"A RAINBOW OF WOMEN"

Diversity and Unity at the 1977 U.S. International Women's Year Conference

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The 1977 National Women's Conference in Observance of International Women's Year (IWY) was in many ways the zenith of U.S. second-wave feminism, producing a Plan of Action that remains a comprehensive statement of the movement's ideals. It also played an important role in the growth and visibility of anti-feminist activism. The conference accomplished meaningful inclusion of women of color and lesbians, both as participants and as authors of the Plan. Notably, this diverse group of over 2,000 delegates agreed on twenty-six of twenty-seven proposed planks, presenting the U.S. public with an image of feminist unity. In this article the authors examine the factors that contributed to both the diversity of the conference and its apparent unity. They argue that two factors were particularly important. First, the threat of anti-feminists motivated lesbian participation and contributed to strategies that minimized dissent among supporters of women's rights. Second, many of the Washington feminists in leadership positions were committed to inclusion and worked to achieve a diverse conference. The article provides important historical detail about the politics of inclusion within second-wave feminism in the late 1970s.

Introduction

The 1977 National Women's Conference in Observance of International Women's Year (IWY) and the state conferences leading up to it have been the only federally-funded women's conferences in U.S. history. At preparatory conferences in every U.S. state and territory, participants elected delegates and voted on a range of proposals aimed at improving women's lives. More than 100,000 women and men participated in state and territorial conferences, and over 2,000 delegates and 18,000 spectators attended the National Conference held in Houston, Texas, from November 18 to 21, 1977. IWY was the most diverse federal conference that had ever been held; over a third of delegates (35.5 percent) were racial or ethnic minorities and sixty delegates openly identified as lesbian.¹

The National IWY Conference and the Plan of Action it produced were remarkable expressions of feminist unity, especially in light of the contentious nature of the women's movement in the 1970s. Throughout the decade, battles over ideology, tactics, and identity divided feminists. Counter-culture radicals dismissed women's advocates working in formal politics, believing them to be co-opted; many moderates feared that feminist involvement with abortion and lesbian rights would undermine the success of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); and divisions on the basis of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and income challenged most organizations and campaigns. Actual divisions were exacerbated by a national press more interested in highlighting battles within the movement than in covering the real substance of feminist concerns.

In contrast, *The Spirit of Houston*, IWY's official report, paints a utopian picture of inclusion at the National Conference: "It was the first time women of so many different income groups, ages, lifestyles and ethnic, racial and religious groups; from so many cities, towns, suburbs, rural areas, farms and islands had been able to gather in one place...This 'rainbow of women' came to Houston with a belief in our democratic system and a hope that justice and equality for women will become engrained in that system." Thus, the National Conference in Observance of International Women's Year achieved a seemingly impossible task: a large and diverse group of delegates agreed upon a controversial slate of feminist proposals.

Although often cited as a major victory of second-wave feminism, surprisingly little scholarship about the IWY Conference exists. 3 In a brief section in Tidal Wave, the historian Sara Evans points out that it was the most diverse gathering of the women's movement and created a massive organizing opportunity for feminists and anti-feminists alike.⁴ No doubt the lack of scholarly interest is, at least in part, due to the limited influence of the conference; the Carter administration failed to create an enduring government body to oversee the implementation of the Plan of Action, and the Reagan administration was even less amenable to feminist goals. Most existing scholarship focuses on the pivotal role of the Conference in the emergent "pro-family" anti-feminist movement.⁵ An estimated twenty percent of delegates to the National Conference opposed the Plan of Action, and a large "Pro-Family Rally" was held in Houston at the same time, ensuring that the national press focused on the conflict. In addition, the tendency of feminist texts to paint second-wave liberal feminism with a broad brush may have led some to overlook the internal workings of the IWY process as an important site of investigation.

In this article, we examine both the National IWY Conference in Houston and the California state preparatory conference to examine the factors that contributed to both inclusion of lesbians and women of color, as well as feminist agreement on the controversial platform. The focus on California is one of convenience as well as content; the California conference was one of the largest, and given our location its records were easiest

for us to access. We found that a number of factors contributed to diversity among participants. The racially diverse and largely feminist National Commission created a framework that encouraged inclusion, and some Commissioners worked with lesbian and women-of-color organizations to ensure that their members and perspectives were included. In addition, the selection of a diverse group of delegates was actually made easier by the involvement of "pro-family" organizations and activists. Many feminists, especially lesbians and their allies, were motivated to participate by the fear that conservatives would dominate the conference. The very real threat posed by anti-feminists also contributed to unified feminist support for the Plan. Concerned that the National Conference would be derailed or replaced with a conservative "pro-family" agenda, a Pro Plan Caucus was created with the goal of passing the Plan of Action in its entirety. The only significant changes allowed to the Plan, interestingly, increased inclusivity; minority women, low-income women, older women, and disabled women successfully submitted substitute planks that referred to their groups.

Background to the International Women's Year Conference

To promote equality between women and men and increase women's contribution to development, the United Nations proclaimed 1975 to be International Women's Year. In 1974, President Nixon called upon Congress to observe the global event and take steps toward the advancement of women. The following year, on January 9, 1975, President Ford created the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. Ford appointed thirty-five members to the Commission and selected Republican Jill Ruckelshaus to be the presiding officer. The Commission's Deputy Coordinator was Catherine East, perhaps the most powerful, if low-profile, feminist in Washington at the time. The Commission spent most of the first six months preparing for the United Nations First World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in the summer of 1975.6 Following the Mexico City Conference, the Ford-appointed IWY Commission published To Form a More Perfect Union, a nearly 400-page document that recommended 115 government policies to improve women's lives.⁷ The Commission's top priority was the ERA; it even established ERAmerica, an umbrella organization of 120 pro-ERA groups that advised and supported state ratification efforts.8

The government-appointed Commission was not the only feminist group interested in using the UN International Women's Year to draft a national feminist agenda. Women's Action Alliance (WAA), a coalition of women's organizations, began crafting a feminist action plan in hopes of promoting a meaningful U.S. response to the UN Conference and ensuring a

role for non-governmental organizations in shaping that response. Through the leadership of the officers of dozen prominent women's organizations, and the input of seventy more, the National Women's Agenda was created. Despite several requests, the Ford-appointed Commission refused to meet with WAA to discuss their proposed action plan. 10

