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THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: WORKING WOMEN'S STRUGGLES IN THE 1970S AND THE GENDER OF CLASS

NANCY MACLEAN

There is a great deal to be learned by turning our minds to the obvious. For it is often what seems most apparent which goes unrecorded and is forgotten. Movements for radical change face considerable odds and can do with remembering themselves from one decade to the next.

–Sheila Rowbotham, *The Past Is Before Us: Feminism in Action since the 1960s*, 1989

It is clear to me that the entire structure of our society is being challenged.

–David Rockefeller, chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank, 1971 Annual Report

In 1993, the New York City Fire Department issued a curious order: no pictures could be taken of Brenda Berkman, on or off duty, inside or outside of a firehouse. Berkman was a firefighter, a fifteen-year veteran of the force. The order was the latest shot in a protracted battle against Berkman and others like her: women claiming the ability to do a job that had been a men's preserve for all the New York City Fire Department's 117-year, tradition-conscious history. The struggle began in 1977, when the city first allowed women to take the Firefighter Exam—and then promptly changed the rules on the physical agility section when 400 women passed the written portion of the test. Five years and a victorious class-action suit for sex discrimination later, forty-two women passed the new, court-supervised tests and training and went on to become the first female firefighters in New York's history. Among them was Berkman, founding president of the United Women Firefighters, and the most visible and outspoken of the group.¹

Their struggle dramatizes many elements in the larger story of women and affirmative action, which involved remaking "women's jobs" as well as braving male bastions. What Berkman and her colleagues encountered when they crossed those once-undisputed gender boundaries was not simply reasoned, judicious skepticism from people who doubted the capacity of newcomers to do the job. Repeatedly, what they met was elemental anger that they would even dare to try. Hostile male coworkers used many tactics to try to drive the women out, including hate mail, telephoned death threats, sexual harassment, refusing to speak to them for months on end, scrawling obscene antifemale graffiti in firehouses, and organizing public demonstrations against them. Male firefighters also slashed the tires of women's cars, urinated in their boots, and, in one instance, tried to lock a woman in a kitchen that they had filled with tear gas. Sometimes, the men resorted to violence: one woman was raped, and a few others endured less grave sexual assaults. Some men even carried out potentially deadly sabotage—as when one newcomer found herself deserted by her company in a burning building and left to put out a four-room fire on her own.

Frozen out by white male coworkers and betrayed by the firefighters union, the women found their only dependable internal allies in the Vulcan Society, the organization of Black male firefighters, who had themselves fought a long battle against discrimination in the department. They now stood by the women, even to the point of testifying in support of their class-action suit, despite "enormous pressure to remain silent." The tensions surrounding the entrance of women into the fire department were explosive although women constituted a mere 0.3 percent of the city's 13,000-member uniformed fire force. The no-photographs order from the top, the uncoordinated acts of hostility from would-be peers, as well as the support of the Vulcan Society, signal us that a great deal was at stake. Even in cases less egregious than the New York firefighters, boundary crossing backed by affirmative action affected something that mattered deeply to many men, especially many white men, in a way that often transcended logic.²

Yet, historians of the modern United States have only begun to examine workplace-based sex discrimination and affirmative action struggles such as those of the United Women Firefighters. More attention is in order. On the one hand, disgust with dis-

crimination and low-paying, dead-end jobs moved large numbers of working women to collective action in the last quarter-century. On the other hand, these struggles produced an unprecedented assault not just on previously unyielding patterns of occupational sex and race segregation and the economic inequality stemming from them but also on the gender system that sustained men's power and women's disadvantage and marked some women as more appropriate for certain types of work than others. "Work is," after all, "a *gendering process*," as the scholar of technology Cynthia Cockburn has observed—and, one might add, a race-making process as well. "While people are working, they are not just producing goods and services," Cockburn argues, "they are also producing *culture*." Similarly, Ava Baron has pushed labor historians to "think of *gender* not only as a noun but also as a verb" and to examine how "gender is created not simply outside production but also within it." These observations complement the argument in recent feminist and cultural theory that gender and race are constituted through performance. Gender identities and ideologies, the philosopher Judith Butler maintains, gain their power through "a *stylized repetition of acts*."³ In effect, struggles against discrimination and for affirmative action interrupted these repetitious performances in one key locale—the workplace—exposing in the process how the cycle worked and how it changed in different settings.

In challenging discrimination and demanding affirmative action, in fact, the struggles described here redefined gender, race, and class by undermining associations built up over more than a century (some historians would say far longer in the case of gender and class). These associations led women and men to have some sharply different experiences of what it meant to be working class. And although my focus here is on the transformation in class and gender specifically, race is deeply embedded in both of these categories and in the associations they carry, if not always accessible in the extant sources. Wage-earning women in 1965, for example, could not expect that the jobs available to them would pay enough to live in modest comfort, certainly not with children; they *could* expect to have to provide personal services to the men in their work places, to clean up after them, and to endure demeaning familiarities from them as a condition of employment. Working-class white men, by contrast, had their own indignities to endure. But they might at least hope for a job that would pro-

vide a "family wage," and they could expect that no boss or co-worker would ask them to do domestic chores or grope them on the job.⁴

Anti-discrimination and affirmative action struggles challenged this system of expectations and the patterns of inequality it perpetuated. Time and again, the system-recasting properties of affirmative action proved necessary to ensure equal treatment. Breaking down job ghettos and the habits that kept them in place required new practices such as wider advertising of job openings, recruitment from new sources, the analysis of jobs to determine skill requirements, the setting up of training programs to teach those skills, and in some cases the setting of specific numerical goals and timetables for recruiting and promoting women (impugned misleadingly by critics as "quotas"). By performing old work in new ways and by breaking into jobs formerly closed to them, the women involved in these efforts began, in effect, to reconstitute gender, and with it class, permanently destabilizing the once-hegemonic distinction between "women's work" and "men's work." To reconstitute is not to root out, of course: class inequality is if anything more shamelessly robust today than it was a quarter-century ago. Yet the *meaning* of particular class positions and experiences has shifted with the entrance of minority men and women of all groups in ways that demand attention. That we have forgotten how dramatic and radical a departure this was is a tribute to the success of their efforts.

Concentrating so heavily on gender and class in a discussion of affirmative action will strike many readers as odd and with good reason. Black civil rights organizations struggled for generations against employment discrimination, and it was their organizing that secured the most significant reforms to combat it. African Americans have also borne the brunt of recent attacks on affirmative action and the larger project of white racial revanchism that drives them. Indeed, so single-mindedly do contemporary critics of affirmative action focus on Blacks that one would never know from their arguments that the policy has served other groups. This sleight of hand has left both affirmative action and African Americans more vulnerable than they would be if the policy's other beneficiaries were acknowledged. Rather than accept the terms of debate used by affirmative action critics, then, this work seeks to bring into discussion another key group involved in the

modern struggle against employment discrimination and the responses its members encountered. Recovering women's relationship to affirmative action also seems important in its own right, because women—especially white women—are so often cast as "free riders" in the discourse, as passive beneficiaries living off the labors of others. This article aims to combat the historical amnesia which makes that image possible and to recognize in the process the cross-racial coalitions built among working-class women at a time when few of their more affluent counterparts yet saw this as a priority.

The curious lack of communication between two subfields of women's history, the women's movement and labor history, contributes to this historical amnesia. Recent accounts of the rise of modern feminism depart little from the story line first advanced two decades ago and since enshrined as orthodoxy. That story stars white middle-class women triangulated between the pulls of liberal, radical/cultural, and socialist feminism. Working-class women and women of color assume walk-on parts late in the plot, after tendencies and allegiances are already in place.⁵ The problem with this script is not simply that it has grown stale from repeated retelling. It is not accurate—or at least not attuned enough to the manifold stories unfolding and entwining in these years, including what Daniel Horowitz has termed the "radical origins" of "liberal feminism." Labor historians, in particular, have been chipping away at this orthodoxy almost as long as it has been in place, by drawing attention to the distinctive concerns and activism of working-class women, among them Black women and other women of color. In an important recent synthesis of this work, Dorothy Sue Cobble has pointed out that contrary to its popular image as the nadir of feminism, the postwar period was a time of exciting new initiatives on the part of working-class women in unions. "If feminism is taken to be a recognition that women as a sex suffer inequalities and a commitment to the elimination of these sex-based hierarchies," argued Cobble, "then the struggles of union women for pay equity and for mechanisms to lessen the double burden of home and work should be as central to the history of twentieth-century feminism as the battle for the enactment of the Equal Rights Amendment."⁶ The Negro American Labor Congress (NALC), for its part, five years before the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW), de-

manded "upgrading and promotion" for "Negro women," an end to "male-female differentials," and representation of Black women in labor leadership. To raise consciousness, NALC also called for local workshops "dealing specifically with women's problems and grievances."⁷

This article seeks to extend and complicate the story of wage-earning women's contribution to modern feminism by pushing the analysis into a new era, when boundaries were becoming more porous and open to crossing. For all that working-class women questioned before the mid-1960s, one institution had remained sacrosanct: the sexual division of labor. That women and men should hold different jobs seemed to require no explanation. Even where activists in NALC and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People fought to open jobs to Black women, they targeted only white "women's jobs" well into the 1960s, ignoring the better-paying jobs occupied by white men. Similarly, female union activists—Black and white—concentrated on improving the jobs women already held. Breaking out of the female job ghetto was unthinkable, because hardly anyone recognized it as a problem. "We never questioned it when they posted female and male jobs," recalled one such activist years later, "we didn't realize it was discrimination." For women at that time, it was simply a "way of life."⁸ Perhaps in part because the labor history literature tends to take the sexual and racial division of labor for granted, it—like some work in women's history and political history—also tends to dismiss affirmative action as of value only or mainly to professional women.⁹ I think this dismissal is mistaken.

