NOT JUNE CLEAVER

Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960

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CHAPTER 4

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RECAPTURING WORKING-CLASS FEMINISM

Union Women in the Postwar Era

Recent scholarship has created a new appreciation of the influence of wage-earning women on social movements formerly seen as shaped almost wholly by the middle class. But for a full account of female activism to take shape, the gender-conscious activities of working women must be examined within their working-class institutions as well as in the cross-class feminist organizations and movements in which they participated.[1] 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, 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 (ERA).[2]

In the decades between the suffrage movement and the 1960s, few women outside the National Woman's Party (NWP) described themselves as feminists. Yet many devoted their lives to the achievement of gender equality, and many consid-

ered the eradication of the problems faced by women to be their principal concern.[3] In particular, in the aftermath of the labor upheavals of the 1930s and undergirded by the continuing feminization of the workforce in the 1940s and 1950s, a sizable group of union women activists emerged whose politics were informed both by class and gender. They built the first sustained and widespread labor organizations in such female-dominated sectors as food service, sales, and telecommunications. And in conjunction with women activists in manufacturing industries, they used their unions as vehicles for the collective advancement of women. This essay details the activism and gender ideology of these union women activists.[4]

Recovering the activism of working-class women forces a reassessment of the conventional contours and definition of twentieth-century feminism. In the postwar years, the character of feminism changed—its goals and tactics shifted under the influence of working-class women—yet the vitality of the movement endured. Far from being an era of retreat for women's activism, working-class feminism flowered in the postwar decades, due in part to the steady increase of wage-earning women and the rise of union power.

The Rise and Feminization of the Labor Movement

The historian Nancy Gabin has suggested that once the experience of working-class women is incorporated into the history of American feminism, unions will emerge as crucial organizational vehicles for gender-based protest. My research confirms this notion. Indeed, in the 1940s and 1950s, labor organizations may have spurred feminism among wage-earning women much as civil rights and New Left organizations did for a very different group of women in the 1960s and 1970s.[5]

This emerging portrait of unionism as a vehicle for feminist aspirations stands in marked contrast to earlier scholarship on World War II and the immediate postwar era that viewed the relation between working women and unions as problematic. The first research monographs, for example, documented the poor treatment wartime "Rosies" received at the hands of the craft union brotherhoods and held the newer industrial unions responsible for the wholesale layoffs of women after the war and their subsequent rehire into lower grade classifications.[6] Writers depicted the powerful union institutions of the 1940s and 1950s as bureaucratic, male-dominated organizations with little sensitivity or interest in their now-diminished female constituency.[7] In part, scholars reached such negative assessments because they focused almost exclusively on male-dominated craft unions and unions in mass production. In part, the dismissal flowed from the widespread assumption that unions histori-

cally have been bastions of male power and unwavering agents of patriarchal impulses.[8]

Along with the new institutional labor history, more recent scholarship has begun to reassess the relation between female activism and unions.[9] Ruth Milkman's 1987 study of the auto and electrical industries in the 1940s, for example, argued that management must shoulder a major share of the blame for the job discrimination women suffered; critical management decisions involving layoff and rehiring of workers were not yet subject to union control.[10] In her 1991 book, *Feminism in the Labor Movement,* Nancy Gabin carried this reassessment into the 1950s and 1960s, contending that the new prominence given to women's issues during World War II by such progressive CIO unions as the United Auto Workers (UAW) was institutionalized after the war.[11] Recent theses on women unionists within the United Electrical Workers (UE) and the United Packinghouse Workers of America support Gabin's work.[12] The UAW women were not atypical: Working-class female activism survived and even flourished in the 1950s. This essay offers a framework within which to place the many excellent case studies of female activism in manufacturing unions that have emerged; it also extends and complicates the revisionist scholarship by analyzing the experience of women in service-sector unions.

Unions representing female-dominated industries not only experienced a surge of membership during wartime, but in contrast to the UAW, for example, their ranks continued to expand once the war ended. As women were laid off from jobs in auto plants and shipyards, they returned to the "pink collar" ghetto, swelling the membership of unions such as the AFL-affiliated Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE), the National Federation of Telephone Workers (NFTW), and others.[13] By 1950, more than two hundred thousand female food-service workers were organized, for example, and they constituted 45 percent of the union's membership, almost double the prewar figure. Women also constituted 40 percent or more of organized telephone workers, department store employees, and bakery and confectionary workers, and they composed the majority of union members in such older female-dominated industries as garment and textile.[14]

Even within manufacturing, certain industries and shops maintained their wartime female majorities. Between 1946 and 1958, approximately 40 percent of all UE workers were female, slightly below their wartime peak of 49 percent, but certainly above their prewar numbers. Depending on the electrical product being manufactured, "women constituted from 25 to 75 percent of the workforce in any given shop."[15]

Overall, then, despite the wholesale layoffs of women in manufacturing during reconversion, women emerged in a much stronger position within the labor

movement than before the war. Less than a tenth of union members (some eight hundred thousand) were female before 1940. Although female membership skyrocketed to 3 million (or 22 percent of organized workers) during wartime and then fell abruptly at the war's end, the number of union women throughout the late 1940s and 1950s still vastly exceeded its prewar level. By 1954, for example, close to 3 million women belonged to unions—some 17 percent of all union members.[16] Of equal importance, with their shift out of male-dominated organizations into unions in which women made up a large if not majority constituency, women union members now wielded considerable power at local and even national levels. They used this newfound power to reshape the labor movement along more gender-conscious lines and to win significant victories for wage-earning women.

The Demand for Collective Bargaining

By the 1930s and 1940s, a large proportion of working-class women (in contrast to middle-class and professional women) sought to realize their aspirations for workplace justice through collective bargaining. During the war and afterward, they institutionalized the new bargaining relations begun in the 1930s. For example, particularly in the expanding service-sector unions, women played an integral if not dominant part in the widespread and militant strikes following World War II.

With 350,000 employees on strike, 230,000 of them women, the 1947 nationwide telephone strike was the largest walkout of women in U.S. history. Carrying signs that proclaimed *The Voice with a Smile Will Be Gone for Awhile*, around-the-clock pickets paraded throughout the South, the Midwest, and in rural towns across America. In New Jersey alone, twelve thousand women operators left their posts, defying a state law that called for jail sentences and steep fines for utility strikers. The Washington, D.C., traffic (telephone operator) local, emboldened by some two hundred successful work stoppages in the previous year and a half, effectively cut off telephone access to the White House and other government offices. Although the NFTW failed to win its economic demands, the walkout ensured that the newly emerging system of collective bargaining would be retained in the telephone industry. By 1948, the fragmented and chaotic NFTW had reconstituted itself into a strong national union, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which affiliated with the CIO in 1949.[17]

Women retail and food-service workers also challenged the authority of employers through shopfloor actions, mass picketing, and strikes, ensuring the permanent status of their fledgling collective bargaining system. In Oakland, California, women department store clerks walked out in November 1946

over union recognition, fomenting a general strike that involved more than 120,000 workers, shut down city services, and eventually forced department store owners to bargain. In the aftermath of a strike in which "Oakland's workers took control over the city . . . [determining] which businesses would open and what prices they would charge," a combined AFL and CIO political action committee also secured the election of four prolabor representatives to the Oakland City Council and the promise of city government neutrality in future labor disputes.[18] In the hotel and restaurant industries, major strikes occurred in Detroit, New York, San Francisco, and smaller communities across the country, resulting in significant advances in wages, hours, and working conditions. By the end of the 1940s, the separate-sex waitress locals moved ahead of all other food-service crafts in terms of size and influence. San Francisco waitresses doubled their 1940 membership, claiming more than six thousand women; the Los Angeles membership rose from eight hundred on the eve of wartime to close to five thousand by the early 1950s.[19]

From this position of power and influence, women unionists began to reformulate the agenda of their mixed-sex, class-based organizations, adding a strong feminist component to the legislative and collective bargaining activities of many unions. They led national struggles to close the wage gap between men and women, and they sought legislative and contract provisions that would protect the employment rights of women. They also lobbied for family support policies such as day care, maternity leave, and limitations on mandatory overtime.

