years. Facing suspicion from other Puerto Rican organizations, chapters of NCPRW focused on the needs of specific communities, violence against women, employment inequality (linked to racial discrimination as much as sexism), and the broader issues of racism, poverty, and education. The leadership of NCPRW were also positioned to have a voice in such organizations as NWPC and a network of presidents of national women's organizations initiated by Dorothy Height.⁴⁵

By the time Eliza Sanchez moved to Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1975, Chicanas there had been meeting for several years. At the age of 8, Sanchez had walked union picket lines with her Mexican immigrant mother in the 2 year (1950-1952) strike by Chicano mine workers in New Mexico, later immortalized in the movie *Salt of the Earth*. When a court injunction enjoined workers from picketing, women in the community not only took over the picket lines but also insisted that their issues—having to do with sanitation and lack of hot water in company-owned housing—be on the table alongside hours and wages. That was, for Sanchez, “a defining experience. I knew what the power of women could be.” During the early years of women's liberation, however, she was cutting her own activist teeth in the black civil rights movement as an organizer for Community Advancement Incorporated, an OEO (Office for Equal Opportunity, the federal “antipoverty” program) organization in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She had no idea that “her” movie, *Salt of the Earth*, had become a staple of women's liberation events.⁴⁶ Soon, however, the growing assertiveness of women within the Chicano movement drew her in. “In Dallas in 1974, several women friends and I got on the nomination committee of the local IMAGE [Mexican-American Government Employees] chapter. [We were] tired of all those men, decided to make our votes count, [and] took over the chapter. The guys were pissed. We were beginning to feel more like ‘Hey, wait a minute. We can think, strategize, run meetings, etc. as well as you can.’” The next year when she arrived in Washington and heard that women were organizing she thought “wow, this is where I want to be.” What she found was a group calling itself the National Mexican American Women's Association (MANA), whose

meetings involved 25-30 at any one time, eager to "do something" and willing to weather the stress and tension over leadership and power that inevitably followed.⁴⁷

Multicultural feminism also found a small niche within the federal bureaucracy. Carol Bonasarro attended the Houston founding conference of NWPC as director of the Women's Rights Project of the Federal Civil Rights Commission. She had served on the Commission staff since the mid-1960s, and when Congress mandated that the Commission must include issues of sex discrimination within its jurisdiction, she received the appointment to head the Women's Project. A white woman, Bonasarro was acutely aware that the leadership of the commission viewed feminism as a "white women's thing" and had resisted previous efforts to place women's rights within its jurisdiction. As a civil rights veteran, she set out to win the Commission over to a vision of a multicultural, multiracial women's rights program. Bonasarro undertook a series of trips around the country to meet women in the movement and get responses to her program. She met with Hispanic, Asian, and black women, as well as noted white feminist leaders. It was an experience of "light bulbs going off, chords being struck." Things she had known all along "were up there in neon." Suddenly she had names and explanations for her "year from hell" as an electrical engineering undergraduate at Cornell whose classmates refused to be her lab partner and whose advisor continually asked, "when are you going to liberal arts where you belong"—and for the frustrations in her career when men received recognition and awards that she knew she deserved. Finally she could link her own anger together with her passionate commitment to racial equality. For Bonasarro, the Houston conference was utterly enthralling.⁴⁸

With the support of the Commission's Staff Director, John A. Buggs, Bonasarro hired a diverse staff and set out to educate the Commission and its staff on the issue of women's rights. Of course she ran into prejudices. When she brought in Gloria Steinem and Margaret Sloan to speak, she was unprepared for the negative response of black women on the staff (Sloan was black but also lesbian). Bonasarro's goal, however, was to link the issue of women's rights to every other issue considered by the Commission.⁴⁹

Carol Bonasarro discovered a multicultural cause she was looking for it. The work of which focused on investigation and participation strengthened the participation of minorities only through openly feminist organizations. The difference was that organizations focused on women's rights; the Civil Rights Commission focused on sex and race, and they understood the group an opportunity to speak in its own voice. The Women's Project published a special issue of *Rights Digest* in 1974, in which they gave voice to Chicanas, Native American women, Pacific Island women, Chinese immigrants, and so on. The issue was titled, "Sexism and Racism: Frontiers."