In what follows, I will sketch out a preliminary reading of the story of women and affirmative action, focusing on three types of collective action that became widespread in the 1970s. In the first type, a decentralized mass movement arose as working women across the country took hold of the new ideas in circulation about gender, applied them to their own situations, and agitated for change, typically through the vehicle of ad hoc women's caucuses that involved women in a range of job categories. In the second type, full-time organizers sought to expand these caucus efforts into citywide organizations for working women in clerical jobs. And in the third variant, individual low-income women and advocates for them turned to affirmative action as an antipoverty strategy for women, particularly female household heads, and

began a concerted push for access to "nontraditional" blue-collar jobs for women. Those involved in all three efforts worked to mobilize working women across racial and ethnic lines. Although smaller numbers of women of color became involved in the first two forms of collective action, they became especially visible in campaigns for "nontraditional" employment.

To appreciate what has changed in the last quarter-century and why struggles such as the New York City firefighters became so pitched, it helps to consider some of the associations between gender and class that workers of this era—female and male—inherited. The most relevant cases are secretarial work and construction, both of which would become sites of contestation in the 1970s. Office work, as the historian Margery Davies first showed, was not always women's work; in the nineteenth century it was the province of upwardly mobile white men. But that changed at the turn of the century, as the multiplication of paperwork in the corporate economy and the spread of the typewriter vastly expanded the need for clerical workers. As women—and, until the 1960s, overwhelmingly white women—filled these jobs, a new ideology emerged that explained their presence by their sex. It now seemed that the female "personality" uniquely suited women for such work. As *Fortune* magazine put it, "by virtue of some of their most womanly traits," women "are capable of making the office a more pleasant, peaceful, and homelike place." Women in these jobs soon found themselves judged, not simply by their typing and filing and scheduling, but also by their looks and clothes and wifelike service, which was what so firmly entrenched these positions in the existing race and gender order.¹⁰

Outside the office buildings where these women labored, many of their male wage-earning counterparts were socialized into a very different place in the class and gender order. The contrast between the culture of clerical work and culture of construction starkly illustrated the pervasive, if sometimes more subtle, gendering of the labor force in modern America. Construction work, the labor historian Joshua B. Freeman reports, was by the postwar years "remarkably male in composition. . . . remarkably male in culture and remarkably sexualized." "Job satisfaction and craft pride," concluded Freeman, "contributed to the swaggering mas-

culinity of the hardhats," as did class resentments and gender anxieties. Women activists would not be just threatening job monopolies, in other words, they would also be tampering with the gender and sexual self-definitions of many men, whose identities and understandings of the world derived in good part from the maleness of their work cultures.¹¹

Interestingly, however, the first big challenges to sex discrimination in the 1960s did not come from either of these poles on the spectrum of gendered employment. Rather, the challenges came from wage-earning women in factory jobs, who discovered a new resource in legislation won by the civil rights movement in 1964. "Although rarely discussed in class terms," the Civil Rights Act's prohibition on race and sex discrimination in employment (Title VII), as the legal scholar Cynthia Deitch has pointed out, "had an unprecedented impact on class relations."¹² In challenging discrimination, that is, Black men and women of all groups were also helping to redefine class relations between workers and employers and within labor organizations. And just as historians are only now recapturing the powerful influence of working-class women on the early-twentieth-century suffrage movement, so we are also just now discovering the important role played by wage-earning women in the late-twentieth-century reemergence of feminism. When the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) opened for business in the summer of 1965, all observers were stunned at the number of women's complaints, which made up more than one-fourth of the total. Some 2,500 women in the initial year alone, overwhelmingly working-class and often trade union members, challenged unequal wages, sex-segregated seniority lists, unequal health and pension coverage, and male-biased job recruitment and promotion policies—among other things. Alice Peurala, for example, who had been stymied each time she tried for promotion since she was first hired at U.S. Steel Corporation in 1953, said that when the Civil Rights Act came along "I thought, here's my chance." The protests of women such as Peurala, we can see now, prompted the development of an organized feminist movement. It was, after all, the EEOC's negligence in handling these charges of sex discrimination that led to the formation of NOW, whose founders included labor organizers and women of color as well as their better-known, affluent, white counterparts. In other words, noted the labor historian Dennis A. Deslippe, "wom-

en unionists did not merely complement the efforts of middle-class feminists; they helped construct second-wave feminism."¹³

Such efforts were brought to the attention of a broad audience by the mass media. By the early 1970s, television news, magazines, and newspapers all carried stories about sex discrimination in employment and women's struggles against it, as well as reports of the wider women's movement. Whether the reporters were sympathetic, hostile, or patronizing, their coverage helped widen the ranks of the struggles they described. For example, the *Chicago Tribune* in 1972 published a questionnaire to discover women's views about the issues the movement raised. To the question "have you ever felt discriminated against because you are a woman?" the answer from over 3,200 women who wrote in response "was an overwhelming, often angry, YES." With responses ranging from one paragraph to eight pages, women readers divulged their experiences. The resulting list was long and varied, but job discrimination loomed large.¹⁴

The gender consciousness promoted by such stories stimulated women to look at their jobs afresh and to imagine class itself in new ways. By 1970, large numbers of American women began to act on this new thinking at work. Borrowing a tactic from mostly male, blue-collar African Americans, and taking strength from the general ferment among rank-and-file workers in the early 1970s symbolized by the famed Lordstown wildcat strike, these women joined together with like-minded coworkers to organize women's caucuses as their characteristic vehicle of struggle. The caucuses embodied, in effect, a new social theory: Blacks of both sexes and women of all races who joined together implicitly announced that traditional class tools—such as unions—were ill suited to the issues that concerned them. In form, the caucuses crossed divisions of occupation in order to overcome the isolation and competition that allowed their members to be pitted against one another. Using separate structures, they fought not simply to achieve racial and gender integration at work but also to redefine it.

Having first appeared about 1970, the caucuses spread rapidly within a few years, one sparking the next like firecrackers on a string. An article on the phenomenon that appeared in 1972 reported that caucuses were "known to exist in more than a hundred companies," the list of which read like a Who's Who of American business and culture. Having set out to write about

"The Ten Best Companies for Women Who Work," a *Redbook* author ended up writing in 1977 about women's caucuses instead, because all eighty of the responses to her inquiry agreed that "no corporation was doing anything it hadn't been forced into, and that grudgingly." Women were organizing in steel plants and auto factories, in banks and large corporations, in federal and university employment, in trade unions and professional associations, and in newspaper offices and television networks. Few sites remained undisturbed.¹⁵ Although women's historians have shown how consciousness-raising groups (mainly white and middle-class) broadened and deepened the women's movement, the importance of these caucuses (working-class and sometimes mixed-race) has been overlooked. Caucuses not only developed a critical consciousness among working women but they also won tangible improvements. Without their efforts, Title VII would have been a dead letter for women.¹⁶

These early women's caucuses nearly always came about because a few women suddenly rejected some expectation arising from contemporary constructions of gender and class. "*Without exception*," a contemporary news story reported (using italics to drive home the point), "*a principal demand of the women's caucuses is for respect*." Although the demand for respect and dignity had recurred with regularity in the struggles of working people, now it assumed a clearly feminist form as a way to challenge the denigration of women workers in particular. Time after time, the fresh recognition of some longstanding practice as sexist—a practice usually first identified as such in the course of casual lunchtime conversation among female coworkers—impelled women to organize. Often a small slight triggered a sense that a broader pattern of discrimination had just been revealed. For example, when *Newsweek* editors assigned a cover story on women's liberation to a nonstaff writer (the wife of a senior editor), women at the magazine suddenly looked around. They saw that management confined virtually all women on staff to what they called "the 'research' ghetto" and hired only one woman to fifty-one men as writers. Armed with Title VII, they organized, complained to the EEOC, and forced change at the magazine. In another variation of the process around the same time, the refusal of editors at the *New York Times* to allow the title "Ms." in the paper led several women on staff to wonder whether "this style rigidity was symptomatic of more basic problems."¹⁷

As it happens, one of the best documented examples of such workplace-based efforts is the resulting *New York Times* Women's Caucus. Its members challenged the newspaper to practice the fairness it preached to its readers. Prompted by the editors' curious resistance to nonsexist language, nine female employees in the news department began to compare experiences in 1972. Ironically, the *New York Times* had once boasted in an advertisement that one of the leaders, then a copy editor, had a "passion for facts." Now, however, the facts so carefully assembled by Betsy Wade, the self-proclaimed "Mother Bloor" of this particular struggle, brought less pride to management. The investigation and organizing continued until eighty women drew up a petition that complained of sex-based salary inequities; the confinement of women to poorer-paying jobs; the failure to promote female employees even after years of exemplary service; and their total exclusion from nonclassified advertising sales, management, and policy-making positions. The more women came to understand and label discrimination, the more of it they discovered. When "nothing happened" to address their complaints, the women secured a lawyer and filed charges with the EEOC. In turning to the state, they found they had to broaden their ranks beyond the original group to include secretarial staff and classified ad workers. That this was a stretch for some was evident in the private comment of one organizer about the latter: "We really gotta have one." Ultimately, in 1974, the enlarged group filed a class-action suit for sex discrimination on behalf of more than 550 women in all job categories at the *New York Times*, including reporters, clerks, researchers, classified salespeople, and data processors. For the next four years, as the suit wound its way through the courts, the caucus held meetings, put out newsletters, and continued to agitate. By 1978, management was willing to concede. Settling out of court, the *New York Times* compensated female employees for past discrimination and agreed to a precedent-setting affirmative action plan. "Considering where we were in 1972," said one of the original plaintiffs, the settlement was "the sun and the moon and the stars."¹⁸

That settlement highlights a more common pattern: in virtually every case where women's caucuses came together, demands for affirmative action emerged logically out of the struggle against discrimination. So striking is this pattern that I have yet to come

across a case in which participants did *not* see affirmative action as critical to the solution. Examples are legion: they range from the *New York Times* group, to steel workers, telephone operators, and NBC female employees, of whom two-thirds (600 of 900) were secretaries when they began organizing in 1971. Even the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), loyal to a trade union officialdom skeptical about affirmative action, came out strongly in its favor. Prioritizing seniority over diversity where the two came in conflict, CLUW nonetheless fought to establish affirmative action for women—and to keep it in place.¹⁹ The logic appeared inescapable: if male managers had for so many years proven oblivious to women's abilities and accomplishments and unwilling to stop preferring men when they hired and promoted, and if women themselves could have been unaware of or resigned to the discrimination taking place, then something was needed to counterbalance that inertia.²⁰ Successful efforts by African American men to wield affirmative action as a battering ram against discrimination only reinforced women's resolve.