Closing the Wage Gap

Although working-class women did not always agree on tactics or on what "gender equality" meant, women from a wide variety of unions viewed the achievement of economic equity with male workers as central to their postwar agenda. Historically, equal-pay proposals within the labor movement had been promulgated by male unionists concerned with preserving men's jobs. By the 1940s, however, equal pay became a demand supported largely by women.[20] In large part, equal pay became the rallying cry of women rather than men because as the workforce feminized and "pink collar" occupations increased, equal pay more often resulted in raising women's pay rather than preserving male employment. Whether a woman worked in a male-dominated or female-dominated occupation or industry proved critical in determining the impact of equal pay. Where employers preferred men and hired women only when they were cheaper, equal pay cost women their jobs. But in heavily feminized occupations or industries, sex typing could protect women from job loss. As one union feminist explained in 1946, although equal pay may have benefited

men in male-dominated industries, "in her industry, where more than half the workers were women, equal pay was forced on the men."[21]

The shifting support for equal pay in the food-service unions offers one example of how feminization, combined with other historical trends, transformed equal pay from a male to a female demand. Waitresses opposed equal-pay resolutions introduced by men during World War I and again in the early 1930s when men still constituted close to half of all food servers. Waitresses rightly feared that employers would prefer male workers over female where women were restricted to eight hours a day (and covered by various other legal protections requiring benefits not enjoyed by men) or where men appeared to enjoy customer preference, such as in the dinner trade. But by the 1940s, as food service rapidly sexualized and feminized—approaching 70 percent female—waitresses reversed their stance and adopted equal pay as one of their primary goals. The experience of receiving equal pay during World War II (as a result of National War Labor Board rulings, new state laws, and contract provisions) may have made many loath to return to inequality. But waitresses also observed the reality of a changing food-service labor market—that is, that employers increasingly preferred female service workers to men even when required to pay men and women the same. Indeed, some employers preferred women even where state law provided benefits and protections to women only. The expanding service economy in the postwar decades undercut any remaining fears of job loss.[22]

Once a consensus existed on equal pay, women unionists pressed for such provisions in union contracts. In food service, for example, a majority of culinary locals negotiated equal-pay provisions by the late 1940s in response to lobbying from female members, and in California, a State Department of Industrial Relations survey revealed that every single culinary contract had identical hourly rates for waiters and waitresses by the late 1950s.[23]

Union women secured equal-pay clauses in other sectors of the economy as well. Angela Gizzi Ward, a business agent representing male and female clerks working at the Pacific Gas and Electric Company in San Francisco, won the first equal-pay provisions in that industry in 1947. In her small-group meetings with female clerks, the women always put equal pay at the top of their agenda, Ward remembered, but the male clerks, "very dignified with their white collars, natty ties and navy blue suits," were reluctant to admit that female clerks did the same work. Eventually, the men relented, and as a result, female salaries almost doubled. Next, Ward turned to getting women "the same right to promotion."[24]

In 1944, Mary Gannon, national NFTW chairwoman for telephone operators, editorialized in favor of equal pay for equal work in the NFTW newspaper, arguing that "rates must be established on the basis of the jobs being done [and]

no other factor." Outraged to find in 1945 that "the highest rate for a woman in a clerk's job was lower than the lowest rate for a man, although the jobs were practically the same," women telephone operators pressed for change. When male unionists ignored "educational materials" on equal pay, NFTW Education Director Ruth Wiencek recalled in 1946, "our female workers . . . forced equal pay for equal work upon our plant divisions. We made it pretty embarrassing for them . . . [being] 60 percent women [we] are able to do that. It depends [also] on how vocal your women's groups are."[25]

From the 1940s until the mid-1950s, UE women launched a wholesale assault to eliminate wage inequities at General Electric (GE), Westinghouse, and other major employers. In what Lisa Kannenberg has deemed "an explosion of women's activism . . . in a decade generally viewed as the dark age of American feminism," UE women organized conferences on women's wages; they picketed, struck, and filed lawsuits in pursuit of wage equity. In 1945, they won a landmark case before the War Labor Board (WLB), in which, arguing that the "equal pay for equal work" standard should be expanded, they called for "the elimination of sex differentials in wages, the abolition of so-called women's jobs, and their re-evaluation from the minimum rate paid to common labor." Siding with the union, the WLB allowed wage adjustments because "the jobs customarily performed by women are paid less, on a comparative job content basis, than the jobs customarily performed by men," but GE ignored the order after the WLB disbanded.[26]

In response, UE made wage discrimination a top priority in the 1946 strike against GE, and they narrowed the wage gap significantly. UE turned inward in the late 1940s, buffeted by internal dissension and Cold War accusations, but by the early 1950s, the fight resumed. UE issued model contracts and pamphlets detailing how locals could "tackle rate discrimination." In 1951, the seventeen-thousand-member GE-Schenectady unit instigated noonday demonstrations and other work stoppages until they won rate increases on 373 job classifications.[27]

The International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), UE's politically conservative rival, mirrored the UE's concern over wage inequities, especially after 1955 when many of UE's larger locals shifted to the IUE. In its 1954 contract proposals with GE and Westinghouse, the IUE called for "equal pay for equal work" and the elimination of "the special category of women's rates." Individual locals struck over gender wage inequities in 1953 and 1954, and in 1957, the IUE held its first National Women's Conference. The 175 women representatives named "equal pay" and "work and job advancement opportunities" as their top priorities. They urged GE and Westinghouse to grant "equal pay," explaining that "by this we mean not only equal pay for identical work but equal pay for work of equal value no matter where it is done."[28]

This cartoon from the *IUE News* of March 1, 1954, demonstrates union support for equal pay for equal work. *Courtesy of the IUE Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Rutgers University Libraries*

As is evident in the language of the women telephone and electrical workers, in the minds of women unionists and their supporters, pay equity was not limited to demands for "equal pay for equal work." They argued for fair "rates for the job irrespective of the sex of the worker." As Mary Anderson, the immigrant shoeworker who rose to be head of the U.S. Department of Labor

Women's Bureau, explained in 1944, "equal pay for equal work is a catchy slogan," but its effect is limited to situations where women "take the place of men in the same work that men have been doing." The "rate for the job" idea, remarkably similar to the comparable-worth arguments of the 1980s, questioned the very basis by which most women's jobs were evaluated and assigned pay grades. The potential for upgrading women's pay relative to men's was thus vastly improved; not only those jobs where women did exactly the same work as men, but also female-dominated job categories could theoretically be affected. As Cornelia Anderson of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers maintained: "From the point of view of industries like canneries and tobacco plants, which is largely women employing, . . . you can very beautifully establish the principal of equal pay for equal work and yet have large numbers of women making less than the men, simply because of women working in . . . entire jobs and categories that are always women-employing. When you talk about rate for the jobs . . . there is a possibility of re-studying and re-evaluating jobs throughout the plant [and of asking] why should a woman who sits and packs be paid 20 to 25 cents less than a man who sweeps the floor?"[29]