While the Commission was working on its report, Congress passed a bill calling for a national women's conference. Sponsored by Congresswoman Bella Abzug (D, NY) and supported by female members of the House of Representatives from both parties (there were no female members in the Senate at this time), Public Law 94-167 expanded the Commission's responsibility to include planning and executing state and national conferences. After Jimmy Carter assumed office in January of 1977, he asked his Presidential Assistant for Public Liaison, Margaret "Midge" Costanza, to recommend members for a reconstituted IWY Commission. 11 A little-known City Councilwoman from Rochester, New York, Costanza proved to be an outspoken feminist and human rights activist. She surprised the country and several key Carter staffers when she took controversial actions in support of gay rights and federally-funded abortions. 12 For Costanza and her feminist allies, the reconstitution of the National Commission created a political opportunity to include more feminists, Democrats, and women of color. The details of the selection process for the reconstituted Commission show the care taken to appoint leaders from diverse backgrounds. Among Costanza's papers are dozens of lists of potential Commissioners, all indicating race, gender, group membership, political party, and geographic location.¹³ In March of 1977, Carter accepted Costanza's recommendations and expanded the Commission to forty-two members, thirteen (thirty-one percent) of whom were women of color. In comparison, only six of the thirty-nine members (15.3 percent) on the Ford-appointed Commission were women of color.

Another way the Carter-appointed Commission differed from its predecessor was its strong feminist presence, signaled by the appointment of Bella Abzug as Presiding Officer. By 1977, Abzug's feminist accomplishments were legendary; she was a co-founder of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), an active member of Women Strike for Peace, and one of the leading supporters of women's and LGBT issues in Congress. Although Abzug was viewed by some (including Rosalynn Carter) as too polarizing and abrasive, Costanza's strong support was persuasive. The Commission also included many feminist leaders, including Ruth Abram (WAA, NWPC), Liz Carpenter (ERAmerica, NWPC), Koryne Horbal (Women's Caucus of the Democratic Party), Gloria Steinem (Ms. Magazine, WAA, NWPC), and Eleanor Smeal (National Organization for Women [NOW]). The most controversial appointment was Jean O'Leary of the National Gay Task Force

(NGTF), who became the first officer of a gay or lesbian organization to be a presidential appointee.¹⁴ Carter initially objected, but as with Abzug's appointment, Costanza was able to convince the President.

The first stage in the International Women's Year process was a series of fifty-six preparatory conferences held in each U.S. state and territory.¹⁵ Directed by their own coordinating committees, each preparatory conference was responsible for two major tasks: 1) electing delegates to send to the National Conference and 2) identifying planks that addressed barriers affecting women's lives.¹⁶ The National Commission provided states and territories with an initial list of sixteen planks based on the topics identified in To Form a More Perfect Union. State conferences offered opportunities for participants to modify or amend these planks and to propose additional ones. After the state and territorial conferences, the National Commission combined state recommendations into a twenty-seven plank National Plan of Action to be debated and voted on at the National Conference. Given the large number of recommendations—over 4,500—they opted to incorporate all suggestions submitted by twelve or more states.¹⁷ The final list of planks was diverse. It included such moderate measures as those calling for an end to discrimination in credit, employment, and insurance, as well as more radical demands, including calls to end involuntary sterilization and provide public funding for abortion.18

Delegates elected at state conferences convened on Houston, Texas for the four-day conference. The event began with the arrival of a highly-publicized torch relay that had begun in Seneca Falls, New York (the site of the first Women's Conference in 1848). The opening session featured three first ladies (Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford, and Lady Bird Johnson) as well as numerous celebrities and political leaders. The effect was powerful. *Newsweek* described the conference as "a big success for the women's movement" and *The Washington Post* declared, "a decade after a handful of feminists symbolically discarded bras and girdles in a ridiculed gesture of independence, thousands of women gathered here today for a massive assertion of their claim that the American women's movement now speaks for a majority." 19

Conservative Women Challenge the Agenda

In addition to praising the conference, the mainstream press also paid close attention to its anti-feminist opponents. During the IWY National Conference, Eagle Forum founder Phyllis Schlafly hosted a "Pro-Family Rally" across town at the Houston Astro-Arena; over 20,000 attended.²⁰ The Pro-Family Rally claimed that because the IWY Plan of Action supported the ERA, abortion rights, and gay rights, it attacked homemakers and undermined traditional "family values." Furthermore, it opposed the use of

taxpayer dollars for a conference they believed marginalized the concerns of mainstream women. It would have been far more honest, one critic argued, if they had called it the International Feminists Year. Antifeminists were also present inside the IWY conferences. Roughly twenty percent of all delegates to the National Conference, including the majority of those from Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, Utah, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, opposed the Plan of Action. Indiana State Senator Joan Gubbins and Oklahoma delegate Ann Patterson coordinated conservative delegates and wrote a minority report, included in the *Spirit of Houston*, which explains their opposition to each of the planks in the Plan of Action.

Conservative opposition had begun during the Ford administration. Catherine East described a "coordinated, organized campaign of public and legal harassment" by the right. Harassment included nine lawsuits (all were unsuccessful but drained energy and resources), including one that briefly halted distribution of the report. During the Carter administration, there were informal "hearings" about IWY held by Senator Jesse Helms (R, NC), which were not associated with any Senate committee and did not include testimony by any IWY Commissioners or staff. These strategies had some impact; on November 24, 1977, the State Department announced it would no longer pay for mail sent out by the International Women's Year Commission.

Right-wing organizing had a considerable impact on many state conferences. In Georgia, for example, anti-feminists disrupted the state conference by using parliamentary procedures such as "point of information" and repeated motions for adjournment.²⁶ In some states, such as Missouri, busloads of men and women were brought in by anti-abortion and anti-ERA groups, staying only long enough to vote for a slate of conservative delegates before reboarding the busses and heading home. 27 In many states, especially those with early conferences, feminists were slow to respond. In Indiana, where the ERA had been ratified only months before, NOW did not begin organizing "pro-women's rights and individuals" to attend the conference until less than a month before it took place, contributing to the overwhelming victory of conservative groups there.²⁸ The most impressive show of anti-feminist force was in Utah, where a total of 14,000 Mormon women responded to the call of church leaders and attended the conference. Conservatives elected all nine delegates from their ranks and voted "no" on every plank, including those concerned with rape and pornography.²⁹ Anti-feminist delegates tended to be white, and in some cases were actively segregationist. For example, the slate of delegates elected at the Mississippi state Conference included only one African American woman, who resigned in protest. Robert Shelton, imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, bragged that members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Klan were infiltrating IWY meetings and actively working against the feminist agenda at state conferences.³⁰

