

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

SECTION 1: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

SECTION 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

SECTION 3: This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

(complete text)



NEWSLETTER

November 1981
Volume 1, #6

M. J. Sommerfeld, President
E. G. Feld, Treasurer
R. Daumas, Membership
J. Evansgardner, Public Relations

GOING THROUGH THE "CHANGE OF LIFE" WITH NOW

Attending the national conference has, to quote the conference slogan, changed my life. What was impressive and affecting about the meeting was seeing thousands of feminists together in one place. The oft-heard responses questioning the validity of the ERA, arguing women already have equal rights, etc., etc., were not at issue. The demand for political social and economic equality between men and women is no longer at issue, the problem of how to get there is.

Aside from the company of feminists, the conference was enlightening in illustrating the focus of National NOW. National has tremendous resources that our chapter will be able to draw on. Not only do they formulate and develop national actions that rely on chapter participation to make feminist theory national policy, but they are a huge reservoir of information. National officers and staff keep abreast of feminist issues on the national, state, and to the extent we inform them the local level. They can give us up-to-date information on bills in Congress or Presidential orders. One thing our chapter must learn how to do is to utilize this resource. If there is someone out there who would be interested in working on developing a communications channel between our chapter and National NOW that would keep our chapter informed of pending legislation and provide National with information from Houston, PLEASE VOLUNTEER. We need someone to keep track of the information-loaded mail we do get from National and to seek out more when it is needed.

The major focus at the conference was the ERA (what a surprise). See page 3 where National's Countdown Campaign for the ERA based upon the Message Brigade is described and actions that local chapters are taking is detailed. Other tactics for influencing the Countdown are phonebanking and letter-writing sessions. Don't believe the media when they tell you the ERA doesn't have a chance. (See story "Biased News Reporting" elsewhere in this issue.) The amendment can be ratified and your help is needed as time is running out.

If you would like more information on the need for the ERA or some history about it, we have an action kit that contains all the statistics and arguments. We will have a copy on file at our office in the Underground UC.

Most of the resolutions that were passed, passed easily and without much argument over the substance of the resolutions. They included raising fifteen million for the media campaign, and demands for increased actions in the areas of reproductive rights, lesbian rights, child care, and outreach to minority women.

The one resolution that was hotly contested was NOW's position on the draft. The policy of National NOW was developed between conferences by the national leaders in

the development and filing of an amicus brief in the Supreme Court case, *Rostker v. Goldberg*, which dealt with women and the draft last term. Because this position was not explicitly mandated by the delegates elected by the membership, which is NOW's supreme policy formulators, the validity of NOW's position was questioned. NOW's position before the conference and the position adopted by the conference is explained more fully in a position paper elsewhere in this letter. Basically, NOW is against the draft but if there is one, women should not be excluded simply because of their gender. The resolution that was brought to the floor would have changed that position to one that stated that NOW is against the draft - period. This resolution was suggested by New Jersey NOW. Many of the members who brought this resolution up are also members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), an organization that NOW has had a long history of conflict over presentation and emphasis of issues on which they may have somewhat similar basic policies. The SWP has a policy of intervening in NOW in order to make NOW policy Socialist Workers Party policy.

The National Conference did provide me with a broader view of feminist clout. It has increased my belief that feminists can make changes in the system and that individual efforts and contributions are essential. I hope that I will be able to convey to some of you who may be weighing the position that feminism has in your life, that it can be both fulfilling to you and can accomplish changes in society. It will change your life by changing the system. This does not constitute a change in stance from last month. Changing your life must not be construed as committing your whole life to organizational feminism.

Mary Jeanne Sommerfeld

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Date	Day	Time	Event
3	Tues		Against Our Will - Rape Prevention Seminars organized by Houston Area Rape Crisis, NOW at UH, UHPD, Student Association
			(see Cougar Advtmmt & Ch 6 for times.)
3	Tues	7:30 pm	Chapter Business Meeting with Reproductive Rights Update.
7	Sat.	9 - noon	Message Brigade Action - Sharpstown Mall.
10	Tues.	10 - 2 pm	Information Tables at Satellite UC &
11	Wed.	10 - 2 pm	Information Tables at Satellite UC recruit, Message Brigade, teach feminism - both days
17	Tues.	7:30 pm	Debra Danburg Speaks - program meeting
19	Thur.	7:30 pm	Inter-Chapter Council Meeting
21	Sat.	9 - 5	Women's Lobby Alliance Workshop on Women's Issues in Congress.
21	Sat.	9 - 5	Chapter Newsletter writing, editing, typing, paste-up, etc.

DEBRA DANBURG
Texas State Representative

will speak on

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Nov. 17 - 7:30 PM

UC Underground

NEWS

NOW

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES - October 6, 1981

Several important decisions were made at the meeting:

1. To staff information tables during the second week of each month on Tuesday and Wednesday. Sue Feagans, Jeanne Sommerfeld, Jo Ann Evansgardner, Debbie McKenna signed up. Jeanne will coordinate reservations.
2. Newsletter - We will write, type, edit and lay out the newsletter on the third Saturday (and Sunday if necessary) of each month at either our Faculty adviser's office or UC underground. We will collate, fold, staple, label, and mail it out on the following Tuesday evening. People can call Jeanne or Jo Ann to be involved in either activity.
3. We will help our delegates attend the National NOW conference by contributing \$25 each for the two elected delegates, (Nancy Cowart George & Jeanne Sommerfeld) or the total of \$50 to one, if only one can go.

We developed the following questions for members to use in departmental interviews concerning offering courses:

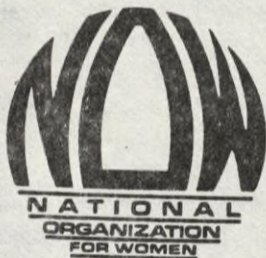
Has anybody in your department ever wanted to teach a course that could be classified as a course in Women's Studies?

What was the response?
a) of faculty?
b) of students?

Who is interested in the area of Women's Studies?
a) friends
b) "enemies"

THANK YOU

We would like to thank Judith Swinney for coordinaton our October program - "Images of Women in Advertising." She is also to be commended for sending her views on abortion to the Cougar.