The key role played by trade union women in developing and carrying forward this new, more encompassing definition of pay equity is apparent in the actions of union women in individual unions like the UE.[30] The records of Women's Bureau meetings with women union leaders in the 1940s provide further evidence.[31] At one 1945 conference, for example, the Women's Bureau brought together thirty-one hand-picked women labor leaders representing more than 3 million women. Female labor leaders in attendance *agreed* that equal pay was "much too limiting and that the rate for the job was the proper approach." One woman unionist suggested a study "re-evaluating jobs through the plant," analyzing what each job "means and what it takes in skill and experience." "Women's skills have been under-estimated," the new director of the Women's Bureau, Frieda Miller, stated in support of the idea. Such an evaluation "would give us some basis for upping many of the types of occupations that women have had in the past."[32]

Another Women's Bureau special conference in 1945 drew up recommended language for state and federal equal-pay laws that would "cover situations where women replace men, where men and women are employed on comparable jobs, and employment of women in so-called women's jobs or women's departments." Although activists and the general public referred to the proposed bills and the laws eventually passed as "equal pay legislation," much of the discussion and activity centered on enacting legislation that would have the widest possible application. The federal equal-pay bill submitted later that year prohibited wage differentials for "work of a comparable character" or work requiring "comparable skills."[33]

The lobbying efforts of union women and their labor organizations proved critical in the passage of equal-pay legislation. At a 1946 Women's Bureau Conference, called "to coordinate passage of equal pay laws," the primarily union delegates decided to use the already established Union Women's Advisory Committee as the vehicle for disseminating information on state legislative campaigns involving equal pay. The committee had prominent women union leaders from almost all unions with large female memberships. The Women's Bureau contacted the appropriate woman on the committee when they knew of work being done in a state for equal pay, and those women became responsible for mobilizing union locals throughout the state.[34] Breakthroughs on the state level occurred quickly. Before World War II, only two states had enacted equal-pay laws. By 1955, the number had jumped to sixteen plus Alaska, and state legislation covered more than half of all wage-earning women.[35]

Advocates for the federal bill worked primarily through the National Committee on Equal Pay, a coalition that joined union women from the CWA, IUE, ACW, UAW, and other unions with middle-class groups such as the Business and Professional Women, American Association of University Women, General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the YWCA. The CIO endorsed and lobbied for the bill from its inception in 1945; the AFL finally adopted the CIO position in 1956 when the two labor federations merged.[36] In 1961, President Kennedy appointed as Women's Bureau director Esther Peterson, a long-time labor educator and union staffer (Peterson served as a labor lobbyist for the ACW in the 1940s and for the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department in the 1950s). With "consummate lobbyist" Peterson at the helm of the campaign, the equal-pay proponents finally overwhelmed the opposition of the business community and conservative legislators in 1963. Peterson relied on her old labor network (which included Caroline Davis of the UAW and Helen Berthelot of the CWA), on the Kennedy administration's strong ties to organized labor, and on the personal support of administrative officials such as labor secretary Arthur Goldberg, a former CIO general counsel.[37]

But the legislative campaigns for equal pay fell short of the goals of their backers. Legislators watered down many equal-pay laws before passage, and once on the statute books courts interpreted them narrowly. Moreover, despite the best efforts of equal-pay advocates, the laws often protected only a small slice of the female labor force. In the 1963 Federal Equal Pay Act, for example, all references to "equal pay for work of comparable value" were deleted.[38]

Yet despite these limitations, equal-pay statutes have provided protection for the sizable number of women who do work in jobs "substantially equal" to those held by men and have been the basis for millions of dollars in wage adjustments.[39] Moreover, recent precedent-setting court decisions indicate that

at least eleven states have "equal pay" laws with broad enough language that comparable-worth claims would be warranted. In 1992, a Massachusetts court awarded $1.5 million in back pay to forty-one women HERE cafeteria workers who claimed work comparable to male custodians. According to the presiding judge: "The legislative history of the Massachusetts law, an analysis of the debate over federal equal pay legislation, and precedents under similar Maine and Oregon laws convinced him that a narrow definition of comparable was not justified."[40] And lastly, as Alice Kessler-Harris concludes in *A Woman's Wage*, although the Equal Pay Act failed to dent labor-market segregation, the struggle for its enactment "expanded notions of justice, encouraging perceptions of male/female equality that had previously been invisible."[41]

Aware of the potential limitations of equal-pay laws, union women combined equal pay with other strategies for lifting women's wages, especially the wages of those in the "women-employing fields." At the 1945 and 1946 Women's Bureau conferences for trade union women, a "broad consensus" emerged in favor of "minimum wage by law as a means of underpinning the wages of low-paid workers." Not only did the value of women's jobs need to be reassessed and public opinion revised, but the delegates insisted that minimum-wage legislation was necessary if the wages of women *as a whole* were to be raised. Like the "rate for the job" campaign, minimum-wage legislation appealed to trade union women because it potentially could affect a broad cross-section of wage-earning women.[42]

Middle-class social reformers led the early struggles to enact minimum-wage laws,[43] but by the 1940s, trade union women dominated the coalition pushing for extended coverage and better enforcement. In particular, domestic workers, store clerks, restaurant employees, switchboard operators, and others in small businesses and intrastate industries not yet protected under the wage and hour provisions of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act needed coverage under state laws. Although their long-term objective was coverage for men as well as women, the existing statutes (almost all of which protected only women) were to be retained in the interim.[44]

Their efforts resulted in numerous new wage orders raising the legal minimums, the passage of *new* minimum-wage legislation protecting both men and women, and the amendment of existing laws to cover men. By 1950, the Women's Bureau announced that twenty-three new wage orders had been issued, sixty-two orders revised, and the laws extended to men in New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. In fact, "all but a few minimum wage jurisdictions had taken some steps to better the legal minimum-wage situation of women in drug stores, restaurants, department and clothing stores, and other businesses in which sizable numbers of women earn their living." By the

1960s, out of forty-one state minimum-wage laws, thirty-one had been extended to protect men, and new higher wage orders had upped the earnings of millions of women.[45]

Another, more limited effort was directed at ending sex-based discrimination in hiring and promotion. In the decades following the war, UAW women, for example, repeatedly objected to such practices as sex-based seniority lists and the refusal of employers to hire married and older women.[46] And although bitter divisions occurred on these issues, a considerable number of women in the UE also fought to protect the jobs of married women and "to eliminate women's jobs as such."[47] UAW and UE women were not alone in their concerns. In 1944 the union women's advisory committee to the Women's Bureau issued "suggested standards for union contracts," which in addition to "no sex differentials in wage rates" urged "no discrimination based on sex or marital status," seniority provisions granting women the same rights to promotion and transfer as men, and no "sex-labeling of jobs or of departments."[48] They reiterated this demand in 1946 when a conference recommended the adoption of contract clauses prohibiting "discrimination based on sex, color, creed, and national origin . . . in all matters pertaining to hiring, upgrading, lay-off, wages, and seniority."[49]