The National Commission struggled to limit the impact of conservatives. Commissioner Eleanor Smeal, then President of NOW, recalled that after about a dozen state conferences had been held, "We had an emergency meeting and said, that's enough of this. If they are organizing, we've got to counter organize."31 One technique was publicizing the right-wing threat. In early May, Bella Abzug sent all state coordinating committee chairs a copy of a letter from Phyllis Schlafly to all Eagle Forum members telling them of the biased meetings "using tax dollars to promote women's lib goals" and urging members to "plan to attend and to get all your friends to attend."32 In many states with later conferences, including California, the threat of anti-feminist participation mobilized feminists who had previously been uninterested in the conference. The NOW Times reported that two weeks before the California conference many NOW members were not planning to attend, since the program was too conservative and the date "seemed to be deliberately picked to conflict with the NOW Southwest Regional Conference."33 This all changed when news spread that right-wing women outnumbered feminists two-to-one in pre-registration. "A statewide telephone alert was initiated to advise NOW members of the situation and urge their attendance at the IWY Conference."34

In Houston, the IWY Conference and the Pro-Family Rally provided excellent opportunities for anti-feminists to make their case to a national audience. For the media, at least, the clash between the feminists and the right was the main event of the conference. The emphasis was captured beautifully in a political cartoon that ran on the first day of the conference in *Daily Breakthrough*, a Houston feminist newspaper. The cartoon featured a cinema marquis with posters for two events: One said "Now showing, PG, National Women's Conference, Women for Woman," and the second said, "Now showing, R, National Women's Conference, Women vs. Woman, featuring KKK, anti-ERA." The first male journalist in a long line outside the theater asked the second, "what d'ya wanna see?" 35

"A Rainbow of Women": Including Women of Color

While anti-feminists made headlines claiming the IWY Conference did not represent the beliefs of all American women, organizers struggled to make sure conference delegates were demographically representative and included poor women and women of color at all levels. The Commission was remarkably successful. Ethnic minorities were more common among delegates than in the 1977 U.S. population as a whole: 64.5 percent of elected delegates were white, 17.4 percent were African American, 8.3 percent were Latina, 3.4 percent were Native American Indian, and Alaskan and Hawaiian natives were .5 percent and .4 percent respectively. The elected delegates

were diverse in other ways as well: 23.7 percent of delegates were either under 30 or over 60 years old, 10 percent of delegates did not hold a high school diploma, and 21 percent were unemployed. Despite efforts to include low-income women, the majority of delegates had above-average incomes.³⁷

This remarkable racial and ethnic diversity was the result of the persistent efforts of many members of the National Commission for IWY. Believing inclusion must start from the top, Costanza recommended that Carter appoint a racially-diverse group of Commissioners. The forty-two member Commission included eight African Americans, one Native American, two Mexican Americans, one Puerto Rican, and one Asian. Far from being tokens, many Commissioners were leaders in the struggle for the rights of minorities. Some, like Maya Angelou and Coretta Scott King, were prominent figures. Others led national organizations, including LaDonna Harris, president and founder of Americans for Indian Opportunity, Carmen Delgado Votaw, president of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, and Addie Wyatt, national vice president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. The commitment of these and other National Commissioners influenced policies and practices at all levels and contributed to the diversity of delegates and opinions.

One of the thorniest issues was creating a structure that would result in the election of truly diverse group of delegates without the use of quotas, which were explicitly forbidden. PL 94-167 tasked the National Commission with both ensuring "the broadest possible diversity of representation" and "proceeding on a wholly open basis," which is to say without quotas. The Commission emphasized outreach as a means of drawing in the widest possible group of delegates. For example, the Commission's manual on planning and conducting state and territorial meetings emphasized that "Very special efforts must be made to recruit those least likely to attend."39 They encouraged states to use demographic data to guide outreach and suggested possible methods, including bilingual materials and free transportation from rural areas. Their suggestions were backed with money. The Commission designated large blocks of each state's funding for transportation for lowincome women to attend both state and national conferences. Despite these guidelines, state conferences were not uniformly inclusive. One reason was the composition of many state coordinating committees. Selected by the more conservative Ford-appointed Commission, many state committees were dominated by moderate white women. Commissioner Celia Burciaga wrote, "Many Chicanas who had long been active in feminist and political struggles were absent from [state coordinating committees] and for them, this created an early feeling of distrust and disengagement from the rest of the process."40 Even more problematic were states where anti-feminist delegates had been elected, most of whom were white. The Commission received complaints that eight state delegations did not include enough racial and ethnic minorities. Since refusing to seat fairly elected delegations was deemed to be unlawful, the National Commission refused to intervene directly. They instead turned to a section of the authorizing statute that allowed them to appoint delegates-at-large. ⁴¹ The lists of potential members-at-large compiled by Commissioners included many racial and ethnic minorities, since they anticipated that whites would be overrepresented. As it turned out, their expectations were wrong; in most states' delegations, women of color were well represented. ⁴² The delegate-at-large policy was nevertheless instrumental in compensating for the lack of representation in those states where bias did occur. It also created a path for the participation of many feminist leaders who had not attended state conferences.

For many Carter-appointed Commissioners, the struggle for racial and ethnic inclusion extended to the comprehensive statement of priorities embodied in the Plan of Action. They unfortunately inherited from the Ford-appointed Commission a study that made only limited reference to the "special problems of minority women." As a result, the original list of sixteen topics sent to state coordinating committees did not even include minority women's issues. 43 Compensating for this oversight, 23 state and territorial conferences addressed the issue, submitting a total of 164 recommendations concerning minority women. 44 At the September 1977 meeting, National Commissioners debated the best approach for incorporating these recommendations into the Plan of Action. After extended discussion, the group passed a resolution calling for "separate recommendations on minorities, and including them, where appropriate, in recommendation of global importance." The Commissioners also created an ad hoc drafting committee and tasked them with revising the Plan along these lines. Its members were Gloria Steinem, Jean O'Leary, Coryne Hornbal, Audrey Rowe Colom, Rhea Mojica Hammer, and Jeffylyn Johnson. 45 The ad hoc committee decided to include a very brief resolution on Minority Women in the Plan of Action sent to all delegates, while simultaneously inviting groups of minority women delegates to write a more extensive resolution to be substituted at the conference.