CHANGE IN OUR MASTHEAD

Sharp-eyed readers will notice a change in our masthead. It is caused by a change in "Student Life Policies" which as of this semester read as follows:

Organizations may not use the name of the University of Houston, or an abbreviation of the name of the University of Houston, as part of its name except to designate location or chapter, nor advertise or promote events in a manner which suggests that the function is sponsored or sanctioned by the University, unless the event is formally co-sponsored with an administrative or academic unit of the University.

This has been interpreted by University legal advisers to mean that Student Organizations may not use the University Logo in their publications or on their leaflets. Violation of the interpreted rule would cost us our campus posting privileges, so we have agreed to remove the logo from our newsletter masthead. Because we bought and paid for our stationery before the ruling was made, we are allowed to use up our existing supply -- we will very soon need new artwork. If anybody reading this is an artist, let us hear from you.

NEWSLETTER POLICIES

MEMBERS -

This newsletter is sent to all chapter members at their home address. You can tell if we have you on our chapter membership list by looking at your label. If you are believed to be a member (and remember, NOW at the chapter and state level is volunteer staffed) there will be an expiration date, e.g. 6/82 if you joined in June of 1981, and your precinct number, e.g. pn#390 if we know it. If we don't know your precinct number, PLEASE CALL JO ANN EVANS GARDNER (741-4009) IF YOU ARE A REGISTERED VOTER. (If you are not, call Carl Smith, Harris County Tax Assessor, 224-1919x310, who will send out a postage-paid form; 30 days after you mail it in, you will be a registered voter. Then call Jo Ann with your precinct #!))

If you are a new member, you should start receiving your National NOW Times about 4-6 weeks after you send us your dues. If you don't, please get in touch with us so we can find out what went wrong. The National Action Center is changing subscription vendors so there may be some slippage.

If there is ANY ERROR in your label, please let Jo Ann know. Or if you move, it is necessary to send your change of address to Jo Ann as well as to the National Office; see the National NOW Times for information on address changes. If you move before you start to receive your National NOW Times, call Jo Ann for information on how to make the change.

COURTESY COPIES -

It is our policy to send three copies of this newsletter to all visitors to chapter meetings. We also send it to people who sign an ERA permission card, or a Reproductive Rights permission card, and to people that tell one of the executive committee they are interested in becoming a member and would like to know about meetings, etc., and to departmental/administrative secretaries who can circulate it within their department. Anyone with a U of H campus mail address can continue to receive courtesy copies by letting us know (see form below.)

Courtesy copy recipients will have a CC above their name on the label, followed by a date indicating when they were first put on the list, e.g. CC 4/81.

The best way to continue receiving this newsletter is, of course to join NOW. When you do, you will also receive, monthly, The National NOW Times, and after the 1st of the year, a quarterly Texas NOW newsletter.

CONTRIBUTORS TO NOVEMBER ISSUE:

Jeanne Sommerfeld
Jo Ann Evansgardner
Felicia Becket
Gerry Gardner

We welcome contributions on topics of concern to feminists. Please mail (see outside cover) or bring in by the newsletter deadline - normally the 4th Saturday, 9 am. but for the next two months, the 3rd Saturday.

ALLOCATION OF OFFICE SPACE IN UC

NOW at The University of Houston has been assigned a desk in the Underground UC. This will be wonderful to use as a central work and storage space for materials, for task force meetings, and hopefully to develop into a feminist resource center. The only catch is that we must keep a minimum of ten office hours per week. Jo Ann and I are able to pick up eight of the required hours. Jo Ann 12 - 2, T & Th, Jeanne 8 - 10, T & Th. Please call if you have time to "staff" for NOW's office.

Jeanne Sommerfeld, 521-2824



MILLION!

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO
FOR THE ERA
SINCE TEXAS IS ALREADY
RATIFIED?

National NOW has developed the message brigade precisely to answer this question. The Message Brigade will link the millions of ERA supporters into a national network that will be able to affect the decisions of the key state leaders who are able to get the ERA ratified in the unratified states. (They will be "able" only if they are convinced that ERA supporters are not only in the majority but organized.)

National ERA Message Brigade

Are You FOR The Equal Rights Amendment?

For \$2 now and 10 minutes' time during the coming year, you can help get the amendment passed, no matter where you live.

May we tell you about it? To join the E.R.A. Message Brigade

Write your name and address on the *ERA Message Brigade* envelope

Put \$2 in the envelope to receive 5 *Action Alerts*

Then, each time you receive an *Action Alert*, you send a *Message*

Here's How It Works:

1. You get an *Action Alert* from NOW when messages to key political leaders are needed.
Each *Action Alert* will include an ERA campaign update, a sample message, and an envelope or postcard addressed to an influential leader.
2. You sign the sample *Message*, or substitute your own, and send it to the leader designated.
(ERA is a national issue. Political leaders frequently aspire to national office—many presidents previously served as state governors.)
3. Your message with thousands of others from *ERA Message Brigade* members reaches the key leader who can influence passage of the amendment.
This national declaration of support for the ERA cannot be denied!

Everybody can help. Together we can put the Equal Rights Amendment into the Constitution.

Will You Join Us?

The Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

(complete text)

- Section 1.** Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
- Section 2.** The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
- Section 3.** This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