As Nancy Gabin concludes, then, the 1940s did witness the beginnings of a critique of the sexual division of labor among working-class feminists. Nevertheless, the majority of union women failed to challenge consistently the sex typing of jobs and the discrimination in hiring and promotion that followed from sex-based occupational segregation, preferring instead to focus on expanding and upgrading the female sphere. This view predominated among women in service- and other female-dominated industries—the majority of women workers—and held considerable sway even in such classic male-dominated labor markets as auto until the 1960s and 1970s.[50] Mary Callahan, IUE executive board member and Kennedy appointee to the Commission on the Status of Women, explained how everyone including herself took job segregation in the 1940s and 1950s as a "way of life": "We never questioned it when they posted female and male jobs . . . we didn't realize it was discrimination. I never thought of it. I figured who the heck wants a job over there; it's a male job, you know."[51]

Recognizing Difference

In addition to approaches demanding more equitable compensation and treatment in the workplace, many women unionists supported policies that required differential treatment of the sexes. In particular, the majority of working-class feminists supported sex-based protective legislation until the 1970s, and op-

posed the Equal Rights Amendment because they feared its impact on the "hard won labor laws protecting women in industry."[52] Their stance did not necessarily reflect a commitment to a more traditional view of women as the "weaker sex" or a belief in restricting women's labor force participation to ensure that women fulfilled their family responsibilities in the way deemed best by a patriarchal society. Instead, attitudes toward sex-based protective legislation often were based as much on judgments about the impact of individual laws on the working conditions and job opportunities of those in a particular occupation as on an ideological conviction concerning sexual difference. As noted by previous scholars, women competing directly with men often favored repeal because the laws put them at a disadvantage in securing employment; women who were more insulated from direct competition (usually as the result of strong sex typing of jobs) saw protective laws as beneficial.[53]

But determining the impact of particular laws could be difficult. Some laws provided what could be seen as better daily working conditions—rest breaks, seats, reductions in daily hours, assignment to the day shift, restrictions on lifting and other hazardous tasks—yet these same laws might also deprive women of more lucrative or interesting jobs working at night, on longer shifts, or involving physical labor. The key question was whether the so-called benefits outweighed the so-called opportunities. Were "light" or "women's" jobs actually easier than "heavy" or "men's" jobs? Would better-paying "men's" jobs really open up to women if protective laws were revoked? Would they open up even to women without access to training and/or women with family ties—ties that in themselves restricted when and for how long women could work? Would the economic advantages of these jobs offset the loss of female community and the sometime pleasure of the "emotion work" associated with the personal interactions often required in "women's" jobs?[54]

As the economic and cultural context for wage-earning women changed over the course of the twentieth century, opening up job opportunities for women and lessening the hardships associated with entering a "man's" job, union women altered their position on particular sex-based statutes, increasingly judging them to be more debilitating than protective. But the *idea* and *acceptance* of differential treatment as a means to achieve equality was never wholly abandoned. Certain statutes were hotly contested; others less so. Union women also debated the impact of the 1947 Status Bill proposal to allow "reasonable distinctions" between the sexes, but the recognition of gender difference and the felt need to restructure the work world to accommodate women's desire for family and personal time were retained.[55]

The controversy over night work affords one example of the division among union women over protective legislation and how and why perspectives on sex-based statutes could shift. The majority of labor organizations (and the

Women's Bureau) assessed night work restrictions as beneficial as late as the 1960s. Yet by the 1940s, women food servers reached the opposite conclusion regarding this particular "protection." Previously the "ownership" by men of certain night jobs such as late-night supper and cocktail service had gone undisputed, but the economic and social changes prompted by the war caused waitresses to reconsider their stance, for several reasons. First, once women entered these jobs during the war, they quickly learned how lucrative they could be. Second, since female wait staff functioned well in this new environment and drew in additional patrons, many employers desired the continued presence of women. Waitresses and waiters were now directly competing for these jobs. Last, the conventional moral reasons for prohibition—that is, that night work was dangerous to the health and well-being of mothers (and future mothers) and their children—appeared increasingly less persuasive to female servers by the 1940s, especially when balanced against their belief that being a good mother also meant providing economically for one's family.[56]

Sex-based statutes restricting the hours of women proved equally controversial. UAW women, continually fighting to maintain their toehold in a high-wage, male-dominated industry, developed a critique of such laws in the 1940s and became increasingly vocal in their demand for repeal. UAW feminist Dorothy Haener pinpointed the loss of her wartime inspector job as the turning point in her thinking. Management claimed the nine-hour law prevented them from hiring women on jobs where ten-hour shifts might occur; Haener never forgot the adverse impact of these "protections" on her life. By the 1960s, Caroline Davis, the head of the Women's Department of the UAW, represented the consensus of UAW female sentiment in her sharp objections to sex-based hours legislation. As a member of the Kennedy Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, Davis issued the sole dissenting report objecting to blanket endorsement of protective laws.[57]

In contrast to UAW activists, most women union leaders backed hours laws until the 1970s. When the Business and Professional Women of California proposed liberalizing the eight-hour work limit for women in 1957, for example, HERE women tenaciously defended the current laws, arguing that in their industry the advantages overrode the disadvantages. Overtime pay was minimal, and few waitresses feared they would be replaced by men willing to work long hours. The responsibilities of motherhood also necessitated legislated controls over hours. Without controls, "you are setting the stage for excessive compulsory overtime," explained one HERE female official. The concept of allowing voluntary overtime appeared reasonable in principle, argued another, but for nonprofessional women, an employer "suggestion becomes an order." Former hotel maid Bertha Metro, representing the primarily black Hotel and Club Service Workers, declared that many working women with children in day

care would be forced to quit their jobs if required to work overtime. "Who's going to pick up the kids, cook their dinner?" asked Elizabeth Kelley of the San Francisco Waitresses' Union. "We're happy that we have a little legislation, and we'll fight to keep it. We're not a bunch of college women, we're waitresses."[58]

In explaining the divisions among working women over night work and overtime legislation, the 1968 insights of industrial relations scholar Alice Cook still appear persuasive. Women will resist such legislation, she argued, in industries where men and women work many of the same jobs and in certain individual cases where women are primary wage earners and are available to work overtime. But where the majority of workers are "secondary," where they have preschool and school-age children, and where their "jobs are insulated to some considerable degree from competition with men," they will probably not assess the legislation as burdensome.[59]

Other laws based on difference proved less controversial than those limiting hours and night work. At the 1945 Women's Bureau conference for union women, Julia Parker of the operator's division of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) raised one of the few objections to the endorsement of paid maternity leave (with job guarantee on return) and disability payments during pregnancy. Intoning that "inequality can come in the back door as well as the front," Parker feared that seeking "to impose upon industry a special payment for women" jeopardized claims for "equal pay and equal treatment of women as citizens and workers." Pregnancy was simply "one of nature's discriminations. On what grounds do you ask for pay?" Her dissent was dealt with summarily. "We make no bones about the fact that there are certain things women need that men don't," one delegate countered. Another remarked dryly that pregnancy was not "developed by women for their entertainment"; it was a social function and as such should be borne by the community.[60]

Union women successfully transformed their consensus on this issue into concrete legislative and contract gains. Women in HERE, CWA, UE, IUE, UAW, and other unions were instrumental in amending state unemployment insurance laws to include disability payments during pregnancy and to allow for more control by the pregnant woman over the timing and length of the leave. They also secured contract clauses that offered paid maternity benefits, job protection, transfer rights, no loss of seniority, use of accrued sick leave, and health insurance during pregnancy.[61]