Similarly, the National Council of Women asserted leadership in the women's movement. The Office of Equal Opportunity of the Department of Labor to generate data on housing. A leadership policy state the legacy of their founder: "Mary McLeod Bethune women to secure justice, the idea of the Council of Negro Women, never when women throughout the nation demanding their rights as persons with HUD to develop a home ownership program. NCNW leaders had learned "lessons, . . . [that] sex discrimination in the housing industry."⁵¹ Shortly thereafter she wrote to the presidents of major organizations to fill this idea of unity of women. . . . collective strategies concerning two

BY FAR, THE SINGLE greatest issue in the American workforce. Beyond the issues of housework between hu

Carol Bonasarro discovered a multicultural women's movement because she was looking for it. The work of the Civil Rights Commission, which focused on investigation and policy recommendation, further strengthened the participation of minority women by linking them not only through openly feminist organizations but also in their communities. The difference was that organizations like NOW focused strictly on women's rights; the Civil Rights Commission refused to separate issues of sex and race, and they understood the political necessity of giving each group an opportunity to speak in its own voice. With a multicultural staff, the Women's Project published a special women's rights issue of *Civil Rights Digest* in 1974, in which they gave voice to the specific concerns of Chicanas, Native American women, Puerto Rican women, Asian-American women, Chinese immigrants, Issei women, and black women. The issue was titled, "Sexism and Racism: Feminist Perspectives."⁵⁰

Similarly, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) began to assert leadership in the women's movement through a contract with the Office of Equal Opportunity of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to generate data on discrimination against women in housing. A leadership policy statement in 1974 claimed the feminist legacy of their founder: "Mary McLeod Bethune's idea for uniting women to secure justice, the idea on which she founded the National Council of Negro Women, never had more relevance than in this day when women throughout the nation are raising their collective voices demanding their rights as persons in all areas of life." Having worked with HUD to develop a home ownership opportunities program, NCNW leaders had learned "from this and our own life's experiences, . . . [that] sex discrimination is pervasive in every area of the housing industry."⁵¹ Shortly thereafter, NCNW President Dorothy Height wrote to the presidents of major national women's organizations "to fulfill this idea of unity of women . . . [by coming] together to develop collective strategies concerning two basics of life—shelter and food."⁵²

BY FAR, THE SINGLE greatest impact of the women's movement was in the American workforce. Beyond housing, beyond day care, beyond issues of housework between husbands and wives, it was issues of career

and work opportunities that allowed women to remake the nation. Whether they worked in factories, in offices, or as professionals, the politics of work was an abiding concern for feminists.⁵³ Consciousness-raising groups facilitated the decisions of millions of women to take advantage of crumbling barriers to professional education and occupational advancement, but women also brought concerted pressure to bear on the workplace.

When Helen Dudley conducted Seminars for Women Executives in the Federal Government in 1968, she introduced an analysis of sex discrimination as part of the curriculum. Dorothy Nelms, an African-American woman working in the Social Security Program, attended one of the seminars as part of an executive development program. Recently divorced, raising two children on her own, Nelms was seeking ways to enhance her career. During the 2 day meeting, leaders invited participants to describe their experiences of sex discrimination. Dorothy recalls that they all said, "we know what it is but it doesn't affect us." So the leader went around the circle asking, "Did you ever come up for promotion in your job? Did you get it? Tell me what happened." She "made us all relive things we had experienced but had buried. Within four hours we were raging maniacs, we had become so livid." After a series of such seminars, a few women took the next step. They called themselves Federally Employed Women, with the pointed acronym, FEW. Nelms, who had already joined NOW and the International Toastmistress Clubs, joined FEW as soon as she heard about it in late 1968: 10 years later she was its president, and 30 years later she served a second term.⁵⁴

Highly focused on job discrimination in the federal government, FEW set out to train members in administrative skills and to give them the knowledge and tools they needed to challenge discrimination. It also set out to train the government itself. An executive order in 1967 had set up a Women's Program throughout the government, appointing people to see that antidiscrimination rules were enforced, but it was FEW that saw to it that the women placed in those positions were properly trained, for example, in how to read statistics and how to frame policy recommendations. Soon FEW was also heavily involved in lobbying

on Capitol Hill on such issues as affirmative action.⁵⁵

Similarly, professional women in academia, professors of sociology and modern languages organized to set up formal committees on the topic. The movement spread to fields in the natural sciences and social sciences. By 1970, 30 groups were established. Between 1968 and 1970, 30 studies on women in academia were published in detail.⁵⁷

Academic women's caucuses for advancement: some went so far as to form caucuses of their professions.⁵⁸ In 1970, including Bread and Roses four-tenths of the way to the top, the Historical Association (AHA) accused women in the historical narrative of treating women, when they were not. Male historians reacted with early objectivity and accusingly, angry meeting at the university.

Bernice Sandler initiated a campaign against discrimination in colleges at the University of Maryland. The issue had been repeated many times before. In January 1970, the Department of Labor demanding that federal contracts to include antidiscrimination regulations. Specific charges of sex discrimination were brought by individual women. More than 100 charges were brought against more than 100 institutions.