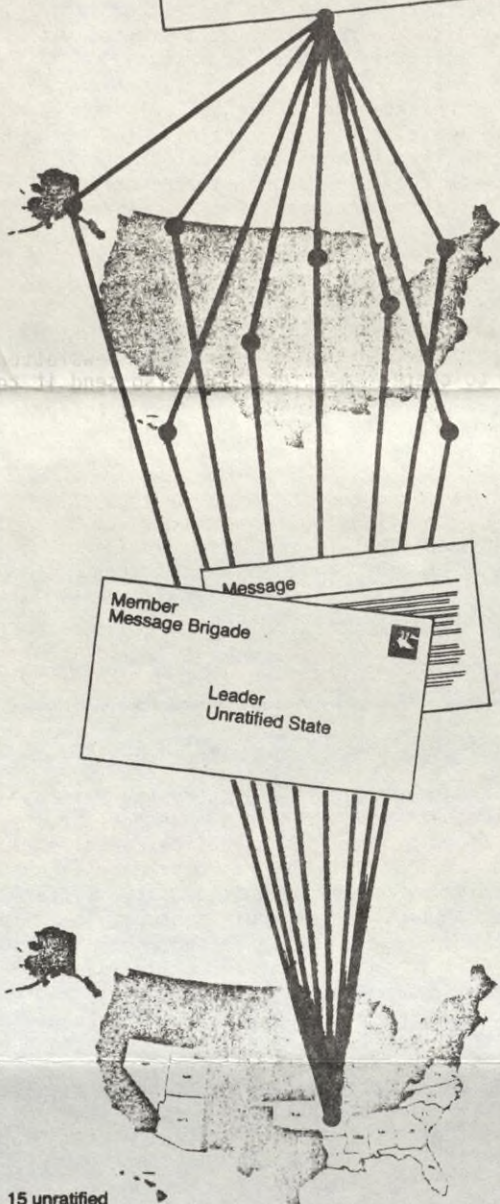
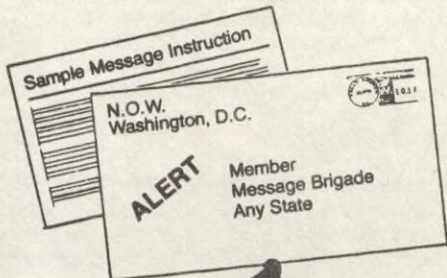
EASY ACTION

On November seventh, all eight NOW chapters in Houston will be providing training for doing the Message Brigade and setting up teams to go out that day and see how effective this idea can be. Each chapter has pledged to have ten members participate. We will be meeting at the law offices of Charles Brink on the

tenth floor of the NBC Bank Building on Sharpstown Mall (near Walgreen's) and will be canvassing in that busy area. This will provide you with an excellent opportunity to learn exactly how easy the Message Brigade is to do and if you are new at doing public actions, will be one that guarantees you a positive result.

3.

National's goal is to sign up ONE MILLION people to the ERA Message Brigade. This number works out to twenty-five message brigades for each chapter member. So far in Houston, we've found that on the average we are able to sign up TEN people per hour per member. That's TWENTY DOLLARS an hour for the ERA. If you are unable to find time for any other action this year, Find Time For The Message Brigade. The ERA must and can be ratified but only by letting our leaders know that their political futures depend upon their active support for the ERA.



15 unratified states—only 3 more are needed to pass ERA.

NOW kicks off last-ditch campaign to salvage ERA

1,000 rally in Washington

By ARTHUR WIESE
Chief, Post Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — In what was billed as a last-ditch drive to win approval of the beleaguered Equal Rights Amendment, two former first ladies Monday told a rally it is time to "raise the conscience of the nation" before the ratification deadline expires next summer.

Betty Ford and Lady Bird Johnson addressed about 1,000 ERA supporters — only a fourth of the Columbus Day turnout predicted by the National Organization for Women — at the Lincoln Memorial.

The rally was the culminating event of NOW's four-day national convention and launched a \$15 million campaign by feminists to save the controversial amendment, with more than half the money dedicated to national television advertising.

To date, 35 states have voted for ratification of the ERA, three short of the number necessary for it to be added to the Constitution. A three-year extension of the original ratification date, approved by Congress in 1979, expires June 30, 1982, and the chances of winning another extension are considered poor.

Lady Bird Johnson described the ERA Monday as "the right thing to do and long overdue. For our daughters and granddaughters we must do no less."

She compared the ratification fight to the one her late husband, Lyndon B. Johnson, waged for passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"As a woman and as a Republican, I don't understand how we as a people can continue to hold our heads high and be proud if we have not guaranteed rights to half our population," said Betty Ford, the honorary head of the final drive for ERA ratification.

"Maybe we have gotten beyond the point of asking — we are demanding recognition of our right to equality," she added.

The crowd, many of its members dressed in the green and white colors of the ERA movement, chanted: "Hey, hey, what do you say, ratify ERA."

Despite that enthusiasm, the chances for adoption of the amendment already are regarded as dim, and very unlikely to revive by next summer, particularly with the Reagan administration opposed to ratification.

In none of the 15 states with legislatures that have not voted for the amendment are ERA supporters optimistic about the future. No state has been added to the ratification list since 1977.

The remaining holdouts are clustered, for the most part, in the conservative Southern and Rocky Mountain states where criticism of the ERA has been strongest. They are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah and Virginia.

Even if ERA advocates could add three more states to the ratification rolls before June, that would not end the amendment's legal problems.

Legislatures in five states that originally voted to approve the measure — Idaho, Kentucky, Tennessee, Nebraska and South Dakota — since have reversed themselves and passed resolutions either withdrawing their support or declaring their previous positions to be null and void.

The Supreme Court has never before faced the question of whether a state can overrule its previous endorsement of a constitutional amendment.

If ERA advocates should begin to make headway again, efforts probably would be mounted in a number of other state legislatures to rescind prior ratification votes. In Texas, one of the first states to vote to approve the amendment in 1972, a resolution disavowing that decision was introduced in the legislature last January by state Sen. Walter Menges, R-Houston.

BIASED NEWS REPORTING

This Post story is a classic example of newspapers' tendency to diminish, trivialize and mis-represent news about feminism and feminist actions. It contains major errors of fact in addition to its overall tone of disparagement. (See numbered points in article.)

1. By actual measurement, there were 3,000+ persons at the rally.
2. ERA supporters in at least six states, (those targeted by NOW) are very optimistic about their ability to get their state ratified.
3. Three states have rescission legislation on their books. South Dakota has declared it "null and void", a legally meaningless action.
4. The Supreme Court in *Coleman v Miller* (1939) stated that the right of states to rescind is one for Congress to decide. The Court stated that: "We think that in accordance with historical precedent the question of the efficacy of ratification by state legislatures, in the light of previous rejection or attempted withdrawal, should be regarded as a "political question" pertaining to the political departments, with ultimate authority in the Congress...."

The third mis-representation is particularly reprehensible. Although legislatures in 5 states voted to rescind or nullify ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, the complete rescission story is very different. In one of those states, Kentucky, The Lt. Governor, Thelma Stovall, vetoed the rescission bill. In ten other states rescission efforts failed ingloriously.