Toward this end, the two African American members of the ad hoc drafting committee, Audrey Rowe Colom and Jeffalyn Johnson, initiated a "Group of Ten," leading African American women to draft a position paper about African American women. ⁴⁶ The position paper, "Black Women's Action Plan," rejected a narrow focus on eliminating discrimination against women, explained the need for intersectional analysis, and called on the IWY to pursue "a course of action designed to redress any denial of equal opportunities to American citizens." ⁴⁷ It also described the specific needs and social location of African American women and offered a list of recom-

mendations for the revised Minority Women's plank. Dorothy Height of the National Council of Negro Women was asked to convene a caucus of African American women to draft "The Black Women's Agenda" based on the Black Women's Action Plan, which would serve as a basis for discussion and the creation of the language in the final plank (and was included as an Appendix in *The Spirit of Houston*). ⁴⁸ Other women of color caucused as well: Chicana delegates began communicating to establish shared interests, as did Native American women and various groups of Asian American women. ⁴⁹ During the conference, representatives of the various groups convened in Minority Women's Caucus meetings to write a complete proposal, aided by National Commissioner and *Ms. Magazine* editor Gloria Steinem. ⁵⁰

The longest and most detailed in the Plan of Action, the revised plank was over six pages. It addressed issues shared by all women of color and those specific to each group. The common problems discussed included: forced sterilizations, monolingual education, culturally-biased testing, high infant mortality rates, confinement to low-paying jobs and poor housing, failure to enforce affirmative action and special admission programs, and bias in health insurance. Women of each group also identified their own unique issues. For example, Native American women opposed the removal of children from their communities and sought guarantees of tribal rights; Asian American women addressed the stereotypes of the "model minority," which made sweatshop working conditions and language and cultural barriers invisible; African American women focused on unemployment and housing; and Hispanic women addressed deportation, farm workers' rights, and citizenship.⁵¹

On Sunday, November 20, during the last plenary session in Houston, the substitute Minority Women's plank came to the full assembly for a vote. Previously, a single spokesperson had read each resolution; this time a group of seven women co-presented the substitute Minority Women's plank. One of the white conservative women who spoke in opposition attempted to slow the momentum by requesting that the plank be re-read. The chair complied and the plank was re-read in its entirety. The request backfired. Rather than fueling opposition, it gave time for even more support to build. When the resolution was called to a vote, it was supported by a large majority and received with thunderous applause. In the short term, at least, many women of color felt the revision of the Minority Women's plank marked a decline in racism within the feminist movement. Billie Masters, who had presented the Native American women's portion, told a reporter, "I think it came out beautifully. We have been accepted, heard, and our efforts have been appreciated." ⁵³

Lesbians Organize for Inclusion

Unlike women of color, whose inclusion was supported by the Commission, lesbians had to wage a grassroots campaign to add a Sexual Preference plank to the Plan of Action. Lesbian rights had been excluded from the discussion at the 1975 UN International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City, and the Ford-appointed Commission report made no explicit reference to lesbians or sexual orientation discrimination. In a memo to the Executive Committee, IWY Secretariat Executive Director Mildred Marcy explained the dilemma. The Commission had not previously addressed lesbianism because they considered it a human rights issue rather than a women's issue. She further explained that there had been requests for the Commission to revisit the issue, and pointed out that either including or failing to include lesbians could lead to conflict and controversy.54 When the more progressive Commission appointed by Carter took over in 1977, the question of whether lesbian rights would be included in the Plan of Action remained unanswered. Presiding Officer Bella Abzug had a long record of support for gay rights, but others did not share her views. Commissioner Martha Griffiths, a former Congresswoman and the House sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment, wrote a letter to all Commissioners explaining why she opposed inclusion of lesbianism in the Plan of Action. "Homosexuality is a national issue of equal concern to men and women...I see no evidence that lesbians are more discriminated against than male homosexuals. Discrimination because of sexual preference is *not* discrimination because of sex."55

In her position as National Commissioner, NGTF Co-Director Jean O'Leary led the successful grassroots movement to include a Sexual Preference plank in the Plan of Action. When the National Commission drafted a memo to state coordinating committees encouraging them to offer workshops on other topics to facilitate drafting additional planks, O'Leary proposed adding lesbian rights to the list of topics mentioned in the memo. Thanks to the presence of numerous allies on the board, the proposal was successful.⁵⁶ The final letter to state coordinating committees included the following statement: "By way of example, we would call your attention to the fact that the Commission Report did not fully explore such issues such as health, housing, sexual or affectional preference, poverty, prostitution, disarmament, domestic and institutionalized violence, and the special problems of girls and young women. The Commission views these as well as any other issues identified by women in your state as women's issues appropriate for discussion at the state conferences."57 In a later interview, O'Leary recalled, "The resolution gave us an organizing tool, because now lesbians could go to state committees and say that they wanted this issue

discussed in pre-convention workshops; before, in some states (Texas and Georgia, for two) lesbians had been told that the issue simply could not be raised."⁵⁸ The Women's Bureau of the NGTF promptly sent out a press release and mailed letters to gay rights organizations across the country urging lesbians to participate in state conferences, telling them, "An active lesbian presence in these state conferences is crucial...because resolutions emerging from them will have a great influence on shaping the legislative goals of the women's movement."⁵⁹

Lesbian activist Charlotte Bunch later recalled that when IWY state conferences were commandeered by the anti-feminist, anti-gay right wing, "the lesbian community began bringing out large numbers of women to attend the conferences, especially in the big city areas."60 For example, the organizing efforts of gay-rights organizations transformed the California conference. When conservative forces began dominating other state conferences, California's gay press joined feminist organizations in sounding the alert. A front-page article in Los Angeles's Lesbian News explained the threat from the right, urged lesbian attendance at the California conference, and provided all registration and transportation details. 61 A call for participants made at a rally against the Anita Bryant crusade the week before the California conference recruited even more participants. As the Los Angeles Times reported, "Hundreds of, more probably several thousand, gay men and women came out to register and vote at the IWY conference, many of them stating they would not normally have come, but that the names Anita Bryant and Phyllis Schlafly were beginning to sound alike to them, that opposition to gay rights and women's rights stemmed from the same fear—that family and traditional values were being threatened."62 A week before the California conference, a broad coalition of feminist groups, including California NOW, had proposed a "blue slate" of delegates for the conference. Shortly thereafter, lesbian activists proposed an alternative "orange slate," which included thirteen lesbians and gay men. 63 The 6,500 attendees at the California conference elected the orange slate, which meant California sent the largest group of openly gay and lesbian delegates to the National Conference.64

The NGTF also shaped the inclusion of lesbian issues in the Plan of Action. A wide variety of lesbian rights resolutions were passed in thirty states, most of them addressing the four themes identified by the NGTF: 1) passage of gay civil rights laws banning discrimination in employment; 2) repeal of all laws governing private sexual behavior between consenting adults; 3) passage of laws making sexual preference irrelevant in determining child custody and visitation rights; and 4) inclusion of more and better lesbian visibility in the media. 65 The Sexual Preference plank that passed in Houston included three of the issues identified by the NGTF: laws prohibit-

ing sexual orientation discrimination, decriminalization of sexual behavior, and rights to child custody.