Time and again, it was affirmative action that women embraced to open advertising of jobs, broaden outreach for recruitment, introduce job analysis and training, set specific numerical goals for recruiting and promoting women, and mandate timetables for achieving these changes, all commitments for which management would be held accountable. The centerpiece of the *New York Times* settlement, goals and timetables, could also be found in other settlements from *Reader's Digest* and NBC, on the one hand, to the steel industry and the New York City Fire Department on the other. Many other employers, such as Polaroid and Levi Strauss, voluntarily adopted such programs in response to pressure from female employees. As early as 1971, NOW literature was thus proclaiming affirmative action as "the key to ending job discrimination," and numerical goals and timetables as "the heart of affirmative action." Typically, and contrary to the notion that affirmative action benefitted only privileged women, these plans covered the gamut of female employees. No longer restricted to clerical and cleaning work, women in lower-paying positions—Black and white—could now get more lucrative jobs as, for example, security guards, machine operators, mail carriers, and commissioned salespeople.²¹

Yet, the largest single number of wage-earning women—one in three—remained in clerical jobs, and they became the target of the second kind of organizing initiative. These jobs were among the most sex segregated: in 1976, for example, women made up 91.1 percent of bank tellers and 98.5 percent of secretaries and typists. The income of clerical workers fell below that of male wage earners in every category except farming.²² Seeking to make the women's movement more relevant to working-class women, some feminists set out in 1973 to develop an organizing strategy geared to women office workers and to build a network that could spread the new consciousness. "The women's movement was not speaking to large numbers of working women," remembered Karen Nussbaum, one of the national leaders of the effort, "we narrowed the focus of our concerns, in order to broaden our base." Among the groups thus created were 9 to 5 (Boston), Women Employed (Chicago), Women Office Workers (New York), Cleveland Women Working, Women Organized for Employment (San Francisco), and Baltimore Working Women. By the end of the 1970s, a dozen such groups existed and had affiliated with an umbrella network called Working Women; together, they claimed a membership of eight thousand. The racial composition of the groups varied by locality, but Black women appeared to participate in larger numbers in these than in the women's caucuses, sometimes making up as much as one-third of the membership.²³

What linked all the members together was a categorical rejection of the peculiar gender burdens of their work: above all, the low pay and demands for personal service. Of these expectations, making and fetching coffee for men quickly emerged as the most resented emblem of women's status. Of the low pay, one contemporary said: "As long as women accepted the division of work into men's and women's jobs—as long as they *expected* to earn less because women *deserved* less—the employers of clerical workers had it easy." Now, however, the women active in these groups insisted on their standing as full-fledged workers who deserved, in what came to be the mantra of the movement, both "rights and respect." Appropriating National Secretaries' Day for their own purposes, the groups demonstrated for "Raises, Not Roses!" and a "Bill of Rights" for office workers. "What we're saying," as one 9 to 5 speaker explained in 1974, "is that an office worker is not a personal servant, and she deserves to be treated with respect and to

be compensated adequately for her work."²⁴

The groups sought to remodel not only the way that people thought about working women but also the very character of their work and the relationships in which it was embedded. No longer were they willing to fulfill the expectation among men that a secretary would serve as an "office wife," an expectation that had become entrenched over the preceding century—when, not coincidentally, clerical workers had been overwhelmingly white. When asked about problems at work, a member of Baltimore Working Women said: "I think respect is the main one. If people would respect women's work, naturally your wages are going to go up. I think that's the problem with low wages. Women's work is looked down upon. It's not really considered important, and you're not going to be paid [good] wages for something that's considered trivial."²⁵

These collective efforts were tackling something more insidious and more pervasive than the culture of office work. Writing about the emerging movement, Jean Tepperman perceived this at the time: "The stereotypes of clerical workers—stupid, frivolous, weak, useful only to help men do the *real* work—are just stereotypes of all women, translated into an office setting." Yet these stereotypes had a particular class content, Tepperman observed, that needed to be confronted directly; one might add, too, that they were stereotypes about white women in particular, as Black women were only beginning to enter clerical work in large numbers in the 1960s.

It's possible to convince someone that a woman lawyer or college professor is a serious, intelligent person. But many people see those women as exceptions—they're not "just" secretaries, or waitresses, or housewives, like most women. So when clerical workers begin to organize and assert themselves, it is a much more basic challenge to stereotypes of women, and very important to *all* women who want real change.²⁶

Thus, when clerical workers spoke out together, it kept defenders of the status quo from treating professional women as anomalous exceptions to the assumed pattern of female incapacity, a habit that served to contain the challenge that all these different categories of women workers posed to the sexual division of labor and prevailing notions of gender. A lot was at stake for both sides.

Neither professional associations nor unions, office worker organizations constituted a new model, one that used research, cre-

ative publicity, and media-savvy direct action to develop a mass membership and power base. Increasing wages and respect for office workers were their top concerns, but not far behind was securing and monitoring affirmative action programs. From the beginning, organizers understood the problems of women office workers in terms of discrimination: poor pay, blocked mobility, and gender-specific personal affronts—or, one might say, economics, social structure, and culture. They therefore turned to the legal tools provided by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and Revised Order No. 4 (the federal regulation stipulating that federal contractors must practice affirmative action for women). In the late 1970s, for example, sometimes working with local NOW chapters, all the Working Women affiliates took up a campaign targeting sex discrimination in banks. After distributing job surveys to female bank employees, the chapters held public hearings and demonstrations to publicize the results and prodded government anti-discrimination agencies to take action. Ultimately, these investigations resulted in several major settlements featuring novel affirmative action plans.²⁷ Individual organizations such as Women Employed continued to press the case for affirmative action, acting as watchdogs over employers and government agencies. Perhaps the most famous instance of such efforts involved female bank employees in Willmar, Minnesota, in 1977. When their bank hired a man to do the same work they did for \$300 more a month and then asked longtime female employees to train him for a management position, the women balked. After filing charges with the EEOC, they went on strike for a list of demands including an affirmative action program. For months they braved Minnesota winter on the picket lines to win their demands, a fight immortalized in the documentary "The Willmar Eight."²⁸

The Working Women network was distinct from but thus connected to another vehicle used by some contemporary wage-earning women to fight sex discrimination: the labor movement. Prompted by their female members and leaders, who sometimes organized in women's committees or caucuses, the more progressive unions in these years provided growing support to affirmative action in particular and feminist policies more generally.²⁹ Betsy Wade Boylan, a key organizer of the *New York Times* Women's Caucus, was thus also a leader of her Newspaper Guild local and a founding member of the New York Coalition of Labor

Union Women.³⁰ Building on the *New York Times* case, the Newspaper Guild began collecting information about affirmative action programs to push with other employers, including the *Washington Post*.³¹ Similarly, the International Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers (IUE) developed a model anti-discrimination and affirmative action program for unions that included obtaining detailed information about an employer's hiring and promotion policies, eliminating discrimination in wage rates and initial assignments, instituting job posting and bidding for promotions and transfers, and establishing plantwide seniority in place of departmental seniority systems that reproduced gender and racial hierarchies. For its part, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the public workers' union, pushed its affiliates to set up women's rights committees and to "work aggressively for truly meaningful affirmative action programs" as well as for comparable worth in their collective bargaining contracts.³² Black women in particular found in collective bargaining contracts effective tools for attacking inequality; they were almost twice as likely as white women to belong to unions. Black women such as Addie Wyatt, Ola Kennedy, and Clara Day—who called her union "one of the greatest civil rights workers"—also played leading roles in CLUW and, to a lesser degree, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.³³ Thus, although many unionists (probably most of those in craft occupations and the uniform trades) opposed affirmative action, some parts of the labor movement (prodded by women and African American men) welcomed the remaking of class that was taking place through the reconstitution of gender and race.

As women's caucuses and office worker groups continued into the late 1970s, a new form of organizing for affirmative action spread: training and placement of women in "nontraditional" blue-collar jobs, particularly in construction. Here, advocates of gender equity came up more directly against sex-typed class consciousness among craftsmen who by long tradition equated working-class pride and "defiant egalitarianism" vis-à-vis bosses with, as the labor historian David Montgomery once observed, "patriarchal male supremacy."³⁴ Feminists turned to the nontraditional work strategy in the belief that as women got access to

these jobs and the higher wages they offered, their movement out of the female job ghetto would also relieve the overcrowding that pulled down women's wages.³⁵ Men without college educations had long found in these jobs both good wages and personal pride; that women were steered away from even considering them was itself a mark of gender discrimination. Building on the reforms wrested by civil rights workers and women's caucuses, the new initiatives marked both a more self-conscious attempt to relieve female poverty and a more frontal challenge to the sexual division of labor in working-class jobs. Two groups came together to make them work. On the one side, emboldened by the ideas of the times and the start of affirmative action, some wage-earning women defied custom and criticism by entering "men's" trades in the hopes of bettering their incomes.³⁶ On the other side, stirred by the Poor People's Campaign and the National Welfare Rights Organization, some female organizers set out to alleviate women's poverty and change the gender system that enforced it. In both groups, white women and women of color found themselves addressing racial issues in order to build class-based women's coalitions.