Furthermore, rescission is not a new tactic. In the struggle to ratify the 14th, 15th and 16th Amendments, several states rescinded ratification legislation, but their rescinding actions were ignored by Congress which simply declared the Amendment ratified when the requisite three-fourths of States had passed ratification legislation.

There is legal precedent for the position that states can only ratify a constitutional amendment. So to imply that rescission means that states aren't ratified, as the article does, or that the Supreme Court has not dealt with the issue is simply bad journalism -- biased journalism to support the status quo.

Jo Ann Evansgardner

POLITICAL ATTACK ON KATHY WHITMIRE

Members of NOW who understand the history and rationale for support of Lesbian and Gay rights were not surprised by the recent effort by the Houston Police Patrolmen's Union (HPPU) to "...discredit mayoral candidate Kathy Whitmire's campaign..." (See Chronicle story, 10/19/81, reproduced on this page. Whether their personal identity is heterosexually or lesbian/gay oriented, they know the depth of homophobia in society and recognize its powerful potential for harming feminists individually and collectively, personally and politically. Old hands in NOW have experience with statements just like those the HPPU made e.g. "...homosexuals have organized a gay political caucus in order to become politically involved and force their sexual abnormalities on other members ..." and "But we feel somebody should stand up and tell these people (gays) it is not an alternative lifestyle, but deviant and abnormal behavior."

I believe every NOW member should be knowledgeable about NOW's positions and actions on every issue. The scurrilous HPPU attack on Kathy Whitmire (nobody attacked Jim McConn in the last mayoral campaign when he was endorsed by the Gay Political Caucus) made me decide it was important to present the history, rationale and formal positions NOW has taken on issues beginning with Lesbian Rights.

The first installment of De-mystifying "The Lavender Menace": A NOW Primer on Lesbian Baiting appears on page 5. We will also keep a copy in our new office in UC. We are collecting all available NOW position papers and will shortly have a library available to our members. Stop by during our office hours, on Tuesday and Thursdays, 8 - 10 am and 12 - 2 pm.

Gay recruitment at issue Police union criticizes Whitmire to city clergy

BY MIKE CINELLI
Chronicle Staff

The Houston Police Patrolmen's Union is seeking the support of religious leaders in an attempt to discredit mayoral candidate Kathy Whitmire's campaign.

The union's tactic has angered at least one area minister.

In a letter dated Oct. 12 and mailed "to about 540 churches in the city," President Bob Thomas said the union "was stunned" by a statement Mrs. Whitmire made to an HPPU committee screening mayoral candidates.

Mrs. Whitmire said homosexuals should not be discriminated against "in any way" during the Houston Police Department's recruitment process, Thomas wrote.

After an attempt to air the issue in the media failed, Thomas said, the HPPU mailed the letters, asking church leaders to "notify and inform members of your congregation about Mrs. Whitmire's public statements concerning homosexuality."

Ronald D. Pogue, pastor at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church at 1440 Harold, in the Montrose area, said he informed his congregation Sunday about receiving the letter, but he did not name any candidate or tell the letter's contents.

"If I had told them that, I would have been doing exactly what they (HPPU) wanted me to do," Pogue said. "My purpose in talking about it was to tell my congregation that some members of the police department are abusing their power and influence simply because they're police officers."

"This is an example of abuse of authority and power, and an insult to the religious community of Houston."

Mrs. Whitmire, who did not see a copy of the letter until Sunday, said she would not respond to Thomas' charges except to reiterate her position.

"The police department has included in the screening process a question that excludes from consideration an applicant who has engaged in a homosexual relationship," she said. "In view of the state law (requiring that the question be

asked), I do not plan to change that part of the screening.

"It's shocking that the (HPPU) leadership favors discrimination against anybody. Some people down there have strong prejudices, and they're working hard to advertise them."

Thomas said the HPPU had to seek help from the religious community because "the homosexuals have organized a gay political caucus in order to become politically involved and force their sexual abnormalities and deviant lifestyle on other members of our community."

The letter was sent to religious leaders, he said, because, "We felt they were the best informed on this issue."

"We didn't expect them to stand on the pulpit and endorse a candidate," Thomas said. "We were hoping they would put out Mrs. Whitmire's statements in church newsletters. We said in the letter we respected the separation of church and state."

"But, we feel that somebody should stand up and tell these people (gays) it is not an alternative lifestyle, but deviant and abnormal behavior."

Pogue labeled HPPU's mailing campaign "gutter politics."

"I've lived in Houston all my life and it is obvious to me the intention of this is to further prejudice and bigotry and divide the community," he said. "And if there is anything Houston needs right now it is unity, not division."

"This is just an inflammatory issue to stir up the religious issue against a particular candidate. In addition it's an insult and an injustice to a segment of our population who happen to be gay."

In a postscript to the letter, Thomas reminded religious leaders that HPPU has endorsed Louis Macey for mayor.

"I wasn't asked to approve it," Macey said. "I saw a copy after they sent it out. It's not my campaign. It doesn't bug me one way or the other. If I had been asked about it, it would have been handled differently. I would have written it differently."

"I'm not fighting Kathy Whitmire. I'm running for mayor."

CHRONICLE
10/19/81

NOW ISSUES

--From "The Woman-Identified Woman"
by Radicalesbians. Quoted with permission.

"Lesbian is the word, the label, the condition that holds women in line. When a woman hears this word tossed her way, she knows that she is stepping out of line. She knows that she has crossed the terrible boundary of her sex role. She recoils, she protests, she reshapes her actions to gain approval. Lesbian is a label invented by the Man to throw at any woman who dares to be his equal, who dares to challenge his pre-regatoves (including that of all women as part of the exchange medium among men), who dares to assert the primacy of her own needs. To have this label applied to people active in the women's liberation movement is just the most recent instance of a long history ... in this sexist society, for a woman to be independent means she can't be a woman -- she must be a dyke. That in itself should tell us where women are at. It says clearly as can be said: woman and person are contradictory terms...

"Lesbian" is one of the sexual categories by which men have divided up humanity ... Are we going to continue the male classification system of defining all females in sexual relation to some other category of people?