Even as grass-roots organizing was impacting state conferences, O'Leary and her allies faced opposition on the National Commission. Some long-time feminists feared lesbian rights would draw negative attention to the meeting and weaken the chances for ERA ratification. Catherine East, who resigned from her position as Deputy Coordinator two months before the National Conference, later told a reporter that the lesbian issue was a major reason for her resignation.66 Such high-level opposition created numerous hurdles. For example, the NGTF was asked to create a guide for running sexual preference workshops at state conferences, but it was never distributed. According to Jean O'Leary, "For other issues they contracted the work out, but for this NGTF had to do it all, and then the Commission staff second-guessed and challenged us on almost every word. It went back and forth and it became later and later, until it was just too late."67 As a result, state conferences holding workshops on sexual preference did it without a Commission guidebook. Lesbian organizers also felt another tactic used against them was the ordering of the agenda. The Commissioners decided to vote on the Plan of Action in alphabetical order, making the Sexual Preferences plank one of the last to be addressed. Aware that the Conference might not reach the end of the list, O'Leary unsuccessfully attempted to rename the plank "Alternative Lifestyles" or "Lesbianism." 68 Failing that, O'Leary switched gears and began a new campaign demanding "every issue be heard."69 The material the NGTF gave to lesbian delegates included an article by O'Leary with the subtitle "Key Theme for Lesbians will be 'Keep the Agenda Moving." For O'Leary and supporters of the Sexual Preference plank, the best hope for success was the Pro Plan Caucus, discussed below.

At the end of Sunday's plenary session, the Sexual Preference plank came up for vote. According to one journalist, "It was obvious to everyone that the lesbian issue had become the emotional focal point of the conference." Under attack by opponents inside and outside the conference, it was unclear whether the plank had enough support to pass. After O'Leary read the proposed plank, others took the stage to debate it. Commissioner Catherine East repeated her opposition, distinguishing between gender and sexual preference; a Georgia delegate called the issue an "albatross" to the movement and the ERA; and a conservative delegate argued that homosexuals should keep their sexual preference private. Among the speakers in favor of the plank, the most moving was Betty Freidan, who declared, "I am known to be violently opposed to the lesbian issue...Now my priority is in passing the ERA. And because there is nothing in it that will give any protection to homosexuals, I believe we must help the women who are les-

bians." Ultimately the plank passed with a clear majority, and hundreds of balloons stenciled with "We Are Everywhere" were released in jubilation.⁷²

Setting the Agenda: The Pro Plan Caucus

Led by New York City Council President Carol Bellamy, chairs of eleven state Commissions formed the Pro Plan Caucus. The goal of the caucus was to pass the Plan of Action as written, without revisions, omissions, or additions. 73 After watching anti-feminists derail state conferences with endless debate, disruption, and parliamentary procedures, many feared it would be impossible during the four-day conference to debate and vote on the full Plan of Action. Activists at some state conferences, including California, had found an effective strategy for limiting disruption: passing entire agendas without discussion or amendment.74 The Pro Plan Caucus decided to use a version of this strategy at the National Conference and limit amendments and revisions from the conference floor. Although this strategy was actively supported by those concerned about planks near the end of the alphabetically-listed Plan, especially Reproductive Freedom and Sexual Preference, the argument made by Pro Plan supporters went beyond specific issues. From the rank and file to the National Commissioners, women's rights advocates feared that the conference, and public acceptance of the movement, would be mortally wounded if the anti-feminist minority succeeded in creating chaos. Before the conference began, numerous individual delegates and several major organizations pledged to support the Pro Plan Caucus. 75 The Caucus met on the first night of the conference to review requests from a number of groups wanting to submit revised or substitute planks. After much debate, the Pro Plan Caucus agreed to support substitute planks written by caucuses representing minority women, disabled women, and welfare advocates.76 In this way, the Commission and the Pro Plan Caucus prioritized the self-representation of marginalized groups, even as they silenced debate on many issues and circled the wagons against the right.

Drawing on the formidable political experience of many of its members, the Caucus set up a plan to control the debate during the convention. They identified floor leaders in each state and set up a communication network. But in limiting disruption by the right, the Caucus also stifled debate among feminists. Some radical feminists bristled at the control and felt its goal was to dampen dissent from radicals. An article in the radical feminist *Majority Report* accused the Commission of planting scare stories about expected busloads of Klan, Nazi, and Pro-Life disrupters to give them control and hide the real issues. The Commission and the Pro Plan group, they argued,

would "frequently shut off the mic as soon as a delegate uttered the word 'amendment,' silencing feminists and fetus-fanatics alike." They went on to report that many Pro Plan delegates "disagreed with a lot in the Plan, that it was too wishy-washy, too compromising, or that it called for too much government control. They said they were opposing any revisions, however, because 'people in Washington' had warned that any break in the ranks would be viewed as catfighting by the media, and might be a soft spot whereby the right wing could disrupt the event."78 Nor did the entire conference run as the Pro Plan Caucus wished. Protests from those on the right and the left who felt excluded and silenced by the process occasionally stopped deliberation. A substitute Older Women plank, written with the support of the Gray Panthers but not initially allowed by the Pro Plan Caucus, was proposed and accepted on the floor of the conference.⁷⁹ Feminist dissenters were successful in defeating one plank, which called for the creation of a Cabinet-level women's department in the federal government. Arguing against the plank were feminists who feared a special agency would be seen as a token and would isolate women's issues from the rest of government.80

Despite these problems, the Pro Plan Caucus was generally successful at coordinating a unified conference. For many, the unity experienced at the IWY Conference was a profound affirmation of the potential of feminism. As the Sexual Preference plank was being read, noted radical lesbian feminist Kate Millet snuck up to the stage with a fake press pass. While delegates were speaking, Millet told a reporter, "In Houston, we have turned a corner; we used to be a middle-class elitist movement and now we're a middle-class mass movement." The press did its part in praising the show of unity. Ms. contributor Lindsey Van Gelder wrote, "In Houston I learned in my gut what I'd been defending intellectually for ten years: that feminists are everywhere; that we are a populist, majority movement. That we use power differently from men. And that we can work together and succeed on a grand scale." ⁸²

The Conference's Impact (Or the Lack of It)