One of the pioneer organizations was Advocates for Women, founded in San Francisco in 1972. Its founders self-consciously broke ranks with women's movement organizations such as NOW that seemed ever more single-mindedly focused on the Equal Rights Amendment and the concerns of better-off women. Taking advantage of newly available federal funds, Advocates for Women began recruiting and training women for nontraditional jobs. Directed by a Latina, Dorothea Hernandez, the organization aimed to reach "women of all races and cultures with emphasis on low-income women who must support themselves and their families." The rationale for the effort was to the point: "Poverty is a woman's problem"; hence, "women need money." The best way to ensure their access to it was through their own earnings. This strategy seemed more reliable than indirect claims on men's paychecks and more generous and empowering than Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). But the low-paying occupations into which most women were shunted wouldn't provide enough money to escape poverty, particularly to those with limited educations and work experiences. Advocates for Women reasoned that government-mandated affirmative action could be

made to work for women in the construction industry. Because the skilled trades had long enabled men with only high school educations to secure good incomes, these jobs ought to be able to do the same for women—if they had the needed advocacy, training, and support services.³⁷

Some established women's organizations found themselves radicalized by the challenges of working for fair employment, as the evolution of Wider Opportunities for Women illustrates. Founded in 1966, this group began as an elite, white-gloves operation to locate volunteer opportunities and part-time employment for college-educated housewives. Yet by 1972, the organization embarked on what would soon become a new focus: providing poor women, particularly "poor minority women," with the training and backing they needed to secure craft jobs. Staffers argued for this program on grounds of women's "disadvantage in the labor market," their concentration in "marginal jobs which cannot sustain even minimum family needs," and their growing responsibility for raising children on their own. Wider Opportunities for Women acted out of a conviction of "the necessity for directing women away from traditional, poorly paid, often-glutted fields and into new and promising areas of work." Within a few years, it had pioneered another application of this basic concept: a highly successful program to "break the cycle" for female ex-convicts by getting them into well-paying jobs with a future.³⁸

Over the next few years, variations on the basic nontraditional jobs model sprang up in locations across the country. By mid-decade, 140 women's employment programs were in operation, from San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., to Atlanta, Dayton, Louisville, Raleigh, San Antonio, and Wichita. In an initiative launched in 1979, over ninety of them, from twenty-seven states, joined together to form the Women's Work Force Network, which soon created a Construction Compliance Task Force to facilitate women's entrance into the building trades.³⁹ Women of color tended to be prominently involved, both as workers and as leaders. In New York, for example, Black women and Latinas helped run United Tradeswomen, and their concerns prompted discussions about how racism and sexism worked together in the construction industry. One result was special attention to the exclusion of Black women from the trades and pressure for their inclusion, such as the 1981 demand that at the con-

vention center construction site "at least one half of women hired be women of color."⁴⁰

Even in the Appalachian South, often thought of as a bulwark of tradition, women began to organize for access to the better-paying work long monopolized by men. In 1977, several women who had grown up in the region's coal fields set up the Coal Employment Project "to help women get and keep mining jobs." Within a year, working with regional NOW chapters, they had filed complaints against 153 leading coal companies for practicing blatant sex discrimination in all areas: men comprised 99.8 percent of all coal miners and 98.6 percent of all persons employed in *any* capacity in the coal industry. Women's interest in this work expanded in tandem with their access. The number of female underground coal miners grew from zero in 1973, to over 3,500 by the end of 1981, when they comprised 2 percent of the work force. Often widowed or divorced and raising children on their own, coal-mining women took these jobs for the same reasons that led other women to construction sites: the work paid more than three times as much as they could get elsewhere. To the extent that working-class women could get jobs in Appalachia, after all, it was nearly always as waitresses, store clerks, or unskilled operatives in factories that came to the region for its low wages. More challenging than these "women's jobs," mining also held more interest and prestige. To women who had grown up in the area, coal was, as one put it, "part of our heritage," it was "part of who we are." "Women go into mining for the money," summed up one reporter: "They stay, they say, because they like it."⁴¹

These endeavors marked an explicit feminist challenge not only to prevailing ideas of employment as something that fitted men for self-reliance and women for dependence on and service to men but also to the public policy model enshrined in the War on Poverty. Constructed on the premises set forth in the Moynihan Report, which explicitly argued that the problem for poor Black families was that so many were female-headed, this approach assumed that the key task was to generate jobs for poor men, particularly Black men, that would enable them to support families. Women's employment at best signaled family pathology; at worst, it created it, by depriving men of rightful dominance. Disparaged today, this thinking exerted a powerful influence through the 1970s, not just in government but in civil rights and Black nation-

alist circles as well.⁴² Participants in women's nontraditional employment programs, Black and white, argued a very different case. Not only were large numbers of women likely to continue heading families: they had a right to do so in comfort and dignity. Poor men needed good jobs, to be sure, but so did poor women. Society should not expect gains for one to come at the expense of the other. This position had far-reaching ramifications. Saying good riddance to both the old family-wage system and the privations and humiliations of AFDC, it aimed at a new model, a model in which women could build families from positions of autonomy and power, heading or coheading households while being recognized as full citizens at the same time. "Money meant independence," a divorced electrician explained, "a trade meant . . . being able to support my family without having a man around, if I couldn't find a decent man to relate to the family."⁴³

If we look at these initiatives in light of theories that gender is constituted through performance and see these women as engaged in performances that revised existing notions of womanhood and manhood alike, richer, subtler meanings emerge. Performing nontraditional work changed many of the women who did it, as did receiving the higher wages once reserved for men. Some entered with the hope of such change; others discovered it in the doing. Coal mining, for example, was one of the most dangerous, demanding occupations in the United States; doing it well changed women's sense of themselves. "As I grow stronger," wrote one woman miner, "as I learn to read the roof [of the mine] like the palm of a hand, the confidence grows that I can do this work. . . . To survive, you learn to stand up for yourself. And that is a lesson worth the effort to learn."⁴⁴ One of the first female guards at U.S. Steel's Gary, Indiana, plant spoke in similar terms. "When I first took this job," she said, "I had to prove to them [the men] that women could handle it. Before this, I had been brought up to think women were inferior and I believed it. It wasn't actually until I started doing what they considered a man's job and found out that I could do it just as well that I actually began to believe this."⁴⁵ Bordering on conversion narratives, such expressions of personal growth from both Black and white women pervade the sources on nontraditional work. (They also help to make sense of some men's intense resistance to women's entry in their trades, a resistance which seemed to be directed against precisely such

feelings of equivalence and efficacy.) "I'm glad I went to jail," said a participant in the program for female ex-convicts; "If I hadn't, I wouldn't have found WOW and my new life."⁴⁶ Other women described how their new work and income altered relationships with husbands, friends, and children, even acquaintances, and endowed the women themselves with a novel sense of their own competence. There were losses along with gains: some women, for example, missed "the sense of camaraderie" they had enjoyed with female coworkers.⁴⁷ And for men, too, the entrance of women into these jobs led to adjustments in identity and social understanding. "Some of the men would take the tools out of my hands," a pipefitter recalled. "When a woman comes on a job that can work, get something done as fast and efficiently, as well as they can, it really affects them. Somehow if a woman can do it, it ain't that masculine, not that tough."⁴⁸

One need not romanticize these changes to realize that cumulatively they could not help but alter meanings of womanhood and manhood in the wider culture. When members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) began getting pregnant, surely it signified a sea change in the relationship between gender and class. For generations, the miner had symbolized male working-class fortitude in U.S. culture; now it seemed that character of exemplary mettle might happen to be a mother. When female union members lobbied so effectively that they won unanimous support from the 1983 UMWA convention for the inclusion of parental leave as a contract demand in upcoming coal negotiations, surely it also marked a sea change in the labor movement. By pushing not simply for maternity leave but for paternity leave as well, they opened the possibility that the icon of working-class manhood—immortalized in America's finest labor ballads—might choose to be a stay-at-home dad.⁴⁹

As women in these struggles remade class and gender, they often found themselves tackling race as well: struggle led to deeper learning. Even when women's caucuses arose in predominantly white offices, for example, at least one, and sometimes a few, Black women were usually actively involved. Inquiries into sex discrimination uncovered racial discrimination as well, as in a landmark suit by Women Employed against the Harris Trust and Savings Bank in Chicago. Many women's groups thus quickly realized the need to establish ties with Black workers' caucuses or

informal groups. An agitational article in *Ms.* on the caucuses thus announced "racial composition" as a factor "critical to the success of a caucus," with interracial groups doing better. "The reason is clear. Management responds to an all-white group with divide-and-conquer tactics." Groups were also sensitive to the danger of appearing to be taking something away from Black men; some made a point of documenting the complementarity of women's and Black men's interests. The resulting coalitions were rarely tension-free—particularly for Black women, who likely felt keenly the need for both groups and the limitations of each—but they were certainly educational and often effective at bringing greater rewards to the partners than they could have achieved alone. When full-time organizations developed, white women initially occupied all or most of the staff positions. This became a particular problem in the construction industry drive, because women of color made up a large proportion of the low-income constituency the organizations aimed to serve. Recognizing this, some of these groups consciously set out to reconstruct themselves by applying affirmative action internally.⁵⁰

At the same time, the nontraditional jobs effort enabled even predominantly white women's groups to develop alliances with Black and Chicano rights organizations fighting for fair employment. One case in point is the United Women Firefighters with whom this story began, who won support from the Black male firefighters of the Vulcan Society. Another example is the *New York Times* Women's Caucus, which coordinated its efforts with those of the Black workers' caucus throughout the struggle. Women telephone workers and steel workers engaged in class-action suits did the same. For its part, Women Employed combined with other civil rights organizations to sue the Chicago District Office of the EEOC for negligence in 1977 and continued to cultivate collaborative relationships thereafter. Alliances such as this could alter both parties, making the women's groups more antiracist and making the civil rights groups more feminist in their thinking and programs. The collaboration between San Antonio NOW and the Chicana Rights Project of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund offers a good example. After a local NOW study revealed pervasive discrimination in San Antonio's city hiring and training programs, activists in the two groups worked together to secure and monitor a new city affirmative ac-

tion plan and to oversee the allotment of CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) funds.⁵¹ Similarly, Chicago NOW discovered "lots of coalition possibilities opening up" with Asian American groups in its campaign against discrimination at Sears in the early 1970s. Their collaboration revealed the specific employment problems of Asian American women. Elsewhere, women's employment groups joined forces with those promoting Black and Latino men's employment to push for better enforcement of anti-discrimination and affirmative action policies in government-funded construction projects.⁵² Although much more research needs to be done before we can draw sound conclusions about the ways that race operated in these women's struggles, it is clear that working-class women's groups provide important models for feminist multiracial coalition building.