As long as male acceptability is primary -- both to individual women and to the movement as a whole -- the term lesbian will be used effectively against women. Insofar as women want only more privileges within the system, they do not want to antagonize male power. They seek instead acceptability for women's liberation, and the most crucial aspect of the acceptability is to deny lesbianism -- i.e. to deny any fundamental challenge to the basis of the female.

DE-MYSTIFYING THE "LAVENDER MENACE" A NOW PRIMER ON LESBIAN-BAITING

by
Kay Whitlock
NOW National Task Force on Sexuality and Lesbianism
April, 1977

There is probably no feminist-identified woman who has not, at some point in her feminist involvement, been overtly or by insinuation called a dyke or a lesbian. There is probably no feminist-identified woman who has not, at some point, felt anxiety or anger when others have attempted to de-legitimize the feminist movement and NOW because of our commitment to lesbian/gay civil rights. As long as the mere mention of the issue of lesbianism calls forth defensive reactions in feminists, the practice of lesbian-baiting will continue to wield power as an effective tool of intimidation.

Years ago, a NOW member charged that our organization was being disrupted by what she termed, in a monumental example of defensiveness, "the lavender menace." She, and others who shared her views, were reacting to the fact that some lesbians who belonged to NOW decided that they would no longer tolerate a closeted, "stepchild" existence within NOW. There had always been lesbians in NOW, and now, there were lesbians in NOW who were not ashamed and who were vocal and outfront. While much of the NOW membership took this in stride, some NOW officials at various levels were horrified. Caught up in an apparent frenzy of homophobia, they spoke out and took action against NOW lesbians. The effect of this was an unofficial "purge." Lesbians began finding themselves targets of whisper campaigns; ways were found to remove some of them from offices they held in NOW; others were targeted by opposition at chapter election times. Some were harassed; some were threatened with being exposed as lesbians. Pressure was put on others to force resignations from NOW office. Some NOW members who were "suspected lesbians" or who sympathized with lesbians were also targeted during the purge. The intent appeared to be to discredit certain NOW members of the basis of their alleged or confirmed lesbianism. The moral and ethical cost to NOW was immense.

Yet, in spite of the scare tactics employed by some who feared their own exaggerated fantasies of "lesbian takeovers," the NOW membership was not quite so easily frightened or intimidated. In 1971, a NOW Position Paper and Resolution on Lesbianism, prepared and submitted by Arlie Scott, was adopted at the NOW National Conference. It articulated the connection between sexism and homophobia, and NOW members were warned to watch for the tactic of lesbian-baiting "by opponents who use the tactic of labelling us the worst thing they can think of, 'lesbians,' in order to divide and discredit the feminist movement and bring women to heel." Regrettably, the paper pointed out, this tactic within NOW was "employed by some members who conjure up the sexist image of lesbians and shout 'lavendar menace' at anyone who opposes their views."

NOW members were called upon to "reassess the priorities that sacrifice principle to 'image'" and there was a demand that we bring to an end the evasiveness on the part of NOW with regard to lesbian visibility in the movement. In blunt, honest language, the position paper spoke directly to the oppression lesbians faced within our own organization:

Afraid of alienating public support, we have often treated lesbians as the step-sisters of the movement, allowed to work with us, but then expected to hide in the upstairs closet when company comes. Lesbians are

now telling us that this attitude is no longer acceptable. Asking women to disguise their identities so they will not 'embarrass' the group is an intolerable form of oppression, like asking black women to join us in white face. Furthermore, this discrimination is inconsistent with NOW's stated goal to 'recognize our sisterhood' and to help women 'overcome self-denigration.'

Sadly enough, in the years since 1971, we have not overcome all the old hassles. There is, certainly, a much more supportive environment for lesbians in NOW. Lesbian invisibility is no longer required (although there are still those fearful people who desire it). Civil rights action on behalf of lesbian/gay rights has been undertaken by NOW, notably in the areas of lesbians in the military, lesbian mother child custody, sodomy repeal, and positive legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual/affectional preference at state, local, and national levels. Not all chapters or state organizations, of course, desire to take action in this regard.

It would be a mistake to assume that there is no more "problem" with regard to lesbians in NOW. While NOW policy reflects positive steps forward, NOW history haunts us because, in subtler forms, some of it is being repeated.

Lesbians in NOW still retain painful memories that for years we were expected and encouraged to remain closeted and in the background by sisters who cared more for "public image" than for the manner in which they oppressed other women. There are still times today when lesbians run into the same attitudes within NOW, though their notions do not have the sanction of national officials or of national policy. It is difficult to forget how marginal some tried to keep visible lesbian involvement in NOW. Some still try. It was the lesbian who, years ago in NOW, saw her life and her struggles dismissed as a "political liability." Sometimes, our lives are still dismissed in that way.

Given NOW's history, and given current realities in NOW, the Now National Task Force on Sexuality and Lesbianism attempted to appeal to the basic goodwill and intelligence of NOW members, and focused almost entirely for a considerable period of time on the personal choice and civil rights aspects of lesbianism. Until now we have avoided dealing with the deeper, political aspects of lesbianism, fearing that by doing so we would alienate heterosexual support. We tried to make ourselves and our program acceptable to everyone, believe that if we were just polite enough, everyone would experience a sudden (and possibly mystical) emotional conversion and would decide that lesbians are wonderful; that fears of lesbian visibility and concerted effort for the attainment of lesbian rights would be discarded overnight, and that hand in hand, all NOW members would move forward as a cohesive group, totally refusing to be intimidated by those who would try to lesbian-bait us.

That is an exaggeration, of course, but it is not much of one. The point is that we overlooked some very basic dynamics...

5 (to be continued in the next issue. Complete copy will be available in our office in UC, for those whose interest in the issue can't wait till December.)

go" from a woman means nothing when no one wants you in the first place. Incidentally, it must have occurred to the Selective Service bosses as well as the Administration that the addition of a proportionately greater peace advocacy population to the draft eligible pool would result in a substantially greater resistance to reinstatement of the draft.