Lastly, during and after the war, women unionists devoted attention to family support policies such as child care and nursery schools.[62] HERE women in San Francisco and New York, for example, lobbied vigorously for local, state, and federal funding of child-care centers and income tax breaks for work

ing mothers. Waitresses' Local 48 in San Francisco helped instigate a Central Labor Council "Committee on the Care of Children of Working Mothers" in 1942. Through this group and others, they urged the permanent state financing of child-care centers throughout the 1940s and early 1950s and created such a furor over the discontinuation of federal funding for child care after the war that San Francisco's city government became one of the few in the country to provide municipal funds for child-care centers.[63] In addition to "pushing for child care centers in their communities," the Women's Committee in New York's hotel workers local used the union's welfare department to advise members about child-care facilities, adoption of children, unemployment insurance, and divorce proceedings.[64] Seattle waitress leader Beulah Compton won reelection in her thirty-seven-hundred-member local in 1953 on a platform promising a union-sponsored nursery for children during afternoon and evening union meetings. Once elected, Compton also arranged for an older, former waitress to be on call through the union when working waitresses needed emergency child care.[65]

Conclusion

Recovering the traditions of working-class feminism broadens our understanding of the goals and strategies pursued by U.S. feminists. Working-class women articulated and acted on a distinctive feminist vision, one that did not always define equality or advancement in the same way as middle-class women did. First, class loyalties and communitarian "class" values shaped their concepts of justice and equality.[66] Union feminists sought advancement as a group, not merely as individuals. They argued that economic justice and fair treatment for the majority of women can be provided only through employee representation and collective power, not through individual upward mobility. Rather than focus primarily on moving individual women into the higher-paying jobs held by men, they opted for improvements in the jobs traditionally held by women. Upward mobility for the few did not seem as important as the economic advancement of the many. They sought security, respect, and dignity for the millions of women who were likely to remain in the "pink collar" ghetto.

As a result, at times they ended up at odds with middle-class feminists, who often were rooted in the liberal traditions of individualism and upward mobility. Mary Callahan of the IUE expressed her differences with middle-class feminists in clear class-based terms: "They're snobs . . . they're suspect. Some of them are looking at, 'How can *I* become the manager. Not, 'How can *we* get along and improve our lot in life?' It's 'How do *I* get up there.' "[67]

Second, the gender equality envisioned by working-class feminists parted

ways with the more strictly "equal rights" approach epitomized by the National Woman's Party. Although some of the UAW women and others pushed for explicit, sex-blind policies, as Nancy Gabin has demonstrated, the majority of union activists advocated a different kind of feminism, one that pushed for upgrading and revaluing the jobs done by women, rather than moving women into jobs usually held by men.[68] Indeed, anticipating insights that resurfaced among feminists only in the 1980s, they argued that equality cannot always be achieved through identity in treatment and that differences must be accommodated. Justice and equality should not have to be based on "sameness." They wanted "equality" *and* special treatment, and they did not see the two as incompatible. In HERE International Vice-President Myra Wolfgang's words: "The chief conflict between those who support the ERA and those of us who oppose it, is not whether women should be discriminated against, but what constitutes a discrimination. We, who want equal opportunities, equal pay for equal work and equal status for women, know that frequently we obtain real equality through a difference in treatment, rather than through identity in treatment. . . . We do want our cake and eat it too."[69]

Third, rather than deny the tension between home and work responsibilities, they sought to design policies that accommodated and recognized women's dual commitments.[70] They wanted to ease the burden of family responsibilities by restructuring the workplace as well as by providing family support measures such as paid maternity leave and child care. Union feminists often saw the demands of family as taking precedence over expanding workplace opportunity, yet it cannot be assumed that this emphasis was necessarily a submission to the larger patriarchal culture or to corporate capitalism. As Myra Marx Ferree has pointed out, "placing career needs and goals in the central position is . . . often taken as a model of independence of women, and [thus] working-class women are seen as deficient."[71]

Union feminists might be faulted for reifying sex differences, but the problem of changing male behavior in the public and private spheres was formidable and not easily subject to rational persuasion. Many wage-earning women no longer assume, as they did in the 1940s and 1950s, "that only women could care adequately for children" and that men will never take on responsibility for domestic chores.[72] Yet despite the pursuit of equality in the private sphere as well as the public, men's share of housework and child care is still minimal; the work world remains structured on the male model of full-time, continuous commitment; low-cost, quality child care is not available for most working women; and even the most committed feminists waver in the face of child-rearing advisers who insist in the mass media that mothers should stay home with their children in their early years, maybe longer.[73] In the face of such con-

straints, union women's attempts to accommodate women's dual responsibilities at work and home reflected a pragmatic realism as much as a commitment to maintaining the sexual division of labor.

The record of working-class activism in the postwar decades also provides new perspectives on scholarly controversies about the era itself. For one, the wartime experience for wage-earning women may have had more lasting consequences than for elite women. To dredge up William Chafe's oft-debated thesis, the war may have actually been a "watershed" for working-class women.[74] A consensus on equal pay emerged among working-class women for the first time during the war. Moreover, many began qualifying their universal support for protective legislation. A number even came to condemn sex-based job classification systems as discriminatory. In short, the war had a dramatic and lasting impact on the gender ideology of working-class women and the strategies they pursued in attaining equality.[75]

Of equal importance, the beachhead of equality secured during the war was not totally surrendered. Wartime feminism found an institutional home in the heavily female service-sector unions as well as in such male-dominated organizations as the UAW.[76] Although the 1940s witnessed the most militant and perhaps widespread instances of gender-conscious activism among union women, the campaigns for equal pay, minimum wage, pregnancy benefits, and other rights extended into the 1950s and beyond. Not only is there greater continuity between the wartime and postwar era than has been recognized, but progress on gender issues was an important element in that continuity.[77]

For working women, the postwar era was a period of mass mobilization, intense activity, and even advancement.[78] Recent accounts of these decades that view with surprise the significant policy changes occurring in the absence of a "widespread social movement" have ignored the rise and feminization of labor organizations—one of the primary vehicles through which wage-earning women have advanced their gender interests.[79] To the extent that unionism gained power in the United States by World War II and to the extent that women gained control over parts of that movement, it should come as no surprise that the economic and social agenda of wage-earning women moved ahead in this period.

Finally, the decisive and widespread mobilization of union women and their gender-conscious activism in the postwar era prompts a remapping of the contours of twentieth-century feminism. Our understanding of the cycles of feminism in the twentieth century has been class biased, based primarily on the activities of elite women. The postwar years, judged as quiescent because the middle-class traditions of equal rights feminism were subdued, were neither doldrum years nor an era in which feminism was kept alive solely by elite

women in the National Woman's Party or by middle-class reformers within a "Women's Bureau coalition."[80]

Working-class feminists bore the torch of gender equality and justice in the 1940s and 1950s, and many lived to see the realization of their ideas in the early 1960s.[81] As Cynthia Harrison points out, Women's Bureau Director Esther Peterson "did not create a new agenda—she simply sought the implementation of the program that labor women had long supported: equal pay legislation and a national commission on women." The long-awaited Commission on the Status of Women confirmed the priorities of union women: they rejected the philosophy of the Equal Rights Amendment and recommended increased minimum wages, equal pay, paid maternity leave, and equalization of employment opportunities.[82]

Yet by the late 1960s the postwar generation of working-class feminists felt the sting of rejection by the younger equal rights feminists who came to dominate the movement. But in a grand pendulum swing, in the 1990s a new gender politics has again taken hold, which, like its predecessor in the postwar decades, is rooted in the labor movement and "accepts difference as a strategic basis for making demands that will ultimately move toward equality."[83] Whether the contemporary comparable-worth movement and other present-day attempts to alter the values and structures of the workplace will move women closer to equality is difficult to predict, but one can only hope that as women's minority status in the workforce recedes into the past, so will the subordination that has accompanied it.