Despite their success in passing a strong platform, many feminists feared the entire exercise would not lead to any permanent changes in women's lives. For example, California delegate Carmela Lacayo worried that the platforms were too vague, "it would be too easy for Congress to respond in spirit. They can just say, 'Why, we're already doing that.'"83 In many ways, Lacayo was right: very little federal legislation resulted from the Conference. Once the Commission formally presented *The Spirit of Houston* to President Carter on March 22, 1978, the administration responded with a status report claiming many planks had already been addressed by legisla-

tion supported by the White House. Nor did Carter create any permanent mechanism for implementation. At the request of the Commission (and following pressure from Costanza) Carter created a thirty-member National Advisory Committee to help the administration implement the Houston Plan of Action, and appointed Bella Abzug and Carmen Delgado Votaw as co-chairs. 84 Tensions emerged when the Committee publically criticized Carter's spending priorities and lack of commitment to women's issues. In November, the Committee cancelled a meeting with President Carter after they learned he had allotted them a mere fifteen minutes. Then on January 12, 1979, Carter abruptly fired Abzug from her non-salaried position and the majority of the Commission resigned in protest. Carter reconstituted the group as the President's Advisory Committee on Women. The new slate of appointees was much smaller and more conservative, and the Committee's actions were so restricted that they were even prohibited from lobbying on behalf of women's programs and legislation.85 Carter's troubles with the Commission were indicative of his uneasy relationship with the women's movement in general. Despite campaign promises to be a strong advocate for women's issues, by the end of his single term he was at odds with many leading feminists.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the IWY Conference was not in policy but in consciousness raising and networking. Interacting with such a wide range of feminists—and anti-feminists—changed the perspective of many attendees. United Farm Worker (UFW) co-founder Dolores Huerta attended the Houston conference with a group of farm workers in support of the "right to lifers." But "when she saw the extreme right wingers who were supporting them, she changed her position."86 Previously opposed to feminism, Huerta went on to take a leave from the UFW to work for the Fund for the Feminist Majority in California. For Huerta and many others, conservative opposition to the Conference provided an education in the interconnections among sexism, racism, and homophobia. NGTF Co-Director Jean O'Leary argued that the experience of working together at the conference changed relations between lesbians and other feminists. "The major thing is that now, more than ever, lesbians are an integral part of the women's movement and lesbian rights are unquestionably a feminist issue, and all the non-gay delegates celebrated with lesbians.... The women who affirmed support for lesbian rights in Houston are taking this back to their diverse communities, and it's going to have a ripple effect throughout the country."87

The Houston conference also fostered the growth of feminist networks. Among delegates surveyed a year after Houston, fifty percent reported "greater cooperation among women's groups in their locality of state since Houston."⁸⁸ An article in *Ms. Magazine* claimed the Houston conference

provided "members of minority and special-interest groups...not only an endorsement of their visibility from other feminists, but the beginnings of national networks." The article went on to list coalitions formed, including a women's task force within the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, Feminists of Faith, and the Washington Women's Network. Be The conference also played a pivotal role in organizing the nascent anti-domestic violence movement, which still lacked a national organization in 1977. In her history of the shelter movement, the historian Claire Renault explains, "It was the first time so many women from that movement had gathered in one place. They shared information, traded stories, and felt empowered being together. This conference was instrumental in the formation of the National Coalition against Domestic Violence (NCADV). It was also out of this experience that shelter activists in Texas decided to form the Texas Council on Family Violence."

For anti-feminists, the IWY Conferences played a monumental role in increasing their visibility and power. In her path-breaking book *Women of the New Right*, the historian Rebecca Klatch argues, "Angry that the taxpayer's dollar was being used to fund a convention of feminists, the meeting in fact provoked activism by many women previously uninvolved in the political arena...IWY gave birth to a network of activists and organizations that called themselves the 'pro-family movement.'" Phyllis Schlafly declared, "IWY was our 'boot camp.' Now we are ready for the offensive in the battle for our families and our faith." Many observers felt that IWY boosted the anti-ERA cause and marked the turning point in the ten-year battle for ratification. ⁹³

Conclusion

While the 1977 Houston Conference has previously been examined in terms of its impact on the mobilization of right-wing women, it also provides a valuable case study for examining the internal organization of the feminist movement itself. The political scientists Roberta Spalter-Roth and Ronnee Schreiber argue that the early 1980s mark a profound shift in the U.S. women's movement. As the backlash grew, divisions between radical and mainstream feminists faded, and the focus shifted to protecting earlier gains and limiting further losses. He Resources once dedicated to internal debates were mobilized to resisting and surviving the rightward shift in culture and policy. This study shows that feminists felt the impact of the backlash even earlier. One way that right-wing participation influenced the Conference was motivating feminists to pull together and present a united front. Knowing that the nation's eyes were on them, organizers urged participants to minimize conflicts and show the unifying power of feminism. The most visible manifestation of this was the Pro Plan Caucus.

which urged passage of the entire agenda and closely monitored the floor to minimize dissent and dialogue. While this strategy undoubtedly limited debate among feminists, it nevertheless protected the most controversial elements of the plan, including the Reproductive Rights and Sexual Preference planks. Nor did it silence marginalized groups of women. The four substitute planks accepted at the conference—Minority Women, Welfare, Older Women, and Disabled Women—were all written by women who were themselves a part of the groups being addressed.

The input and activism at state conferences were key factors contributing to radical feminist participation in IWY. As the example of the California conference shows, once right-wing groups began to dominate state conventions, feminists who may have otherwise stayed away from a federallyfunded "liberal" feminist conference instead attended and advocated for their issues. Lesbians and their allies especially organized around many state conferences to introduce sexual preference planks and elect lesbian delegates. Yet the grassroots were not the only source of radical and intersectional feminist activism; national leaders also sought a more progressive and inclusive agenda. In particular, Midge Costanza encouraged President Carter to appoint a diverse Commission with a feminist vision that went beyond anti-discrimination. The presence of such leaders as Jean O'Leary, Jeffalyn Johnson, and Audrey Rowe Colom, who had intersectional understandings of oppression and close ties to activist organizations, ensured that the Plan of Action represented the voices and perspectives of lesbians, women of color, and other marginalized groups of women. And despite some internal pressure, Washington feminist leaders were unwilling to marginalize controversial issues for the sake of expediency.

We highlight the influence of radical, intersectional feminist leadership in a government-funded, "liberal" feminist conference to make a final point about feminist scholarship. Too often there is a careless conflation of people with very different ideologies in the much disparaged category of "liberal feminist" simply because they worked from within the political system. This can lead to a false assumption that feminist "insiders" were only fighting against gender discrimination and not committed to a vision of feminism that was also pro-lesbian and anti-racist. Yet, at least in 1977, there were several feminists who had opted to use traditional political methods to advance an agenda that not only went beyond fighting discrimination, it introduced an intersectional perspective to an important federal conference and Plan of Action. The work of these unlikely insiders contributed to a National Conference that was much broader and more inclusive than it would have been without them.