The military has historically resisted encroachment by minorities and women upon the last vestiges of the sacred turf of the quintessential white male club. Military service and the right to bear arms has historically served as a sign of privilege and an indication of high social value ascribed to those upon whom the "honors" were conferred. Although not so regarded today, it remains a repository of training and opportunity to which many women desire access and from which they are turned away.

The civil rights movement recognized that racial integration of the armed services was absolutely essential in the quest for civil rights. The arguments used in the 50's against racial integration of units in Korea were exact precursors of current arguments to exclude women: that blacks were inferior soldiers, unreliable, and cowardly, and that integration would result in lessened effectiveness, racial tension, debilitation of morale and restricted deployability. Experience, of course, proved quite to the contrary, as integrated units reported greater morale and efficiency than non-integrated units. Interestingly enough, soldiers reported that their racist attitudes eroded in the face of experience that could not corroborate their stereotypes.

The root of the true opposition to women in the armed services has nothing to do with ability, unit flexibility or national security -- its cause is blatant sexism, its effect is discriminatory on the basis of sex, and it therefore must be challenged.

The military is not about to "go away", women will be called upon to serve, women are capable of military service, and women are capable of resisting a draft. Current sex-based restrictions in the military keep women in the low pay grades, limit their training opportunities, restrict their access to military service, and largely exclude them from veterans' benefits and preference. Government reinforcement of the stereotype that women are physically incompetent contributes powerfully to the perception of women as defenseless and the ensuing reality of women as victims -- it results in violence that women fear and experience in their lives.

Official government policy which discriminates so thoroughly on the basis of sex and has such deleterious effects on over half the population cannot go unchallenged.

Susan A. Kahil

1 The National Board of Directors of NOW passed the following resolution in February, 1980:

NOW opposes the reinstatement of registration and draft for both men and women. NOW's primary focus on this issue is in opposition to registration and draft. However, if we cannot stop the the return to registration and draft, we also cannot choose between our sisters and our brothers. We oppose any registration or draft that excludes women as an unconstitutional denial of rights to both young men and women. And we continue to oppose all sex discrimination by the volunteer armed services.

Editor's Note: This paper was written in response to a resolution proposed to the National Convention by New Jersey NOW which asked that the 1981 NOW National Convention rescind the position taken by the National Board of Directors in February, 1980 and instead, come out against the draft, period. The slogan of the group seeking change in NOW's position was, "Drafting women is equally wrong." The convention overwhelmingly voted against the resolution and supported the decision of the National Board after lengthy debate.

San Francisco Chronicle, Sunday, October 16, 1981

SAN FRANCISCO (UPI) — The all-male Bohemian Club, which counts President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George Bush among its members, has been ordered by the state Fair Employment Practices Commission to begin hiring women.

The quasi-judicial commission ruled the club illegally discriminated against women in its hiring policies and must begin hiring women for its spring and summer encampments along the Russian River.

The club's all-male membership policy was not challenged in the complaint filed against the 109-year-old club.

The commission's ruling grew out of a request to the state Employment Development Department to provide a male

when it went into the general labor market to hire employees.

A club spokesman expressed disappointment in the decision and said it had not yet decided if the ruling would be appealed.

The club argued the presence of women would inhibit members and guests from dressing like women for musicals and skits staged during the encampments and from roaming the grove's 200 acres naked or partially clothed.

In January, Administrative Law Judge Robert S. Kendall ruled in favor of the club, stating the hiring of women would "drastically change the nature and purpose of the club."

But the commission in its own decision said, "The right of privacy does not allow

Law requiring sex equity in education gets mixed review

WASHINGTON (AP) — A controversial law requiring sex equity in athletics and other federally-subsidized educational activities has led to "significant improvements" in opportunities for women and girls, a special advisory panel reported Saturday.

But the report to Congress, from the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, concluded that there are still marked pockets of resistance to the law in such areas as employment and wages.

The report said there have been clear improvements in enrollment levels, degree awards, scholarship distribution and other measures of progress since passage of Title IX of the 1972 Education Act Amendments.

The proportion of women enrolled in traditionally male, vocational education courses rose from 5 percent to 11 percent between 1972 and 1978. One in five members of the Future Farmers of America organization, which once forbade the admission of girls and young women, now are female.

Also, the percentage of women enrolled in four-year colleges rose from 43 percent in 1972 to 49 percent in 1978. In two-year institutions, the percentage of women increased from 44 to 54 percent during those years, the report said.

The improvement was far less dramatic in employment. The percentage of female school principals rose only 1 percent between 1974 and 1978 — from 12 to 14 percent, the

report said. And women hold less than one percent of the superintendents' posts in the nation this year. The percent of women who are full professors at colleges and universities remained static between 1975 and 1981.

"Women and girls have experienced significant improvements in educational opportunity in the nine years since enactment of a law prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded education programs," said Susan Margaret Vance, chairwoman of the commission.

She said Title IX has proven itself to be "an extraordinary catalyst for change."

But the report also maintained that most change since the law was passed in 1972 was the result of initiatives at state, local and institutional levels rather than of federal enforcement activities.

Commission member Bernice Sandler said the changes "have been occurring very quietly. In most cases, schools are not visited by federal officials." She said federal intervention has occurred at less than 1 percent of the nation's schools.

Ms. Vance said a continuing federal role in Title IX was important. But unlike many other feminists who support Title IX, she declined to criticize the Reagan administration's approach to enforcing it.

Education Secretary T.H. Bell has said Title IX should not apply to faculty employment cases. There also have been reports

that a narrower definition of what constitutes federal funding is under consideration. If imposed, such a definition would reduce the number of schools subject to the law's provisions.

And Vice President George Bush has made Title IX's application to athletics the subject of the administration's regulatory review process.

Much of the controversy over Title IX has centered on its application to athletic programs.

And it is in that area that some of the clearest changes have been made.

The proportion of girls in high school sports jumped from seven percent in 1971 to 35 percent in 1981. The percent of women in intercollegiate sports doubled from 15 percent in 1971 to 30 percent in 1980. The number of colleges offering women's athletic scholarships skyrocketed from 60 in 1974 to more than 500.

And, the proportion of athletic scholarships going to women increased from about one percent in 1974 to more than 22 percent today.