NOTES

1. A similar argument has been made in regard to women of color. Their activities within their community-based organizations must be taken into consideration for a full history of feminism to emerge. See Marie Laberge, " 'We Are Proud of Our Gains' Wisconsin Black Women's Organizational Work in the Post World War II Era," paper presented at the Eighth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, June 9, 1990 and Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 232–330.

2. Nancy Cott's definition of feminism is similarly inclusive. Feminism, in Cott's view, is "an integral tradition of protest against arbitrary male dominion." See Cott, "What's in a Name? The Limits of 'Social Feminism'; or, Expanding the Vocabulary of Women's History," *Journal of American History*, December 1989, 809. Problems arise in applying the label when the historian must evaluate whether the policies and actions of any one group preserved or challenged male power. Moreover, the consequences of certain acts may be at odds with the motivations of the adherents, may have a differential impact on different groups of women, or both. Evaluating whether protective legislation was a feminist strategy, for example, is fraught with many of these dilemmas.

3. For recent accounts of feminist activism, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), for the pre–World War II era; and Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945–1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), for the postwar decades.

4. The limited scope of this essay and the preliminary nature of my research into unions other than HERE prohibit any speculations at this point concerning ethnic and racial variations. Most of the union leaders I quote in this paper are white. With additional research, I hope to incorporate the voices of minority women and more fully detail the sentiments of the rank and file.

5. Nancy Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935–1975* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 232. See also Sara Evans, *Personal Politics* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 212–232.

6. For example, D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 148–154; and Lyn Goldfarb, *Separated and Unequal: Discrimination against Women Workers After World War II*, Union for Radical Political Economics pamphlet, Washington, D.C., 1976.

7. For a synthetic work illustrating this view, see James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 174–248.

8. Heidi Hartmann's influential article "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex," *Signs*, Spring 1976, 137–169, argued that working-class men through their unions had played a central role in maintaining gender inequality.

9. See Ruth Milkman, "Gender and Trade Unionism in Historical Perspective," in *Women, Politics and Change*, ed. Patricia Gurin and Louise Tilly (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990), 87–107. See also Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Rethinking Troubled Relations between Women and Unions: Craft Unionism and Female Activism," *Feminist Studies*, Fall 1990, 519–548.

10. Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), chap. 7.

11. Ibid., chaps. 5, 8; Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement*, 188–236; Milkman, "Gender and Trade Unionism in Historical Perspective," 87–107.

12. See Lisa Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War: Women Electrical Workers and Their Union, 1940–1955," Master's thesis, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, 1990; and Bruce Fehn, "Striking Women: Gender, Race, and Class in the United Packinghouse Workers of America," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991.

13. Women's share of membership in unions like the UAW dropped from a wartime peak of 25 percent in 1944 to 10 percent during reconversion. Milkman, *Gender At Work*, 13; and Nancy Gabin, "Trade Union Feminism: Advocating Women's Rights and Gender Equity in the UAW, 1935–1975," talk presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, 27 March 1988, Reno, Nevada. The California Department of Industrial Relations studied the relation between women and unions over a seven-year span in the 1940s and found that the number of women plummeted in unions such as the Machinists, the Boilermakers, and the transport workers after the war, but in a significant number of "friendly" unions—ones representing traditionally female occupations—women maintained their numbers and continued their upward spiral in the late 1940s. Campbell, *Women at War with America*, 141–143.

14. See Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the*

Twentieth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1991), tables 5A–5C, 6, 7, 8. See also Jack Barbash, *Unions and Telephones: The Story of the Communications Workers of America* (New York, 1952), chaps. 1, 9; Thomas R. Brooks, *Communications Workers of America: Story of a Union* (New York: Mason/Charter, 1977), 63, 238; John Schacht, *The Making of Telephone Unionism, 1920–1947* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 26–27, 166; George Kirstein, *Store and Unions: A Study of the Growth of Unionism in Dry Goods and Department Stores* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1950), 217. For national figures gathered by the Women's Bureau, see "Summary of Conference of Trade Union Women and Women's Bureau on War and Postwar Problems of Working Women," April 19–20, 1945, File "1945 Union Conference," Box 1544, Records of the Women's Bureau, National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as RG-86).

15. Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 12, 69, 73; Milkman, *Gender at Work*, 13.

16. Ruth Milkman, "Union Responses to Workforce Feminization in the United States," in *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond*, ed. Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 226–250.

17. Schacht, *The Making of Telephone Unionism*, chap. 8; Philip Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement: From World War I to the Present* (New York, Free Press, 1980), 400–402; *Telephone Worker*, December 1945 and March 1947.

18. George Lipsitz, *Class and Culture in Cold War America: "A Rainbow at Midnight"* (South Hadley, Mass.: J. F. Bergin Publishers, 1982), 81–84; Kirstein, *Stores and Unions*, 102; Interview with Marion Sills, conducted by author, 1977, Women in California Oral History Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco.

19. Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, chap. 4 and table 8.

20. There is no full book-length treatment of the history of pay equity. Consult Alice Cook, "Equal Pay: A Multinational History and Comparison," manuscript in possession of the author; and Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990): 83–112.

21. "Summary of Discussion at WB Conference with Women Union Leaders, October 30–31, 1946," File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86.

22. For documentation, consult Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, esp. chap. 1, pp. 152–156, table 1. Lisa Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 4, 11–42, shows how in the electrical industry pay equity shifted from an issue motivated by the desire to protect male wage rates to an issue of gender equality.

23. Consult Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Sisters in the Craft: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1986, 403–408; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 154–155.

24. Interview with Angela Gizzi Ward, conducted by author, 1976, Women in California Oral History Collection, California Historical Society.

25. Transcript, "Women's Bureau Conference for Women Union Leaders, October 1946," 35, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86; *Telephone Worker*, April 1944 and September 1944.

26. See Milkman, *Gender at Work*, 79–83; Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 16–19, 31–38, 101. Quote from 95 and 103.

27. Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 7, 43–44, 81–90.

28. *IUE News*, April 7, 1952, December 21, 1953, January 18, 1954, June 6, 1955

August 16, 1954, May 13, 1957, June 24, 1957, June 9, 1958; see also IUE Archives, Box 2186, 1957 Women's Conference, Special Collections, Alexander Library, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

29. Alice Angus to Frieda Miller, August 21, 1944, Box 901, RG-86; Mary Anderson to Blanch Freedman, Exec-Sec, New York WTUL, June 7, 1944, File "WTUL," Box 852, RG-86; Transcript, "Conference of Trade Union Women," April 1945, 69, File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86.

30. Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 11–42.

31. Summary, "Conference of Trade Union Women," April 1945, 2, File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86.