In response to similar charges, the government began to pay new attention to dropping barriers and quotas.

on Capitol Hill on such issues as the Equal Rights Amendment and affirmative action.⁵⁵

Similarly, professional women began to organize themselves. In academia, professors of sociology, history, political science, psychology, and modern languages organized caucuses to pressure their associations to set up formal committees on the status of women.⁵⁶ Soon their example spread to fields in the natural sciences as well as the rest of the humanities and social sciences. Between 1968 and 1971, 50 such women's groups were established. Between 1969 and 1972, such groups sparked 30 studies on women in academic disciplines, documenting the extent of discrimination in detail.⁵⁷

Academic women's caucuses did not simply pressure for professional advancement: some went so far as to challenge the intellectual premises of their professions.⁵⁸ In 1970, a panel of young, feminist historians (including Bread and Roses founder Linda Gordon) at the American Historical Association (AHA) accused the profession not only of ignoring women in the historical narratives presented in textbooks but also of treating women, when they did so, with condescending stereotypes. Male historians reacted with incredulity, claiming the mantle of scholarly objectivity and accusing the women of political bias. It was a turbulent, angry meeting at the usually decorous AHA.⁵⁹

Bernice Sandler initiated one of the most far-reaching challenges to discrimination in colleges and universities after she was denied tenure at the University of Maryland. Upon discovering that her experience had been repeated many times over, she approached WEAL about taking action. In January 1970, WEAL filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor demanding a review of all colleges and universities holding federal contracts to determine whether they complied with antidiscrimination regulations; 250 institutions were targeted for more specific charges of sex discrimination. By the end of the year, suits brought by individual women and for women as a class had been brought against more than 360 institutions of higher education.⁶⁰

In response to similar pressures, most professional schools not only began to pay new attention to their own employment patterns but also to drop barriers and quotas designed to limit the enrollment of female

students. The revolution was quiet. Two decades of rapidly increasing access to higher education had prepared a large number of women for law school, medical school, and the like. As the floodgates opened, thousands seized the opportunity. The number of female applicants to law school, for example, grew 14-fold between 1969 and 1972.⁶¹ By 1976, women were more than 19 percent of medical school graduates, up from 7.5 percent in 1969.⁶² Stories of hostile treatment in this formerly male terrain abound. Doctoral students in chemistry found dog feces in their desk drawers.⁶³ Less hostile departments simply reminded women from time to time that they didn't quite fit. Kathleen Graham's female classmates at Stanford Law School (1968-1971) developed intense bonds to help them cope. What they faced was not hostility but a generalized inability of those around them—both in and out of school—to entertain the category female lawyer. "It took a lot of energy to think about how to respond to the broad spectrum of response to us that suggested we weren't serious. . . . [We were] being constantly, subtly undercut and relegated to a complementary, soft, feminine role that [undermined] the possibility and opportunities and reality of being intellectually rigorous and articulate and strong."⁶⁴

The dramatic increase in the number of women "in the pipeline," in turn, began to change the workforce, heralded by a growing number of "firsts." Among the earliest were women who had been waiting, fully prepared, for ordination. In 1970, two major Lutheran denominations approved the ordination of women. In 1972, Sally Preisand became the first female rabbi. Most major Protestant denominations experienced turbulence as "women's liberation" presentations appeared on the agendas of major national meetings. Episcopalians in 1970 seated female deputies for the first time but denied ordination on the grounds that women were not in the "image of Christ." Sandra Hughes Boyd had been devastated by the rejection of women's ordination. When she heard that 11 women deacons and several bishops planned an "irregular" ordination in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974, she "knew [she] had to be there."

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The church quickly declared such ordinations "invalid," but after 20 more years of intense debate and politicking, in 1976 the Episcopal Church reversed itself, recognized the ordinations of these rebellious pioneers, and allowed future women's ordination.⁶⁶

ALTHOUGH MANY OF the most powerful and visible symbols of women's new access to the world of public work were highly educated professionals, greater numbers lay in the tenacious and courageous challenges raised by women in the "pink and blue collar" ghettos of factories and offices. In 1974, clerical workers in Boston and Chicago created a new kind of workplace organization using the techniques of community organizing pioneered by Saul Alinsky rather than traditional trade union methods.

Day Piercy, as an undergraduate at Duke University and then a student in social work at the University of North Carolina in the late sixties, had become intensely involved in community organization and briefly connected to women's liberation groups. After moving to Chicago in 1969, she served as the first staff member of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU), working out of a small office in the YWCA. She convinced the YWCA to hire her "to do rap groups with working class women," which led to a strong interest in day care. She and Heather Booth (one of the founders of the West Side Group and later the CWLU) created an action committee for decent child care through the CWLU despite serious debates about "whether it was correct to work on issues like child care."

It was the demise of the day care project—in the aftermath of Nixon's veto of federal child care funding—that provoked Piercy to shift her focus toward organizing working women. Heather Booth had recently

founded the Midwest Academy, a training center for community organizers. Together they and several others debated the possibilities of organizing women workers. They modeled themselves on the farmworkers' union led by Caesar Chavez. Piercy recalls thinking that the development of the Farm Workers, which began with civil rights issues and then moved to more traditional forms of collective bargaining, "was totally parallel to feminism in many ways. I began to wonder if you couldn't [use] those same principles: dignity for women workers, equal opportunity for women, equal pay for equal work—by the end of 1972 [these were] widespread."⁶⁷

Women Employed, then, was founded by two women in their middle twenties who had been active in the women's liberation movement, influenced by civil rights, farmworkers, and community organizing, and who had an institutional connection to the YWCA, where Piercy was still employed. Aware that labor unions denigrated the possibility of organizing women, they set their sights on women workers in the Chicago Loop.