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER REQUEST FORM

1. I wish to join the National Organization for Women, NOW at the University of Houston, Central Campus.

(Dues for NOW are on a sliding scale from \$11.00 to \$35.00. This amount is divided among the Chapter, Texas NOW, and the National. Please send an amount for your dues according to your circumstances.)

2. Enclosed are my dues in the amount of \$_____.

Make your check payable to "NOW at the University of Houston, and send to:

NOW at the University of Houston (Membership)
Box 509, University Center
4800 Calhoun
Houston, TX 77004

NAME _____
HOME ADDRESS _____
TOWN, STATE, ZIP _____
PRECINCT NUMBER _____ (from voter registration card)
HOME PHONE _____ OTHER PHONE _____ (hours)
(Please mail this form to address above.)

State orders hiring of women at all-male club in California

SEXIST MYTHS V. FEMINIST REALITIES

SEX STEREOTYPES

Sex Role Myths -- and Some Second Thoughts

- WOMEN ARE GOOD WITH THEIR FINGERS
(for sewing on buttons, not for brain surgery.)
- WOMEN ARE GOOD WITH FIGURES
(for bookkeeping or paying the bills, not for high finance.)
- WOMEN ARE GOOD AT HANDLING DETAILS
(for keeping men in clean underwear, not for holding political office.)
- WOMEN ARE PLACED ON A PEDESTAL
(but pedestals are very small places and do not allow much room for self-determination.)
- WOMEN MAKE GOOD COOKS
(but not chefs.)
- WOMEN MAKE GOOD SEAMSTRESSES
(but not tailors.)
- WOMEN ARE THE OBJECT OF MEN'S SEXUAL INTEREST
(unless they are too fat, too old, too ugly, too poor, too uppity, or too intelligent.)
- WOMEN ARE COMPLEX AND TEDIOUS BITCHES
(when they get in the way.)
- WOMEN ARE HAPPY, SIMPLE BEINGS
(when they are in their place.)
- WOMEN WERE BORN TO BE MOTHERS AND WIVES
(but men were not born to be fathers and husbands.)
- WOMEN WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL ARE LUCKY
(men who are successful are skilled.)
- WOMEN ENJOY BEING HELPLESS AND DEPENDENT
(the poor? the widowed? the battered?)
- WOMEN ARE PROTECTED BY MEN
(when they get raped? when they need an abortion? when they need a good job?)
- WOMEN GET TO HAVE DOORS OPENED FOR THEM
(while the doors of opportunity are slammed in their faces.)
- WOMEN ARE SO IMPORTANT THEY ARE SAVED FROM THE SINKING SHIP, AND DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT WARS
(so why aren't women running Congress?)
- WOMEN NURTURE AND HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CHILDREN
(so why don't the children get their mother's name?)

Another common myth is that feminists despise those who work in the home. In fact, feminists are very concerned that women who choose to nurture should be honored for their work. If you would like more information about the precarious status of homemakers under current law come read the facts collected in our library.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON MOTHERHOOD

Becket

A mother's job has no status in this society which rewards the single-minded pursuit of money as success. Her role clashes head on with the real values of an achievement oriented culture. The qualities needed to nurture, and in the case of infants to put the needs of others ahead of your own, are directly opposite to those needed to "make it" in the outside\corporate world.

The proliferation of theories on child-rearing by "professionals" has had the demeaning side effect of reducing mothers to bewildered consumers of expert (and often contradictory) advice. The glory has gone to an ever-increasing array of self-proclaimed experts - pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers - who have defined the job in terms of their own special doctrines and prejudices.

Mother no longer knows best.

Because mothering is done out of love and without the monetary reimbursement which society values and because it is done only by women, mothering is devalued. Feminists are changing this society so that nurturing work is valued.

As many of us have learned on this campus, there is a very common myth to the effect that The Equal Rights Amendment is "UnChristian". Below is a feminist perspective on the true meaning of Christianity.

WOULD JESUS HAVE VOTED FOR THE ERA?

Christ lived at a time when people were listening to the word of the male-dominated religious institutions who allowed the voice of culture to become more authoritative than the voice of God. It is incredible how for nearly 2000 years male theologians have hidden from us the equality of women proclaimed loud and clear by the very source of the Christian religion -- Jesus Christ! People who continue to listen to the word of the church rather than the word of God are living contrary to the life and teachings of Christ.

Jesus made a unique contribution to the equality of women through His every word and deed as He purposely countered His culture. He chose women to witness for Him at a time when Judaic law did not allow women to bear legal witness. Even though a male Jew never spoke to a woman in public, nor to a person from Samaria, it was a Samaritan woman -- at the village well -- who was asked to be the first witness to others that Jesus was the Messiah, God's anointed One (John 4:26). And again, for the very center of His Gospel, Jesus chose female witnesses for His Resurrection; He first appeared to women and told them to "tell the others" (Mark 16:9-10).

Jesus came to bring the good news about the Kingdom of God to every person, and He made a point to break the traditional customs of treating women as second class citizens, in order to accomplish His purpose. Christ knew that if love is a fruit of the spirit (a by-product of a person's relationship with God) then every person must know and feel that they are worthy of this special relationship to God, by the way that others treat them.

At a time when woman's only value was bearing children, a woman said to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb of your mother," but Jesus said, "Bless her instead because she hears the word of God and keeps it" (Luke 11:27-28). He broke with the traditional ways of His time to show that women could study the word of God and it was much more important than cooking and housework. At a time when women were not allowed to read or study the Torah, Jesus was talking to Mary about the scripture when Martha complained about her sister's not helping with the dinner. Jesus said, "Never mind, Martha, don't get upset about the housework -- Mary knows what really counts and I won't take that away from her" (Luke 10:39-42)

When we think about how religion based on the "love of God and the love of humankind" could ever work without equality of humankind, we realize a special mission of Jesus. He had to work toward equality for all persons, if the Kingdom of God was to succeed! It is not that men and women are the same. The point is that they have to be equal as individuals in order to love self enough to love God and to love others. We must have equality in order for all humankind to be loving. Even St. Paul, who held the world-view of his time that women were not equal to men, had this to say about Christ and equality: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:28)

It is time we recognize that for women, there is a harsh conflict between the demands of a career and raising a family, no matter how fulfilling and personally rewarding both may be. It is precisely because they are both rewarding and both demanding of time, energy and resources that the problems are so difficult to tackle. The fact remains that if a mother drops out of her career or job slot for a few years her professional development will suffer. Yet, if she continues to work she will also suffer - from chronic exhaustion. The current chic theory that it is possible and desirable to set aside short periods of "quality time" for children is baloney. How can anyone do a demanding job by only working at it an hour or so a day? And after a hard day at the office as well! Chalk up another put-down for mother's work.