32. Transcript, "Conference of Trade Union Women," April 1945, 56, 67, 181, File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86; "Summary of Discussion at Women's Bureau Conference with Trade Union Leaders," October 1946, 2, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86; Transcript, "Women's Bureau Conference with Women Union Leaders, October 1946, 24–5, 66, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86; Summary, "Conference of Trade Union Women," April 1945, 19, File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86.

33. Sheet entitled, "March 17, 1945 Conference," File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86; Transcript, "Women's Bureau Conference for Women Trade Union Leaders, October 1946," 13, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86.

34. Transcript, "Women's Bureau Conference for Women Union Leaders, October 1946," 13, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897; "Summary of Discussion of Women's Bureau Conference with Women Union Leaders, 1946," 1, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86.

35. Susan M. Hartmann, *American Women in the 1940s: The Home Front and Beyond* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 134; Leopold, "Federal Equal Pay Legislation," 21; *CWA News*, June 1955, 5; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 155–156. By 1963, 22 states had equal pay statutes. See Transcript, "Women's Bureau Conference for Women Union Leaders, October 1946," 40, File "Conf 10/46," Box 897, RG-86 for a discussion of the organizations active in the equal-pay campaigns.

36. Leopold, "Federal Equal Pay Legislation," 19–21; *IUE News*, March 30, 1953 and June 6, 1955; *Telephone Worker*, October 1945, 9, 11. See also *CWA News*, March 1948, 3; June 1950, 1, 5; May 1951, 7; January 1954, 5; February 1954, 6; April 1957, 2. According to Harrison, the National Committee to Defeat the UnEqual Rights Amendment set up the equal-pay committee in 1945. Mary Anderson chaired the committee, expanding and renaming it in the 1950s. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 39–51.

37. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 89–105; Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement*, 189–194.

38. Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 155–156; Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 104–105.

39. In the first ten years of its enforcement alone, discrimination victims received $84 million in back pay. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 105.

40. *Jancey v. Everett School Committee*, Massachusetts Superior Court, Case No. 89–3807, August 13, 1992, as reported in Bureau of National Affairs, *Daily Labor Report*, August 20, 1992.

41. Kessler-Harris, *A Woman's Wage*, 112.

42. Summary, "Conference of Trade Union Women," 1945, 2, 5, 18, File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86; Gertrude Lane to Hugo Ernst, "11/12/46 Report on

the Meeting of the Union Women Advisory Committee," Reel 145, HERE International Archives, Washington, D.C.

43. See Susan Lehrer, *Origins of Protective Labor Legislation for Women, 1905–1925* (Albany: SUNY, 1987); Elizabeth Baker, *Protective Labor Legislation with Special Reference to Women in the State of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925); Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Ronnie Steinberg, *Wages and Hours: Labor and Reform in Twentieth Century America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

44. See *Catering Industry Employee*, July 1941; August 1941, 16; San Francisco Local Joint Executive Board (LJEB) Minutes, March 18, 1941, 6 May 1941, April 18, 1950, September 5, 1950, February 5, 1952, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Local 2 Archives, San Francisco, California; News Release, April 12 1976, Photo Files—Myra Wolfgang, HERE International Archives, Washington, D.C.; and Cobble, "Sisters in the Craft," 285–288. See also *CWA News*, June 1956, 5; *IUE News*, June 24, 1957.

45. "Summary of Discussion at Women's Bureau Conference, 1946," File "Conf, 10/46," Box 897, RG-86; Transcript, "Women's Bureau Conference with Women Union Leaders, October 1946," 205, File "Conf. 10/46," Box 897, RG-86; Summary, "Conference of Trade Union Women, 1945," File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86; Transcript, "Conference of Trade Union Women, 1945," 55, Box 898, RG-86; *Catering Industry Employee*, September 1940; USDL release, January 11, 1950, "Survey Material for Bulletin 227," Box 991, RG-86. Barbara Babcock et al., *Sex Discrimination and the Law: Causes and Remedies* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1975).

46. Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement*, chap. 4.

47. Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 30, 43–67; see also *Telephone Worker*, January 1945, 7, for CWA proposed strike action on behalf of discharged married woman, and *IUE News*, February 16, 1953, for a similar example from the electrical industry.

48. "Suggested Standards for Union Contracts," File "Union Conf., February 1944," Box 901, RG-86.

49. Summary, "Conference of Trade Union Women, 1945," 12, 23, File "1945 Conference," Box 1544, RG-86. See also comments by Ruth Young of the UE and Cornelia Anderson of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers in Transcript, "Conference of Trade Union Women, 1945," 127, 138, Box 898, RG-86.

50. Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, chap. 11; Dorothy Sue Cobble, " 'Drawing the Line': The Construction of a Gendered Work Force in the Food Service Industry," in *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor*, ed. Ava Baron (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 216–242. Even within the UAW, Gabin notes that "not all female union leaders rejected the longer-standing emphasis on gender differences." Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement*, 140.

51. Interview with Mary Callahan, conducted by Alice M. Hoffman and Karen Budd, 1976, Twentieth Century Trade Union Woman: Vehicle for Social Change, Oral History Project, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan/Wayne State University.

52. Editorial in *Hotel and Club Voice*, official newspaper of HERE Local 6 in New York City. April 19, 1947, 7. In 1945 a coalition of some 43 national organizations,

including 26 trade union groups, formed the "Committee to Defeat the Unequal Rights Amendment." The AFL-CIO and most international unions officially maintained their opposition to the ERA until 1973. Dorothy S. Brady, "Equal Pay for Working Women," *Annals of the American Academy*, May 1947, 11; James Kenneally, "Women in the U.S. and Trade Unionism," in *The World of Women's Trade Unionism: Comparative Historical Essays*, ed. Norbert C. Soldon (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 79–83. For a thorough statement of this position as late as 1972, see Bernard Rosenberg and Saul Weinman, "Young Women Who Work: An Interview with Myra Wolfgang," *Dissent*, Winter 1972, 29–36.

53. For example, see Elizabeth Baker, *Protective Labor Legislation With Special Reference to Women in the State of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), 425; Alice Cook, "Women and American Trade Unions," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January 1968, 124–132; Nancy Schrom Dye, *As Equals and as Sisters: Feminism, Unionism and the Women's Trade Union League of New York* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 152, 158.

54. The concept of "emotion work" is borrowed from Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 7. In Hochschild's view, many women's jobs involve the expression of emotions. When the worker controls these interpersonal encounters, "emotion work" can be rewarding. But when the employer manages these encounters, requiring the expression of certain emotions (sympathy, cheerfulness, attentive listening, etc.) and the suppression of others (anger, irritation, depression), the worker must expend considerable effort to produce the desired emotion. Hochschild labels this effort "emotional labor."

55. In the discussion over the 1947 Status Bill, a bill that proposed to set up a commission to study the status of women and the prohibition of sex discrimination but the continuation of protective legislation where "reasonable," union women evidenced considerable concern that differentiation be made on "reasonable" grounds only and that "reasonable distinctions" be defined clearly. They did not want sex-linked distinctions made that could later be used to justify discriminatory practices and female subordination. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 26–28.

56. See Cobble, " 'Drawing the Line,' " 216–242.

57. Interview with Dorothy Haener, conducted by Lyn Goldfarb, Lydia Kleiner, and Christine Miller, 1976, Twentieth-Century Trade Union Woman: Vehicle for Social Change, Oral History Project, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan/Wayne State University; Carol Kates, "Working-Class Feminism and Feminist Unions," *Labor Studies Journal*, Summer 1989, 28–45.