One of their first steps was to conduct training sessions for women at the Midwest Academy. Ann Ladky and Ann Scott from Chicago NOW showed up. Piercy quickly discovered among them a capacity for strategic and pragmatic thinking and a strong interest in organizing she had missed in more ideological groups. Ellen Cassedy arrived from Boston, where she worked with an organization of Harvard office workers started by Bread and Roses member Karen Nussbaum. Cassedy recalls that after her years of antiwar and women's movement activism in Chicago and Berkeley, she was stunned by discussions that began with "OK, what are you going to win?" Just the word 'victory' felt weird." She spent 2 months more working with the fledgling Women Employed and returned to Boston inspired to change their small group into an organization that could win concrete changes for working women.⁶⁸ That group became 9 to 5, ultimately a national network of organizations of clerical workers.

Women Employed and 9 to 5 took the insights generated by several years of consciousness-raising and applied them to the problem of organizing women in one of the most female-dominated sectors in the labor

force. Instead of focusing on time and hours, they talked about office workers of their subordinate secretaries made coffee for their boss's wife or children. Office workers regularly trained secretaries for which they could face harassment from men at all levels. Aware that office workers were extremely vulnerable, WE administered questionnaires at subway stations. The survey results announced that clerical workers toiled about limitations on advancement not only unfair but illegal.

Like the Farm Workers' Union with an assertion of power to move from there—perpetual organization. Using information against major corporate companies, for demonstrations that were "unorganizable" (a company where parents' wishes) she was other people. It was depressing. I just could not do what it had come to be because she was a woman who had been up by my bootstraps. However, a friend

force. Instead of focusing on the traditional labor union issues of wages and hours, they talked about the little daily humiliations that reminded office workers of their subordinate status *as women*. Highly trained legal secretaries made coffee for the entire office; secretaries performed personal services outside their job descriptions—shopping for presents for their boss's wife or children and delivering and picking up laundry; office workers regularly trained inexperienced men to take over senior positions for which they could never be considered and endured sexual harassment from men at all levels; and clerical pay remained extremely low on the assumption that women didn't really need the income. Aware that office workers were often isolated from one another and extremely vulnerable, WE and 9 to 5 developed methods of gathering information and feeding it back in a public forum. They passed out questionnaires at subway stops and near office buildings. Then they announced survey results at a press conference and through flyers that invited clerical workers to meetings at the end of the workday. In the flyer, secretaries could read information about salary discrepancies, about limitations on advancement, and about how these practices were not only unfair but illegal.

Like the Farm Workers' Union, Women Employed proposed to begin with an assertion of legal civil rights, win some early victories, and move from there—perhaps—to more traditional forms of union organization. Using information gained from questionnaires, they filed suits against major corporations, including Kraft, Sears, and banks and insurance companies, for violations of Title VII. They also held flamboyant demonstrations that were empowering for women previously considered "unorganizable." Darlene Stille, for example, worked in an insurance company where despite her hard-won college degree (against her parents' wishes) she found herself ". . . in a great bullpen with a lot of other people. It was noisy; it was uncomfortable; it was gloomy; it was depressing. I just couldn't believe that after all those years of effort, this is what it had come to." Then she was rejected for a supervisory post because she was a woman. "I just had this notion that I could pull myself up by my bootstraps. And my bootstraps kept breaking." In April 1973, however, a friend in NOW persuaded her to attend a Women Em-

ployed demonstration and for the first time she saw that change was possible. She joined a WE picket line at Kraft Foods 2 days later. "It was wonderful, feeling that all this anger that had been backing up inside me now had a release, that I could bark back somehow . . . that I could find my voice in a larger community of women." Inspired, Stille became an activist and eventually served as Chairperson of Women Employed.⁶⁹

Demonstrations not only recruited members, they were carefully designed to provoke media coverage and spread the word. Iris Rivera was an excellent legal secretary in a major Chicago law firm. When her supervisor ordered her to prepare the office coffee every morning, she refused on the grounds that "I don't drink coffee; it's not listed as one of my job duties, and ordering the secretaries to fix the coffee is carrying the role of homemaker too far." When she was fired, Women Employed saw a wonderful opportunity to dramatize their issues. They held a demonstration at the law office, national media in tow, and presented the lawyers with a bag of used coffee grounds and a flyer on how to make your own coffee. Step 5 was "Turn switch to on. This is the most difficult step, but, with practice, even an attorney can master it." Iris Rivera's face and words flashed across the country on TV screens and in newspapers, sparking debates and small revolutions in thousands of offices. She got her job back.⁷⁰