I do not want to overstate the changes that occurred. If women tried to rewrite the script, so could men. Resistance was common, and sometimes fierce, as the example of the New York City firefighters illustrates. To take one obvious case: as if to certify their own now-uncertain masculinity and remind women of their place, some men turned to sexual harassment. Although hardly new, this tactic seemed to be used more aggressively and self-consciously where men found treasured gender privileges and practices in question—as in the case of the New York firefighters. It was almost as though the men involved were marking the workplace as their territory, as indeed they were when they posted up pornography—a common practice in these situations. As one observer grasped: "By forcing sexual identities into high relief, men submerge the equality inherent in the work and superimpose traditional dominant and subordinate definitions of the sexes."⁵³ The support of Black firemen complicated but did not forestall this development.

Putting face-to-face resistance to the side for the moment—which may in any case distract us from the variety and complexity of male responses—it is plain to see that the struggles described here have left much undone.⁵⁴ By and large, working women still face serious obstacles in trying to support themselves and their families. As much as occupational sex and race segregation have diminished, they have hardly disappeared, as any glance at a

busy office or construction site will show. For women and men to be equally represented throughout all occupations in the economy today, 53 out of every 100 workers would have to change jobs. The absolute number of women in the skilled trades has grown, but they hold only 2 percent of the well-paying skilled jobs. In any case, these good jobs for people without higher education, as each day's newspaper seems to announce, are themselves an endangered species. In fact, although the wage gap between the sexes has narrowed, only about 40 percent of the change is due to improvement in women's earnings; 60 percent results from the decline in men's real wages. The persistent disadvantage in jobs and incomes contributes to another problem that has grown more apparent over the last two decades: the impoverishment of large numbers of women and their children, particularly women of color. Many of these poor women, moreover, are already employed. In 1988, more than two in five women in the work force held jobs that paid wages below the federal poverty level.⁵⁵ So I am not arguing that some kind of linear progress has occurred and all is well.

Still, affirmative action was never intended as a stand-alone measure or panacea. From the outset, advocates were nearly unanimous in their insistence that it would work best in conjunction with full employment above all but also with such measures as pay equity, unionization, and improvements in education and training. Affirmative action's mission was not to end poverty, in any case, but to fight occupational segregation. And there it has enjoyed unprecedented, if modest, success. The best indicator is the index of occupational segregation by sex: it declined more in the decade from 1970 to 1980, the peak years of affirmative action enforcement, than in any other comparable period in U.S. history. As of 1994, women made up over 47 percent of bus drivers, 34 percent of mail carriers, and 16 percent of police—all jobs with better pay and benefits than most "women's work." This lags slightly behind nontraditional jobs requiring postsecondary training: women now account for nearly 40 percent of medical school students (20 percent of practicing physicians), nearly 50 percent of law school students (24 percent of practicing lawyers), and almost one-half of all professionals and managers.⁵⁶ The ways that white women and women of color fit into these patterns complicate analyses based on sex alone. Yet whether in blue-collar, pink-col-

lar, or professional jobs, white and Black women have gained benefits from breaking down sex barriers.

It would be absurd, of course, to give affirmative action exclusive credit for these changes. The policies described here came to life as the result of a broader history involving women's own determination to close the gap between the sexes in education and labor force participation, institutional fears of lawsuits for discrimination, new developments in technology and labor demand, and changes that feminism and civil rights brought about in U.S. culture. The mass entry of women into hitherto "men's work" in particular is deeply rooted in the breakdown of the family wage-based gender system. It is both result and reinforcement of a host of other changes: new expectations of lifelong labor force participation among a majority of women, the spread of birth control, the growing unreliability of marriage, the convergence in women's and men's patterns of education, the demise of associational patterns and sensibilities based on stark divisions between the sexes—even the growing participation of women in sports. But if it would be foolish to exaggerate the causative role of affirmative action, it would also be sophistry to deny or underrate that role. It has furthered as well as been fostered by these other developments.⁵⁷ Women simply could not have effected the changes described here without its tools and the legal framework that sustained them. There are sound reasons why by 1975 virtually every national women's organization from the Girl Scouts to the Gray Panthers supported affirmative action, and why today that support persists from the African American Women's Clergy Association at one end of the alphabet to the YWCA at the other.⁵⁸

Yet there is a curious disjuncture between these organizations and the female constituency they claim to represent: repeated polls have found that white women in particular oppose affirmative action by margins nearly matching those among white men (which vary depending on how the questions are worded).⁵⁹ No doubt several factors help to explain this paradox, not least of them the racial framing of the issue, which encourages white women to identify with white men against a supposed threat from nonwhites. The preference for personal politics over political economy at the grassroots has also led many women to interpret feminism in terms of lifestyle choices rather than active engagement in public life. Struggles for the ERA and reproductive

rights ultimately eclipsed employment issues on the agenda of the women's movement in the 1970s. And most major women's organizations have come to emphasize service or electoral politics over grassroots organizing, and staff work over participation of active members. All these developments help to explain why today there is so little in the way of a well-informed, mobilized, grassroots female constituency for affirmative action—a vacuum that, in turn, has made the whole policy more vulnerable to attack.

Surely another reason, however, for the paradoxical gulf between national feminist organizations and grassroots sentiment on this issue is the historical amnesia that has obliterated the workplace-based struggles of the modern era from the collective memory of modern feminism—whether women's caucuses, clerical worker organizing, the fight for access to nontraditional jobs, or union-based struggles. If not entirely forgotten, these efforts on the part of working women are so taken for granted that they rarely figure prominently in narratives—much less interpretations—of the resurgence of women's activism. This disregard is especially ironic in that such struggles likely contributed more than we realize to our own era's heightened consciousness concerning the social construction and instability of the categories of gender, race, and class. Activists, that is, had begun the task of denaturalizing these categories and their associated hierarchies well before academics took up the challenge. If historians have now begun excavating the buried traditions of working-class women that can help us rethink the trajectories of modern feminism, there are still many, many more stories to be uncovered.

These stories have implications for how we approach the future as well as the past. As a recent gathering of feminist practitioners and scholars concluded: "we need to enlarge [our idea of] what counts as theory." Convened by the pioneering feminist economist Heidi Hartmann, the discussants revealed unanimous frustration at how theory has come to be equated exclusively with deconstruction, and how that constricted definition, in turn, has steered many people—especially but not only nonacademic feminists—"away from theory."⁶⁰ It need not be this way. Practical struggles such as those over employment discrimination and affirmative action can advance the project of enlarging the purview of feminist theory, for they raise a host of critical questions—questions about the meaning and effects of different sexual divisions of

labor; about the sources of collective consciousness and action among working women in the postwar period; about the relationships among sex discrimination and class and racial oppression; about how workplace-based performance affects consciousness and social relations; and about the connections between capitalism, labor, and state policy in the shaping of our lives. Above all, they remind us to think about change, and the agency and power needed for it. A feminist theory that began to tackle such issues might find that it had more to say to the majority of U.S. women, whose foremost concerns, as they try to tell us over and over again, are economic (defining economic expansively). This is not an argument to suppress sexual politics, ignore reproductive rights, or avoid questions of culture and subjectivity; new thinking on all these fronts contributed much to the struggles described here. It is to say that attention to other, neglected issues—issues of economic inequality, employment, and class foremost among them—could enrich historical scholarship on the women's movement and invigorate feminist theory and practice. Attention to employment issues and broader economic concerns could also focus the current interest in diversity on the arena where it ultimately matters most: the search for solid ground for alliances across differences to win changes that would enhance all our lives.⁶¹

NOTES

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1. The information in this and the two subsequent paragraphs is compiled from multiple documents, too numerous for individual citation, all found in United Women Firefighters Papers, box 4, First Women Firefighters of New York City Collection, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York.
2. Brenda Berkman to David J. Floyd, 23 Dec. 1983, box 4, United Women Firefighters Papers. Of course, some individual white men supported women in these struggles and some individual Black men proved hostile. For an excellent ethnographic account of the variety of male responses in one workplace in the skilled trades and why this makes leadership from management and unions especially important, see Brigid O'Farrell and Suzanne Moore, "Unions, Hard Hats, and Women Workers," in Dorothy Sue Cobble, ed., *Women and Unions: Forming a Partnership* (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 1993), 69-84. See also Marian Swerdlow, "Men's Accommodations to Women Entering a Nontraditional Occupation: A Case of Rapid Transit Operatives," *Gender & Society* 3 (September 1989):

386; and Jean Reith Shroedel, *Alone in a Crowd: Women in the Trades Tell Their Stories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), 39, 57-59, 62, 170, 196-97, 208.