(This article considers the traditional and still current status of mothers. We hope future articles will consider the development of equal parenting between fathers and mothers and changes in societal norms that will allow parents to also be individuals.)

PLEASE RETURN IF NOT DELIVERABLE AS
ADDRESSED.
Prof. Bette Ann Stead
MKT 333 M
CC=4/81

(complete text)

SECTION 3: This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.
provisions of this article.
SECTION 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the States or by any state on account of sex.
SECTION 1: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT



4800 Calhoun
Box 509, University Center
Houston, Texas 77004

NOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

WOMEN AND THE DRAFT

More than a year and a half has passed since NOW issued its position on the registration and drafting of women. The cycle of activity has come full circle with the Supreme Court ruling this June in Rostker v. Goldberg, the case challenging the constitutionality of an all-male draft.

NOW's position paper on the registration and drafting of women contains a double-edged response -- not a contradictory one, but a necessary "bi-level" approach. Unfortunately, this response to Jimmy Carter's proposal to include women in his registration scheme was a bit too complex to be accurately reflected in headlines, and was sometimes inaccurately recorded for posterity as "NOW Advocates Draft of Women".

NOW's primary response -- what I refer to as the "above all" response -- states a very strong opposition to registration and the draft for anyone. The following excerpt appeared on the first page of the position paper -- it bears repeating because a lot of people seem to have missed it.

NOW is against the registration of young people precisely because it is a response which stimulates the environment of preparation for war. Too many of us still remember the senseless killing and destruction in Vietnam -- which we also protested -- and believe that violence is the 'ultimate solution' taught most typically to males in our society. We reject that solution, and believe that too many are willing to wage war with others' lives. National defense and self-defense is one thing; aggression for economic self-interest is quite another. To fight a war for oil is to deny that the inherent rights of all human beings must take precedence over the economic self-interest of a very few. We are committed to working for the day when our nation and our world priorities will be people -- a day when our domestic problems are not solved by military aggression.

The secondary response in the position paper is the one I refer to as the "what if?" response, i.e. IF Congress reinstates registration, then what about women? The bulk of the criticism aimed at the position hinges on this secondary response -- specifically, why go the extra step, why not oppose registration for everyone and leave it at that? Because, to put it bluntly, ignoring the "what if?" is a refusal to deal with reality -- the reality that a draft may be imminent, that women will serve, as they always have, and that exclusion of women from registration reinforces their consignment to second class citizenship.

Neither NOW's position paper nor the amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Court advocates a return to compulsory military service. Rather, the paper's perhaps most important point states that the Defense Department's arbitrary limitations on female access to the All Volunteer Force (AVF) is directly responsible for lowered competence levels in the military and therefore gives unjustified credence to the arguments for a return to the draft. If the military eliminated the sex-based restrictions placed on women and judged personnel solely on their individual skills and abilities, systematic evidence as well as cold logic show that the quality of the AVF would increase dramatically and eliminate the purported and imaginary need for the draft, AS WELL AS open the doors to the capable and qualified women who seek entrance to the military, but are excluded solely on the basis of sex.

Congress, in its finite wisdom, refused to bow to evidence and logic, and reinstated a male-only registration. Subsequently, a Vietnam-era court challenge to the constitutionality of an all-male registration and draft was then reactivated and made its way to the Supreme Court.

NOW's submission of an amicus brief in the case was a logical next step. The issue at bar was the constitutionality of women's exclusion from the provisions of the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA). Arguments relating generally to the wisdom/need for re-enactment of the MSSA were simply not legally germane and therefore not appropriate. Refusal to address the issue that was involved in the case -- exclusion of women -- would have resulted in loss of an important opportunity to

- 1) combat the "big lies" promulgated by the Administration with regard to the roles and capability of women,
- 2) present to the highest court in the land the arguments and perspectives that Supreme Court Justices rarely find among their professional or "pleasure" reading, and
- 3) advocate once again the principle of gender neutrality in all circumstances.

Therefore, it became necessary in the amicus brief to focus on the secondary response outlined in the position paper: if anyone were to be inducted, women as a class should not be excluded.

Women are "allowed" to serve in the military because they are desperately needed. The numbers of women in the military did not increase as a result of the military establishment's enlightenment with regard to equity considerations. Women cost less to train and recruit. The Army spends 24 times more to recruit what it considers a high quality male recruit than it spends to recruit a high quality female recruit. The modern technological military requires increased education and intelligence levels from recruits -- elimination of half of the technically trained and trainable population from the potential service pool makes no sense -- and therefore cannot continue -- especially in light of the fact that the pool of "draft eligible" males will decrease by almost 25% by 1992 due to our aging population. So it becomes patently obvious that women will be called upon to serve. The question now becomes -- "in what capacity?"

"Allowing" women to volunteer is tantamount to advocating continued exploitation of women by the military. Lower pay, inferior training and benefits, and institutionalized veteran's preference that excludes women, coupled with the sexual harassment and lack of concern for equitable treatment attendant to women's presence in token numbers are the inevitable results.

Further, the government's exclusion of women from registration imparts a clear message to women and to the country: that all men, by virtue of their gender, are somehow valued enough to be trusted with the (theoretical) defense of the country, and therefore all must be registered regardless of physical or mental competency. Yet NO women are similarly capable, or trustworthy. All men, by the simple "virtue" of membership in the "at risk" category feel entitled to, and are expected to, lead, direct and comment upon the foreign and domestic affairs of the country. Hence, the origin of the "holier than thou" pedestrian epithet: "shoulder a rifle, then talk to me about equal rights." The response to the challenge need not be an affirmative response to waging war. One always has the option of resistance. The simple fact is that "Hell no, I won't