Both 9 to 5 and Women Employed inspired similar groups in a number of other cities and a movie starring Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton. Actress Jane Fonda, who knew Nussbaum through anti-war movement networks, arranged a conversation with members of 9 to 5 who were invited not only to tell stories of office work from the point of view of secretaries but also to imagine changes they would like. These became grist for the script writers. The movie used comic exaggeration to portray scenes that any woman who ever worked in an office would recognize: incompetent men whose offices run only because of the behind-the-scenes competence of women, secretaries with skill and ambition who experience routine harassment and discover that promotion is impossible. The sequences in which women take over the office, exact revenge on evil bosses, and run it more effectively than ever were drawn directly from the fantasies of members of 9 to 5.⁷¹

In 1981, 9 to 5 agreed to become a part of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The SEIU, however, had in the meantime created a division in which women began to work. This division was the Union Women (CLUW). The CLUW came from women who had been in the International Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUE); the International Union of Electrical, Electronic, and Radio-Telegraph Workers (IUE); the American Federation of Teachers (AFT); the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). IUE, with their deep roots in the growing female sector of the Second Wave. AFSCME, in the growing female sector divisions not only prevented female activists in the seventies, however, they

Several CLUW found themselves in the early seventies. Those divisions on the status of people going to do you [the labor movement]? government intervention. The IUE, for example, a Social Action Department following year it held the problem of sex d

It was difficult to know each other in Status of Women, WEAL. A few mo

In 1981, 9 to 5 agreed to become District 925 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and to take on the unionization of clerical employees using their new methods.⁷² The labor movement, however, had in the meantime enjoyed its own upsurge within the ranks in which women began to work together to build a Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). The initiative that led to the formation of CLUW came from women who had been active in the formation of NOW and the NWPC.⁷³ Most important were the Women's Department of the United Auto Workers, which had housed NOW in its first year; the International Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers (IUE); the Communications Workers of America (CWA); the American Federation of State County and Municipal Workers (AFSCME); and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). UAW and IUE, with their deep roots in the radical unionism of the 1930s, had provided leadership on women's issues from the very beginning of the Second Wave. AFSCME, CWA, and AFT had organized constituencies in the growing female sectors of the labor force. But traditional union divisions not only prevented concerted action, for the most part they kept female activists in different unions from being aware of each other, even when they worked in the same city. By the late sixties and early seventies, however, they were meeting on other grounds.⁷⁴

Several CLUW founders recalled the charged atmosphere in the early seventies. Those who were active in NOW, WEAL, or commissions on the status of women were constantly asked, "When are you people going to do your part [i.e., begin to raise women's issues within the labor movement]?" Female workers now regularly resorted to government intervention against both their employers and their unions. The IUE, for example, in 1966 expanded its Civil Rights Department to a Social Action Department in order to incorporate women's issues; the following year it held a national women's conference that spotlighted the problem of sex discrimination.⁷⁵

It was difficult to organize across union lines. A few leaders got to know each other in the aftermath of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, and then through state commissions, NOW, and WEAL. A few more met at the roundtable discussions of women union

leaders hosted by Elizabeth Koonz at the U.S. Women's Bureau. Others, like Olga Madar of the UAW and Addie Wyatt of the Amalgamated Meatcutters Union, met in antiwar activities or in support of the farmworkers' organizing efforts.⁷⁶

More than 3,000 women showed up at the founding meeting for CLUW in 1974, twice the expected attendance. Joan Goodin described the excitement as "electric." "I remember being hugged in a jammed elevator by a stranger who proclaimed: 'Sister, we're about to put trade union women on the map.'"⁷⁷ Founders were surprised at how exciting it was simply to establish a network among union women. Addie Wyatt, elected Vice President, proclaimed, "CLUW has been a shot in the arm to the total labor movement. It has brought trade union women to the surface . . . never again will they be content to be absent from the world's agenda."⁷⁸ In subsequent years, despite serious internal divisions between 1974 and 1977, CLUW became an important training ground in leadership skills as well as a support group for women. For many, leadership in CLUW has translated into further leadership roles in local unions.⁷⁹ Joyce Miller, the first woman on the AFL-CIO Executive Council in 1980, was a president of CLUW.⁸⁰

Yet CLUW also fueled a serious internal struggle with some radicalized graduates of elite colleges, determined to spread revolution. The effort of leftist sectarian groups to infiltrate and take over CLUW provoked a strong reaction by the founders of CLUW and forced a relatively closed hierarchy to seal its borders. CLUW was also shaped by the nature of the labor movement. Careful not to encroach on the organizing territories of individual unions or to appear in any way to be competitive with them, CLUW forswore any effort to reach out to unorganized workers.