3. Cynthia Cockburn, *Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How* (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 167-68; Ava Baron, "Gender and Labor History: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future," in *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor*, ed. Ava Baron (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 36, 37; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 140; see also 25 and 136. Earlier, Sally Alexander offered a similarly dynamic definition of the sexual division of labor as "a historical relationship which structures both economic relations and unconscious mental processes." Sally Alexander, introduction to Marianne Herzog's *From Hand to Mouth: Women and Piecework*, trans. Stanley Mitchell (London: Penguin Books, 1980), 25; see also Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, *Gender at Work* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 14. On race making, see Thomas C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History," *American Historical Review* 100 (February 1995): 1-20; also Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States, from the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994).

4. For an incisive discussion of how gender and class have come to constitute one another over a several-thousand-year period, see Gerda Lerner, "Re-Thinking Class; Re-Thinking Race," in her *Why History Matters: Life and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). For an important early statement, see the editors' introduction to *America's Working Women: A Documentary History*, ed. Rosalyn Baxandall, Linda Gordon, and Susan Reverby (New York: Vintage, 1976), xxii. My intent here is not to discount the class oppression that wage-earning men endured but, rather, to highlight how gender differentiated the forms of that oppression as well as experiences of it and ideas about it. For a thoughtful exploration of how working-class standing affected U.S. men in these years, see Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Vintage, 1972).

5. For the pathbreaking origins story, see Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Random House, 1979); also William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). Recent works that fail to move beyond the focus on middle-class white women and the neglect of the workplace in the story of the modern women's movement include Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945-1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Susan M. Hartmann, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989); Winifred Wandersee, *On the Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston: Twayne, 1988).

6. Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism: Union Women in the Postwar Era," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). See also the pioneering work of Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of U.S. Women's Labor History* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 259-322; and Nancy F. Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935-1975* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); also Daniel Horowitz, "Rethinking Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique*: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America," *American Quarterly* 48 (March 1996): 1-42.

7. A. Philip Randolph to NALC members, with attachments, 28 Mar. 1961, box 1 (of National Afro American Labor Congress Addition), Richard Parrish Papers, Manuscripts Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York.

8. NALC Minutes, 28 Apr. 1959, box 4, James Haughton Papers, Manuscripts Division,

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York; *ibid.*, 16 Dec. 1963; Mary Callahan of the International Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers, quoted in Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism," 68.

9. For an example of the exclusive association of affirmative action with "career women," see Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Introduction: Remaking Unions for the New Majority," in *Women and Unions*, 4; also Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism," 72. Other scholars have trivialized affirmative action as something of value only to relatively privileged women or misconstrued it as a policy in which feminists, unlike those fighting for racial equality, showed little interest. For an example of the former, see Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1992), 235; for the latter, see Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). For a brief synthesis of social science research on the efficacy of affirmative action, see Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Affirmative Action in Employment: An Overview," Briefing Paper (Washington, D.C.: IWPR, 1996).

10. Quoted in Margery Davies, "Woman's Place Is at the Typewriter: The Feminization of the Clerical Labor Force," in *Capitalism, Patriarchy, and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, ed. Zillah R. Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 257. See also Margery Davies, *Woman's Place Is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Rosalyn L. Feldberg, "'Union Fever': Organizing among Clerical Workers, 1900-1930," in *Workers' Struggles, Past and Present: A "Radical America" Reader*, ed. James Green (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 151-67; Angel Kwolek-Folland, "Gender, Self, and Work in the Life Insurance Industry, 1880-1930" (168-90), and Ileen A. DeVault, "'Give the Boys a Trade': Gender and Job Choice in the 1890s" (191-215), both in *Work Engendered*. For an argument from Australian evidence about the way gender and sexuality pervade workplace relations in the office, see Rosemary Pringle, *Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power, and Work* (London: Verso, 1988).

11. Joshua B. Freeman, "Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstrations," *Journal of Social History* 26 (summer 1993): 726, 732. See also Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Jeffrey W. Riemer, *Hard Hats: The Work World of Construction Workers* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1979); Herbert A. Applebaum, *Royal Blue: The Culture of Construction Workers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981). For a provocative if flawed preliminary attempt to theorize relationships between masculinity and class, see Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity: Male Identity and the Liberated Woman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). I am grateful to Linda Grant for bringing this work to my attention. See also Ava Baron, "On Looking at Men: Masculinity and the Making of Working-Class History," in *Feminists Revision History*, ed. Ann Louise Shapiro (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

12. Cynthia Deitch, "Gender, Race, and Class Politics and the Inclusion of Women in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *Gender & Society* 7 (June 1993): 198. For a sample of the ways women began to use Title VII, see Louise Bernikow, "Heaven Won't Protect the Working Girl," *Ms.*, spring 1972, 123-25; Susan Edmiston, "Out from Under! A Major Report on Women Today," *Redbook*, May 1975, 159-68; "Business and the Radicals," *Dun's Review* 92 (June 1970): 46-49.

13. Interview with Alice Peurlala in Brigid O'Farrell and Joyce L. Kornbluh, *Rocking the Boat: Union Women's Voices, 1915-1975* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 268; Dennis A. Deslippe, "Organized Labor, National Politics, and Second-Wave Feminism in the United States, 1965-1975," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 49 (spring 1996): quotation on 161; also 147, 150. For further discussion of how "second-wave" feminism germinated in the ranks of labor and the Left, see Dennis A. Deslippe,

"We Had an Awful Time with Our Women': Iowa's United Packinghouse Workers of America, 1945-1975," *Journal of Women's History* 5 (spring 1993): 10-32; the pioneering study by Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement*, 188-228; also Horowitz, "Rethinking Betty Friedan," 1-42.

14. Lynn Van Matre, "Women Speak Out on Their Status," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 June 1972, sec. 2ff, in box 51, Anne L. Armstrong Papers, Staff Member Office Files, White House Special Files, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Materials, National Archives, Washington, D.C. See also the fascinating interview with older working-class women by Susan Jacoby, "What Do I Do for the Next Twenty Years?" *New York Times Magazine*, 17 June 1973, reprinted in *America's Working Women*, 384-89; and "How Bosses Feel about Women's Lib," *Business Week*, 5 Sept. 1970, 18-19.

15. Susan Davis, "Organizing from within," *Ms.*, August 1972, 92; Mary Scott Welch, "How Women Just Like You Are Getting Better Jobs," *Redbook*, September 1977. This article provides the most wide-ranging and best single discussion of the caucus phenomenon. See also Philip Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 2: 542-43; O'Farrell and Kornbluh, 274-76. On Black workers' caucuses and rank-and-file unrest in the period, see *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, ed. Burton H. Hall (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1972); Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying; A Study in Urban Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975); Staughton Lynd and Alice Lynd, *Rank and File: Personal Histories by Working-Class Organizers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

16. One recent study has found in such caucuses the predominant form of gender-conscious activism among women in the 1980s. See Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, "Feminism within American Institutions: Unobtrusive Mobilization in the 1980s," *Signs* 16 (autumn 1990): 27-54. Women involved in such efforts not infrequently developed international connections, helping women in other countries to start their own caucuses and sharing information thereafter. For an example, see Mary Stott to Betsy Wade, 18 Mar. [ca. 1975], box 1, *New York Times Women's Caucus Papers*, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge (hereafter, NYTWC).

17. Davis, 96. On the start of the *New York Times Women's Caucus*, see Grace Glueck's typescript notes for speech at American Palace Theater, 26 Oct. 1978, box 1, NYTWC. For other efforts, see Jewell George [for NBC's Women's Committee for Equal Employment Opportunity] to Jill Ruckelshaus, 7 Nov. 1973, box 18, GEN HU 2-2, White House Central Files, Nixon Presidential Materials; *Media Report to Women* 2 (1 Dec. 1974), box 1, NYTWC; and "Sexism Scorecard," *MORE*, October 1977, *ibid.*; NBC Women's Committee, press release, "Network Women Meet," 18 Dec. 1972, *ibid.* See also Welch. For the grievances and experiences of other women involved in like efforts, see Jean Tepperman, *Not Servants, Not Machines: Office Workers Speak Out* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), 1-38, 69-93.

18. For the attitude toward classified sales people, see Betsy Wade to Grace, Joan, Harriet, and Howard, 22 Aug. 1974, box 1, NYTWC; see also Glueck notes for speech. For followup, see Joan Cook, "Notes on telephone conversation with [Attorney] Harriet Rabb," 2 Apr. 1980, box 1, NYTWC. Discussion in this paragraph is based on a large number of documents in the NYTWC Papers but see in particular: the text of Elizabeth Boylan et al., *Plaintiffs v. The "New York Times,"* Defendant, U.S. District Ct., Southern District of New York, 74 Civ. 4891, Judge Werker, and the expert witness depositions in box 1; "Betsy Wade, A Fondness for Facts," clipping of advertisement, ca. 1962, box 2; Betsy Wade to Grace Glueck and Joan Cook, 19 Aug. [1974], box 1; Betsy Wade to Yetta Riesel, 30 May 1974; Members of the Negotiating Committee to All Women at the *New York Times*, December 1974; also, "The Other Side of It," spring 1977, 1; [no author] "The Times Settles Sex Bias Suit Filed by Female Workers in U.S. Court," *New York Times*, 21 Nov. 1978, B7; Marion Knox, "Women and the Times," *The Nation*, 9 Dec. 1978, 635-37; typescript history, "Times Caucus," n.d. [1975], NYTWC Papers. See also Lindsay Van

Gelder, "Women vs. the *New York Times*," Ms., September 1978, 66 ff. For another well-documented but dispersed group, see the records of Federally Employed Women (FEW), in the Mary O. Eastwood Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge.

