

ople were getting used to the sight of thousands of ng, picketing or rallying. But in the spring of 1968 wasn't only massive, it was violent. Crowds didn't ticed "mobile street tactics." Demonstrations led s with the police.... From a historical point of view, gest feature of the new radicalism was the new radi- They weren't underpaid or unemployed workers. rly middle-class kids....

was haunting Europe, and America. It was no longer anized communism. The Communists had settled struggle for a few percentage points per election. In utionary students.... For once, [FBI head] J. Edgar out the communist threat long enough to point out t threat"... But most students refused to let the sion change their style. It wasn't they who were

features do the Ehrenreichs see in the unrest in the Western Europe in 1968?

ink is most surprising about the events of 1968?

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## **CHAPTER 26**

# **The Triumph of Conservatism, 1969-1988**

## **178. Brochure on the Equal Rights Amendment (1970S)**

*Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Based on typescript by Rachel Maloshok.*

First proposed in the 1920s, the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution was resurrected in the 1970s as an outgrowth of the second wave of feminism. Its language was brief: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." But its implications were anything but simple. It quickly won approval by Congress, but as states debated ratification it aroused a growing storm of protest from conservatives who claimed it would undermine women's traditional roles as mothers, wives, and homemakers. The National Organization for Women, founded in the 1960s to promote women's equality, led the campaign for approval, but the amendment failed to gain ratification by the required number of states. In this brochure, the Philadelphia chapter of NOW details the gender inequalities that persisted and outlined what it hoped the ERA would accomplish.

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### **Did You Know . . .**

- Under the U.S. Constitution corporations are considered legal persons, but women are not

- Women earn on an average 41% less than men
- A man with an 8th grade education earns as much as a woman with a college degree
- Women and men do not receive the same benefits under Social Security, although they contribute the same percentage of their income
- "Equal pay for Equal Work" is based on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act which can be reversed by Congress
- If a man dies, his widow pays a large tax; if a woman dies her widower pays substantially less
- A husband controls his wife's use of "his" credit cards; a wife cannot establish credit in her name
- Insurance rates are higher for women than for men; loans for house payments, etc. are more difficult for women to obtain than men
- The military has higher entrance requirements for women, but significantly fewer benefits and opportunities
- During probate, a joint bank account is considered to be solely the property of the husband
- Women receive longer jail sentences than men for the same crime
- Unemployment is twice as high for women as for men
- There are over 1,795 laws which discriminate against women

#### The ERA Will . . .

- Declare women full persons under the law
- Outlaw discrimination on the basis of sex, establishing constitutionally the legal right of "equal pay for equal work"
- Provide equal Social Security benefits for women and men at the same retirement age; widowers will receive the same benefits now only received by widows
- Recognize a housewife's contribution as a financial resource to the home by not taxing her half of the estate when her husband dies
- Give married women the right to establish credit, own businesses, buy and control property, and sign contracts

- Equalize military entrance eligible for equal benefits and of
  - Extend alimony and child s
  - Establish equal rights for b
  - wife bank accounts during prob
  - Mandate "equal time for equi
  - Strike down laws which res
- it will be extended to the others

#### Questions

1. What kinds of inequality seem to
2. How does the brochure seem to d

### 179. Barry Commoner, (1971)

Source: *Barry Commoner: From The copyright © 1971 by Barry Commoner Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.*

Another movement born in the 1960s decade was environmentalism, v American life—the equation of progress and the faith that science, technology advance the social welfare. Concern ment dated back to the creation of na efforts during the Progressive era. B more activist and youth oriented. Th Commoner, did much to direct American costs of technological development.

## 182. Phyllis Schlafly, "The Fraud of the Equal Rights Amendment" (1972)

Source: *Phyllis Schlafly: "The Fraud of the Equal Rights Amendment," The Phyllis Schlafly Report, Vol. 5, February 1972. Reprinted with permission of Phyllis Schlafly.*

One of the first major conservative victories of the 1970s was the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed change in the Constitution that would have affirmed that "equality of rights under the law" could not be abridged because of sex. This seemingly uncontroversial measure passed Congress in 1972 with little opposition. It soon aroused unexpected protest from those who claimed it would discredit the role of wife and homemaker.