58. Unidentified newspaper clippings, Bertha Metro Collection, Box 3, File 24, San Francisco Historical Society, San Francisco; Myra Wolfgang to James Del Rio, May 31, 1968, Myra Wolfgang Collection, Box 1, File 3, Walter Reuther Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. For later examples, see Alice Cook, "Women and American Trade Unions," *Annals of the American Academy* 375 (January 1968): 12; *Hotel Bar Restaurant Review*, October 1969.

59. Cook, "Women and American Trade Unions," 127.

60. Transcript, "Conference of Trade Union Women, 1945," 103–106, Box 898, RG-86.

61. "Suggested Standards for Union Contracts," File "Union Conference, February 1944," Box 901, RG-86; Summary of Conference, 1945, 22, File "1945 Conference,"

Box 1544, RG-86; Report, "1945 Women's Bureau Conference on War and Postwar Problems for Trade Union Women," 6, 21, Box 1544, RG-86. *Catering Industry Employee*, December 1951, 14; *Cafeteria Call*, New York, February 1952, 6; *CWA News*, March 1951, 3, August 1958, 3, June 1969, 9; Kannenberg, "From World War to Cold War," 38; *IUE News*, April 7, 1952. For an example of the key role played by union women in amending state unemployment insurance to allow disability payments for pregnancy, see Elizabeth Kelly Correspondence, Waitresses Local 48; Local Joint Executive Board Minutes, September 5, 1950, July 17, 1952, HERE Local 2 Files, San Francisco.

62. Report, "1945 Women's Bureau Conference on War and Postwar Problems for Trade Union Women," 26–27, Box 1544, RG-86.

63. *Cafe Call*, October 1942, 5–6; *Catering Industry Employee*, July 1953, 30. *Hotel and Club Voice*, February 14, 1948, June 25, 1949, 4. *Local 240 News*, February 1954, Reel 342, HERE Files. John Shelley to San Francisco Labor Council, August 28, 1942, File "Committee on Care of Children of Working Mothers, 1942," Box 41, San Francisco Labor Council Records, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Helen Wheeler to John O'Connell, April 2, 1943, File "Local 110, 1943," Box 46, ibid.; Minutes and letters, File "Committee on Care of Working Mothers, 1943," Box 44, ibid., File "LJEB, 1951," Box 65, ibid. Waitresses' Local 48 Minutes, August 10, 1949, July 26, 1950, September 5, 1950, January 16, 1951, HERE Local 2 Files.

64. *Hotel and Club Voice*, September 7, 1940, 8, March 23, 1946, 2, June 25, 1949, 4.

65. HERE Local 240 Records, 1951–1954, and *240 News*, February 1954, Reel 342, Local Union Records, HERE Files; interview with Beulah Compton, conducted by Elizabeth Case, 1978, Twentieth Century Trade Union Woman: Vehicle for Social Change, Oral History Project, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan/Wayne State University.

66. See Maurine Greenwald, "Working-Class Feminism and the Family Wage Ideal: The Seattle Debate on Married Women's Right to Work, 1914–1920," *Journal of American History*, June 1989, 118–149; and Dolores Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied: Race, Gender, and Class in a New South Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985).

67. Interview with Mary Callahan, conducted by Alice M. Hoffman and Karen Budd, 1976, Twentieth Century Trade Union Woman: Vehicle for Social Change, Oral History Project, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan/Wayne State University.

68. It is important to clarify that I am speaking of dominant philosophical tendencies rather than reified and non-overlapping oppositional categories. Not all working-class women thought alike; neither did all supporters of the NWP nor all middle-class second-wave feminists. See Cott, "The Limits of 'Social Feminism,'" 822–825.

69. Myra Wolfgang, "Some of the Problems of Eve," talk before the AFL-CIO Conference Women at Work, March 13, 1971, 4, Myra Wolfgang Collection, Box 1, File 6, Walter Reuther Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit.

70. Harrison criticizes feminists in this period for their failure to address adequately the problem of women's dual responsibilities at home and in the labor force. She points out that the solution offered by feminist groups like the National Woman's Party amounted to a denial of the tension between home and work commitments. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 13–15.

71. Myra Marx Ferree, "She Works Hard for a Living: Gender and Class on the Job," in *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*, ed. Myra Marx Ferree and Beth Hess (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1987), 340. In addition, as James Henretta has argued, many working-class women may not have aspired to individual upward mobility, or if they did, may not have seen it as a real possibility given their educational and financial resources. Too often, upward mobility is assumed to be a goal across all classes and groups in society. Henretta, "The Study of Social Mobility: Ideological Assumptions and Conceptual Bias," *Labor History*, 1977, 165–178.

72. Harrison argues that the majority of feminists in both the Women's Bureau Coalition and the National Women's Party held this belief. *On Account of Sex*, 13–15.

73. Such articles as Robert Karen's "Becoming Attached," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1990, 35–70, in which he warned mothers of the psychological harm of infant day care, have received serious and widespread credence.

74. William Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); and Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121–238. The debate over the impact of World War II is extensive, but the class-skewed nature of its impact has not been addressed. See Ruth Milkman, "Review Essay," *Contemporary Sociology*, January 1987, 21–25.

75. Sherna Gluck also makes explicit connections between the wartime experiences of the "Rosies" and their later receptivity to feminist thought. Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, the War, and Social Change* (Boston: Twayne, 1987).

76. That the wartime feminism of working-class women carried over into the postwar decades might be explained in part by the different work experiences of the classes. A much greater number of working-class women continued on in the workforce and an even greater number worked in full-time jobs as primary income-earners. As Myra Marx Ferree has demonstrated for contemporary women, it is likely that women in the 1940s and 1950s who remained in the labor force, especially those for whom wage earning meant economic survival, held different, "more feminist" conceptions of sexual equality and female advancement than those who worked full-time in the home. Myra Marx Ferree, "Working-Class Feminism: A Consideration of the Consequences of Employment," *Sociological Quarterly*, Spring 1980, 173–184. Kessler-Harris also notes the importance of women's increasing participation in wage work in laying the basis for the feminist upsurge of the 1960s. See her chapter "The Radical Consequences of Incremental Change" in *Out to Work*, 300–319.

77. This interpretation questions the general consensus positing conservatism after the war. Compare Chafe, *The American Woman*, chaps. 8–9, and Campbell, *Women at War with America*, chap. 8.

78. The class militancy of these women may have been fueled in part by their wartime experiences. Working-class women who entered unionized, high-paying sectors of the economy during the war or who, like waitresses, simply moved into "nontraditional" jobs in their own industry, experienced heightened expectations about working conditions and wages and learned about the processes and protections of collective bargaining. They carried these expectations with them when they returned to typical female-dominated occupations.

79. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, xii.

80. My work builds on Harrison's and Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor's *Survival in*

the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), which began the reassessment of the postwar years. My interpretations, however, differ in some respects. For example, I see feminism as a broader phenomenon than Rupp and Taylor describe. I would also take issue with Harrison's description of the Women's Bureau Coalition (a group led by shoe-worker Mary Anderson and composed largely of union women) as "primarily educated, middle-class white women" as well as her conclusions that it lacked "major labor organizations and political clubs" and that the policy advances in these years happened in the absence of a mass movement. See Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, xiii, 8–9.

81. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 87.

82. Kenneally, "Women in the U.S. and Trade Unionism," 79–83.

83. See Milkman, "Union Responses to Workforce Feminization in the United States," 245.