19. On AT&T and steel, see O'Farrell and Kornbluh, 250-51, 257, 274; Foner, 54; on NBC, see Welch. For CLUW's support for affirmative action and other gender-conscious policies, see resolution adopted by CLUW National Coordinating Committee, Houston, 31 May 1975, box 37, Coalition of Labor Union Women Records, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit; CLUW, "Convention Call to the Third Biennial Convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women . . . and a Conference on Affirmative Action," Chicago, 22-25 Mar. 1984, *ibid.*; Committee to Defend Affirmative Action, "Affirmative Action: Model Resolution," box 75, *ibid.* For Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality (WAGE)'s support, see Foner, 500, 514, 518, also 525-27.

20. For a discussion of the securing and monitoring of affirmative action plans as the *raison d'être* of women's caucuses, see Carla Lofberg Valenta, "Change from Below: Forming a Women's Caucus," *Women's Work* 2 (October 1976): 26-31. See also Davis, 94-96. For a more general discussion of why affirmative action is necessary for women, written from the perspective of social psychology, see Susan D. Clayton and Faye J. Crosby, *Justice, Gender, and Affirmative Action* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

21. See "Fact Sheet: Boylan v. *New York Times*," box 1, NYTWC; press release, 6 Oct. 1978, *ibid.*; Welch; NOW, "Affirmative Action: The Key to Ending Job Discrimination," 28 Apr. 1971, box 44, National Organization for Women (NOW) Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge; Lucy Komisar, in *NOW York Woman*, July 1971, 1. For the prevalence of affirmative action in major media sex-discrimination settlements, see "Sexism Scorecard." For other examples, see Ruth I. Smith [for National Association of Bank Women] to Robert J. Lipshutz, 20 Feb. 1978, box FG-183, FG 123, White House Central Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta; Susan Ells [of Polaroid] to Lynn Darcy, 20 Sept. 1974, box 18, NOW Papers.

22. Roberta Goldberg, *Organizing Women Office Workers: Dissatisfaction, Consciousness, and Action* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 22. See also the popular Louise Kapp Howe, *Pink Color Workers: Inside the World of Women's Work* (New York: Avon, 1977).

23. Quotation from David Plotke, "Women Clerical Workers and Trade Unionism: Interview with Karen Nussbaum," *Socialist Review*, no. 49 (January-February 1980): 151. See also Tepperman, 69, 79, 81, 88; Nancy Seifer and Barbara Wertheimer, "New Approaches to Collective Power: Four Working Women's Organizations," in *Women Organizing: An Anthology*, ed. Bernice Cummings and Victoria Schuck (London: Scarecrow Press, 1979). For an excellent, critical history of one such office workers group, see Judith Sealander and Dorothy Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Feminist Organizations in the 1970s: Dayton as a Case Study," in *Women, Class, and the Feminist Imagination: A Socialist-Feminist Reader*, ed. Karen V. Hansen and Ilene J. Philipson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 239-57, originally published in *Feminist Studies* 12 (summer 1986): 321-41. On racial composition, see Goldberg, 41, 97.

24. Tepperman, 66, 81.

25. Tepperman, 66. For a fascinating recognition in the contemporary business press of clerical workers' changing attitudes, see Alfred Vogel, "Your Clerical Workers Are Ripe for Unionism," *Harvard Business Review* 49 (March-April 1971), reprinted in Baxandall, *America's Working Women*, 351-53.

26. Tepperman, 40, 173. Organizers of clerical workers in these years focused less on the racial dynamics of clerical work than the gender dynamics, although they often highlighted the "double discrimination" facing Black women. On Black women's growing participation in clerical work over this period (from 9.3 percent of Black women in clerical jobs in 1960, the number grew to 29.3 percent by 1980) and the special barriers to

mobility they confronted, see Marilyn Power and Sam Rosenberg, "Black Female Clerical Workers: Movement toward Equality with White Women?" *Industrial Relations* 32 (spring 1993): 223-37.

27. Nussbaum interview, 153-56; Sealander and Smith, 245-46. For detailed reports on discrimination in banking, see Council on Economic Priorities, *Economic Priorities Report*, September-October 1972, 3-29; Carol S. Greenwald, "Banks Should Stop Discriminating against Women in Employment," *Bankers' Magazine* 155 (summer 1974): 74-79. Not all clerical workers saw affirmative action as relevant. "We decided to drop affirmative action as a waste of time," one Harvard organizer said. "In our job categories, we're basically all women, and affirmative action doesn't have any provision for a situation where the *entire* class of women is being discriminated against" (quoted in Tepperman, 96-97). Most of the evidence I've seen, however, points to a consensus on the value to office workers of affirmative action in conjunction with other policies.

28. See, for example, Women Employed, *The Status of Equal Employment Opportunity Enforcement: An Assessment of Federal Agency Enforcement Performance—OFCCP and EEOC* (Chicago: Women Employed, 1980). On the Willmar events, see Foner, 491-92.

29. On the way that office worker organizations sometimes spun off union locals, such as the Service Employees International Union Local 925 in Boston, see Nussbaum interview. For the story of one longstanding women's committee in an IUE factory local, see Alex Brown and Laurie Sheridan, "Pioneering Women's Committee Struggles with Hard Times," *Labor Research Review*, no. 11 (spring 1988): 63-77. See also Deborah E. Bell, "Unionized Women in State and Local Government," in *Women, Work, and Protest*, ed. Ruth Milkman (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Ruth Milkman, "Women Workers, Feminism, and the Labor Movement since the 1960s," in *ibid.*; Union WAGE, *Organize! A Working Women's Handbook* (Berkeley: Union WAGE Educational Committee, September 1975).

30. Betsy Wade to Grace Glueck and Joan Cook, 19 Aug. [1974], box 1, NYTWC; Betsy Wade to Yetta Riesel, 30 May 1974, *ibid.*

31. "Notes on Meeting," 9 Nov. [ca. 1973], box 1, *ibid.* On the rigorous promotion of affirmative action by the Newspaper Guild subsequently, see Anna Padia in "Roundtable on Pay Equity and Affirmative Action," in Cobble, *Women and Unions*, 63-68.

32. National Office to National Executive Board "Affirmative Action" Committee, 9 Mar. 1979, box 49, CLUW Records. See also "IUE's Check List on Sex Discrimination," box 4, AFSCME Program Development Department Records, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit; Winn Newman to David Brody, 13 July 1976, box 84, Center for National Policy Review Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Paul Jennings to John H. Powell Jr., 27 Sept. 1974, *ibid.*; Winn Newman and Carole W. Wilson, "The Union Role in Affirmative Action," *Labor Law Journal* 32 (June 1981): 322-42.

33. See, for example, "Black Women in the Labor Movement: Interviews with Clara Day and Johnnie Jackson," *Labor Research Review*, no. 11 (spring 1988): 80, 82. The best single reference on CLUW, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and Union WAGE, another labor women's group, is Foner, 506, 497-501. On the latter's support for affirmative action, see "Purpose and Goals," *Organize! A Working Women's Handbook*, 21.

34. David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 13. See also Freeman. Although the focus here is on wage-earning jobs, working-class men were by no means alone or singular in their resistance to women's entry into their occupations. For the hostility of male lawyers, which the authors attribute to "a distinctive professional ethos," see Bradley Soule and Kay Standley, "Perceptions of Sex Discrimination in Law," *American Bar Association Journal* 59 (October 1973): 1144-47, quotation on 1147.

35. "The Best Jobs for Women in the Eighties," *Woman's Day*, 15 Jan. 1980, box 1, United Tradeswomen Records, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New

York; Judy Heffner, "A Conversation with Barbara Bergmann," *Women's Work*, March-April 1977, 12. For elaboration of the economic argument for affirmative action for women, see Barbara R. Bergmann, *The Economic Emergence of Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 146-72.

36. An example with major ramifications was the case of Lorena Weeks, who, after almost twenty years of "exemplary" service as a telephone operator, applied for the position of "switchman" in 1966, only to be denied it because she was a woman and then harassed for protesting her exclusion. Weeks went on to sue Southern Bell and assist the EEOC's landmark action against AT&T. See New York NOW, press release, 29 Mar. 1971, box 627, Bella Abzug Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York. For other examples of spontaneous moves into nontraditional work, see Michael Jett, "The Return of Rosie," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 Apr. 1973, 1; also Lucille De View, "Women Move Up the Blue Collar Ladder," *Detroit News*, 23 July 1972. Their stories are not without irony: some of the women in this story took these jobs so that they could afford to send their children to parochial school—presumably, in part to get away from now-integrated public schools. Why the construction industry became the target is explained in Jane P. Fleming to William Taylor, 29 Jan. 1980, box 30, Center for National Policy Review Papers.

37. Rebecca A. Mills to Anne L. Armstrong, 11 July 1973, box 58, Anne L. Armstrong Papers, Nixon Presidential Materials; Dorothea Hernandez to Joe O'Connell, 25 June 1974, box 19, *ibid.* On Revised Order No. 4, see Department of Labor, press release, 2 Dec. 1971, box 86, Leonard Garment Papers, Staff Member Office Files, Nixon Presidential Materials. For a fuller sense of such organizations, see the United Tradeswomen Records, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

38. WOW, introductory letter, October 1966, box 6, Wider Opportunities for Women Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge; WOW, "Preliminary Proposal: Jobs 70," 15 Aug. 1972, box 3, *ibid.* Rated "the most effective employment program in the city" by the head of Superior Court Adult Services in the District of Columbia, the ex-offender program is described in Kevin Bellows and Beryl Lief Benderly, "WOW Spells Work (Not Whistles) for Women," brochure reprinted from an article in *Working* magazine, box 6, *ibid.* An analogous radicalization was taking part in the National Council of Negro Women, from, in the words of its leader, Dorothy Height, a "social club mentality" to "a new and more profound social awareness" that aimed "to make the Council into an effective organization for the black community." See Thomas W. Wahman to Rockefeller Brothers Fund Files, 5 Nov. 1969, box 70, Rockefeller Brothers Fund Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, New York.