To its supporters, the amendment offered a guarantee of women's right to participate fully in public life. Its foes insisted that women should remain within the divinely appointed roles of wife and mother. They claimed it would subject women to the military draft and let men "off the hook" by denying their responsibility to provide for their wives and children. Phyllis Schlafly, a veteran of anticommunist politics of the 1950s, led the campaign against the ERA. Polls consistently showed that a majority of Americans, male and female, favored the measure. But thanks to the mobilization of conservative women, the amendment failed to achieve ratification by the required thirty-eight states.

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IN THE LAST couple of years, a noisy movement has sprung up agitating for "women's rights." Suddenly, everywhere we are afflicted with aggressive females on television talk shows yapping about how mistreated American women are, suggesting that marriage has put us in some kind of "slavery," that housework is menial and degrading, and—perish the thought—that women are discriminated against. New "women's liberation" organizations are popping up, agitating and demonstrating, serving demands on public officials, getting wide

press coverage always, and purporting to speak for some 100,000,000 American women.

It's time to set the record straight. The claim that American women are downtrodden and unfairly treated is the fraud of the century. The truth is that American women never had it so good. Why should we lower ourselves to "equal rights" when we already have the status of special privilege?

The proposed Equal Rights Amendment states: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." So what's wrong with that? Well, here are a few examples of what's wrong with it.

This Amendment will absolutely and positively make women subject to the draft. Why any woman would support such a ridiculous and un-American proposal as this is beyond comprehension. Why any Congressman who had any regard for his wife, sister, or daughter would support such a proposition is just as hard to understand. Foxholes are bad enough for men, but they certainly are *not* the place for women—and we should reject any proposal which would put them there in the name of "equal rights." . . .

Another bad effect of the Equal Rights Amendment is that it will abolish a woman's right to child support and alimony, and substitute what the women's libbers think is a more "equal" policy, that "such decisions should be within the discretion of the Court and should be made on the economic situation and need of the parties in the case."

Under present American laws, the man is *always* required to support his wife and each child he caused to be brought into the world. Why should women abandon these good laws—by trading them for something so nebulous and uncertain as the "discretion of the Court"?

The law now requires a husband to support his wife as best as his financial situation permits, but a wife is not required to support her husband (unless he is about to become a public charge). A husband cannot demand that his wife go to work to help pay for family

expenses. He has the duty of financial support under our laws and customs. Why should we abandon these mandatory wife-support and child-support laws so that a wife would have an "equal" obligation to take a job?

By law and custom in America, in case of divorce, the mother always is given custody of her children unless there is overwhelming evidence of mistreatment, neglect or bad character. This is our special privilege because of the high rank that is placed on motherhood in our society. Do women really want to give up this special privilege and lower themselves to "equal rights," so that the mother gets one child and the father gets the other? I think not....

#### WHAT "WOMEN'S LIB" REALLY MEANS

Many women are under the mistaken impression that "women's lib" means more job employment opportunities for women, equal pay for equal work, appointments of women to high positions, admitting more women to medical schools, and other desirable objectives which all women favor. We all support these purposes, as well as any necessary legislation which would bring them about.

But all this is only a sweet syrup which covers the deadly poison masquerading as "women's lib." The women's libbers are radicals who are waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children.

#### Questions

1. Why does Schlafly believe that the Equal Rights Amendment will actually harm women?
2. How does Schlafly's picture of the status of American women differ from that of the Equal Rights Amendment brochure?

**183.** James Watt, "Enviro to the Ecology of the W

*Source: James Watt, "Environmental West," Speech at the Conservation For diligent efforts to contact the copyright this selection. If you have information Permissions Department, W. W. Norton New York, NY 10110.*

The rapid growth of the environmental reaction. New environmental intervention in the economy. I where measures to protect the environment and private access to public lands. Government byranny, western leaders decision-making power over issues I ment, and whether public lands shown to the states. Conservative I tary of the interior under President I ism threatened to prevent the develp and therefore would damage the nat

IN RECENT YEARS, the unique I lended. The nation has demande of coal, oil and gas, uranium, for Because of good leadership ar citizens, the states of the West sures. We have struggled, and w able to protect our natural enviro have been met....

But now, all this is being thre