Notes

Many of the documents used in this paper come from the papers of Margaret "Midge" Costanza, Assistant to President Carter for Public Liaison (OPL) from January, 1977 to August, 1978. Costanza's papers are temporarily housed in the Midge Costanza Institute in San Diego California, an organization she directed until her death in 2010 (http://www.midgecostanzainstitute.com/). The Institute has provided special access to all documents to Doreen Mattingly for her work on a biography of Costanza. Once the biography is complete, the documents will be divided between Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and San Diego State University Library Special Collections.

¹National Gay Task Force Press Release (Hereafter NGFT Records), "Lesbian rights proposal controversial issue at Houston's National Women's Conference," November 18, 1977, Box 36, file 31, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) records, Cornell University Library, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections.

²National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, *The Spirit of Houston: An Official Report to the President, the Congress and the People of the United States*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 12.

³Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 291–294; Barbara Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement Ideology and Activism* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 75.

⁴Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 139–142. See also Winifred D. Wandersee, *On the Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1988), 175–202.

⁵Rebecca Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Erin M. Kempker, "Battling 'Big Sister' Government: Hoosier Women and the Politics of International Women's Year," *Journal of Women's History* 24, no. 2 (2012): 144–170.

⁶Catherine East, "Newer Commissions," in Women in Washington: Advocates for Public Policy, ed. Irene Tinker (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), 35–44, especially 35–39.

⁷National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, ... *To Form a More Perfect Union...Justice for American Women*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

⁸Wandersee, On the Move, 189.

⁹Founded in 1971 by Brenda Feigen Fasteau and Gloria Steinem, the WAA was an umbrella organization dedicated to supporting smaller feminist organizations. It is the precursor to the current National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO).

¹⁰Cynthia Harrison, "Creating a National Feminist Agenda: Coalition Building in the 1970s," in *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States*, ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 19–47.

¹¹National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year Commission, *Update on the State Women's Meetings and the National Women's Conference: Update 4*, April 29, 1977, IWY box, State meeting file, Midge Costanza Institute, San Diego, CA. (Hereafter Costanza papers).

¹²Susan Hartmann, "Feminism, Public Policy, and the Carter Administration," in *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era*, ed. Gary M. Fink and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 224 - 243.

¹³IWY box, Commission nominee file, Costanza papers.

 $^{14}\mbox{Later}$ renamed the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, www.thetaskforce. org.

¹⁵From February to August of 1977, conferences were held in each of the fifty states, as well as American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Trust Territories, Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia.

 $^{16}\mbox{The}$ number of delegates was twice the number of the state's Congressional districts plus ten.

¹⁷The Spirit of Houston, 11.

¹⁸The Spirit of Houston.

¹⁹Merrill Sheils with Lea Donosky, Lucy Howard, Elaine Sciolino and Hal Bruno, "A Woman's Agenda" *Newsweek*, November 28, 1977, 59; Bill Curry and Megan Rosenfeld, "Crucial Test for Women's Conference," *Washington Post*, November 18, 1977, A1.

²⁰Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, 246.

²¹Sheils et al. "A Woman's Agenda," 57.

²²Letter from Jacqueline E. Sumner to President Carter. Undated. IWY box, "Misc. letters" file, Costanza papers.

 $^{23}\hbox{''}A$ capsulized look at state meetings," July8,1977, IWY box, "State meetings" file, Costanza papers.

²⁴The Spirit of Houston, 265–272.

²⁵East "Newer Commissions." 42.

²⁶Carole Askinaze, "ERA Opponents Rail against Women's Meeting," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 14, 1977.

²⁷The Spirit of Houston, 101.

²⁸Kempker, "Battling 'Big Sister' Government," 150.

²⁹Georgie Anne Geyer, "Two Rights Could be Wrong," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1977.

³⁰BettyBlair, "Klan's 'Spies' Plan to Disrupt Feminist Parley," *Detroit News*, Thursday, September 1, 1977, IWY box, Clippings file, Costanza papers.

³¹Susan Braun Levine and Mary Thom, Bella Abzug: How One Tough Broad Fought Jim Crow and Joe McCarthy, Pissed off Jimmy Carter, Battled for the Rights of Women and Workers, Rallied against War and For the Planet and Shook up Politics Along the Way (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 199.

³²Letter, Bella Abzug to State Chairs, May, 1977. Attachment, Phyllis Schlafly to Eagle Forum, March 31, 1977. IWY box, State meetings file, Costanza papers.

³³Carol Schmidt, "Schlafly-Bryant Forces Lose IWY," *National NOW Times: Official Journal of the National Organization for Women* 11, no. 7 (July 1977), 1, Box 5, file 1, California IWY Support Coalition Papers (Collection 1126), UCLA Charles Young Research Library.

³⁴Schmidt, "Schlafly-Bryant Forces Lose IWY," 1.

³⁵Cartoon by Mark Stinson, *The Daily Breakthrough*, Nov. 18, 1977, 2, Box 5, file 1, California IWY Support Coalition Papers.

³⁶Alice Rossi, Feminists in Politics: A Panel Analysis of the First National Women's Conference (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 32. These demographics reflect the elected delegates. They do not include the at-large delegates appointed by the National Commission. By way of comparison, the 1980 census found 79.6 percent of all those living in the U.S. were non-Hispanic whites.

³⁷A survey of delegates conducted by sociologist Alice Rossi (*Feminists in Politics*, 58) found that although 18 percent of delegates self identified as low-income, 73.9 percent as middle income and 7.8 percent as high income, only 22.6 percent of women reported a personal annual income of less than 10,000 dollars. According to the census, the mean income for employed women in 1976 was 6,345 dollars. US Census, Current Population Reports, "Money Income in 1976 of Families and Persons in the United States," P-60, no. 114, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-114.pdf. Accessed: January 17, 2014.

³⁸Memo from Midge Costanza to President Carter, March 16, 1977, Regarding: IWY Commission Nominees, IWY Box, Commission nominee file, Costanza papers.

³⁹National Commission, *Manual for State and Territory IWY Coordinating Committees*, November 1976, 14–15, IWY Box, State meetings file, Costanza papers.

⁴⁰Cecilia P. Burciaga, "The 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston," in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, ed. Alma M. Garcia (New York: Routledge, 1997), 183–185.