39. For details of their efforts, see Wider Opportunities for Women, *National Directory of Women's Employment Programs: Who They Are, What They Do*, box 2, WOW Papers; Women's Work Force, "New Connections," Network Conference Report (Washington, D.C., 21-23 May 1979), box 2, *ibid.*; Betsy Cooley et al. to Weldon J. Rougeau, 16 Nov. 1979, box 1, *ibid.*; Maureen Thornton to Betsy Cooley, 1 Nov. 1979, box 18, *ibid.*

40. "Demonstrate to Demand Construction Jobs for Women!" box 1, United Tradeswomen Records, 5 Aug. 1981; *United Trades Newsletter* 1 (fall 1980): 2, *ibid.*; February 1983, 1-9, *ibid.*; Bernice Fisher, "United Tradeswomen Going beyond Affirmative Action" *Womaneus* (March [1981]), *ibid.* Such efforts notwithstanding, white women ended up with a disproportionate share of skilled construction jobs, a pattern that needs explanation. See Deborah M. Figart and Ellen Mutari, "Gender Segmentation of Craft Workers by Race in the 1970s and 1980s," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 25, no. 1 (1993): 50-66.

41. Coal Employment Project, brochure from Fifth National Conference of Women Coal Miners, 24-25 June 1983, Dawson, Pennsylvania (materials in author's possession); *Coal Mining Women's Support Team News* 1 (September-October 1978): 4, box 76, CLUW Papers; Christine Doudna, "Blue Collar Women," *Foundation News*, March/April 1983, 40-

- 44, box 25, WOW Papers; quotations from Dorothy Gallagher, "The Women Who Work in the Mines," *Redbook*, June 1980, 29, 139. Similar reports came from Chicana copper miners in Arizona, suggesting commonalities across race and region in the ways women experienced the move into "men's work." See Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 1989), 73-96.
42. For explicit criticism of "the Moynihan Effect" on women's employment opportunities, see Ann Scott and Lucy Komisar, . . . *And Justice for All: Federal Equal Opportunity Effort against Sex Discrimination* (Chicago: NOW, 1971), 14. For an example of how such thinking created fear about women's disproportionate progress among Puerto Ricans, see "The Puerto Rican Community Development Project: A Proposal for a Self-Help Project to Develop the Community by Strengthening the Family. . ." (New York: Puerto Rican Forum, 1964), 54. Fifteen years later, a new analysis of Puerto Rican New Yorkers reached opposite conclusions: "the employment of the female head-of-household," one important study explained, "is the only viable mechanism for lifting the family above the poverty line." Lynn Angel Morgan, "Access to Training Programs: Barriers Encountered by Hispanic Female Heads-of-Households in New York City" (New York: PRLDEF, 1981), 3, in Administrative Division Records, box 8, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Centro de Estudios Puertorriquenos, Hunter College, City University of New York, New York.
43. See, for example, WOW Papers, "Preliminary Proposal: Jobs 70," 15 Aug. 1972, box 3, WOW Papers; Anna Brickle, quoted in Schroedel, 191. For related, earlier Black women's social thought, see Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945," *Journal of American History* 78 (September 1991): 559-90.
44. Gallagher, 139. See also Laura Berman, "The Struggles of Tradeswomen," *Detroit Free Press*, 26 Aug. 1979, box 9, CLUW Records. Such testimony supports Alice Kessler-Harris's case that "the wage . . . contains within it a set of social messages and a system of meanings that influence the way women and men behave." See Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 7.
45. Bonnie Halascsak, interview, in Nancy Seifer, ed., *Nobody Speaks for Me: Self-Portraits of American Working-Class Women* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), 290. For more first-person testimony along the same lines, see *Hard-Hatted Women: Stories of Struggle and Success in the Trades*, ed. Molly Martin (Seattle: Seal Press, 1988). Women who became active in office worker organizations in one study "uniformly" reported analogous changes, most notably increased self-confidence and political awareness. See Goldberg, 54.
46. Quoted in Bellows and Benderly. For other such stories, see *Denver Post*, 8 Mar. 1987, 3F; *Capital Spotlight*, 23 Apr. 1987, 9.
47. Gallagher, 131; Schroedel, 40, 70, 116-17, 129-30, 191, 213-15, 261-62. See also Mary Lindenstien Walshok, *Blue-Collar Women: Pioneers on the Male Frontier* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1981), 139-53, 256-61, 276; Kay Deaux and Joseph C. Ullman, *Women of Steel: Female Blue-Collar Workers in the Basic Steel Industry* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 128-46. On the sense of loss of female camaraderie, see Pamela Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-1979* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 194.
48. Quoted in Schroedel, 20-21, also 38-39, 259; Swerdlow, 273-87; Doudna, 42.
49. Doudna, 43; Cosby Totten, Goldie Totten, and June Rostan, "Women Miners' Fight for Parental Leave," *Labor Research Review* 7 (spring 1988): 89-95, esp. 93.
50. Women Employed, *Status of Equal Employment Opportunity Enforcement*, 40; Davis, 93-94; "Fighting Sexism on the Job" (document from a women's struggle in the United Steelworkers, with special emphasis on the victimization of Black women at Great Lakes Steel), in *America's Working Women*, 373-74. For WOW's internal affirmative action efforts, see Affirmative Action Committee, minutes, 22 Sept. 1974, box 9, WOW Papers,

and *ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1974. For the problem of white domination in women office worker organizations, see Sealander and Smith, 252.

51. See, for example, "To All Women at the *New York Times*," Dec. 1974, box 1, NYTWC; "The Other Side of It," 2, *ibid.*; Patricia M. Vasquez to Eva Freund, 22 Sept. 1975, RG V, box 38, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (hereafter MALDEF) Papers, Special Collections, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California; Patricia M. Vasquez to Joan Suarez, 9 Oct. 1975, *ibid.*; Patricia M. Vasquez to Vilma Martinez, 21 Oct. 1975, *ibid.*; Women Employed, *Status of Equal Opportunity*, 21-23; on AT&T and steel, see Foner, 493-94, 541-43.

52. Ann Ladky to Lynn Darcy, 12 Sept. 1974, box 20, NOW Papers. See also *A Decade of Feminism: Chicago NOW Highlights of the 1970s* (Chicago: National Organization for Women, Chicago Chapter, n.d.). On construction, see, for example, Jane Fleming to William Taylor, 29 Jan. 1980, box 30, CNPR Papers; Clinton Cox, "Fight Back Goes After Construction Jobs," *New York Sunday News Magazine*, 25 Sept. 1977, reprint in box 8, James Haughton Papers, Schomburg Library; Cleveland Women Working, *Cleveland's Banking Industry: Affirmative Action or Inaction?* (Cleveland: Cleveland Women Working, 1978); "The General Mills Story," [1973], box 15, NOW Papers; Betty Geyer to Joel Contreras, 27 Oct. 1978, RG V, box 163, MALDEF Papers.

53. Swerdlow, 381. See also Freeman, 726-31; Schroedel, 10, 60-61, 126, 170. For a groundbreaking analysis of sexual harassment "as a mechanism of social control," see Mary Bulzarik, "Sexual Harassment at the Workplace: Historical Notes," in *Workers' Struggles, Past and Present*, 117-35.

54. For salutary correctives to the idea of monolithic male opposition and portrayals instead of a more complex (and politically promising) spectrum of male views on women's entry into nontraditional jobs, see Brigid O'Farrell and Sharon L. Harlan, "Craftworkers and Clerks: The Effect of Male Co-Worker Hostility on Women's Satisfaction with Non-Traditional Jobs," *Social Problems* 29 (February 1982): 252-65; also Deaux and Ullman, 145.

55. Chicago Women in Trades, *Building Equal Opportunity: Six Affirmative Action Programs for Women Construction Workers* (Chicago: CWIT, 1995), 5; Heidi Hartmann, "The Recent Past and Near Future for Women Workers: Addressing Remaining Barriers" (speech delivered 20 May 1995 at the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., distributed by Institute for Women's Policy Research), 3, 8, 10; "Program and Policy Agenda," WOW Papers, 4.

56. Data from Hartmann, "Recent Past and Near Future," 3, 8, and 10; IWPR, "Affirmative Action in Employment," 3-4. On the value of affirmative action, see Bergmann, 146-72.

57. For assessments of affirmative action's contribution to the changes, see "Program and Policy Agenda," WOW Papers, 5; IWPR, "Affirmative Action." For the demise of the family-wage-based sex-gender system, see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late-Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

58. On support for affirmative action, see, for example, the U.S. National Women's Agenda, [1975], box 10, AFSCME Program Development Department Records.

59. For reports that white women oppose affirmative action by nearly as large a margin as white men, particularly when the question is worded as "preferences," see Charles Krauthammer, "Calling for an End to the Affirmative Action 'Experiment,'" *Chicago Tribune*, 14 Apr. 1995, I, 1. Polls taken in the wake of the anti-affirmative action California Proposition 209 in 1996 confirmed the pattern.

60. Heidi Hartmann et al., "Bringing Together Feminist Theory and Practice: A Collective Interview," *Signs* 21 (summer 1996): 946.

61. On the poll data and its implications for feminism, see Martha Burk and Heidi Hart-

mann, "Beyond the Gender Gap," 262, *The Nation*, 10 June 1996, 18-21. For critical discussion of the politics of difference, see Hartmann et al., 935; also Roberta Spalter-Roth and Ronnee Schreiber, "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics: Strategic Tensions in the Women's Policy Network during the 1980s," in *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, ed. Myra Marx Ferrée and Patricia Yancey Martin (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 124; Linda Gordon, "On Difference," *Genders*, no. 10 (spring 1991): 91-111.