At the height of the movement, women were not only challenging employers and political parties, they were rewriting the language itself. The story of Women in Publishing shows how a social movement can find its way into newspapers, textbooks, and schools across the country. Ann Ladky, a founder of Women in Publishing, attended one of Day Piercy and Heather Booth's training sessions at the Midwest Academy in 1972 and went on to become a leader in Women Employed. Her path

to activism, however consciousness-raising rooms, and even campus in 1970, La promotion department April 1971 to get the women "who were ment." Several were bate the sexism experiences as well ponder setting up join the Chicago I but I was disturbed women working for ganization, Women self encodes the insights of numerous lines for nonsexist to adopt them.⁸¹

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to activism, however, had been through an eclectic mix of grass roots consciousness-raising that surged through workplaces, kitchens, bedrooms, and even car pools. After graduating from Northwestern University in 1970, Ladky found a job in publishing as a writer in the promotion department of Scott Foresman. The car pool she joined in April 1971 to get to her office in the Chicago suburbs was filled with women "who were all reading and talking about the women's movement." Several were members of NOW, and in the car they would debate the sexism of textbooks, offering examples from their own experiences as well as from discussions in NOW. Soon they began to ponder setting up a women's group at work. They also urged Ladky to join the Chicago NOW chapter. "I didn't see myself as a joiner at all, but I was disturbed the longer we talked." Late in 1971 a dozen or so women working for different publishers decided to create a citywide organization, Women in Publishing. Their first concern, that language itself encodes the subordination of women at every turn, drew on the insights of numerous CR groups and task forces. They drew up guidelines for nonsexist language use and set out to persuade major publishers to adopt them.⁸¹

In October 1974 the *New York Times Magazine* published excerpts from "Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Company Publications," an 11-page statement that had been distributed to all editorial employees and to 8,000 nonfiction authors of textbooks, reference works, trade journals, educational materials, and children's books. These guidelines inscribed the key elements of feminist ideas about sex roles and individual choice by the middle 1970s: "Men and women should be treated primarily as people, and not primarily as members of opposite sexes." Thus the guidelines advised avoidance of typecasting either men or women either by the type of work or by level of authority. "Members of both sexes should be represented as whole human beings with *human* strengths and weaknesses, not masculine or feminine ones." Not only were authors advised to avoid stereotypic and simplistic presentations, they were also warned to deal with women and men in the same terms (negative example: "Henry Harris is a shrewd lawyer and his wife, Ann, is a striking brunette"), to

avoid patronizing, "girl-watching," and sexual innuendo, and to treat women "as part of the rule, not as the exception" (e.g., woman doctor).⁸² The grammar of sexism was spelled out in admonitions to avoid the generic use of "man" or male pronouns (with numerous examples to illustrate possible substitutions: firefighter, not fireman; chair, not chairman; humanity, not man) and the many ways that women can be diminished by being referred to by first names when men are designated with full names and titles or by identification in terms of roles as wife, mother, sister, or daughter regardless of relevance, or by such pairings as "man and wife" and "the men and the ladies," and by never being first in order of mention. The disquiet of the *Times* editors, who themselves had not adopted such guidelines, was reflected in the subtitle: "The McGraw-Hill Book Company's guidelines for equal treatment of the sexes, in which the average American loses *his* pronoun, Betty Co-ed becomes simply *student* and boys shall henceforth grow to *adulthood*."⁸³

By the time publishers began to pay serious attention to the grammar of sexism, women's liberation had been a major force in the mass media for several years. Feminists communicated among themselves in a startling array of journals and newsletters. By 1975 there were upward of two dozen feminist presses and nearly 200 periodicals.⁸⁴ The most prominent bridge between the internal conversations generated by these publications (often within very specific groups, such as professional caucuses or feminists interested in such topics as abortion or therapy referral) and the broader public was *Ms.* magazine, whose preview edition, enclosed in an issue of *New York* magazine, appeared at the end of 1971.

Ms. set out to compete with mainstream women's magazines on the shelves of grocery stores. Glossy, slick, professional—run by professional journalists Gloria Steinem and Pat Carbine (former editor of *McCall's* and *Look*)—the first "stand-alone" issue of *Ms.* sold out 300,000 copies within 8 days, generating a modest but encouraging 36,000 subscriptions and an astonishing 20,000 letters.⁸⁵ On the cover, a figure of the Hindu goddess Kali brandished in her ten arms the tools of women's daily lives: an iron, a telephone, a hand mirror, an automobile steering wheel, a clock, a feather duster, a frying pan, and a typewriter.⁸⁶ In that

issue women first read wife's Moment of Truth "deep personal connection of age, economics, and that, in male or mixed"; Letty Cottler and Celestine Ware Black Family and women's issue, how to complain about a significant range of feminism.