⁴¹National Commission, Summary of Executive Committee Meetings, July 14 & 15, 1977, IWY Box, "July 1977" file, Costanza papers.

⁴²Rossi, Feminists in Politics, 31.

⁴³The "core agenda of major issues" sent to chairs of state delegations included the following topics: Arts and Humanities, Child Care, Credit, Education,

Employment, Equal Rights Amendment, Female Offenders, Health, Legal Status of Homemakers, International Interdependence, Mass Media, Older Women, Rape, Strategies for Change, Reproductive Freedom, Women in Elective, and Appointive Office. Letter from Bella Abzug to Chairs and Program Chairs of State Coordinating Committees, April 20, 1977, Box 977, file, "IWY memos, etc." Bella Abzug papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University,

⁴⁴The Spirit of Houston, 117

⁴⁵National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, "Summary of Minutes and Commission Meeting," September 15 and 16. Box 979, file "Minutes of Comm. Meeting, Sept. 15–16," Bella Abzug papers.

⁴⁶The "Group of Ten" were: Elizabeth Abramowitz, Amy Billingsley, Audrey Rowe Colom, Bernadine Denning, Jeffylyn Johnson, Esra Poston, Elizabeth Stone, Ruth Sykes, Lynnette Taylor, and Ethyl Adams. "IWY Working Group for Position Paper for Black Women's Agenda," IWY, 7/24/77- 10/78 file, Box 16, Domestic Policy Staff, Beth Abramowitz's Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

 47 Black Women's Action Plan: A Working Document for Review and Ratification, IWY Conference, Houston 1977," "Commission on the IWY 2/77-3/77" file, Box 5, Martha "Bunny" Mitchell's Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁴⁸Dorothy Height, letter addressed to "Dear Friends and Colleagues," 10/21/77, "IWY, 7/24/73—10/78" file, Box 16. Domestic Policy Staff, Beth Abramowitz's Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁴⁹The Spirit of Houston, 156.

⁵⁰Lorraine Bennett, "Conference Scores with Delegates, Los Angeles Times, Nov 24, 1977.

⁵¹The Spirit of Houston, 70–75.

⁵²The Spirit of Houston, 158–60.

⁵³Bennett, "Conference Scores with Delegates."

⁵⁴Memo, Mildred Marcy to Executive Committee, IWY Commission, 8/8/76, Box 979, file "Women CCIWY 1975," Bella Abzug papers.

 $^{55} Letter$, Martha Griffiths to Presiding Officer and Members of National Commission on the Observance of IWY, 4/14/77, Box 977, file "IWY Memos, etc." Bella Abzug papers.

⁵⁶Charlotte Bunch, 'Lesbian Rights: A Feminist Issue," *It's Time: Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force. Special IWY Issue.* November, 1977, 1. Box: 147, file 2, Bella Abzug papers.

⁵⁷National Commission, April 12, 1977. Resolution on Agenda Adopted at April 12 Meeting of the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. IWY Box, April-May 1977 file, Costanza papers. Italics added by the author.

⁵⁸David Stein, "An Interview with Jean O'Leary," *Christopher Street*, January 1978, 24–25.

⁵⁹NGLTF Press release, "National Gay Task Force Urges Lesbians to Participate in International Women's Year Conference," Box 35, file 15, NGLTF records.

⁶⁰Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbian Rights: A Feminist Issue," *It's Time: Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force. Special IWY Issue.* November, 1977, 2. Box: 147, Folder 2, "International Women's Year: Documents," NGLTF records.

⁶¹Diane Abbit and Bobbi Bennett, "IWY and the Lesbian Issue," *The Lesbian News* 23, June 1977.

⁶²Kathleen Hendrix, "'Inherent Tension' in Women's Meeting," *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1977, A1.

⁶³Jeanne Cordova, "Gay, Feminist Coalition Sweeps IWY," *The Lesbian Tide* July / Aug 1977, 8, 10, Box 5, file 1, California IWY Support Coalition Papers.

⁶⁴Estimated attendance, State and territorial meetings, Box: IWY, file, "State meetings, National Commission information," Costanza papers.

⁶⁵NGLTF Press release, "National Gay Task Force Urges Lesbians to Participate in International Women's Year Conference," Box 35, file 15, NGLTF records.

⁶⁶Betty J. Blair, "Support for Lesbians Splits Feminist Ranks," *The Detroit News*, December 20, 1977, 1H.

⁶⁷David Stein, "An Interview with Jean O'Leary," *Christopher Street* January 1978, p. 27, Box: 6, Folder 2, "O'Leary, Jean". NGLTF records.

⁶⁸Jean O'Leary, "From Agitator to Insider: Fighting for Inclusion in the Democratic Party," in *Creating Change: Sexuality, Public Policy, and Civil Rights.* ed. John D'Emilio, William B. Turner, and Urvashi Vaid (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 81–114, quote on 91.

⁶⁹Jean O' Leary, "The Ex-Nun," in *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights: An Oral History*, ed. Eric Marcus (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 261–273, especially 271.

⁷⁰Jean O'Leary, "IWY: Strategy for Action," *It's Time: Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force. Special IWY Issue.* November, 1977, 2, Box: 147, Folder 2, "International Women's Year: Documents," NGLTF records.

⁷¹Ann Taylor Flemming, "That Week in Houston," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 25, 1977.

⁷²The Spirit of Houston, 166

⁷³"Dear Delegate to the Houston IWY" letter, no date, box 977, file, "Houston Pro Plan," Bella Abzug papers.

⁷⁴Jeanne Cordova, "Gay, Feminist Coalition Sweeps IWY."

⁷⁵Organizations committed to the Pro Plan agenda ranged from mainstream women's organizations such as the American Association of American Women (AAUW) and The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), to more explicitly feminist organizations, including Women's Action Alliance (WAA) and The National Organization of Women (NOW). National Commission, *The Spirit of Houston*, 133.

⁷⁶The Spirit of Houston, 134.

 $^{77}\!\!\!^{\prime\prime}\!\!\!^{\prime}\!\!\!$ Dear Delegate to the Houston IWY" letter, no date, file, "Houston Pro Plan," Box 977, Bella Abzug papers.

⁷⁸Nancy Borman, "Rockefeller, in Drag, Takes over WLM" *Majority Report* 7, Dec 10-22, 1977, 1-3.

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⁸⁰William Endicott, "U.S. Cabinet-Level Position Voted Down," Los Angeles Times, November 22, 1977.

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⁸⁶Carolyn Heilbrun, *The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 159

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91Klatch, Women of the New Right, 122-23.

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⁹³Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, 246–8.

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