This first issue wish. She chose its circle of friends.⁸⁸ branches of the Second the founders of women of NOW. Already professional and political radicalized, fundamental connections, and go leader and spokes erable fire. Yet through networks Abzug or Shirley Hers was always she insisted that speaking engaged Convention in New York, she continued larizer of some of *Ms.* lacked the but neither was an optimistic and

issue women first read about "the click" in Jane O'Reilly's "The Housewife's Moment of Truth." Gloria Steinem explained "Sisterhood" as "deep personal connections of women . . . [which] often ignore barriers of age, economics, worldly experience, race, culture—all the barriers that, in male or mixed society, had seemed so difficult to cross." Judy Syfer humorously addressed working women's exhaustion with "I Want A Wife"; Letty Cottin Pogrebin explained how to raise children without imposing traditional sex roles in "Down with Sexist Upbringing," and Cellestine Ware interviewed Eleanor Holmes Norton on "The Black Family and Feminism." Additional articles on welfare as a women's issue, how to set up child care centers, abortion rights, where to complain about job discrimination, and lesbian love portrayed a significant range of feminist concerns and activities.⁸⁷

This first issue was the brainchild of Gloria Steinem from start to finish. She chose its contents, and the authors were drawn from her own circle of friends.⁸⁸ Steinem is an interesting link between the various branches of the Second Wave. Generationally she was a bit older than the founders of women's liberation and a bit younger than the founders of NOW. Already a professional journalist, she was drawn into the professional and political circles around NOW and WEAL, but she was radicalized, fundamentally, by radical feminism. With her media connections, and good looks, Steinem was quickly anointed a feminist leader and spokesperson by journalists. For this she came under considerable fire. Yet because most of her close political connections were through networks of policy activists, she could be a superstar like Bella Abzug or Shirley Chisholm without being driven from the movement. Hers was always a multicultural vision of feminism. Through the 1970s she insisted that she share the platform with a woman of color at all her speaking engagements. A founder of NWPC, activist in the Democratic Convention in 1972, and founder of Women's Action Alliance in New York, she continually functioned as a link between groups and a popularizer of some of their more radical ideas.⁸⁹

Ms. lacked the raw angry passion of women's liberation manifestos, but neither was it a dry, policy-oriented brief. It packaged feminism in an optimistic and personalized frame using the approaches of tradi-

tional women's magazines, such as "how-to" articles with an altogether new twist: how to raise children without imposing stereotypic sex roles or how to file an EEOC complaint about discrimination on the job. Through *Ms.*, a new form of address entered the popular culture. Many Americans found it odd, even insultingly strange, but *Ms.* defined its title as a "form of address meaning whole person, female" that did not define women according to their marital status (as Miss and Mrs.)."⁹⁰

Women's liberation found another institutionalized and mainstream outlet in the creation of women's studies programs on campuses across the country. Women's studies started with informal courses at "free universities" and other alternative settings. Indeed the campus setting of much of the New Left made it natural for consciousness-raising groups and women's caucuses of New Left organizations to offer courses as a form of outreach. Leaders of such courses made no pretense of expertise, but they wanted to spread the word that women were oppressed and needed to band together. They used courses to extend their own understanding of women's history and the nature of female oppression, to review classics like Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, as well as to read the new feminist literature that was growing with breathtaking speed.⁹¹ To colleges and universities, they began to make the claim that women were a worthy subject of study.

Just as the civil rights movement had stimulated a demand for black history and African-American studies, the women's liberation movement posed questions that challenged the standard content of traditional courses in history, literature, and social sciences. Feminists who were already in positions of academic leadership played critical roles in launching women's studies. Sheila Tobias, Associate Provost at Wesleyan University, teamed up with Betty Friedan as visiting professors at Cornell in January 1969 to teach what may have been the first women's studies course for credit.⁹² Gerda Lerner taught a women's history course at Sarah Lawrence, and courses on "Women in History," "Women in Literature," "The Politics of Male-Female Relationships," and "The Evolution of Female Personality" appeared in college catalogues from Cornell to San Diego State and from the College of St. Catherine to Princeton, in 1969-1970. In 1970, Tobias put together a

collection of 17 syllabi and biographies of Women of the Modern period, and compiled 66 syllabi from about 1960-1970 in *Female Studies II*. Nearly half of the syllabi were in literature or cultural criticism—closest to the compilers—beyond the core of the history and political science courses (several on women's rights movements and politics), "Linguistics and Women," and "Women's Studies: A Survey of Women's Roles," "Women's Roles," "Women's Roles in American Society," and "Sex Roles in American Society."

Word about women's studies spread as well as academic ones. A demand for a women's studies program at a community college on Long Island Sound led to a course attended by students and faculty. The college president.⁹⁴ Karen Brody's courses were interdisciplinary. She had taken her first women's studies course at the college when it was coeducational. About women, she taught for a year, and together they wrote *Female Students Flock to Women's Studies: A Study of the Development of Male and Female Students' Interest in Women's Studies*. "We fired us up."⁹⁵

The handful of women's studies courses found an audience among young professors who were suddenly challenged in the tradition of the forefront of the new

collection of 17 syllabi and bibliographies. The Commission on the Status of Women of the Modern Language Association 2 years later compiled 66 syllabi from about 40 different schools for the publication of *Female Studies II*. Nearly half the courses concerned women and literature or cultural criticism—understandable because of the networks closest to the compilers—but they also gathered descriptions of 9 history courses (several on women's social roles, 2 specifically on the history of women's rights movements), 15 social science courses (e.g., "Sex and Politics," "Linguistic Behavior of Male and Female," "Psychology of Women," and "Women in the U.S. Economy"), and 11 interdisciplinary courses (e.g., "Philosophical and Psychological Aspects of Women's Roles," "Women as a Minority Group," "Biology and Society," and "Sex Roles in American Society and Politics").²³

Word about women's studies spread through movement channels as well as academic ones. At many universities, students were the first to demand a women's studies course and they frequently participated in teaching experimental and interdisciplinary offerings. At Old Westbury Community College on Long Island, students and faculty jointly taught a course attended by students, secretaries, and even the wife of the college president.²⁴ Karen McTighe Musil remembered that those early courses were interdisciplinary and closely connected to students' lives. She had taken her first teaching job in 1971 at LaSalle College just as the college went coed. Eager to offer the women students a course about women, she teamed up with Judy Newton, who arrived the next year, and together they taught the first women's studies course in 1973. Female students flocked to them, acutely aware of the differential treatment of male and female students. "It was heady times. The students fired us up."²⁵

The handful of scholars already studying women, people like Alice Rossi, Jesse Bernard, Gerda Lerner, and Anne Firor Scott, suddenly found an audience and an intellectual community. A generation of young professors with activist leanings but trained in traditional disciplines suddenly changed course. They left behind standard dissertations framed in the traditions of their disciplines and moved quickly into the forefront of the new feminist scholarship and the creation of women's

studies programs.⁶⁶ Kate Millett, galvanized by her participation in New York Radical Women, wrote a dissertation entitled *Sexual Politics* that broke open the field of feminist literary criticism and feminist theory when it was published in 1970.⁶⁷ A total of 150 women's studies programs were established between 1970 and 1975, offering everything from a small cluster of courses to full-blown undergraduate majors. By 1980 there were 300.⁶⁸

WITH THE ISSUE of women's equality a matter of continuing public debate, on September 20, 1973, 48 million Americans were glued to their television sets, watching "The Battle of the Sexes," a tennis match between tennis pro Billie Jean King and a former male tennis star, Bobby Riggs. King was at the top of her form in 1973. For several years she had used her prominence to publicize the inequities faced by professional women tennis players and to build a grassroots movement of female athletes. In 1970 she was the first professional woman tennis player to earn more than \$100,000 in a single year, yet the top male player earned three times as much for winning only one-third as many tournaments. King organized a boycott in protest of the pro tennis tour because of the income differences between women and men. Subsequently she played a prominent role in the new all-women's pro circuit (the Virginia Slims Tour); forced the U.S. Open to equalize prize money for women and men; and organized the Women's Tennis Association. For many women, and especially budding young female athletes, Billie Jean King symbolized their hopes.⁶⁹

Billie Jean had no need to defend her skill against the taunts of a 55-year-old hustler and former tennis star, Bobby Riggs. Proclaiming himself a "male chauvinist pig," Riggs needled, "You insist that top women players provide a brand of tennis comparable to men's. I challenge you to prove it. I contend that you not only cannot beat a top male player, but that you can't beat me, a tired old man." When he goaded the second-ranked player, Margaret Court, into a match—for which she did not train or prepare—and won, King accepted the challenge, because she understood the power of a symbol. She trained hard and joined in the hype. At the Houston Astrodome, the two contestants met at center

court. Riggs entered the "buddies," five young women in a brilliant red divan borne by female workers. Las Vegas boys King won the three sets and echoed in homes and bars seemed that nothing could few militants the Second society, changing everything dinner and who can be a

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court. Riggs entered the arena in a ricksha pulled by "Bobby's bosom buddies," five young women in skimpy attire. King appeared on a brilliant red divan borne by four men in Roman slave costume. Riggs' hustle worked. Las Vegas bookies set the odds at 5 to 2 in his favor, but King won the three sets with ease 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.¹⁰⁰ Shouts of jubilation echoed in homes and bars across the country. For a moment, at least, it seemed that nothing could hold women back. From the protests of a few militants the Second Wave had swept to the forefront of American society, changing everything from language, to etiquette, to who cooks dinner and who can be a sports star.

The national organizations, campaigns, and institutions feminists built in the golden years only hint at the massive upsurge in state and local activism. Yet it is too easy to tell the story as if the movement was invincible and internally consistent. Within the growing surge of the feminist tidal wave the undertow of internal strife always coexisted with innovation and creativity.